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Judges

Version 86

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Judges

Introduction to Judges

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Judges

Introduction: the tribes conquer their territories (1:1–3:6)
History of the judges of Israel (3:7–16:31) Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar (3:7–31) Deborah and Barak (4:1–5:31) Gideon (6:1–8:35) Abimelech (9:1–57) Tola and Jair (10:1–5) Jephthah (10:6–12:7) Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon (12:8–15) Samson (13:1–16:31)
Dan becomes a center of idolatry (17:1–18:31)
Outrage at Gibeah, civil war against Benjamin (19:1–21:25)

What is the book of Judges about?

The book of Judges tells of events that occurred after the Israelites settled in the land of Canaan. The events in this book happened over a period of about 150 years. The book continues the biblical narrative directly from the book of Joshua. It begins, “After the death of Joshua,” resuming the story at the point it had reached at the end of the book of Joshua.

This book describes how the Israelites repeatedly sinned against Yahweh during this time. They worshiped false gods and did the same wicked things as the peoples who lived around them. Therefore, God would allow enemies to defeat and oppress the Israelites. Eventually, the Israelites would call to Yahweh for help. Yahweh would then cause someone to help the Israelites defeat their enemies. This person was called a “judge.” The Israelites would live in peace until the judge died. After that judge died, the Israelites would start sinning again. So this pattern of events would repeat.

What title should translators give this book?

This book has traditionally had the title “Judges” because it gives accounts of some of the main leaders or judges in Israel before there were any kings ruling the people. Unless a translation of the Bible exists in your region that uses a different title, you should probably use the title “Judges” or a similar title such as “The Book about the Leaders in Israel.”

Part 2: Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Book

What kind of leaders were the judges?

The judges were men and women whom God chose to help the Israelites defeat their enemies. Afterward these leaders usually continued to help the people by deciding disputes among them. They also helped them make important decisions. Many of these leaders served all the people of Israel, but some of these leaders may have served only certain tribes.

What kind of society was Israel during the time of the judges?

During this time, the twelve tribes of Israel were independent of one another. They were not a unified nation with one ruler. However, they were descendants of the same ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They also shared in the same covenant with Yahweh. So the tribes would often help each other when enemies were threatening them. However, the book of Judges tells of some times when the tribes fought against each other.

Part 3: Translation Issues in This Book

“the angel of Yahweh”

In many places in the book, the author speaks of a character whom he calls “the angel of Yahweh.” Interpreters are unsure about the exact identity of this character. When he speaks, sometimes the author says “the angel said” and sometimes the author says “Yahweh said.” So he is closely identified with Yahweh in some way, although it is not clear in precisely what way. We recommend that you translate this phrase using the same words that you use in the rest of your translation for “angel” and “Yahweh.” The UST models one way to do this.

“arose”

In many contexts, the author uses the expression “arose” to mean that a person took action or took on a particular role. It does not mean that he or she stood up from a sitting or lying position. Similarly, characters sometimes tell other characters to “arise,” meaning that they should take action. Notes will help clarify what the expression means in specific contexts. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

“behold”

The author and characters often use the word “behold” to focus their listeners’ attention on what they are about to say. While the word literally means “look,” the speakers do not want their listeners to look at something, but to pay careful attention. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

“in the eyes of”

The author and characters often use the common expression “in the eyes of” to mean in someone’s estimation, opinion, or judgment. For example, the author says in 2:11 that the Israelites “did evil in the eyes of Yahweh,” meaning that they did what Yahweh considered wrong and had said was wrong. Samson says to his parents in 14:3 about the woman he wants to marry, “she is right in my eyes,” meaning that he thinks she is the right one for him. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

“to the face of”

The author and characters often use the word “face” to represent the presence of a person or group, by association with the way people can see the face of someone who is present. The expression “to the face of” can have different shades of meaning, depending on the context. The focus may be more on the presence of a person, such as in 20:26, where the author says that the Israelites “sat … to the face of Yahweh.” He means that they were in the presence of Yahweh near his sacred tent. The focus may also be on something being in front of or near a person or thing. When the author says in 3:27 that Ehud was “to the face of” the Israelite soldiers who were with him, he means that Ehud was in front of them, that is, leading their army. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

“into the hand of,” “into your hand”

The author and characters often use the word “hand” by association to represent the power and capability of a person. For example, the author says in 11:32 that when Jephthah went to fight the Ammonites, “Yahweh gave them into his hand.” This means that Yahweh gave him the power to defeat them. The word “hand” may also represent possession, as when the author says in 7:8 that Gideon’s soldiers “took provision into their hand.” The word “hand” may also represent agency, as when the author speaks in 3:4 of the commandments that Yahweh gave the Israelites “by the hand of Moses.” In such cases, the author is using the hand, part of a person, to mean the whole person in the act of doing something. Notes will help distinguish the difference between these shades of

meaning when that may not be clear from the context. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]] and [[rc:///ta/man/translate/figs-synecdoche]])

“hear,” “listen”

The author and characters often use the terms “hear” and “listen” to mean complying with what someone has said. When humans “hear” or “listen” in this sense, the terms mean “obey,” as when the author says negatively in 2:17 that the disobedient Israelites did not “hear the commandments of Yahweh.” When Yahweh “hears” or “listens” in this sense, it means that he does what someone asks in prayer. For example, when the author says in 13:9 that “God listened to the voice of Manoah,” he means that God answered Manoah’s prayer and sent the angel back to him and his wife. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

name of tribe, city, or kingdom representing its people

The author and characters often use the name of a tribe, city, or kingdom to represent its people. For example, in 1:12, when Caleb speaks of “whoever attacks Kiriath Sepher,” he is using the name of that city to refer by association to the people who live in it. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

name of a person representing associated or accompanying people

For example, in 3:10, when the author says of Othniel that “he went out to war,” he is using Othniel, one person who was involved in this action, to represent everyone who was involved. He means that the army of Israel went out to war with Othniel commanding it. (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

“nose burned against”

In several places in the book, the author uses the term “nose” and the expression “burned” to mean anger. For example, in 2:14 he says that “the nose of Yahweh burned against Israel,” meaning that Yahweh became very angry with the Israelites. This is by association with the way that a person who is angry breathes heavily through his nose and the way the skin of a person who is angry becomes hotter. Your language and culture may also associate anger with a particular part and disposition of the body. If so, it may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also use plain language and say “anger.” (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

“shall”

The ULT represents the Hebrew instructional verb form with the English helping verb “shall.” For example, when Deborah tells Barak in Judges 4:6 “and you shall take with you 10,000 men,” she is instructing him to take 10,000 men with him. Other ways to say this are: “you are to take 10,000 men with you” or “take 10,000 men with you.” Translate this form with the most natural way in your language for giving instructions.

“sons of”

The author and characters often speak of “the sons of” a person to mean the nation or tribe that consists of his descendants. For example, the author speaks in 1:1 of the “sons of Israel” to mean the Israelites and in 1:8 of the “sons of Judah” to mean the people of the tribe of Judah and particularly their army. In this case, “sons” does not mean first-generation offspring but later descendants. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

The phrase “sons of” may also refer to people who have a particular characteristic or quality. For example, the author speaks in 18:2 of “sons of valor,” meaning men who were characterized by valor, that is, valiant warriors. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

“struck,” “struck to the mouth of the sword”

In many places, the author says that soldiers “struck” an opposing army, city, or king, as if they had only hit them. But he means that they attacked those opponents, and in some contexts the meaning is clearly that they killed them. That is the case in 3:29, for example, where the author says, “And they struck Moab at that time, about 10,000 men ... not one escaped.” (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

In several contexts the author uses a longer form of this expression and says “they struck them (or it) to the mouth of the sword.” This means that they completely destroyed a city, killing everyone who lived there. For example, speaking in 1:25 of what the tribes descended from Joseph did to Bethel, the author says that “they struck the city with the mouth of the sword.” (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

“went up,” “went down”

In Hebrew, writers and speakers generally indicated whether people were going up to a higher elevation or going down to a lower elevation when they traveled. For example, in 1:3 the soldiers of Judah ask the soldiers of Simeon to “go up” with them into their allotment because the Israelites were in the valley of the Jordan River and the Judeans’ allotment was in the hills above the valley. In 3:27, the author says that the fighting men of Ephraim “went down” with Ehud because they were going from the hill country of Ephraim down into the Jordan River valley. If your language does not mark travel for change in elevation, you can translate instances such as these simply as “go” or “went.”

Judges 1

Judges 1 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- Verses 1–10: Judah conquers its assigned territory
- Verses 11–16: Caleb and Othniel conquer Debir (Kiriath Sepher)
- Verses 12–21: Judah and Simeon conquer territory but leave some hostile nations
- Verses 22–29: Ephraim and Manasseh conquer territory but leave some hostile nations
- Verses 30–36: Zebulun, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan conquer territory but leave some hostile nations

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Cutting off the thumbs and big toes of captured enemies

In 1:7, Adoni-Bezek describes how he had his soldiers cut off the thumbs and big toes of the kings he had defeated. This prevented a captured enemy from running away or from ever using a weapon again. However, as the context shows, it was also a way of humiliating a captured king. When the Israelites did this to Adoni-Bezek, he acknowledged that he was getting what he deserved for having done this to others.

Complete destruction of a city and its people

In 1:17, the armies of Judah and Simeon completely destroy a Canaanite city and kill all of its people. They call the place “Hormah,” which means “destruction.” Deuteronomy 7:1–4 describes how, when Yahweh was preparing the Israelites to enter the Promised Land, he commanded them to destroy completely the Canaanite people who lived there. They were not to make any treaties with them or to intermarry with them. This was to prevent the Israelites from joining them in worshiping their false gods, which would have led them to develop a culture and society very different from the kind that Yahweh wanted. The book of Joshua describes how the Israelites completely destroyed the major Canaanite cities and their people. In this chapter, 1:17 describes a further instance of that. However, the Israelites left many of the Canaanite people in the land, and they did intermarry with them and worship their gods. This led the Israelites into many evil practices that made Yahweh very angry with them.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Names of people groups, cities, and Israelite tribes meaning their people or armies

In this chapter, the author and characters frequently use the names of people groups or cities by association to mean the people or armies of those groups or cities. For example, when the author says in 1:1 that the Israelites “fought against Jerusalem,” he means that they fought against the people who lived in that city. The author and characters sometimes also speak of the Israelite tribes as if they were individual people who could talk to one another, go places together, and so forth. For example, the author says in 1:1, “Then Judah said to Simeon, his brother, ‘Go up with me into my allotment.’” If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. For example, instead of saying “Judah,” you could say “the people of the tribe of Judah.” (See: [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-metonymy]] and [[rc:*///ta/man/translate/figs-personification]])

Generic nouns

In this chapter, the author and characters use expressions such as “the Canaanite,” “the Perizzite,” “the Amorite,” and so forth. They are not referring to specific individuals. Rather, they mean in general the people of the nation mentioned. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using plural forms, for example, “the Canaanites.” (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

Judges 1:1

And it happened

The author is using the phrase **And it happened** to introduce a new event in the story of the people of Israel, which continues here in the book of Judges at the point where it left off at the end of the book of Joshua. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

the sons of Israel

See the discussion of the phrase **the sons of Israel** in the Introduction to Judges. Alternate translation: [the people of Israel] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Who will go up

The Israelites are asking Yahweh which of their tribes should be the first to go into its allotment and fight against the Canaanites living there. They are speaking of that tribe as if it were an individual person. (The verb in this phrase is singular, indicating that **Who** is also singular.) See the discussion of this issue, which occurs several times in this chapter, in the Introduction to this chapter. Alternate translation: [What tribe will go up] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

for us

By **us**, the Israelites mean themselves but not Yahweh, to whom they are speaking, so use the exclusive form of that word in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.724)**)

the Canaanite & against him

As the Introduction to this chapter discusses, here and in similar instances throughout the chapter, this is not a reference to a specific **Canaanite**. Rather, it refers to the Canaanites or the Canaanite nations in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using plural forms. Alternate translation: [the Canaanites ... against them] or [the Canaanite nations ... against them] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

Judges 1:2

Judah

As the Introduction to Judges and the Introduction to this chapter discuss, here Yahweh is using the name **Judah** by association to mean the army that belongs to the tribe of Judah. Alternate translation: [The army of the tribe of Judah] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Behold

Yahweh is using the term **Behold**, which literally means “Look,” to focus his listeners’ attention on what he is about to say. See the discussion of this usage in the Introduction to Judges. In this context, since Yahweh is the speaker, there is also the implication that what follows is something that Yahweh has determined and so is certain to happen. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [Indeed] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

I have given the land into his hand

Here, as the Introduction to Judges discusses, having something in one’s **hand** represents possessing it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I have given them possession of the land] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 1:3

Then Judah said to Simeon, & So Simeon went with him

As the Introduction to this chapter discusses, here the author is speaking of the tribes of Judah and Simeon as if they were individual people who could speak with each other. Alternate translation: [Then the people of Judah said to the people of Simeon ... So the people of Simeon went with them] or [Then the commanders of the Judean army said to the commanders of the Simeonite army ... So the Simeonite army went with the Judean army] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

his brother

The author is using the term **brother** to describe people who are descended from the same ancestor. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [their kinsmen] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Go up with me

In a context such as this, your language might say “Come” instead of **Go**. Alternate translation: [Come with me] (See: **Go and Come (p.734)**)

against the Canaanite

See how you translated this same expression in 1:1. Alternate translation: [against the Canaanites] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

And I will also go with you myself into your allotment

The Judeans are leaving some information implicit. You could state this information explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [If you do, we will also go with you into your allotment and fight against the Canaanites] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 1:4

And Judah went up

As the Introduction to this chapter discusses, here the author is using the name of one of the tribes whose soldiers were in this army to mean the entire army, which included soldiers from both tribes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And the army of the tribe of Judah went up with the army of the tribe of Simeon] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

and Yahweh gave the Canaanite and the Perizzite into their hand

Here, as the Introduction to Judges discusses, **hand** represents the power or capability of a person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh gave them the power to conquer the Canaanites and the Perizzites] (See: **Metonymy (p. 780)**)

And at Bezek they struck

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, when the author says that the armies of Judah and Simeon **struck** or “hit” the Canaanite and Perizzite soldiers who opposed them, he means that they defeated them and, in contexts such as this, that they killed them. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also use plain language. Alternate translation: [And at Bezek they defeated] or [And at Bezek they killed] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

at Bezek

Bezek is the name of a city in the territory in Canaan that was allotted to the tribe of Judah. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

10,000

The author may be using the number **10,000** as an approximation or as a customary way of saying “very many.” Alternate translation: [a large number of] (See: **Numbers (p.784)**)

Judges 1:5

And they found

The word **found** does not mean that the armies of Judah and Simeon were intentionally searching for this man. It means that they encountered him when they reached the city of Bezek. Alternate translation: [and they encountered] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Adoni-Bezek

The word **Adoni-Bezek** is the name or title of a man. It means “the lord of Bezek,” and so it may be the title for the king who reigned in the city of Bezek. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

and they fought against him

As the Introduction to this chapter discusses, here the author is using Adoni-Bezek to represent both this king himself and his entire army. Alternate translation: [and they fought against him and his army] (See: **Synecdoche (p. 841)**)

Judges 1:6

the thumbs of his hands and his feet

Some languages use the same word for the largest finger and the largest toe, as the biblical text does here. If your language has different words for these, you can use both words in your translation. If the phrase might then seem to contain extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language, you could shorten it, as the UST does. Alternate translation: [the thumbs of his hands and the big toes of his feet] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 1:7

70 kings

This could be an approximate number, chosen for its symbolic significance. Alternate translation: [dozens of kings] (See: **Numbers (p.784)**)

kings

In Canaan at this time, each city and town had a ruler who had the same title as someone who ruled over a large territory. So, for example, Pharaoh is called the “the king of Egypt” in Exodus 1:5, while the book of Joshua refers to the “king” of cities such as Libnah (Joshua 10:30) and Hebron (Joshua 10:37). If your language uses a different word for people who rule over one community than for people who rule over extensive areas, you could use that term here. Alternate translation: [chieftains] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

with} the thumbs of their hands and their feet cut off

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 the Introduction to this chapter for an explanation of the practice described here. It is unlikely that Adoni-Bezek was the agent who did this personally. Alternate translation: [whose thumbs and big toes I ordered my soldiers to cut off] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

were gathering beneath my table

Adoni-Bezek 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: [were gathering scraps of food beneath my table] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

were gathering beneath my table

Dozens of **kings** would not have fit under the **table** where Adoni-Bezek ate his meals, so he probably does not mean this literally. Instead, he seems to be speaking of these defeated chieftains as if they were dogs that had to scrounge for food from the scraps that fell from his table. This indicates that he had reduced them to a state of helpless dependence. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [had to survive on what little I gave them] or [were my helpless prisoners] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 1:8

the sons of Judah

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” The author is describing the people of the tribe of Judah as descendants of their ancestor Judah. In context, the reference is specifically to the army of the tribe of Judah. Alternate translation: [the Judeans] or [the Judean army] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

the sons of Judah

As in 1:4, the author is using the name **Judah** to represent the entire combined army. Alternate translation: [the armies of the tribes of Judah and Simeon] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

with Jerusalem and captured it

As the Introduction to this chapter discusses, here the author is using the name **Jerusalem** to represent the people of that city. Alternate translation: [against the people who lived in Jerusalem and captured that city] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

And they struck it to the mouth of the sword

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, the author is using the expression **to the mouth of the sword** to mean that the army of the tribe of Judah killed all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. The UST models one way to do that. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

And they struck it

The author is speaking of the people who lived in the city of Jerusalem by association with the city itself, which he refers to by the pronoun **it**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And they struck the people who lived there] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and they sent the city into fire

The author is speaking as if the Israelites had literally **sent** or thrown the **city** of Jerusalem into a large **fire** that was burning nearby. (This same expression occurs in Judges 20:48.) If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and they set the city on fire] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 1:9

the sons of Judah

See how you translated this expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [the armies of the tribes of Judah and Simeon] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

and the Shephelah

The word **Shephelah** is the name of a region within the territory that was assigned to the tribe of Judah. It consists of hills that are lower than the central ridge where Jerusalem is located. Alternate translation: [and the foothills] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 1:10

Judah

See how you translated the term **Judah** in 1:4 and the expression “the sons of Judah” in 1:8. Alternate translation: [the combined army] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Now the name of Hebron previously {was} Kiriath Arba

Here the author is providing background information to help readers understand what is happening in the story. The author probably wrote this because his readers knew this city as **Hebron**. But at the time when Israel attacked it, it was called **Kiriath Arba**. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. You may also wish to mark it in some way as background information, such as by putting it in parentheses as the ULT does. Alternate translation: [Hebron used to be called Kiriath Arba] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

And they struck Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai

Sheshai, **Ahiman**, and **Talmai** are the names of three clans that lived in and around the city of Hebron. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 1:11

And he went

The pronoun **he** refers to “Judah” in the previous verse. That name represented the army of the tribe of Judah and implicitly the accompanying army of the tribe of Simeon. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And these armies went] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Debir

The word **Debir** is the name of a city in the territory that Joshua assigned to the tribe of Judah. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Now the name of Debir previously {was} Kiriath Sepher

See how you translated the similar sentence in the previous verse. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Judges 1:12

And Caleb said

The author assumes that readers will know that a man named **Caleb** was commanding the armies of Judah and Simeon at this point. (The full story is told in Joshua 15:13–19.) You could indicate this explicitly if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And Caleb, the man who was commanding these armies, said] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 1:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 1:14

Now it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce background information that is not part of the main narrative. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

in the coming of her

The author assumes that his readers will understand what he means by this phrase. This could mean: (1) that Aksah came to Kiriath Sepher in order to marry Othniel and that she made this **request** when she arrived and saw the land that Caleb had given to him. Alternate translation: [when Aksah arrived at Kiriath Sepher]; (2) that the author is using this expression to describe Aksah entering Othniel's household as his wife. Alternate translation: [once Aksah had married Othniel] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

that she persuaded him to request the field

The author is leaving implicit who was to make this request. The meaning does not seem to be that Aksah persuaded Othniel that he should **request** this **field** from Caleb, since he is not the one who asks; she is. In this culture, a young man such as Othniel may not have had the standing to make this kind of request from a leader such as Caleb. So the meaning seems to be that Aksah persuaded Othniel that she should ask for the field. In this culture, a daughter may have been able to make such a request of her father. Alternate translation: [that she persuaded him to allow her to request the field] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

the field from her father

The author has a particular **field** in view. The narrative suggests that Caleb had given some land to Othniel but that it was arid territory. It suggests further that near this land, there was some ground that was suitable for cultivation because it was watered by springs. You could state this information explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [from her father some land that was nearby the land that he had already given to Othniel and that was watered by springs and so could be cultivated] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

What for you

Caleb 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: [What can to do for you] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 1:15

Give

This is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation: [Please give] (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.750)**)

a blessing

In this context, the word **blessing** is an abstract noun. It does not refer to something that someone would say to cause good and beneficial things to happen to a person. Instead, it refers to a good and beneficial thing itself. If your language does not use abstract nouns in this way, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [something that will benefit me] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

you shall also give to me

Aksah is using a verb form that could either indicate what a person ought to do or what a person is going to do. This could mean: (1) that since the land Caleb gave Aksah and Othniel was dry, he also ought to give them some land with springs of water. Alternate translation: [you should also give me]; (2) that Aksah is answering Caleb’s question and this is implicitly her request. Alternate translation: [my request is that you will also give me] (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.764)**)

springs of waters.” & the upper springs and the lower springs

Aksah and the author are using these expressions to mean by association the land on which these **springs** were located. Alternate translation: [some land that has springs of waters ... some land in that area where there were upper springs and lower springs] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

springs of waters

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: [springs] or [land on which there are springs] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 1:16

Now the sons of the Kenite

The author is introducing some further background information that is not part of the main narrative. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Now the sons of

Since the actual sons of the man whom the author is describing here would have been in the same generation as Moses, the term **sons** could be intended literally. However, since those sons would have had three or even four generations of descendants by this time, the term may also be meant to include them. Alternate translation: [Now the descendants of] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

the Kenite

The word **Kenite** is the name of a people group. Since the author has a specific **Kenite** in mind, your language might use a demonstrative pronoun here. Alternate translation: [that Kenite] or [that man from the Kenite people group] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

the father-in-law of Moses

Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [the father of Moses' wife] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

from the City of Palms

The author is using the expression **the City of Palms** to refer to settlements in the area of the city of Jericho, which the Israelites had destroyed several years before this. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use the name "Jericho" here. Alternate translation: [from Jericho] or [from Jericho, the city of palm trees] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

with the sons of Judah

Here, the term **sons** means "descendants." The author is identifying the Judeans as descendants of their ancestor Judah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. See how you translated the similar expression "the sons of Israel" in 1:1. Alternate translation: [with the people of Judah] (See: **Metaphor (p. 774)**)

And he went and he dwelled

The pronoun **he** seems to refer to **the Kenite**, that is, the man who was the father-in-law of Moses. The author is using him to represent his descendants. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And they went and they dwelled] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

with the people

By **the people** the author means those from the tribe of Judah who also settled in this region. You could state this information explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [among the people of Judah who also settled there] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 1:17

Then Judah went with Simeon his brother

See how you translated the terms **Judah**, **Simeon**, and **brother** in 1:3. Alternate translation: [Then the soldiers of the tribe of Judah went with their kinsmen, the soldiers of the tribe of Simeon] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

And they devoted it

The word that the ULT translates as **devoted** is a specialized term that describes the cultural practice of giving something over to Yahweh so that humans will no longer be able to use it. Depending on the context, the term can indicate either “destroy” or “preserve, but set apart.” In this context, the meaning is clearly “destroy.” You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And they completely destroyed it] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

and they called the name of the city

It might seem that the expression **called the name** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [and they called the city] or [and they named the city] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Hormah

The word **Hormah** is the name of a city. The Israelites changed the name of Zephath to Hormah, which means “destruction,” after they destroyed it completely. See the Introduction to this chapter for a further discussion. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 1:18

Judah

The author is using the name of one of the tribes whose soldiers were in this army to mean the entire army. Alternate translation: [the combined army of Judah and Simeon] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 1:19

Now it happened {that

The author is using this expression to introduce information about what was happening behind the scenes in this story and also to introduce an overall theme for 1:19–36. In a way that was not visible, Yahweh was helping the Israelites to defeat the Canaanites. Nevertheless, the Israelite tribes did not drive the Canaanite nations completely out of their assigned territories. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Yahweh {was} with Judah

The author is speaking as if Yahweh had literally been present **with** the army of Judah as it fought to conquer its assigned territory. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Yahweh helped Judah] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

chariotry of iron

The metal **iron** was barely used during this time period, so this is not a reference to chariots entirely made of **iron**. Those would have been too heavy for any practical use in warfare anyway. It is probably a reference to chariots whose wheels or floor were strengthened with iron or that had iron studs or points to make them more destructive when used in ramming. Alternate translation: [chariots fitted out with iron] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 1:20

But they gave

The pronoun **they** refers to the people of the tribe of Judah and most likely to their leaders. While Moses had originally promised **Hebron** to **Caleb** in Numbers 14:24 and Joshua had confirmed this in Joshua 14:6–15, the leaders of Judah confirmed this again when they conquered their assigned territory. Alternate translation: [But the leaders of the tribe of Judah gave] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

the three sons of the Anak

The author is speaking of the three clans that lived in and around the city of Hebron as if they were the literal **sons** of their ancestor Anak. (These clans are named in 1:10.) If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the three clans descended from Anak] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

the Anak

The word **Anak** is the name of a man. The author seems to be using the definite article **the** to indicate that he has a specific **Anak** in mind, the man who was the ancestor of these clans. Your language might naturally use a demonstrative pronoun for this purpose. Alternate translation: [the well-known Anak] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 1:21

But the Jebusite, the dweller of Jerusalem, & So the Jebusite has dwelled

1:251:25The word **Jebusite** is the name of a member of a particular people group. Alternate translation: [But the Jebusites dwelling in Jerusalem ... So the Jebusites have dwelled] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

the sons of Benjamin & with the sons of Benjamin

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” The author is describing the people of the tribe of Benjamin as descendants of their ancestor Benjamin. The reference in the first instance is specifically to the army of this tribe; it seems to be generally to the people of the tribe in the second instance. Alternate translation: [the army of the tribe of Benjamin ... with the people of the tribe of Benjamin] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

until this day

The author is using the term **day** to refer to a specific time, the time when he was writing this book. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [right up to this time] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 1:22

the house of Joseph

Here the term **house** means all the people descended from a particular person. It envisions them as if they were one household living together. So **the house of Joseph** means all the people descended from the patriarch Joseph. By this time, those descendants had become the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. Alternate translation: [the descendants of Joseph] or [the armies of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and Yahweh {was} with them

See how you translated the same expression in 1:19. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 1:23

the house of Joseph

See how you translated the expression **the house of Joseph** in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Now the name of the city previously {was} Luz

Here the author is providing background information to help readers understand what is happening in the story. The author probably wrote this because his readers knew this city as **Bethel**. But at the time when Israel attacked it, it was called **Luz**. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. You may also wish to mark it in some way as background information, such as by putting it in parentheses as the ULT does. Alternate translation: [Bethel used to be called Luz] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Judges 1:24

and we will do kindness with you

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **kindness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [we will treat you kindly] or [we will treat you mercifully] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 1:25

and they struck the city to the mouth of the sword

The author is saying **the city** by association to mean the people who lived in the city. Alternate translation: [and they struck the people of the city with the mouth of the sword] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 1:26

until this day

See how you translated the same expression in 1:21. Alternate translation: [right up to this time] (See: **Idiom (p. 747)**)

Judges 1:27

Beth Shan & or Taanach & Dor & Ibleam & Megiddo

The words **Beth Shan**, **Taanach**, **Dor**, **Ibleam**, and **Megiddo** are the names of cities. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

and its daughters

The author is speaking as if the villages surrounding the cities named in this verse were literally their **daughters**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [or the people who lived in the surrounding villages] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 1:28

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 1:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 1:30

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 1:31

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 1:32

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 1:33

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 1:34

And the Amorite, they pressed the sons of Dan {into} the hill country, for he did not allow him to go down into the valley

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: [And the Amorites did not allow the sons of Dan to go down into the valley, so they were pressed into the hill country] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

the sons of Dan

See how you translated the expression “the sons of Judah” in 1:16. Alternate translation: [the people of Dan] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

he did not allow him

The pronoun **he** refers to **the Amorite**, and the pronoun **him** refers to **the sons of Dan** (as if they were a single individual, their ancestor Dan). It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the Amorites did not allow the people of Dan] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 1:35

And the Amorite resolved to dwell at Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim

The author is leaving some information implicit that he assumes readers will understand. You could state this information explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And the Amorites resolved to dwell at Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim, and so the Israelites were not able to dispossess them] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

at Mount Heres

Mount Heres is the name of a large hill on which the city of Aijalon was built. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 739)**)

but the hand of the house of Joseph became heavy

Saying that the **hand** of a person or group **became heavy** means that the person or group became strong. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [but the house of Joseph became strong] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

the house of Joseph

See how you translated the phrase **the house of Joseph** in 1:22. Alternate translation: [the descendants of Joseph] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and they became forced labor

The pronoun **they** refers to **the Amorite**, that is, the people group of the Amorites. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [and the Amorites were put to forced labor] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 1:36

Now the border of the Amorite

The author is introducing background information that is not part of the main story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

was} from the Ascent of Akrabbim

Akrabbim is a Hebrew word that the ULT has spelled out using English letters so that readers will know how it sounds. The word means “scorpions” in Hebrew, and here it is the name of a place. In your translation you could spell this name the way it sounds in your language, or you could express its meaning as a name. Alternate translation: [was from Scorpion Pass] (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.709)**)

from Sela

The word **Sela** also means “cliff,” so this could be a geographic description rather than a proper name. Alternate translation: [from the cliff] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 2

Judges 2 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- Verses 1–5: The angel of Yahweh appears to the Israelites at Bochim
- Verses 6–10: Review: the Israelites worshiped and obeyed Yahweh during the lifetimes of Joshua and the elders
- Verses 11–23: The Israelites disobeyed Yahweh and worshiped other gods afterward, so Yahweh let other nations conquer them

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Joshua reappears in the story after it tells how he died

In Judges 2:6–9, the author repeats Joshua 24:28–31 to remind readers how the people of Israel served Yahweh faithfully when they first arrived in the land of Canaan. This is background information. After these verses, the main story of the book of Judges begins. It is about how the Israelites then worshiped other gods, but Yahweh repeatedly brought them back to himself and delivered them from their enemies when they repented. It may seem strange for the book to speak of Joshua doing something, since it begins "after the death of Joshua." So you can translate this in a way that shows that the author is providing background information by describing something that happened in the past. See the note at 2:6 for a specific suggestion.

"Cut a covenant"

The phrase "cut a covenant" occurs in this chapter. It means "make a covenant." The word "cut" reflects the cultural background. It is used because in some covenant ceremonies, the participants would cut up animals and then walk between the pieces. This was to indicate, "If I break this covenant, may I be destroyed in this same way." It is not necessary to understand this background to covenant ceremonies in order to understand the action in this chapter, so you do not have to use the term "cut" in your translation. You could simply say "make," or you could use an expression from your own language and culture.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

"fathers"

In this chapter, the author uses the word "fathers" several times to mean "ancestors." He is not speaking of the immediate male parents of the Israelites, but of the generations who lived before them. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Symbolic action

In this chapter, the author speaks of the Israelites bowing down to idols that represented foreign gods. This was a symbolic action that constituted a public act of worship, so it represented a definitive expression of allegiance to those gods. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. When the book says that the Israelites bowed down to foreign gods, you could say, for example, that they "worshiped them by bowing down to them." (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Judges 2:1

the angel of Yahweh

See the discussion of the phrase **the angel of Yahweh** in the Introduction to Judges. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Bochim

The word **Bochim** is the name of a place. The Israelites actually give the place this name at the end of this episode, in 2:5, but the author is using it here because his readers knew the place by that name. See the UST for one way to handle this issue. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

and said

The author is leaving some information implicit that he assumes readers will understand. You could state this information explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and said to the Israelites, who had gathered there] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

I am bringing you up

The angel, speaking on behalf of Yahweh, is using the present tense to describe a past event. He may be doing that because delivering the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and settling them in the land of Canaan together constitute a single work on their behalf that was still ongoing at this point. However, if it would not be natural for a speaker of your language to use the present tense in such a context, you could use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: [I brought you up from Egypt] (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.764)**)

to your fathers

As the Introduction to this chapter discusses, the angel is using the term **fathers** to mean “ancestors.” If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to your ancestors] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And I have said, ‘I will forever not break my covenant with 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: [And I have said that I would not break my covenant with you, to eternity] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Judges 2:2

And you, you shall not cut a covenant with the dwellers of this land. Their altars you shall demolish

If you decided in the previous verse to translate this quotation in such a way that there would not be a quotation within a quotation, you can continue doing that here. Alternate translation: [But I also said that you were not to cut a covenant with the dwellers of this land. You were to demolish their altars] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

But you have not heard my voice

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, here the word **heard** has the specific sense of "obeyed." Alternate translation: [But you have not obeyed my voice] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

But you have not heard my voice

The angel, speaking on behalf of Yahweh, is using the word **voice** by association to mean what he said by using his voice. Alternate translation: [But you have disobeyed what I commanded] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

What {is} this you have done

The angel is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You should not have done this!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 2:3

And I have also said, ‘I will not expel them from the face of you, but they will be to you in the sides, and their gods will be to you for a snare

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [And I have also said that I would not expel them from before you, but they would be to you like thorns in your sides, and their gods would be a snare to you] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

And I have also said

The angel, representing Yahweh, assumes that the Israelites will know when he **also said** this. In Numbers 33:55, Yahweh told the Israelites that if they did not drive out the Canaanites, the ones who remained would be thorns in their sides. In Joshua 23:12–13, Joshua warned the Israelites that if they made treaties with the Canaanite nations and intermarried with them, then Yahweh would no longer dispossess those nations and they would be thorns and a snare to the Israelites. So the angel seems to be indicating that Joshua was speaking on behalf of Yahweh when Joshua said that Yahweh would no longer drive out the Canaanites. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And as I said through Joshua] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

from the face of you

Here, **from the face of** is a common expression of the culture that means “because of” or “on account of.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [on your behalf] or [because of you] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

but they will be to you in the sides

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: [but they will be thorns in your sides] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

but they will be to you in the sides

Yahweh spoke as if the Canaanites would literally be thorns in the **sides** of the Israelites. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [but they will continually cause trouble for you] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and their gods will be to you for a snare

Yahweh spoke as if the **gods** of the Canaanites would literally be a **snare** in which the Israelites would be caught. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and worshiping their gods will be the cause of your destruction] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 2:4

Now it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce background information that is not part of the main narrative. This verse and the next verse explain how this place got the name Bochim. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p. 676)**)

the sons of Israel

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

that the people lifted up their voice and wept

Since the author is referring to a group of people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **voice**. Alternate translation: [that the people lifted up their voices and wept] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

that the people lifted up their voice and wept

The author is speaking as if a **voice** were literally something that the people of Israel could have **lifted up**. He means that they spoke loudly. Your language may have an expression of its own that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [that the people wept in loud voices] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

that the people lifted up their voice and wept

The phrase **lifted up their voice and wept** conveys a single idea by using two expressions connected with **and**. The expression **lifted up their voice** tells in what way the people **wept.** Alternate translation: [that the people wept out loud] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

Judges 2:5

So they called the name of that place Bochim

The author assumes that his readers will know that **Bochim** means “weepers.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could provide this information in a footnote, or you could put it in the text of your translation, as the UST does. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

So they called the name of that place

It might seem that the expression **they called the name of that place** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. See how you translated the same expression in 1:17. Alternate translation: [So they called that place] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 2:6

And Joshua dismissed the people, and the sons of Israel went

Here the author is providing background information to help readers understand what happens next in the story. See the discussion of this in the Introduction to this chapter. Alternate translation: [Now after Joshua had dismissed the people, the sons of Israel had gone] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

a man to his inheritance

The author is speaking as if the land that Joshua assigned to the tribes were literally an **inheritance** that they received from a relative who had died. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [each one to his assigned territory] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 2:7

And the people served Yahweh

If you decided to translate 2:6 in a way that showed it was background information, you can continue to do that in this verse. Alternate translation: [And the people had served Yahweh] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

all of the days of Joshua and all of the days of the elders

In these phrases, the author is using the term **days** to refer to a specific time, the lifetimes of Joshua and these elders. He is doing this by association with the way a lifetime is made up of individual days. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [throughout the lifetimes of Joshua and the elders] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

who had lengthened their days after Joshua

The author is speaking as if these **elders** had done something to make their days longer after Joshua died. He is using a common expression that means that their **days**, that is, their lifetimes, continued for some years after Joshua died. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who had outlived Joshua] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

all of the great deed of

In a context such as this, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **deed**. Alternate translation: [all of the great deeds] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

Judges 2:8

And Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, died

If you have been translating these verses in a way that shows they are background information, you can continue to do that here. Alternate translation: [Now Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of Yahweh, had died] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Nun

The word **Nun** is the name of a man, the father of **Joshua**. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

a son of 110 years

In certain contexts, the expression **son of** indicates that a person shares the qualities of something. In cases such as this, it specifically describes how old a person is. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [when he was 110 years old] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 2:9

And they buried him

If you have been translating these verses in a way that shows they are background information, you can continue to do that here. Alternate translation: [And they had buried him] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

And they buried him

Here the author is not using **they** to refer to specific people. Use an expression for this that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And his people buried him] or [And he was buried] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

in Timnath Heres, & Gaash

The words **Timnath Heres** are the name of an area. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 2:10

And all of that generation was also gathered to its fathers

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 Yahweh. Alternate translation: [And Yahweh also gathered all of that generation to its fathers] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

And & was also gathered to its fathers

The author is using **gathered to its fathers** to mean that the people of that generation died. This is a mild way of referring to death. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [And ... also passed away] (See: **Euphemism (p.720)**)

who did not know Yahweh and also the deed that he had done for Israel

The author 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: [who did not know Yahweh and also did not know the deed that he had done for Israel] (See: **Ellipsis (p. 715)**)

the deed

Since the author is referring to all of the things that **Yahweh ... had done for Israel**, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **deed** as in 2:7. Alternate translation: [the deeds] (See: **Collective Nouns (p. 689)**)

Judges 2:11

evil

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **evil**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [what was evil] or [things that were evil] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

in the eyes of Yahweh

The author is using the common expression of his culture, **in the eyes of**, to mean “in the judgment of” or “in the opinion of.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [in Yahweh’s judgment] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

the Baals

The word **Baals** is the plural of the name Baal. While Baal was generally the name of one particular false god, the word was also used for various other gods that were often worshiped along with Baal. If using the plural name in your translation would not be clear for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [many false gods] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 2:12

and they went after other gods

The author is speaking as if the Israelites literally **went after** the false gods that they worshiped, that is, as if they walked somewhere following them. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and they served other gods] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and they bowed down to them

As the Introduction to this chapter discusses, bowing down to these gods was a symbolic action that was an act of worship. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [and they worshiped them by bowing down to them] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Judges 2:13

and the Ashtoreths

The word **Ashtoreths** is the plural of the name Ashtoreth. This was a false goddess who was worshiped in many different forms. If using the plural name in your translation would not be clear for your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [many false goddesses] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 2:14

Then the nose of Yahweh burned against Israel

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, the author is using the term **nose** to mean anger, by association with the way that a person who is angry breathes heavily through his nose. Your language and culture may also associate anger with a particular part of the body. If so, you could use an expression involving that part of the body in your translation. You could also use plain language. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh became very angry with Israel] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Then the nose of Yahweh burned against Israel

The author is speaking as if Yahweh's anger literally **burned**, as if it were a fire. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh became furious with Israel] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And he sold them into the hand of their enemies from around

The author is speaking as if Yahweh had literally **sold** the Israelites as slaves to the hostile nations around them. He means that the Israelites became subject to those nations. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And he made them subjects of the enemies that surrounded them] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And he sold them into the hand of their enemies

Here, **hand** represents possession, by association with the way that people may hold something that they own in their hands. It was as if the hostile nations owned the Israelites as their slaves. Alternate translation: [And he made them subject to their enemies] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and they were not able anymore to stand to the face of their enemies

The author is speaking as if the Israelites could literally not **stand** up in the presence of their **enemies**. As the Introduction to Judges discusses, here **face** represents their presence, by association with the way people can see the face of someone who is present. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and they were no longer able to resist their enemies] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 2:15

just as Yahweh had spoken and just as Yahweh had sworn to them

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two expressions connected with **and**. The word **sworn** tells in what way Yahweh **spoke.** Alternate translation: [as Yahweh had said solemnly that he would do] (See: **Hendiadys (p. 736)**)

And it narrowed to them greatly

The author is speaking as if the Israelites were literally brought into a place where they had very little room on either side of them. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And they were in great distress] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 2:16

Then Yahweh raised up judges

The author is speaking as if Yahweh had literally **raised up** these **judges**, that is, as if Yahweh had lifted them up to a high place. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Yahweh provided judges] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 2:17

But even to their judges they did not listen. & to hear the commandments of Yahweh

See how you translated the similar expression in 2:2. Alternate translation: [But they would not even obey their judges ... to obey the commands of Yahweh] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

they whored after other gods

The author is speaking as if the Israelites had literally acted as prostitutes for **other gods**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they betrayed Yahweh by worshiping other gods] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

They turned quickly from the way that their fathers had walked

The author is speaking of how people live as if that were a **way** or path that people **walked** along. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [They quickly stopped living in the manner that their fathers had] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 2:18

For when Yahweh raised up for them judges, & For Yahweh had compassion because of their groaning from the faces of their afflictors and their oppressors

If it would be more natural in your language, you could put the second sentence of this verse at the beginning of the verse, since it gives the reason for what the rest of the verse describes. Within that sentence, you could also put the reason before the result. Alternate translation: [For the people of Israel were groaning because of their afflictors and oppressors. Yahweh had compassion on them, so he raised up judges for them] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Yahweh raised up for them judges

See how you translated the expression **raised up** in 2:16. Alternate translation: [Yahweh provided judges for them] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and he saved them

The pronoun **them** refers to the Israelites. The pronoun **he** could refer either to Yahweh or to the **judge**, although there is not a significant difference in meaning. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh saved the Israelites] or [and that enabled the judge to save the Israelites] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

all of the days of the judge

See how you translated the word **days** in 2:7. Alternate translation: [throughout the lifetime of that judge] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

from the faces of their afflictors and their oppressors

Here, **from the faces of** is a common expression of the culture that means “because of” or “on account of.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [caused by their afflictors and their oppressors] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 2:19

they turned

The author is speaking as if the Israelites had literally been walking behind God but then **turned** away to walk in a different direction from him. He means that they stopped living in the manner in which God wants people to live. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they changed their behavior] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

to walk after other gods

The author is speaking of how people live as if that were a path that people would **walk** along. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [to live as the followers of other gods do] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

They did not drop

The author is speaking as if the Israelites could literally **drop** their wrong actions, that is, have them fall out of their hands onto the ground. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [They did not give up] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

any} of their deeds or {any} of their stubborn ways

The author is speaking of the actions that people do as if those were **ways** or paths that people were walking along. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [any of their deeds or any of their stubborn actions] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

any} of their deeds or {any} of their & ways

The terms **deeds** and **ways** mean similar things. The author 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. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

Judges 2:20

So the nose of Yahweh burned against Israel

See how you translated the same expression in 2:14. Alternate translation: [So Yahweh became furious with Israel] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and they have not listened to my voice

Yahweh is using the word **voice** to represent what he said by using his voice, and he is using the term **listened** to mean by association “obey.” See how you translated the similar expression in 2:17. Alternate translation: [and they have not obeyed what I commanded] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 2:21

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 2:22

whether they will be keeping the way of Yahweh, to walk in them

See how you translated the similar expression with **way** and **walk** in 2:17. Alternate translation: [are they living in the manner that Yahweh wishes, obeying his commandments] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

the way of Yahweh

Yahweh is speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: [my way] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.726)**)

to walk in them

Since the pronoun **them** is plural, it is not a reference back to the **way** of Yahweh. It is probably a reference instead to the commandments of Yahweh, which were mentioned in the corresponding phrase in 2:17. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [to walk in his commandments] or [to obey his commandments] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 2:23

and he did not give them into the hand of Joshua

The author is using **Joshua** to represent the entire army of Israel, which Joshua commanded. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and he did not enable the Israelite soldiers under the command of Joshua to conquer them] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 3

Judges 3 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

- Verses 1–8: The Israelites lived with other nations and worshiped their gods
- Verses 9–11: God sent Othniel to rescue Israel from Aram
- Verses 12–30: God sent Ehud to rescue Israel from Moab
- Verse 31: God sent Shamgar to rescue Israel from the Philistines

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Yahweh allowed other nations to conquer Israel

As 3:5–8 explains, Israel worshiped idols and false gods. Because of this, Yahweh allowed the nations of Aram and Moab to rule over them. In the period of Judges, when Israel sinned, they were often placed under the rule of a foreign power. However, when the people repented, Yahweh sent judges to deliver them. This chapter describes how Yahweh sent Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar to rescue Israel from foreign control. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/falsegod]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/sin]])

The carved images at Gilgal

Biblical scholars are not entirely sure what the “carved images” mentioned in 3:19 were. They could have been some kind of boundary marker. Some interpreters associate them with the twelve large stones that Joshua set up at Gilgal in Joshua 4:20. They seem to have been a recognizable landmark of some kind. Once Ehud and the porters reached them, Ehud knew that the porters were back in Israelite territory and could find their way safely back home from there without him. In your translation, you might refer to these as “carved stones” or, as in the UST, “boundary stones.”

Judges 3:1

Now those nations that Yahweh left for the testing of Israel by them, all who had not known any of the wars of Canaan

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: [Now many of the Israelites had not known any of the wars of Canaan, so Yahweh left some nations for the testing of Israel by them] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Now those nations

The author is introducing background information that will help readers understand what happens next in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Judges 3:2

the sons of Israel

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:4. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

had not known them

This instance of the pronoun **them** refers to the wars against the Canaanites described in the previous verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [had not experienced these wars] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 3:3

the Canaanite and the Sidonian and the Hivite

The author is not referring to a specific **Canaanite**, **Sidonian**, or **Hivite**. He means the members of those people groups in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. Alternate translation: [the Canaanites and Sidonians and Hivites] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

from Mount Baal Hermon

Mount Baal Hermon seems to be another name for the mountain that was also known as Mount Hermon. This is the tallest mountain in Israel. It is at the southern tip of the Lebanon mountain range. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 3:4

whether they would hear

See how you translated the similar expression in 2:2. Alternate translation: [whether they would obey] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

the commandments of Yahweh, which he commanded their fathers

For emphasis, the author 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 another way of showing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [the commandments that Yahweh ordered their fathers to obey] (See: **Poetry (p.802)**)

by the hand of Moses

The author is using the **hand** of Moses to represent Moses himself in the act of giving **the commandments of Yahweh** to Israel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [through Moses] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 3:5

the Canaanite, the Hittite, and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite

See how you translated the similar list of people groups in 3:3. Alternate translation: [the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

Judges 3:6

And they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and they gave their daughters to their sons, and they served their gods

It may be helpful to clarify for your readers the references of the pronouns in this verse. Alternate translation: [And the Israelites took the daughters of these nations for themselves as wives, and the Israelites gave their daughters to the sons of these nations, and the Israelites served the gods of these nations] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 3:7

evil

See how you translated the same expression in 2:11. Alternate translation: [what was evil] or [things that were evil] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

in the eyes of Yahweh

See the discussion of the phrase **in the eyes of** in the Introduction to Judges. See how you translated the same expression in 2:11. Alternate translation: [in Yahweh's judgment] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

the Baals and the Asherahs

See how you translated the similar expression in 2:11. Alternate translation: [many false gods and goddesses] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 3:8

Then the nose of Yahweh burned against Israel

The author is introducing a new event in the story. The ULT indicates this with the word **Then**. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

Then the nose of Yahweh burned against Israel

See how you translated the same expression in 2:14. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh became furious with Israel] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and he sold them into the hand of

See how you translated the same expression in 2:14. Alternate translation: [and he made them subjects of] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Aram Naharaim

The word **Aram Naharaim** is the name of a country. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 3:9

and Yahweh raised up a savior

See how you translated the same expression in 2:16. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh provided a savior] or [and Yahweh provided someone to deliver] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 3:10

And the Spirit of Yahweh was upon him

The author is speaking as if the **Spirit of Yahweh** had physically been **upon** or on top of Othniel. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And the Spirit of Yahweh powerfully influenced him] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And he went out to war

Othniel did not do this by himself. Rather, he led an army of soldiers that did this. The author is speaking of Othniel, one person who was involved in this action, to mean everyone who was involved. Alternate translation: [And he led the army of Israel out to war] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

and Yahweh gave Cushan-Rishathaim, the king of Aram, into his hand

See how you translated the same expression in 1:4. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh gave him the power to defeat Cushan-Rishathaim, the king of Aram] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and Yahweh gave Cushan-Rishathaim, the king of Aram, into his hand

The author is speaking of Cushan-Rishathaim to mean that king and his whole army. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh gave him the power to defeat the army of Cushan-Rishathaim, the king of Aram] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

So his hand was strong against Cushan-Rishathaim

This is a common expression that means that Othniel won the battle against this king because his forces were more powerful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [So he prevailed against Cushan-Rishathaim] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 3:11

And the land rested 40 years

The author is speaking as if the **land** on which the Israelites lived were a living thing that **rested** after a foreign occupier was driven away. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And there were no more wars for 40 years] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

Judges 3:12

evil in the eyes of Yahweh

See the discussion of the phrase **in the eyes of** in the Introduction to Judges. See how you translated the same expression in 2:11 and 3:7. Alternate translation: [what was evil in Yahweh's judgment] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

So Yahweh strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab, against Israel, because they did evil in the eyes of Yahweh

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: [So because the Israelites did evil in his eyes, Yahweh strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab, against them] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

So Yahweh strengthened Eglon, the king of Moab, against Israel

The author is speaking of **Eglon** to mean that king and his army. Alternate translation: [So Yahweh enabled Eglon to build a strong army to attack Israel] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 3:13

And he gathered to him the sons of Ammon and Amalek

Here, **sons** means “descendants.” While the phrase **the sons of Ammon and Amalek** could refer to the entire Ammonite and Amalekite people groups, here the term **sons** may have male descendants, specifically soldiers, in view. Alternate translation: [And he made a military alliance with the Ammonites and Amalekites] or [And he joined forces with the Ammonite and Amalekite armies] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and struck Israel

See the discussion of the term **struck** in the Introduction to Judges. Alternate translation: [and attacked the Israelites] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

the City of Palms

See how you translated this name in 1:16. Alternate translation: [Jericho] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 3:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 3:15

and Yahweh raised up a savior for them

See how you translated the same expression in 2:16. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh provided a savior for them] or [and Yahweh provided someone to deliver them] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Ehud, the son of Gera

The words **Ehud** and **Gera** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

a man impeded in his right hand

The author is speaking as if the Ehud literally had some limitation in the use of his **right hand**. In the context of this culture, the phrase probably indicates that he could use his left hand better than he could use his right hand but that he actually had no restriction in the use of either hand. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [a left-handed man] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And the sons of Israel sent tribute by his hand

The author is using the **hand** of Ehud to represent Ehud himself in the act of bringing **tribute** to Israel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And the sons of Israel sent tribute with Ehud] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 3:16

and two mouths {were} to it

The author is speaking of Ehud's **sword** as if it had been a living thing that had a **mouth** and could eat. This is probably a reference to the way a sword cuts into a person as if it were an animal biting him. Since the author speaks of the sword having **two** mouths, in this context the word **mouths** probably refers to the edges of the sword. Alternate translation: [it was double-edged] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

a cubit {was} its length

The word translated as **cubit** describes the distance from a typical person's elbow to the knuckles of his clenched fist. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express this distance in terms of modern measurements. Alternate translation: [it was about half a meter long] or [it was about eighteen inches long] (See: **Biblical Distance (p.679)**)

Judges 3:17

Now Eglon

The author is introducing background information that will help readers understand what happens next in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Judges 3:18

that he sent away the people

The pronoun **he** refers to Ehud, not Eglon, in both instances in this verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [that Ehud sent away the people] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Now it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

Judges 3:19

But he, he turned back

The author is stating the pronoun **he** separately, even though the verb translated as **he turned back** already includes this meaning. He is doing that because he is contrasting what Ehud did with what the bearers of the tribute did. If a speaker of your language would use an explicit pronoun for the same purpose, you may want to use that construction in your translation. If not, your language may have other ways of showing the meaning here. Alternate translation: [But for his part, he turned back] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

the carved images

See the Introduction to this chapter for a discussion of what these **carved images** might have been and for some suggestions of how to describe them in your translation. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

and he said

The author is leaving some information implicit that he assumes readers will understand. You could state this information explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and he returned to King Eglon. Ehud said to him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

A word of secrecy {is} to me for you

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **secrecy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [I have something secret to tell you] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

And he said, “Hush

“The pronoun **he** refers to Eglon. This could mean: (1) that he wanted silence in his court, and he specifically wanted everyone except him and Ehud to leave the room so that the court would be silent. Alternate translation: [And King Eglon told his servants, “Leave us here alone”]; (2) that he was telling Ehud not to say anything further, since his message was secret, until everyone else left. Alternate translation: [And King Eglon told Ehud, “Keep quiet for a moment”] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 3:20

Then Ehud came to him. Now he was sitting in the upper room of coolness that {was} to him

The author is leaving some information implicit that he assumes readers will understand. You could state this information explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. The word **came** could indicate: (1) that Ehud walked up close to Eglon and stood in front of him. Alternate translation: [Then Ehud approached him. Now he was sitting in his upper room of coolness]; (2) that Ehud came into the **upper room** where Eglon was sitting. If so, this could mean that Ehud actually sent word to Eglon through his servants that he had a message for him, and Eglon summoned Ehud to come into his room where the two of them could speak privately once all the servants had left. Alternate translation: [Then Ehud entered the upper room of coolness in which the king was sitting] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Now he was sitting

The author is introducing background information that will help readers understand what happens next in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

in the upper room of coolness that {was} to him

The phrase **upper room of coolness** describes a room in a palace that was designed to give rulers a place to go to escape the heat of summer, which was intense in this climate. Sometimes these were interior rooms on whose walls the sun did not shine, and sometimes they were rooms in a garden within the palace complex. In this case, it seems to have been a room on the roof that was exposed to currents of air, since the author describes it with the term **upper room**. Your language and culture may have an expression to describe such a room. Alternate translation: [in his summer parlor] or [in his cool roof chamber] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

And he arose

King Eglon **arose** as a symbolic action to show respect for **God** and the message he thought God was sending to him through Ehud. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [And he stood up respectfully] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Judges 3:21

and he thrust it into his belly

The pronoun **he** refers to Ehud, and the pronoun **his** refers to Eglon. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [and Ehud thrust the sword into Eglon's belly] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 3:22

and the fat closed around the handle, for he did not pull the sword from his belly

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: [and since Ehud did not pull the sword from Eglon's belly, the fat closed around the handle] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

and excrement came out

The word translated as **excrement** occurs only here in the Old Testament, so its meaning is not entirely certain. This could mean: (1) that Eglon's bowels discharged from the force and shock of the sword thrust. (See the Introduction to this chapter for a further discussion of this possibility.) Your language may have a way of referring to this discreetly. Alternate translation: [and he soiled himself]; (2) that the point of the sword came out the other side of Eglon's body. Alternate translation: [and the point came out the other side]; (3) that Ehud went out to a chamber within this room before leaving the room itself. Alternate translation: [and he went out to the vestibule] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 3:23

to} the porch

The word translated as **porch** occurs only here in the Old Testament, so its meaning is not entirely certain. Most interpreters understand it to mean a covered entrance area just outside the room Ehud had been in. Your language and culture may have an expression to describe such an area. Alternate translation: [to the vestibule] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 3:24

And he went out, and his servants came

The pronoun **he** refers to Ehud, and the pronoun **his** refers to Eglon. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And Ehud went out, and Eglon's servants came] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

and they looked, and behold, the doors of the upper room {were} bolted

The author is using the term **behold** to indicate that what the servants found when they **looked** was unexpected. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and they discovered that the doors of the upper room were bolted] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

the doors of the upper room {were} bolted

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 bolted the doors of the upper room] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

he is covering his feet

The servants are using the phrase **covering his feet** as a polite way of referring to an activity that is done in private. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [he is going to the bathroom] (See: **Euphemism (p.720)**)

in the chamber of coolness

See how you translated the expression "the upper room of coolness" in 3:20. The word **chamber** here is different from the word "upper chamber" there, but the author is referring to the same room, so you can use the same expression here as you did there. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 3:25

until they felt ashamed

The author implicitly means that the servants **felt ashamed** because they were supposed to stay in the king's presence and remain available to fulfill any request of his. (The author describes these servants in 3:19 as those who were usually "standing around" him.) You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [until they felt they were neglecting their duty] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

the opener

The word translated as **opener** refers to a device that people in this culture used to release the inside bolt of a door from the outside. It was a bar of wood, hooked on one end, that people would pass through a hole in a door in order to catch and lift the bolt inside. If the word **opener** would be unclear and it would be difficult or complicated to explain what it was, you could use a general expression in your translation. Alternate translation: [the key] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 3:26

But Ehud escaped during their delaying

Since Ehud escaping is new information, it may be more natural in your language to present it after the information that readers already have, about Eglon's servants **delaying**. Alternate translation: [Now while they were delaying, Ehud escaped] (See: **Information Structure (p.753)**)

the carved images

See how you translated the same expression in 3:19. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 3:27

that he blew on the shofar

The author means implicitly that Ehud **blew on the shofar** to summon the Israelites to battle. The UST models one way to indicate this explicitly. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

on the shofar

A **shofar** is the horn of a ram (a male sheep) that has been made into a musical instrument. If your readers would not be familiar with this, in your translation, you could use the name of a similar object that your readers would recognize, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: [a loud horn] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

was} to the face of them

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:3. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

וַיְהִ֣י בְּבוֹא֗ וַיִּתְקַ֤ע בַּשּׁוֹפָר֙ בְּהַ֣ר אֶפְרָ֔יִם וַיֵּ֥רְד עִמּ֖ וֹ בְּנֵ֣י־יִשְׂרָאֵ֑ל מִן־הָהָ֣ר וְה֖וּא לִפְנֵיהֶֽם׃
וַיֹּ֤אמֶר אֲלֵהֶם֙ רִדְפ֣ וּ אַחֲרַ֔ י כִּי־נָתַ֥ ן יְהוָ֖ ה אֶת־אֹיְבֵיכֶ֣ ם אֶת־מוֹאָ֑ ב בְּיֶדְכֶ֣ ם וַיֵּרְד֤ וּ אַחֲרָ֙ יו
וַיִּלְכְּד֤ וּ אֶת־מַעְבְּר֙ וֹת הַיַּרְדֵּ֔ן לְמוֹאָ֖ ב וְלֹא־נָתְנ֣ וּ אִ֑ ישׁ לַעֲבֹֽר׃

You could also create a verse bridge and combine verses 27 and 28 so that the background information comes within the flow of the narrative. Alternate translation: [Now it happened at his coming that he blew on the shofar in the hill country of Ephraim. And he said to them, ”Follow after me, for Yahweh has given your enemies, Moab, into your hand.“ Then the sons of Israel went down with him from the hill country, and he was to the face of them. They captured the fords of the Jordan opposite Moab, and they did not allow anyone to cross over] (See: **Verse Bridges (p.850)**)

Judges 3:28

Now he had said to them, “Follow after me, for Yahweh has given your enemies, Moab, into your hand

The author is providing background information that will help readers understand what is happening in the story. In the previous verse, the author described how “the sons of Israel went down with” Ehud “from the hill country.” This sentence explains that they had the courage to do that because Ehud had announced that Yahweh had promised them victory. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

your enemies, & into your hand

The word **your** is plural in these instances because Ehud is addressing the Israelites, so use the plural form in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (Because **your** is plural, it may be more natural in your language to say “hands” rather than **hand**.) (See: **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular (p.730)**)

Moab, & opposite Moab

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, Ehud is using the word **Moab** in its first instance in this verse by association to mean the Moabite army. However, in the second instance, the author is using the word **Moab** to mean the country that has that name. Alternate translation: [the Moabite army ... the territory of Moab] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 3:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 3:30

So Moab was subdued on that day under the hand of Israel

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 the hand of Israel subdued Moab on that day] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

and the land rested 80 years

See how you translated the same expression in 3:11. Alternate translation: [And there were no more wars for 80 years] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

Judges 3:31

After him

The pronoun **him** refers to Ehud. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And after Ehud] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Shamgar, the son of Anath

The words **Shamgar** and **Anath** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

with a goad of the ox

The author is not referring to a specific **ox**. He means oxen in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. Alternate translation: [with a goad for oxen] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

with a goad of the ox

To make their cattle move, farmers in this culture would poke them with a long tool that had a point at one end. This tool was called a **goad**. If your readers would not be familiar with this object, in your translation you could use the name of a similar object that your readers would recognize, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: [with a pole used to urge cattle to move] or [with a pole used to direct cattle] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 4

Judges 4 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

The place of this story in the book

To this point, after giving an introduction to the stories of the judges (1:1–3:6), the author has briefly described the work of three judges: Othniel (3:7–11), Ehud (3:12–30), and Shamgar (3:31). In this chapter, he describes at more length the work of another judge, Deborah, and the man she called and helped to lead an Israelite army, Barak.

The ending of the story

In verses 23 and 24, the author ends the story with a summary of what happened. He presents the information in a special form called a chiasm, in which the first and last parts match and the middle parts match. These parts match: “So on that day God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan” and “until that they destroyed Jabin, the king of Canaan.” These parts also match: “to the face of the sons of Israel” and “For going, the hand of the sons of Israel went and {became} severe against Jabin, the king of Canaan.” You may be able to show this in your translation by using some special formatting. For example: So on that day God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan to the face of the sons of Israel For going, the hand of the sons of Israel went and {became} severe against Jabin, the king of Canaan until that they destroyed Jabin, the king of Canaan.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

How had Yahweh already begun to fight Sisera before the Israelites attacked?

In 4:14, Deborah tells Barak that it is time to attack Sisera’s forces because Yahweh has already begun to fight against them. It is not clear from this chapter entirely what this means. But readers learn in the next chapter that there was a great storm on the day of this battle. Deborah says in her song (in 5:4) that when Yahweh marched out, “dark clouds dripped down water” and “the earth shook” (perhaps a reference to thunder). She speaks in 5:21 of the Kishon River flooding. The historian Josephus writes of this battle that “as soon as the armies were engaged, there arose a prodigious tempest of hail and rain, which drove in the faces of the Canaanites, and occasioned a total rout of them.” With the rain, hail, and flooding, Sisera’s forces were not able to make use of their chariots. Barak was able to lead his troops down from the relative safety of Mount Tabor onto the plain and destroy Sisera’s army and its chariots.

“Yahweh will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman”

When Deborah tells Barak to raise an army to oppose Sisera, he replies, “If you will go with me, then I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go” (4:8). Deborah agrees to go with him, but she also tells him that the credit and honor for killing Sisera will not go to him but to a woman. Interpreters have many different ideas about what this means. One possibility is that Barak was insisting on having visible, tangible assurance of God’s presence and help in the person of Deborah, who was a prophetess. Deborah graciously agreed to accompany Barak and provide this assurance, but at the same time she indicated to him that God’s power was so great that Barak should not have put this condition on his obedience. God would use a woman, who in this culture would not have been a warrior, to kill Sisera. At this time, great honor came from killing an enemy commander, and this honor would not go to Barak but to this woman and ultimately to God, who would arrange the circumstances for it. However, it is not necessary to

resolve the meaning of this exchange in order to translate this passage. You can report the conversation between Deborah and Barak naturally in your translation without adding any interpretation.

Judges 4:1

the sons of Israel

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:4. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

evil in the eyes of Yahweh

See how you translated the same expression in 2:11. Alternate translation: [what was evil in Yahweh's judgment] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

after Ehud died

Since readers already have information about **Ehud**, and since what happened after his death is new information, it may be more natural in your language to put the phrase **after Ehud died** at the beginning of this verse. (See: **Information Structure (p.753)**)

Judges 4:2

And Yahweh sold them into the hand of

See how you translated the same expression in 2:14. Alternate translation: [So Yahweh made them subjects of] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

king of Canaan

Canaan was not a single kingdom; it was an area in which there were many different cities and territories ruled by different kings. The author seems to mean implicitly that Jabin's rule from Hazor extended over a wide part of the region of Canaan. You could state this information explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [a king who ruled over much of Canaan] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

in Hazor. & in Harosheth Hagoyim

The words **Hazor** and **Harosheth Hagoyim** are the names of cities. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

in Harosheth Hagoyim

The name **Harosheth Hagoyim** means "Woodcutting of the Nations." Since there were forests in this area, many interpreters believe that Jabin kept prisoners there from the nations he had conquered and forced them to work cutting down trees. In your translation you could spell this the way it sounds in your language, as the ULT and UST do, or you could use a word or phrase from your language that expresses the meaning of all or part of this name. Alternate translation: [in Harosheth of the Nations] or [in Timberland of the Nations] (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.709)**)

Judges 4:3

for 900 chariots of iron {were} to him

The pronouns **him** and **he** seem to refer to Sisera, since these **chariots** were under his command. Alternate translation: [because Sisera had 900 iron chariots] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

chariots of iron

See how you translated the same expression in 1:19. Alternate translation: [chariots fitted out with iron] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

with might

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **might**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [mightily] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 4:4

Now Deborah, a woman, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, she {was} judging Israel at that time

The author is using the phrase **a woman** to introduce **Deborah** as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. Alternate translation: [Now a certain woman named Deborah was judging Israel at that time. She was a prophetess, and her husband was named Lappidoth] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

Now Deborah, & Lappidoth

The word **Deborah** is the name of a woman, and the word **Lappidoth** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 4:5

was} sitting

In this culture, people in positions of authority such as rulers, teachers, and judges would exercise their authority from a seated position. Deborah **sitting** beneath the tree was therefore a symbolic action that indicated her role as a judge. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [was judging cases] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

and & came up

In a context such as this, your language might say “went” instead of **came**. Alternate translation: [and ... went up] (See: **Go and Come (p.734)**)

for justice

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **justice**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [to have her judge their cases] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 4:6

for Barak, the son of Abinoam

The words **Barak** and **Abinoam** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Has not Yahweh, the God of Israel, commanded, ‘Go and draw out at Mount Tabor, and you shall take with you 10, 000 men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [Has not Yahweh, the God of Israel, commanded you to go and draw out at Mount Tabor and to take with you 10,000 men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Has not Yahweh, the God of Israel, commanded, ‘Go and draw out at Mount Tabor, and you shall take with you 10, 000 men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun

Deborah is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. (While the question continues into the next verse, you may find it helpful to divide it into two sentences.) Alternate translation: [Yahweh, the God of Israel, has commanded, ‘Go and draw out at Mount Tabor, and take with you 10,000 men from the sons of Naphtali and from the sons of Zebulun] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

and draw out

For elegance of expression and to emphasize the certainty of what he is saying, in this verse and the next one Yahweh uses the same verb in two different senses. Here, **draw out** means to recruit men for an army. In the next verse, it refers to how Yahweh will lure Sisera unsuspectingly into a situation where he and his army will be destroyed. Your language may have a verb that can be used in both of these senses. But if trying to use the same word in both places would be unclear, you could express the meaning. Alternate translation: [and recruit] (See: **Poetry (p.802)**)

10, 000 men

Here, **10,000** may be an approximate number or a customary way of saying “very many.” Alternate translation: [a large army of men] (See: **Numbers (p.784)**)

Judges 4:7

and I will draw out to you, & and I will give him into your hand

In this verse, Deborah is continuing to tell Barak what Yahweh has commanded him. If you began translating this in the previous verse so that there was not a quotation within a quotation, you can continue doing that here. Alternate translation: [and he will draw out to you ... and he will give him into your hand] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

and I will draw out to you, to the wadi of Kishon, Sisera, the commander of the army of Jabin, and his chariotry and his multitude, and I will give him into your hand

This is the continuation of a question that Deborah began asking Barak in the previous verse, using the question form for emphasis. If you began to translate it it as a statement or as an exclamation there, you can continue to do that here. Alternate translation: [And I will draw out to you, to the wadi of Kishon, Sisera, the commander of the army of Jabin, and his chariotry and his multitude, and I will give him into your hand!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

and I will draw out to you

As discussed in a note to 4:6, in his command to Barak, Yahweh uses the same verb in two different senses. Here, **draw out** refers to how Yahweh will lure Sisera unsuspectingly into a situation where he and his army will be destroyed. Your language may have a verb that can be used in both verses. But if trying to use the same word in both places would be unclear, you could express the meaning. Alternate translation: [And I will lure to you] (See: **Poetry (p.802)**)

Judges 4:8

If you will go with me, then I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go

Barak is describing a condition in which a second event will take place only if a first event does. Your language may have its own way of expressing such conditions. Alternate translation: [Suppose you go with me. Then I will go. But suppose you do not go with me. Then I will not go] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.698)**)

If you will go with me, then I will go, but if you will not go with me, I will not go

Barak is making parallel statements of his position, first positively and then negatively. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine the phrases. Alternate translation: [I will only go if you go with me] (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

If you will go with me, & go, but if you will not & with me

In a context such as this, your language might say “come” instead of **go**. Alternate translation: [If you will come with me ... but if you will not come with me] (See: **Go and Come (p.734)**)

Judges 4:9

Going, I will go with you

Deborah is repeating forms of the verb **go** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [I will indeed go with you] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

it will not be your honor

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **honor**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [people will not honor you] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

upon the way that you are going

Deborah could be using the term **way** to refer to: (1) Barak's conduct in saying he will only go if Deborah comes with him. Alternate translation: [since you have said that you will only obey Yahweh on this condition]; (2) the military expedition that Barak will be leading. Alternate translation: [for leading this expedition] (See: **Metaphor (p. 774)**)

for Yahweh will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman

See how you translated the similar expression in 2:14. Alternate translation: [for Yahweh will give a woman the opportunity and power to kill Sisera] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Then Deborah arose

Here the expression **arose** means that Deborah took action, specifically to accompany Barak. It does not mean only that she stood up from where she was sitting beneath the palm tree. See the discussion of this usage in the Introduction of Judges. Alternate translation: [Then Deborah got ready] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 4:10

10,000 men

See how you translated the same expression in 4:6. Alternate translation: [a large army of men] (See: **Numbers (p. 784)**)

at his feet

The author is using the **feet** of Barak by association to represent these **men** walking where Barak had just walked. In other words, they were following him, and this means that he was their military commander. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [under his command] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 4:11

Now Heber the Kenite

The author is introducing background information that will help readers understand what happens next in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Now Heber & from Kain, & Hobab, & in Zaanannim

The words **Heber**, **Kain**, and **Hobab** are the names of men, and the word **Zaanannim** is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

from Kain

The author is referring to the people group of the Kenites (described in 1:16) by association with its ancestor **Kain**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [from the other Kenites] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

the father-in-law of Moses

See how you translated the same expression in 1:16. Alternate translation: [the father of Moses' wife] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

And he had pitched his tent

The author is using one thing that Heber did to mean everything that he did to establish his residency in Zaanannim. (The author indicates in 4:17 that Heber's wife Jael had her own tent, so at the very least Heber set up more than one tent.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And he had moved to a place] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 4:12

And they reported to Sisera

Here the author is not using **they** to refer to specific people. Use an expression for this that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And people reported to Sisera] or [And Sisera was told] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 4:13

chariots of iron

See how you translated the same expression in 4:3. Alternate translation: [chariots fitted out with iron] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 4:14

Arise

Deborah is using the expression **Arise** to tell Barak to take action and lead his army against Sisera's army. She is not telling him to get out of bed or stand up from a seated position. Alternate translation: [Get going] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Yahweh has given Sisera into your hand

To emphasize the certainty of Barak winning this battle, Deborah is speaking as if Yahweh has already given Barak victory over Sisera. If it would be clearer in your language, you could use the future tense in your translation. Alternate translation: [Yahweh is going to give Sisera into your hand] or [Yahweh is going to give you the power to conquer Sisera] (See: **Predictive Past (p.813)**)

Has not Yahweh gone out to the face of you

Deborah is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [Yahweh has already gone out ahead of you!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

to the face of you

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:3. Alternate translation: [ahead of you] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 4:15

And Yahweh panicked Sisera and all of the chariotry and all of the army, to the mouth of the sword to the face of Barak

The author 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 Yahweh panicked Sisera and all of the chariotry and all of the army, with the result that Barak and his army were able to attack them and kill large numbers of them] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

to the mouth of the sword

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges. Alternate translation: [since there was wholesale slaughter] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and fled on his feet

It might seem that this expression contains extra information that your language would not naturally express. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [and ran away] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 4:16

But Barak

The author is using **Barak**, the commander of the Israelite army, to mean the entire army. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [But Barak and the soldiers he commanded] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

and all of the army of Sisera fell by the mouth of the sword. Not even one remained

The phrases **all of the army ... fell** and **Not even one remained** mean the same thing. For emphasis, the author is saying it first positively and then negatively. If a speaker of your language would not use repetition like this, in your translation you can convey the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [and every single one of Sisera's soldiers fell by the mouth of the sword] (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

and & fell

The author is using the word **fell** to mean "died," by association with the way that people fall down when they die. Alternate translation: [and ... died] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

by the mouth of the sword

See how you translated the similar expression in the previous verse. (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

Judges 4:17

fled on his feet

See how you translated the same expression in 4:15. Alternate translation: [ran away] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Jael

The word **Jael** is the name of a woman. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

for {there was} peace between Jabin, king of Hazor, and the house of Heber the Kenite

Here the author is providing background information to help readers understand what happens next in the story. Since there was **peace between** Jabin and Heber, Sisera felt that he could safely go to Heber's compound and find protection there. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

and the house of Heber the Kenite

The author is using the term **house** to mean an entire household living together. Alternate translation: [and the extended family of Heber the Kenite] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 4:18

Turn aside

This is an imperative, but it communicates a polite request rather than a command. In your translation, use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. Alternate translation: [Please turn aside] (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.750)**)

Turn aside

Jael means implicitly that Sisera does not need to continue running away from the Israelites. He can **Turn aside** from the road he is on and come into her tent. Alternate translation: [Come in here] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

with a blanket

The word translated as **blanket** occurs only here in the Old Testament, so its meaning is not entirely certain. The word could refer to: (1) something that people use to keep warm in bed. Alternate translation: [with a coverlet]; (2) something that people put on the floor for warmth and decorative purposes. Alternate translation: [with a carpet]; (3) an outer garment. Alternate translation: [with a cloak] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 4:19

Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty

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. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

a skin of milk

The word translated as **skin** refers to a bag made out of animal skin that was used for holding liquids. If your readers would not be familiar with this object, in your translation you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: [a leather bag of milk] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 4:20

and asks you and says, ‘Is there anyone here?’ then you shall say ‘No one

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [and asks you whether there is anyone here, then tell him that there is not] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

and asks you and says

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: [asks you] or [says to you] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 4:21

a peg of the tent, & the hammer

The phrase **a peg of the tent** describes a pointed piece of wood or metal that people drive into the ground to hold down a corner of a tent. A **hammer** in this context refers to a heavy tool made of wood that people use to hit objects with force, for example, in order to drive a tent peg into the ground. If your readers would not be familiar with these objects, in your translation you could use the name of similar things that your readers would recognize, or you could use general expressions. Alternate translation: [a spike ... a mallet] or [a sharp piece of wood ... a heavy tool] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

for he was sleeping deeply and was weary

Here the author is providing background information to help readers understand what is happening in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. It may be helpful to put this information at the beginning of the verse, as the UST does. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

for he was sleeping deeply and was weary

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [since he was so weary that he had fallen fast asleep] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Judges 4:22

And behold

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 1:2. Alternate translation: [Now listen] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and Jael came out to meet him

In a context such as this, your language might say “went” instead of **came**. Alternate translation: [and Jael went out to meet him] (See: **Go and Come (p.734)**)

Sisera had fallen dead

See how you translated the similar expression in 3:25. Alternate translation: [and he found Sisera dead] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 4:23

on that day

While the battle against Sisera did take place on a specific day, the author may be using the term **day** to refer generally to the whole time when the Israelites gathered an army to oppose the rule of Jabin and fought against his forces. Alternate translation: [at that time] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

So on that day God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan, to the face of the sons of Israel

In this verse and the next one, the author is ending this story of Deborah and Barak with a summary of what happened. Your language may have its own way of presenting such a summary at the end of a story. (See: **End of Story (p.718)**)

So & God subdued Jabin, the king of Canaan, to the face of the sons of Israel

In one sense, this battle was a direct contest between the power of **God** and the power of **Jabin.** (The next chapter describes how God sent a hailstorm to thwart Sisera's chariots.) In another sense, the author is speaking of **God** to represent all of the forces on the side of **Israel**, including God, and he is using **Jabin** to represent that king and his army. The UST models one way to represent this second sense. (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 4:24

For going, the hand of the sons of Israel went and {became} severe

The author is repeating forms of the verb “go”—**going** and **went**—in order to intensify the idea that this word expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [For the hand of the sons of Israel became more and more severe] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

Jabin, the king of Canaan, & Jabin, the king of Canaan

The author is repeating this phrase for emphasis. If it would not be natural in your language to do that, you may have another way of expressing the emphasis. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

they destroyed Jabin

The author is using the name **Jabin** by association to mean the army of this king, which the Israelites **destroyed**. (The book does not say specifically that the Israelites killed Jabin himself.) Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [they broke the power of Jabin] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 5

Judges 5 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

In this chapter, the author presents a song that Deborah and Barak sang to celebrate the victory that Yahweh enabled them to win over Sisera.

Some translations prefer to set apart quotations, prayers, and songs with special formatting. The ULT and many other English translations set the lines of chapter 5, which is a song, farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

How were the Israelites able to fight against Sisera if they had no weapons?

In 5:8, this song describes how Jabin's occupying soldiers took away the weapons that the Israelites had. So how were the Israelites able to fight a battle against Sisera's forces? As a note to 4:2 explains, the name Harosheth Hagoyim may describe a place where Jabin forced captive peoples to cut wood for him. It has been suggested that the conscripted Israelites who joined Barak's army took their axes and hatchets with them and used them as weapons.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Hebrew poetry

Except for a brief introduction and conclusion, this chapter is poetry that consists of pairs of phrases that repeat the same meaning. The second phrase advances the idea of the first by affirming, contrasting, or supplementing it in different words. (Sometimes there is a third line with similar meaning.) Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both (or all three) phrases in your translation. It may be clearer in your language to connect the phrases with a word other than **and** in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the idea of the first one, not saying something different. For example, in 5:2 you might say, "For the loosening of long hair in Israel, yes, for the volunteering of the people." (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

Deborah and Barak singing this song together

While the author says in 5:1 that both "Deborah and Barak" sang this song, the first-person verbs and pronouns in it are singular. It was common for the Israelites to sing in responsive parts, so it may be that Deborah and Barak each sang parts of this song individually, responding to one another. For example, it seems probable that in 5:12 Barak sang "awake, Deborah" and Deborah responded "Arise, Barak."

Hebrew does not mark first-person pronouns or verbs for gender, so it is not clear in many cases which of them sang which parts, although in some cases the text does give us a fair idea. For the sake of languages that do mark first-person singular pronouns or verbs for gender, here are some suggestions as to who might be singing when the song says "I" or "my." This is, however, largely a matter of interpretation, so use your own best judgment in your translation. Since Deborah and Barak are, in a sense, speaking for each other, another alternative would be to use

plural first-person pronouns. (See: [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/writing-pronouns]] and [[rc:///*ta/man/translate/figs-youcrowd]])

- In 5:3, you could consider using masculine forms for "I ... {even} I, let me sing" and feminine forms for "I will make music." The verb translated as "make music" refers to singing with an instrumental accompaniment. Deborah was a prophetess, and the Old Testament prophets appear to have sung at least some of their prophecies to instrumental accompaniment. (See, for example, Ezekiel 33:32.) So it is perhaps more likely that Deborah sang "I will make music" and Barak sang "let me sing."
- Deborah is speaking of herself as "I" in 5:7, so it would be appropriate to use feminine forms there.
- It has been suggested that in 5:9, it would be more appropriate for Deborah to thank the leaders, who would have included Barak, and for Barak to thank those who volunteered in response to his summons. So you may wish to mark "My" as feminine.
- Barak is probably referring to himself as "me" in 5:13, since he was the one who led the Israelite army "against the warriors" of Sisera.
- Barak seems to be speaking in 5:15, "my commanders in Issachar were with Deborah," because otherwise Deborah would be speaking of herself in the third person, which she does not seem to do in this song.
- It has been suggested that in 5:21, Barak may have described the Kishon River flooding, since he saw this first-hand in the battle, and then said, "March on, my soul, in strength," recalling how the Israelite soldiers pursued the attack against Sisera vigorously when they saw how the flooding had put them and their chariots at a disadvantage.

A different setting for part of the song

There is an apparent change of setting in 5:10–11, from the original performance of the song at a victory celebration to its repeated recitation at places where travelers stopped along the road for water. In this part of the song, Deborah and Barak are not addressing people who are not present as if they could hear them. That is a poetic device that writers and speakers in the Bible sometimes use, but it does not occur here. Rather, verses 10 and 11 of the song reflect its later use at "watering places" to commemorate the victory over Sisera and Jabin. So translate verse 10 as a direct address to people who are present.

Judges 5:1

on that day

As in 4:23, here the word **day** may refer not to a single day but to a more general time. The author may not mean that Deborah and Barak sang this song on the actual day on which the Israelites defeated the forces of King Jabin, but rather during that general time. Alternate translation: [at the time when the Israelites defeated the forces of King Jabin] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

So Deborah and Barak, the son of Abinoam, sang on that day, saying

The author is using the term **saying** to introduce a direct quotation of the song that Deborah and Barak **sang**. In your translation, use a natural way of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: [So Deborah and Barak, the son of Abinoam, sang the following song on that day] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.820)**)

Judges 5:2

For the loosening of long hair in Israel, for the volunteering of the people

This is the beginning of the song that Deborah and Barak sang. You may wish to indicate this with an opening first-level quotation mark or with some other punctuation or convention that your language uses to indicate the start of a first-level quotation. You may also be able to use special formatting to set off the song as poetry, as the ULT does. (See: **Quote Markings (p.822)**)

For the loosening of long hair in Israel, for the volunteering of the people

These two phrases mean similar things. See the Introduction to this chapter for a discussion of how to translate such similar phrases throughout this song. (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

For the loosening of long hair in Israel

While scholars disagree about how to translate and understand this phrase, it seems to be describing the practice of taking a vow not to cut one's hair until a certain objective is achieved, in this case, the defeat of Sisera's army. Growing long hair was thus a symbolic action that expressed the determination to achieve this objective. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [For the Israelites who vowed to defeat Sisera's army] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

For the loosening of long hair in Israel

For emphasis and poetic effect, Deborah and Barak are using a construction in which a verb and its object come from the same root. That is, the word translated as **long hair** describes hair that is flowing freely or loosely, and the word translated as **loosening** describes not braiding that hair or binding it with a turban. Your language may have terms available that will allow you to use the same construction in your translation to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis and poetic effect, if you do not express the meaning in plain language. Alternate translation: [For freely flowing hair in Israel] (See: **Poetry (p.802)**)

for the volunteering of the people

Deborah and Barak are referring implicitly to people **volunteering** to fight against Israel's enemies. You could state this information explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [for the people who volunteered to fight] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

bless

The imperative verb **bless** is plural here because Deborah and Barak are addressing an audience of many people, so use the plural form in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

Judges 5:3

Listen, kings! Give ear, rulers

Deborah and Barak are speaking to two groups that they know cannot hear them. They are doing this to show in a strong way how they feel about the story they are telling in their song. They feel that it is worth the attention of the most important people in the world. They are actually speaking to all the people who can hear them or who will hear them. (5:10–11 indicates that this includes people from throughout Israelite society.) If your readers might not understand what Deborah and Barak are doing, you could translate their words as if they were speaking directly to people who were present. Alternate translation: [This story deserves to be heard by kings and rulers!] (See: **Apostrophe (p.670)**)

I, to Yahweh, {even} I, may I sing. I will make music

If your language marks first-person singular pronouns or verbs for gender, see the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter for a suggestion of how to mark the instances of **I** here. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 815)**)

may I sing

The speaker here is not asking permission. He is using a particular verb tense to encourage himself to do something. If your language does not use this type of verb, in your translation you can use an equivalent type. Alternate translation: [I certainly should sing] (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.764)**)

Judges 5:4

Yahweh, at your going forth from Seir, at your marching from the field of Edom

The song is speaking as if Yahweh had literally traveled from or across the land of **Seir**, that is, **Edom**, in order to lead the Israelites into battle against Sisera. This could mean: (1) that the song is envisioning Mount Sinai as Yahweh's dwelling place on earth and describing the route that Yahweh would have taken from there to the battlefield. Alternate translation: [Yahweh, when you came across Seir to fight against Sisera, when you marched across the fields of Edom]; (2) that the song is referring to the time when the Israelites left Edom to start conquering the people in Canaan and speaking of Yahweh as if he had been a warrior leading the Israelite army at that time. Alternate translation: [Yahweh, it was just like the time when you first led our armies into Canaan from Seir. It was as if you marched ahead of us across the fields of Edom] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

from the field of Edom

The song is not referring to a specific **field** in **Edom**. It means the cultivated land in Edom in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. Alternate translation: [from the fields of Edom] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

the earth shook, the heavens also dripped, the dark clouds also dripped water

The song seems to be referring implicitly to the great storm that rendered Sisera's chariots useless for the battle. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the earth trembled from the thunder and there was a heavy downpour] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 5:5

The mountains flowed

The song is speaking as if the **mountains** above the battlefield had literally **flowed** down onto it. This seems to be a reference to the way the downpour made the mountain streams overflow. (Ultimately, they fed into the Kishon River, and it flooded the battlefield. See 5:21.) This might also be an allusion to the way that the overflowing streams would have carried dirt, branches, rocks, etc., down from the mountains, as if the mountains themselves were coming down onto the plain. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The mountain streams overflowed] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

this {is} Sinai from the face of Yahweh

The song is saying that what happened to the mountains above the battlefield was just like what happened when Yahweh appeared to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. When he did, according to Exodus 19:16–18, there was also a thunderstorm and the mountain shook. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [just as Mount Sinai trembled when Yahweh appeared there in a storm] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 5:6

In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, in the days of Jael

The song is speaking of two time periods in order to mean the time in between them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [Between the time when Shamgar son of Anath defeated the Philistines and the time when Jael killed Sisera] (See: **Merism (p.772)**)

roads ceased

The song is speaking as if the **roads** in Israel had literally **ceased** to exist. It means that people stopped using the main roads because it had become too dangerous to travel on them. Jabin's forces were apparently occupying Israel, and his soldiers would plunder the goods that anyone was transporting. (This means that, in a sense, the roads literally did cease to exist, since they were dirt roads and grass would have grown back over them. One translation option would be to say this and let readers realize the implications.) Alternate translation: [people stopped using the main roads] or [grass grew back over the roads] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and walkers of paths walked crooked roads

The song means implicitly that because people needed to stay off the main roads for safety, they took back roads that wound through the countryside. You could indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and travelers had to take roundabout back routes] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 5:7

The peasantry ceased in Israel, they ceased, until when I, Deborah, arose, when I arose, a mother in Israel

Deborah is repeating the verbs **ceased** and **arose** in order to intensify the ideas that they express. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [The peasantry completely ceased in Israel until when I, Deborah, arose triumphantly as a mother in Israel] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

The peasantry ceased in Israel, they ceased

The song is speaking as if the rural population of Israel had literally **ceased** to exist. The meaning is that no one was living in the countryside anymore because the rural people hid in the mountains or moved into fortified cities for safety. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Everyone had to move from the countryside into the cities where it was safer] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

in Israel, & in Israel

If it would be more natural in your language, you could use another term to refer to **Israel** in the second instance, rather than repeating the name. Alternate translation: [in Israel ... there] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 815)**)

until when I, Deborah, arose, when I arose, a mother in Israel

Deborah is using the expression **arose** to mean that she took on a particular role. She is not referring to getting up from sitting beneath her palm tree to accompany Barak. The role she is describing included settling the Israelites' disputes there. Alternate translation: [but then I, Deborah, became a mother in Israel] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

when I, Deborah, arose, when I arose, a mother in Israel

Deborah is speaking of herself as if she had literally become the **mother** of the Israelites. She means that she became a leader who cared for the Israelites the way a mother takes care of her children. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning as a comparison. Alternate translation: [when I, Deborah, became a leader who took care of the Israelites the way a mother takes care of her children] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 5:8

He chose new gods

The pronoun **He** refers back to “Israel” in the previous verse, meaning the people of Israel. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [The people of Israel chose new gods] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

then fighting {was} {at} the gates

The song is using one part of cities, their **gates**, to mean entire cities. The gates are chosen to represent the cities because that is where enemies would attack to try to get into the city and conquer it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [then enemy armies besieged the cities] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

was a shield seen, or a spear, among 40,000 in Israel

The song is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [a shield or spear was not seen among 40,000 in Israel!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

was a shield seen, or a spear, among 40,000 in Israel

The song is using the number **40,000** as a customary way of saying “very many.” Alternate translation: [one could hardly find a single shield or spear among a large number of Israelites] (See: **Numbers (p.784)**)

was a shield seen, or a spear

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [did anyone see a shield or a spear] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

was a shield seen, or a spear

The song is using the fact that no shield or spear could be **seen** by association to mean that no Israelites had these weapons. (Jabin’s occupying forces has apparently confiscated all of the weapons that the Israelites had.) Alternate translation: [was there a single shield or spear] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

was a shield seen, or a spear

The author is using two weapons, a **shield** and a **spear**, to mean weapons of all kinds. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [were there any weapons] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 5:9

My heart is to the commanders of Israel

In this culture, people regarded the **heart** as the location of human feelings. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I am so happy about what the commanders of Israel did] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Bless

As in 5:2, the imperative verb **bless** is plural here, so use the plural form in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

Judges 5:10

Riders of white donkeys, sitters on carpet, walkers on the road

See the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter of the apparent change of setting in 5:10–11, from the original performance of the song at a victory celebration to its repeated recitation at places where travelers stopped along the road for water. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Riders of white donkeys, sitters on carpet, walkers on the road

The song is speaking of two kinds of people, rich and poor, in order to mean all kinds of people. (Wealthier people would have animals to ride and carpet to sit on as they traveled; poorer people would walk on foot.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [All of you who pass by this place] (See: **Merism (p.772)**)

carpet

The word translated as **carpet** describes something that people would put on the back of a riding animal to make the rider more comfortable. If your readers would not be familiar with such an object, you could use a general expression in your translation. Alternate translation: [saddle blankets] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 5:11

From the voice of the singers

The song is using the **voice** of these **singers** to represent the song they are singing with their voices. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [From the song of the singers] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

From the voice of the singers

Since the song is referring to a group of people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **voice**. Alternate translation: [From the voices of the singers] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

the righteous acts of Yahweh, the righteous acts of his peasantry in Israel

The song is using the term **righteous** to describe the victory that **Yahweh** and his **peasantry** (the volunteer soldiers) won over Sisera. This is by association with the fact that it was wrong for Jabin to oppress the Israelites, and so by defeating him, the victors restored a situation that was right or **righteous**. Alternate translation: [what Yahweh and his peasantry in Israel did to restore a right situation] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

went down to the gates

The song is using one part of cities, their **gates**, to mean entire cities. See how you translated the same expression in 5:8. Alternate translation: [returned to live in the cities that their enemies had conquered] (See: **Synecdoche (p. 841)**)

Judges 5:12

Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, speak a song

The song is addressing Deborah as if she were literally asleep and needed to wake up. (Baruk may be singing this part; see the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter.) This is actually a call for Deborah to apply vitality and creativity to the task of celebrating Yahweh's victory through this song. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [Come on, Deborah, sing in a lively way!] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, speak a song

The song is repeating the word **awake** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [You certainly must not be drowsy as you sing, Deborah!] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

speak a song

This does not mean that Deborah should stop singing and only speak the words of the song. It is actually play on words in Hebrew: the word translated as **speak** has the same three root letters as Deborah's name, D-B-R. Your language may have an expression that you could use in your translation to bring out the meaning here. Alternate translation: [make the song your own] (See: **Poetry (p.802)**)

Arise

The expression **Arise** does not mean that Barak should get out of bed or stand up from a seated position. Rather, it means that Barak should take action. Deborah could be the one singing this line (see the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter), and it could be intentionally reminiscent of 4:14, where she used the same expression to tell him that it was time to attack Sisera. See how you translated the expression there. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and take captive your captivity

For emphasis, the song 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 another way of showing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [and lead away all of your prisoners] (See: **Poetry (p.802)**)

and take captive your captivity

The song is using this possessive form to speak to Barak about the group of people that he and his army have taken prisoner. It is not saying that Barak himself is in **captivity**. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [and lead away all the prisoners you have captured] (See: **Possession (p.809)**)

and take captive your captivity

The song is leaving some information implicit that listeners are expected to understand. It is possible that the original occasion of this song was a victory celebration through which captured enemy soldiers were paraded in order to dramatize the victory. Barak, as the army commander, would have led this procession. You could suggest

this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and parade the captured enemy soldiers in a victory procession] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 5:13

the remnant came down to the nobles, the people of Yahweh came down to me

While the expression **came down** in both instances is probably a literal reference to travel down from higher elevations to a plain, the implicit meaning is that the **remnant** and **people** were gathering on a level place as troops for battle under the command of the **nobles** and Barak. You could indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the remnant gathered to the nobles, the people of Yahweh gathered to me] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

the remnant came down to the nobles

The phrase translated as **to the nobles** could also be a possessive form and mean “of the nobles.” There would not be a significant difference in meaning. Alternate translation: [the remnant of the nobles came down] (See: **Possession (p.809)**)

to me

The pronoun **me** probably refers to Barak, since he was the one who led the Israelite army **against the warriors** of Sisera. Even if your language does not need to mark first-person pronouns for gender, it may be helpful to clarify the reference for your readers. Otherwise, they might take it to be Deborah, since she clearly spoke in the first person in 5:7 and probably did in 5:9 as well. Alternate translation, as in the UST: [to me, Barak] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 5:14

From Ephraim, their root {is} in Amalek; after you, Benjamin, with your peoples; & and from Zebulun, the ones holding the scepter of a scribe

In these phrases, the song 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: [Some from Ephraim, whose root is in Amalek, came down; they came after you, Benjamin, with your peoples ... and from Zebulun, the ones holding onto the scepter of a scribe also came down] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

From Ephraim, their root {is} in Amalek

The song is speaking as if the people of the tribe of Ephraim were literally a plant whose **root** was in the territory that formerly belonged to the Amalek people group. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [People from the tribe of Ephraim, which defeated the Amalekites and took their territory] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

after you, Benjamin, with your peoples

Here the song could be speaking to a group of people who are not there to hear it, the people of the tribe of **Benjamin**, in order to express strong approval of the way the soldiers from that tribe came and fought for Israel. The song would actually be speaking to the people who could hear it, initially the soldiers and others who gathered for the victory celebration at which it was first performed. However, some people from the tribe of Benjamin probably were present at the celebration, so the direct address with **you** and **your** could be literal. On the other hand, as 5:9–10 shows, this song was later sung in other contexts where people from Benjamin were not necessarily present. So it may be clearer in some languages to translate this without using second-person pronouns and to express the emphasis in some other way. Alternate translation: [they followed the brave soldiers from the tribe of Benjamin] (See: **Apostrophe (p.670)**)

from Machir, commanders came down

The song is using these **commanders** to refer to them and the troops they commanded. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the military leaders from Machir brought their soldiers] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

from Machir

The word **Machir** is the name of a man, the son of Manasseh. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

from Machir

The name **Machir** could mean: (1) the descendants of Machir, who formed one part of the tribe of Manasseh. Alternate translation: [from the clan of Machir]; (2) by association, the tribe of Manasseh. Alternate translation: [from the tribe of Manasseh] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and from Zebulun, the ones holding the scepter of a scribe

The military leaders of the tribe of **Zebulun** each carried a **scepter** as a symbolic action to indicate their rank and position. Each leader is called a **scribe** because one of his duties was to record the names of soldiers who enlisted

and keep a total of the number of soldiers in the army. But the focus here is not on that duty but on the fact that these were military leaders, like the **commanders** mentioned in the previous phrase. Alternate translation: [and the military commanders of the tribe of Zebulun also brought their soldiers] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Judges 5:15

And my commanders in Issachar {were} with Deborah

Here again the song is using part of an army, its **commanders**, to mean all of the army. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And the soldiers and officers I commanded who were from Issachar also supported Deborah] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

and {as} Issachar, so Barak

This expression means that the first person or group mentioned was willing to do whatever the second person mentioned wanted to do. (See, for example, 1 Kings 22:4.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and the soldiers from Issachar were willing to do whatever Barak ordered] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

into a valley he was sent at his feet

This could mean: (1) that the pronoun **he** refers to Issachar, that is, the soldiers from the tribe of Issachar, and the pronoun **his** refers to Barak. In that case, the phrase **at his feet** would mean the same thing as in 4:10. Alternate translation: [those soldiers were sent into a valley under Barak's command]; (2) that both the pronoun **he** and the pronoun **his** refer to Barak. In that case, the last phrase would be translated "on his feet," and it would be a reference to the courage of Barak and his soldiers, who fought against chariots on foot. Alternate translation: [he was sent into a valley to fight against chariots on foot] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

into a valley he was sent at his feet

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. While it was Deborah who told Barak in 4:14 to go down and attack Sisera, she did this as a prophetess speaking for Yahweh, so it would be appropriate to describe Yahweh as the one who **sent**. Alternate translation: [Yahweh sent these soldiers into a valley under Barak's command] or [Yahweh sent Barak into a valley to fight against chariots on foot] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Among the divisions of Reuben

The word translated as **divisions** is a rare word whose meaning is not entirely clear in this context. It could mean: (1) divisions of the people of the tribe of Reuben. Alternate translation: [Among the clans of Reuben]; (2) divisions of the territory of the tribe of Reuben. Alternate translation: [Throughout the districts of Reuben] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

great {were} the searchings of the heart

Here the **heart** represents the thoughts and intentions. By using the word translated as **searchings**, the song is speaking as if the people of Reuben needed to look around inside their hearts to find out what they should do. That is also a rare word whose meaning is not entirely clear in this context. This could mean: (1) that the people of Reuben could not decide whether to help fight. Your language may have a comparable expression for this meaning that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [people had second thoughts about whether to fight]; (2) that the people of Reuben publicly expressed a resolve to help fight Sisera but, as the next verse shows, they did not follow through. Alternate translation: [great were the promises to help] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 5:16

Why did you sit among the sheepfolds? To hear the piping for the flocks

The song is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You should not have stayed among the sheepfolds, as if it was more important to listen to the piping for the flocks!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Why did you sit among the sheepfolds? To hear the piping for the flocks

The song is speaking to someone who is not present. It is doing this to express a strong feeling about that person to the people who are present. If a speaker of your language would not address someone who was not present, you could translate this as if the song were directly addressing those who are present. Alternate translation: [Reuben should not have stayed among the sheepfolds, as if it were more important to listen to the piping for the flocks] (See: **Apostrophe (p.670)**)

Why did you sit among the sheepfolds

The word **you** is singular here because the song is addressing this tribe as if it were a single person, its ancestor Reuben. It may be more natural in some languages to use a plural form of "you," since a group of people is actually being addressed. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

To hear the piping for the flocks

The song is implicitly making a comparison that it expects listeners to recognize. When Barak summoned the Israelites in 4:10, it is likely that he blew a shofar (ram's horn), as Ehud did in 3:27. The song is suggesting that the men of Reuben so much enjoyed listening to shepherds play their pipes to summon their flocks that they did not pay attention to the war trumpet. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Was it because you would rather listen to shepherd's pipes than respond to the call of the war trumpet?] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

As for the divisions of Reuben, great {were} the searchings of the heart

See how you translated the similar expression in the previous verse. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 5:17

Gilead

The song is using the name **Gilead** by association to mean the soldiers from the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, which settled in the region of Gilead on the east side of the Jordan River. Alternate translation: [The soldiers of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and Dan, why did he sojourn {on} ships

The song is using the present tense to describe habitual action. During the battle against Sisera, the people of the tribe of Dan continued to do what they usually did. Their territory included the harbor of Joppa, and so they were devoted to the pursuits of fishing and maritime trading. But since the song is referring specifically to what the people of Dan did on a specific occasion, you could use the past tense in your translation. Alternate translation: [and Dan, why did he sojourn on ships] (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.764)**)

and Dan, why did he sojourn {on} ships

The song is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [and Dan should not have sojourned on ships!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 5:18

Zebulun {was} a people reproaching its soul unto death

Since the song is referring to a group of people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **soul**. Alternate translation: [The people of Zebulun were reproaching their souls unto death] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

Zebulun {was} a people reproaching its soul unto death

The song is speaking as if the people of the tribe of Zebulun had literally been **reproaching** their souls during the battle, that is, as if they had been taunting or shaming them for wanting to stay alive. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The people of Zebulun told themselves not to be afraid to die] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

also Naphtali on the heights of the field

The song 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 the people of Naphtali were also not afraid to die on the heights on the battlefield] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 5:19

Kings came, they fought; then the kings of Canaan fought

Chapter 4 describes only Jabin oppressing the Israelites and only his army attacking Barak and his forces. However, it also describes Jabin as the “king of Canaan” (4:2), suggesting that other Canaanite kings were his subjects or allies. The song may be referring to such kings implicitly here. Alternate translation: [Then the armies of Jabin and his Canaanite allies came and fought] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Kings came, & the kings of Canaan

The song is using the term **kings** to refer to them and their armies. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Kings came with their armies ... the armies of the kings of Canaan] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

they fought; & the kings of Canaan fought

The song is leaving some information implicit that it assumes readers will understand. The meaning is not that these kings **fought** with each other, but that they fought against the Israelites. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [they fought against us Israelites ... the kings of Canaan fought against us] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

at Taanach, & Megiddo

See how you translated the names of the cities of **Taanach** and **Megiddo** in 1:27. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

the waters of Megiddo

Here the song is referring to the Kishon River as **the waters of Megiddo** by association with the fact that the river flows through the plain of Megiddo, also known as the valley of Jezreel, where the battle against Sisera was fought. You could use the name Kishon River here if that would help your readers to recognize that the song is describing the same **waters** as in 5:21. Alternate translation: [the Kishon River] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Plunder of silver they did not take

The song is using **silver**, one thing that armies might take as **plunder**, to mean plunder of all kinds. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [But they did not take any plunder] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Plunder of silver they did not take

The song is using taking plunder to mean winning the battle, by association with the way that victorious armies take plunder. Alternate translation: [But they did not win the battle] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 5:20

From the heavens the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera

The song is speaking of the **stars** as if they were living things that could have **fought against Sisera**. It is using the stars to represent the forces of nature, particularly those in the sky, and celebrating the way Yahweh used those forces to defeat Sisera. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Yahweh used the forces of nature to defeat Sisera; he sent a great storm from the sky] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

Judges 5:21

swept them away

The pronoun **them** refers to the soldiers in Sisera's army. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [swept away Sisera's soldiers] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

the wadi of antiquity

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **antiquity**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [that ancient wadi] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

the wadi of antiquity

The implicit idea behind this phrase may be that the Kishon is a natural river, part of the original creation, rather than a manmade canal or irrigation channel. Therefore, like the storm, it was a natural force that Yahweh used to defeat Sisera. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [a river that God created] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

March on, my soul, {in} strength

The singer, who is probably Barak at this point (see the Introduction to this chapter), is using one part of himself, his **soul**, to mean all of himself. He is putting himself back in the time of the battle and encouraging himself to fight vigorously since Yahweh is already defeating Sisera with natural forces. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly, and you could express it from the time perspective of the victory celebration, that is, as a past event, as in the first sentence of the verse. Alternate translation: [When I saw this, it encouraged me to fight vigorously] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 5:22

Then the hooves of a horse beat, from the galloping, the galloping of his mighty {ones

The pronoun **his** refers to Sisera. This is a description of the sound of Sisera's horses fleeing from the battle. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [Then there was the sound of horses' hooves beating, as Sisera's mighty steeds galloped away from the battlefield] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 815)**)

the hooves of a horse beat

Since the song is referring to all of Sisera's horses, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **horse**. Alternate translation: [the hooves of horses beat] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

from the galloping, the galloping of his mighty {ones

The author is repeating the verb **galloping** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses and perhaps to imitate the repetitive sound of horses' hooves beating against the ground. If your language can repeat words for intensification and poetic effect, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [as Sisera's mighty steeds galloped wildly away] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

his mighty {ones

The song is using the adjective **mighty** as a noun to mean a horse that has the characteristic of being mighty. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this adjective with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [his mighty steeds] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.782)**)

Judges 5:23

Curse Meroz!’ said the angel of Yahweh. Cursing, you shall curse the dwellers of it, because they did not come to the aid of Yahweh, to the aid of Yahweh against the warriors

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [The angel of Yahweh said that we must certainly curse the people who lived in Meroz, because they did not come to the aid of Yahweh against the warriors] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Meroz

The word **Meroz** is the name of a town. It was probably along the route that Sisera’s army took when fleeing from the battlefield, and the people of the town could have blocked their way so that the Israelites could have kept many more of the enemy soldiers from escaping. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

the angel of Yahweh

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the same phrase in 2:1. Translate it here as you do in other parts of the book, even though there is no further information here about how or when the **angel of Yahweh** appeared on this occasion. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Cursing, you shall curse the dwellers of it, because they did not come to the aid of Yahweh, to the aid of Yahweh against the warriors

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [Because they did not come to the aid of Yahweh, to the aid of Yahweh against the warriors, cursing, you shall curse the dwellers of it] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Cursing, you shall curse

The song is repeating forms of the verb **curse** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [You must certainly curse] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

they did not come to the aid of Yahweh, to the aid of Yahweh against the warriors

These two phrases are saying the same thing. The second phrase emphasizes the meaning of the first by being more specific. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and you could show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation. However, if it would be clearer in your language, you could combine the phrases and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [they did not help Yahweh at all against the warriors] (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

Judges 5:24

Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, is blessed from women, from women in the tent she is blessed

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: [May Yahweh bless Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, who lives in a tent, more than any other woman] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

is blessed from women

Here, **from women** is a common expression that means that Jael is the most **blessed** woman, that is, she is more blessed than any other woman. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is more blessed than any other woman] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

is blessed from women, from women in the tent she is blessed

These two phrases are saying the same thing. The second phrase emphasizes the meaning of the first by being more specific. (It is not qualifying the first phrase by specifying that this statement about Jael actually applies only to women who live in tents.) You could include both phrases in your translation. However, if it would be clearer in your language, you could combine the phrases and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [who lives in a tent, is the most blessed of all women] (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

in the tent

The song is not referring to a specific **tent**. This expression refers to tents in general. Alternate translation: [who live in tents] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

Judges 5:25

Water he requested, milk she gave

The pronoun **he** refers to Sisera, and the pronoun **she** refers to Jael. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [Sisera requested water, Jael gave him milk] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

in a bowl of nobles she brought curdled milk

Bringing more than Sisera asked for and bringing it in an elegant bowl was a symbolic action that suggested that Jael respected Sisera and wanted to honor him. This would have made Sisera less cautious and encouraged him to think that he could safely go to sleep. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [to suggest that she respected and honored him, she brought curdled milk in an elegant bowl] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

in a bowl of nobles

The song is using this possessive form to describe the kind of elegant **bowl** that wealthy **nobles** would have. This does not mean a bowl that contained nobles or a bowl that actually belonged to nobles. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [in a bowl fit for nobles] or [in an elegant bowl] (See: **Possession (p. 809)**)

Judges 5:26

They reached out

The pronoun **They** refers to Jael's hands. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [Her hands reached out] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

They reached out

The song is speaking of Jael's hands as if they were living things that could have **reached out** by themselves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [She reached out with her hands] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

her hand

The context indicates that the word **hand** here means Jael's left hand. Alternate translation: [her left hand] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

she crushed his head, and she shattered and pierced his temple

These two phrases are saying the same thing. The second phrase emphasizes the meaning of the first by being more specific. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine the phrases and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [she drove the peg right through his temple and smashed his head] (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

Judges 5:27

Between her feet, he bowed

Since Sisera was lying down asleep when Jael pounded the tent peg through his head, it does not seem that he literally **bowed** down to her from a standing position. Rather, the song seems to be saying that when Jael stood astride his dead body, it was as if Sisera had prostrated himself before her, the way people in this culture did to show great honor to someone. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [It was as if Sisera had been prostrating himself before Jael] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

he fell, he lay down

Since Sisera was lying down, it also does not seem that he **fell** or **lay down** from a standing position. The song seems to be using the word **fell** to mean "died," as in 4:16, and the expression **lay down** to mean "died" as well. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [he died, he surely died] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Between her feet he bowed, he fell. At where he bowed, there he fell, destroyed

For emphasis, these two clauses repeat the idea of the first clause and last clause adds some specific information. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine these clauses and express the emphasis in another way. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

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. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here and replace the comma before it with a period. Alternate translation: [She had destroyed him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 5:28

Why has his chariot delayed to come? Why do the hoofbeats of his chariots tarry

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [She asked why his chariot had delayed to come and why the hoofbeats of his chariots were tarrying] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Why has his chariot delayed to come? Why do the hoofbeats of his chariots tarry

Sisera's mother is using his **chariot** and these **hoofbeats** by association to mean Sisera himself. Alternate translation: [Why has he delayed to come back in his chariot? Why do I not hear the sound of the hoofbeats of his chariot horses indicating his arrival?] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Why has his chariot delayed to come? Why do the hoofbeats of his chariots tarry

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine them. Alternate translation: [Why is it taking so long for him to come back with his chariots?] (See: **Parallelism (p. 797)**)

Why do the hoofbeats of his chariots tarry

Sisera's mother is using the phrase **the hoofbeats of his chariots** by association to mean the sound of the hoofbeats of the horses that pull Sisera's chariots. Alternate translation: [Why do I not yet hear the sound of the hoofbeats of the horses that pull his chariots?] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 5:29

The wise of her princesses

The song is using the adjective **wise** 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 with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [Her wisest princesses] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.782)**)

she also returned her answer to herself

This is a common expression that means that Sisera's mother answered her own question. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [she also answered her own question] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 5:30

Are they not finding, {are} they {not} dividing spoil, a maiden, two maidens to the head of a warrior, spoil of dyed fabrics for Sisera, spoil of dyed fabrics {and} embroidery, dyed fabric {and} two embroideries for the necks of the spoil

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. It may be helpful to make this more than one sentence. Alternate translation: [She told herself that Sisera and his soldiers must be searching the battlefield for plunder and dividing it up. Each soldier, she thought, must be claiming a woman or two as concubines. She also thought that the soldiers must each be finding one or two dyed, embroidered robes that they could wear] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Are they not finding, {are} they {not} dividing spoil

Sisera's mother is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [Certainly they are finding and dividing spoil] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

to the head of a warrior

This expression uses one part of a **warrior**, his **head**, to mean the warrior himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [for each warrior] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

for Sisera

Sisera's mother is probably using the name **Sisera** by association to mean the soldiers in his army. She is probably not saying that only one or two expensive robes will be found among all the plunder and that Sisera personally will get those. Alternate translation: [for Sisera's soldiers] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

dyed fabrics {and} embroidery

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words implicitly connected with **and**. The word **embroidery** indicates how these **dyed fabrics** have been made even more luxurious. Alternate translation: [embroidered dyed fabrics] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

for the necks of the spoil

Sisera's mother is using one part of these soldiers, their **necks**, to mean the soldiers themselves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [for the soldiers to wear who are collecting this plunder] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

for the necks of the spoil

Sisera's mother is using the term **spoil** by association to mean the soldiers who are collecting this plunder after the battle. Alternate translation: [for the necks of the soldiers collecting this plunder] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 5:31

But {may} the lovers of him {be

The song is speaking about Yahweh in the third person after addressing him in the second person. It may be more natural in your language to translate this phrase in the second person as well. Alternate translation: [But may those who love you be] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.726)**)

like the going forth of the sun in its strength

The **strength** of the sun could be its brightness or its heat. So the point of this comparison may be that just as the sun, once it rises, is too bright to look at or so hot that people must get out of its rays into the shade, so no one will be able to resist those who love Yahweh. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [irresistibly strong, like the unbearable brightness of the risen sun] or [irresistibly strong, like the unbearable heat of the risen sun] (See: **Simile (p.834)**)

like the going forth of the sun in its strength

This is the end of the song that Deborah and Barak sang. (In the next sentence, the author resumes the story.) If you began the song with an opening first-level quotation mark or similar opening convention, indicate its ending here with a closing first-level quotation mark or similar closing convention. If you have been using special formatting to set off the song as poetry, resume regular formatting with the next sentence. (See: **Quote Markings (p.822)**)

Then the land rested 40 years

See how you translated the same expression in 3:11. Alternate translation: [After this, there were no more wars for 40 years] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

Judges 6

Judges 6 Chapter Introduction

Structure and formatting

This chapter tells the first part of the story of the next judge, Gideon. That story continues in Chapters 7 and 8.

Judges 6:1

evil in the eyes of Yahweh

See how you translated the same expression in 2:11. Alternate translation: [what was evil in Yahweh's judgment] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

the sons of Israel

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:4. Alternate translation: [the Israelites] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

so Yahweh gave them into the hand of

See how you translated the same expression in 2:14. Alternate translation: [so Yahweh made them subject to] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Midian

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, the author is using the name **Midian** by association to mean the people of Midian. Alternate translation: [the Midianites] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 6:2

From the face of Midian

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:3. Alternate translation: [To get away from the Midianites] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 6:3

Now it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce background information that will help readers understand what happens in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

when Israel sowed

The author is using one part of the process of growing crops, sowing seed, to mean the whole process. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [as the Israelites tried to grow crops each year] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

and the sons of the east

In certain contexts, the biblical text uses the expression **sons of** to indicate that the members of a group share the quality of something. In this case, they share the quality of living to the **east** of the Israelites. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and the inhabitants of the land to the east of Israel] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

against him

The pronoun **him** refers to **Israel**. The author is speaking of the nation as if it were a person. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [to oppress the people of Israel] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 6:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 6:5

And of them and of their camels there was no counting

The author is making an overstatement for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [Large numbers of people came, and they brought very many camels with them] (See: **Hyperbole (p.743)**)

And they came into the land to destroy it

The author is describing the result rather than the purpose of the Midianites coming into the land of Israel. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And as a result of them coming into the land, it was ruined] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Judges 6:6

And Israel was impoverished greatly from the face of Midian

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 the Midianites greatly impoverished the Israelites] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

from the face of Midian

Here, **from the face of** is a common expression of the culture that means “because of” or “on account of.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [because of the Midianites] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 6:7

Now it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

Judges 6:8

a man, a prophet

The author is using the phrase **a man** to introduce this **prophet** as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. Alternate translation: [a certain prophet] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt, and I brought you out from the house of slaves

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [Yahweh, the God of Israel, says that he brought you up from Egypt and that he brought you out from the house of slaves] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

I brought you up from Egypt, and I brought you out from the house of slaves

Yahweh gave the prophet a poetic message that used repetition for emphasis. To show that this is poetry, you may want to include both phrases in your translation. But it may be clearer in your language to 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: [I brought you up from Egypt, indeed, I brought you out from the house of slaves] (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

you

Yahweh is saying **you** by association to mean "you Israelites." He did not bring the people whom this prophet is addressing **up from Egypt**, since that happened in an earlier generation. Alternate translation: [you Israelites] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

from the house of slaves

Yahweh is speaking of Egypt as if it had been a **house** where people kept slaves. Alternate translation: [the country where you were in slavery] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 6:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 6:10

And I said to you, “I {am} Yahweh your God. You shall not fear the gods of the Amorite, when you {are} dwelling in their land.” But you have not heard my voice

If you began translating this in the previous verse in such a way that there would not be a quotation within a quotation, you can continue to do that here. Alternate translation: [He says that he told you that he was Yahweh your God and that you were not to fear the gods of the Amorite when you were dwelling in their land, but you have not heard his voice] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

But you have not heard my voice

See how you translated the same expression in 2:2. Alternate translation: [But you have not obeyed my voice] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

But you have not heard my voice

Yahweh is using the term **voice** by association to mean what he used his voice to command them to do. Alternate translation: [But you have not obeyed what I commanded you] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 6:11

Now the angel of Yahweh came

The author is introducing a new event in the story. The ULT indicates this with the word **Now**. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

the angel of Yahweh

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated it in 2:1. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

was} in Ophrah, & the Abiezrite

The word **Ophrah** is the name of a town, and the word **Abiezrite** describes a person who belonged to the group of descendants of a man named Abiezer. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

And Gideon, his son

The author is using this phrase to introduce **Gideon** as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. Alternate translation: [And one of his sons, Gideon] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

from the face of Midian

Here, **to the face of** represents being in the presence of the Midianites. See the discussion of the term **to the face** in the Introduction to Judges. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from the presence of Midian] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 6:12

Yahweh {is} with you

Verses 14 and 16 identify this **angel** as Yahweh himself. So here Yahweh is actually speaking about himself in the third person. However, Gideon does not yet know that Yahweh is appearing to him in the form of this angel. So it would be appropriate to leave this statement in the third person. (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.726)**)

warrior of valor

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **valor**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [valiant warrior] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 6:13

Excuse me, my lord, but {if} Yahweh is with us, then why has all of this happened to us? And where {are} all of his wonders that our fathers recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not Yahweh bring us up from Egypt

Gideon and the ancestors whom he is quoting are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate these questions as statements or as exclamations. Alternate translation: [Excuse me, my lord, but if Yahweh is with us, then all of this should not have happened to us! We should be seeing the same kind of wonders that our fathers recounted to us, saying, ‘Yahweh brought us up from Egypt!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Excuse me, my lord

Gideon is politely asking permission to address a superior and referring to the angel by a respectful title. In your translation, use comparable forms for these purposes in your own language. (See: **Politeness (p.805)**)

with us, & has & happened to us? & to us, & Did & bring us up & and given us

In each of these instances, by **us**, Gideon means himself and others in his situation but not the angel of Yahweh, to whom he is speaking. So use the exclusive form of that word in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.724)**)

our fathers

Gideon is using the term **fathers** to mean “ancestors.” If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [our ancestors] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

saying, ‘Did not Yahweh bring us up from Egypt

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [when they told us how Yahweh brought us up from Egypt] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 825)**)

and given us into the palm of Midian

Here the term **palm**, like the term “hand” elsewhere in the book, represents the power of a person or group. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and given the Midianites power over us] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 6:14

from the palm of Midian

See how you translated the similar expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [from the power of Midian] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Have I not sent you

Yahweh is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [I am sending you!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 6:15

Excuse me, my lord

See how you translated this same phrase in 6:13. (See: **Politeness (p.805)**)

by what shall I save Israel

Gideon seems to be using the question form for emphasis rather than to ask for information, since in the rest of the verse he gives reasons why he cannot do what Yahweh is telling him to do. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [there is no means by which I can save Israel!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Behold

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, Gideon is using the word **Behold** to call attention to what he is about to say. Alternate translation: [Listen] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

my thousand

Here the term **thousand** probably refers not to that number of people but to a part of a tribe. Alternate translation, as in the UST: [my clan] (See: **Numbers (p.784)**)

is} the weak {one} in Manasseh, and I {am} the young {one

Gideon is using the adjectives **weak** and **young** as nouns. The ULT shows this by adding the word **one** in each case. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate these adjectives with equivalent phrases. Alternate translation: [is the weakest clan in Manasseh, and I am the youngest son] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.782)**)

Judges 6:16

Because I will be with you

Yahweh 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. Yahweh is implicitly answering Gideon's question in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [You will be able to save Israel because I will be with you] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Midian as one man

This is a common expression that refers to an entire group gathered together, as the similar uses in 20:1, 20:8, 20:11, and Nehemiah 8:1 show. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the entire army of Midian at once] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 6:17

if I have found favor in your eyes

Gideon is not using the word **found** to mean that he was intentionally searching for something. He is using it to refer to having something, as if he had found it. Alternate translation: [if in fact I have favor in your eyes] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

if I have found favor in your eyes

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **favor**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [if in fact you have judged me favorably] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

in your eyes

See the discussion of the expression “in the eyes of” in the Introduction to Judges. See how you translated the same expression in 2:11. Alternate translation: [in your judgment] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 6:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 6:19

a kid of goats

This is a common expression that describes a young goat. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [a young goat] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and, {from} an ephah of flour

If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express this amount in terms of modern measurements. Alternate translation: [and from about 22 liters of flour] or [and from about 20 pounds of flour] (See: **Biblical Volume (p.682)**)

Judges 6:20

the angel of God

The phrase **the angel of God** refers to the same person as “the angel of Yahweh.” It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers by using the same expression that you have been using to translate “the angel of Yahweh.” (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

Judges 6:21

and fire came up

In a context such as this, your language might say “went” instead of **came**. Alternate translation: [and fire went up] (See: **Go and Come (p.734)**)

from his eyes

The author is using the term **eyes** by association to mean sight. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [out of his sight] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 6:22

And Gideon saw

The author is using the term **saw** by association to mean “recognized.” Alternate translation: [And Gideon recognized] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Alas, my Lord Yahweh, for upon that I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [Since I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face, I am afraid that you, Lord Yahweh, are going to punish me] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Alas, my Lord Yahweh

Gideon is using a word that expresses a strong feeling, fear. The ULT translates this word as **Alas**. There may be an equivalent word or expression in your language that you can use in your translation to convey this strong feeling. If not, you could specify that Gideon said this because he was feeling fear. Alternate translation: [Oh, no, my Lord Yahweh] or [I am afraid, my Lord Yahweh] (See: **Exclamations (p.722)**)

face to face

This is a common expression that describes seeing someone in person. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. (For example, some languages may say something such as “nose to nose.”) You could also state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation, as in the UST: [in person] (See: **Idiom (p. 747)**)

Judges 6:23

But Yahweh said to him

Since the angel of Yahweh had disappeared from Gideon's sight, the author seems to mean implicitly that Yahweh spoke to Gideon from heaven. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [But Yahweh spoke to him from heaven and said] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Peace to you

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: [Everything is peaceful between you and me] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 6:24

Yahweh {is} Peace

Even if your language would not ordinarily use an abstract noun for the idea of **Peace**, you may be able to use that word in the name of this altar. If not, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [Yahweh Makes Us Peaceful] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

To this day

The author is using the term **day** to refer to a specific time, the time when he was writing the book of Judges. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [At this time] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 6:25

And it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

the bullock of an ox

This is a common expression that describes a young ox. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. See how you translated the comparable expression “a kid of goats” in 6:19. Alternate translation: [the young ox] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and the second bullock, seven years {old

If your language does not use this type of number, you could use a different type of number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: [and his other bullock, the one that is seven years old] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p. 793)**)

Judges 6:26

on the head of this stronghold

Yahweh assumes that Gideon will understand that by **the head of this stronghold**, he is referring to the top of a rocky cliff in the town of Ophrah. The people of the town could go there for safety from the Midianites, and since it was a high place, it was also where Gideon's father had built an altar. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [on the high place near this town] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

in the arrangement

This phrase probably refers to Yahweh's command to the Israelites in Exodus 20:25 to use only natural stones if they built a stone altar to him. That is, they were not to use any stones that had been cut or shaped with tools. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [in the proper arrangement] or [using only natural stones, as I have commanded] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Then you shall take the second bull and you shall offer an offering

As the previous verse describes, this **second bull** was seven years old. This was symbolic of the seven years during which God had punished the Israelites for their disobedience, as 6:1 describes. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [Then you shall take the seven-year-old bull and you shall offer an offering for the sins of the Israelites] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

on the wood of the Asherah

Yahweh is using the term **wood** by association to mean a fire that Gideon would build using this wood as fuel. Alternate translation: [on a fire that you shall build from the wood of the Asherah] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 6:27

the house of his father

The author is using the term **house** by association to mean a group of people who were living together, not necessarily all in the same building. Gideon's **father** was the head of this household, which probably included family members in several generations and servants. Alternate translation: [the people in his extended family] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and the men of the city

Here the masculine term **men** has a generic sense that includes both men and women. While the males in the city were the most likely to attack Gideon for tearing down the altar of Baal, he probably feared any person—man or woman, adult or child—who would recognize him and identify him as the person who had done that. Alternate translation: [and the people of the city] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.852)**)

Judges 6:28

and behold, the altar of Baal was torn down, and the Asherah that {was} beside it was cut down, and the second bullock had been offered on the built altar

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express these ideas with active forms or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and they saw that someone had torn down the altar of Baal, cut down the Asherah that was beside it, built an altar, and offered the second bullock on it] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 6:29

And they said, a man to his fellow

This is a common expression that means that the people of the city were asking each other the question that follows. No particular relationship is in view between a **man** and his **fellow** man. The expression just means that one person asked another. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Each person was asking other people] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

And they searched and sought, and they said

The terms **searched** and **sought** mean similar things. The author is using the two terms together for emphasis, probably to mean that it took some time to find out who was responsible. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [They had to search for some time, but finally they discovered] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

Judges 6:30

Bring out your son, that he may die, because he tore down the altar of Baal and because he cut down the Asherah that {was} beside 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 your son tore down the altar of Baal and cut down the Asherah that was beside it, he deserves to die, so bring him out to us] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

that he may die

The men of the city mean implicitly that they want Joash to surrender Gideon to them so that they can execute him as a punishment. They do not mean that Gideon would die as a result of Joash bringing him out. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [so that we can execute him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 6:31

who stood against him

This is a common expression that describes these people opposing Joash in an argument. The emphasis is not on their body position, although they likely were standing around his house. The idea is that they wanted Joash to bring Gideon out to them, but he refused, so the people were in opposition **against** Joash. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who were arguing with him] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Will you contend for Baal? Or will you save him

Joash is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate these questions as statements or as exclamations. Alternate translation: [You should not have to contend for Baal! You should not have to help him!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Whoever contends for him, may he die

Joash is saying implicitly that anyone who thinks he needs to act to defend Baal's honor is suggesting that Baal is not powerful enough to defend his own honor, and that is being just as disrespectful to Baal as the person who tore down his altar. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Whoever contends for him is being just as disrespectful, and he is the one who deserves to die] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

still morning

Joash 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: [while it is still morning] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 6:32

Jerubbaal

The word **Jerubbaal** is another name by which Gideon became known. It means “may Baal contend.” (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

saying, “May Baal contend against him, since he tore down his altar

It is unclear how many of the words that follow **saying** were spoken by the people who gave Gideon the name **Jerubbaal** and how many are an explanation by the author of why the people gave him this name. The people could have spoken: (1) all of the words that are within quotation marks in the ULT. This would be a repetition of what Joash said at the end of the previous verse. (2) only the first phrase that is within quotation marks in the ULT. This would explain the meaning of the name Jerubbaal. The rest would be an explanation by the author. Alternate translation: [saying, “May Baal contend against him,” since he tore down his altar] (See: **Quote Markings (p.822)**)

Judges 6:33

Now all of Midian and Amalek and the sons of the east assembled themselves together

The author is introducing a new event in the story. The ULT indicates this with the word **Now**. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

and the sons of the east

See how you translated this expression in 6:3. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and they crossed over

The author assumes that readers will understand that he means that these enemy forces **crossed over** the Jordan River into Israel. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and they crossed over the Jordan River into Israel] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 6:34

Then the Spirit of Yahweh wore Gideon

The author is speaking as if the **Spirit of Yahweh** literally **wore** Gideon as if he had been a garment. He means that the Spirit of Yahweh gave Gideon strength and guidance, as if Gideon had the Spirit right inside himself doing that. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Then the Spirit of Yahweh filled Gideon] or [Then the Spirit of Yahweh made Gideon strong and confident] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Abiezer

See the discussion in the Introduction to Judges of the author's use of the name of a nation, tribe, or clan to mean its people or army. Alternate translation: [the Abiezrites] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 6:35

him

The author is using the pronoun **him** in the first instance to speak of the tribe of **Manasseh** as if it were an individual person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the soldiers from that tribe] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

and they went up to meet them

In a context such as this, your language might say “came” instead of **went**. Alternate translation: [and they came up to meet them] (See: **Go and Come (p.734)**)

and they went up to meet them

The pronoun **they** refers to the soldiers from the tribes of **Asher**, **Zebulun**, and **Naphtali** who responded to the summons from Gideon. The pronoun **them** could refer to: (1) Gideon and the soldiers from Manasseh whom he was commanding. This would suit the sense of the verb **went up**, since 7:9 indicates that Gideon was staying on some high ground above the battlefield. Alternate translation: [and soldiers from those tribes went up to meet Gideon and the soldiers from Manasseh whom he was commanding]; (2) the enemy armies. Alternate translation: [and soldiers from those tribes joined in the fight against the Midianites and their allies] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 6:36

If you are saving Israel by my hand

Gideon is using one part of himself, his **hand**, to represent all of himself in the act of **saving Israel**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [If you are indeed using me to save Israel] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 6:37

a fleece of wool

A **fleece of wool** is a large piece of skin from a sheep that still has the wool (the thick, warm hair of the sheep) attached. In this culture, a fleece could be used as a blanket or to make a garment. If your readers would not be familiar with what a fleece is, in your translation you could use the name of a similar thing that your readers would recognize, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: [a sheepskin] or [an animal skin with the hair still on it] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

but on all of the ground {is} dryness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **dryness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [but all around it the ground stays dry] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 6:38

and wrung dew from the fleece, the fulness of a bowl {of} water

The author is leaving some information implicit that he assumes readers will understand. While the fleece was soaked with dew, the ground all around it remained dry. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 6:39

May your nose not burn against me

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:14. Alternate translation: [May you not be angry with me] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

but may I speak only this time. May I please test only this time

Since Gideon has already done a test with the fleece once, by **only this time** he means, in both instances, “just one more time.” You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [but may I speak just one more time. May I please test just one more time] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

may dryness be on the fleece alone

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **dryness**, you could express the same idea in another way. See how you translated the similar expression in 6:37. Alternate translation: [may only the fleece be dry] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 6:40

For dryness was on the fleece alone

See how you translated the similar expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [For only the fleece was dry] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 7

Judges 7 Chapter Introduction

Structure and formatting

The account of Gideon, which began in chapter 6, continues in this chapter.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Why does the barley loaf represent Gideon?

In 7:13, a Midianite soldier tells his friend that the loaf of barley bread in the dream the friend has just recounted must represent Gideon. He says this because barley was a grain that only poorer people ate, and as 6:6 states, the Midianites had reduced the Israelites to poverty. In 6:11, Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to hide it from the Midianites; they may have taken the wheat from Israel but left the barley because they did not want to eat it. Beyond this, the "sons of the east" were nomadic herders, so they would have associated grain with a farming culture such as the Israelites had. For these reasons, the soldier recognizes that the loaf of barley bread represents the Israelite army under the command of Gideon. A note to verse 13 suggests a way to indicate this in your translation.

Mount Gilead

In 7:3, Yahweh tells Gideon to announce to his troops that anyone who is afraid can depart from "Mount Gilead." In this context, that name cannot refer, as it usually does, to the mountainous region east of the Jordan River. The Valley of Jezreel, where the two armies had gathered for battle, was west of the Jordan River. Since Gilead was the ancestor of a major part of the tribe of Manasseh, including the Abiezrites, and since that tribe had territory on both sides of the Jordan, it is possible that the people of Manasseh had named a mountain after Gilead on the west side of the river, near where Gideon's army had assembled. But such a mountain is not known from any other source. Some commentators have suggested instead that "Mount Gilead" might have been a name that the soldiers of Manasseh gave to their army, to describe both its strength and its lineage. However, there is no evidence elsewhere for that either. But since this is ultimately a matter of interpretation rather than of translation, is probably best to translate the expression as "Mount Gilead" and allow preachers and teachers of the Bible to explain the possible meanings.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

"into their hand"/"into your hand" (plural "you")

In several places in this chapter, the author or characters use the expressions "into their hand" and "into your hand" (with a plural "you"). Since this expression refers to a group of people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **hand**. (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

Judges 7:1

Harod. & Moreh

The word **Harod** means “trembling.” The spring probably got this name because, as 7:3 describes, all the soldiers who were “afraid and trembling” were dismissed from Gideon’s army there. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this in a footnote. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 7:2

for my giving Midian into their hand

Here Yahweh is using the term **hand** in the sense of possession. The image is of someone holding something in his hand. That is, when Yahweh speaks of **giving Midian into** the **hand** of the Israelites, the idea is that the Israelites will conquer the Midianites, who will then become subject to them. Alternate translation: [for me to enable them to conquer the Midianites] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

into their hand

As the Introduction to this chapter discusses, since a group of people is in view here and in similar instances, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **hand**. Alternate translation: [into their hands] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

My hand has saved me

Here Yahweh is using the term **hand** more in the sense of power. The image is of someone doing something with his hand. That is, if the Israelites claimed that their **hand** had **saved** them, they would be saying that they had saved themselves by their own power. Alternate translation: [We Israelites have saved ourselves by our own power] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 7:3

proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, ‘Whoever {is} afraid and trembling, may he turn back and depart from Mount Gilead

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [proclaim in the ears of the people that anyone who is afraid or trembling may turn back and depart from Mount Gilead] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

in the ears of the people

Yahweh is using one part of Gideon’s soldiers, their **ears**, to mean all of them in the act of hearing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [loudly so that the people can hear] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

is} afraid and trembling

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **afraid** tells why a soldier might be **trembling**. Alternate translation: [is trembling with fear] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

from Mount Gilead

See the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter for a suggestion of how to translate this name in this context. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

were left

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: [remained] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 7:4

and I will refine it for you there

The pronoun **it** refers back to **the people** earlier in the verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [and I will refine the people for you there] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

and I will refine it for you

Yahweh is speaking as if he were literally going to **refine** Gideon's troops, as if they were a precious metal such as silver or gold and he was going to melt them with heat to remove their impurities. He means that he is going to enable Gideon to identify the best soldiers and keep only them in his army. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and I will enable you to identify the best soldiers] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And it will be, {of} whom I say to you, 'This {one} shall go with you,' he shall go with you, but all {of} whom I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall not go

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [And when I tell you that a certain kind of soldier is to go with you, then you must bring that kind of soldier with you, but you must not bring any other kind of soldier with you that I say is not to go with you] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Judges 7:5

So he brought the people down

In a context such as this, your language might say “took” instead of **brought**. Alternate translation: [So he took the people down] (See: **Go and Come (p.734)**)

and anyone who kneels upon his knees to drink

Yahweh 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 you shall put in a different group anyone who kneels upon his knees to drink] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

kneels upon his knees

It might seem that the expression **kneels upon his knees** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [kneels down] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 7:6

with their hand to their mouth

Since the author is referring to a group of people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural forms of **hand** and **mouth**. Alternate translation: [with their hands to their mouths] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

knelt upon their knees

See how you translated the similar expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [knelt down] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 7:7

I will save you, and I will give Midian into your hand

Since Yahweh was going to **give Midian** into Gideon's **hand** (that is, give Gideon the power to conquer Midian) in order to **save** the Israelites, in your translation you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they were going to happen. Alternate translation: [I will give Midian into your hand and save you] (See: **Order of Events (p. 791)**)

you

In this verse, the word **your** is singular because Yahweh is speaking to Gideon as an individual. However, the word **you** is plural because Yahweh is addressing Gideon as representative of all the Israelites. So use the plural form in your translation if your language marks that distinction. Other languages may have different ways of clarifying the meaning. Alternate translation: [you Israelites] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

But all the people may go

Yahweh assumes that when he says **all the people**, Gideon will understand that he means "all the other people," that is, the soldiers who did not lap the water from their hands. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [But all the soldiers who did not lap the water may go] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

a man to his place

Yahweh is not referring to a specific **man**. He means each of the men who knelt down to drink. Express this in a way that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [each man to his own home] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

Judges 7:8

into their hand

See how you translated the same expression in 7:6. Alternate translation: [into their hands] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

and their shofars

The pronoun **their** refers to the soldiers who were leaving the army. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [and the shofars that the other soldiers had brought] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

but every man of Israel

The author assumes that readers will understand that by **every man of Israel** he means the soldiers who had not lapped the water from their hands. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [but the soldiers who had not lapped the water from their hands] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Now the camp of Midian was to him from below, in the valley

The author is introducing a new event in the story. The ULT indicates this with the word **Now**. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

Judges 7:9

Arise

Yahweh is using the expression **Arise** to tell Gideon to take action and lead his army down into the valley to attack the Midianites. Gideon probably was lying in bed when Yahweh spoke to him **that night**, but the meaning of the term **Arise** is not simply that Gideon should get out of bed. See how you translated the same expression in 4:14. Alternate translation: [Get going] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Go down into the camp, for I have given it into your hand

Yahweh is using the term **camp** by association to mean the Midianite army in its camp. Alternate translation: [Go down and attack the Midianite army where it is encamped, for I have given you the power to defeat it] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

I have given it into your hand

Yahweh is using the past tense to describe something that is going to happen in the future. He is doing this to show that the event will certainly happen. If it would be clearer in your language, you could use the future tense in your translation and express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [I will certainly give it into your hand] (See: **Predictive Past (p.813)**)

Judges 7:10

and Purah

The word **Purah** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 7:11

your hands will be strong

Yahweh is using one part of Gideon, his **hands**, to mean all of him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [you will feel courageous] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

to the edge of the armed {ones} who {were} in the camp

If your language does not use a passive form such as **armed**, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The emphasis here may be on the fact that these men were holding weapons because they were sentries guarding the camp. Alternate translation: [to the edge of the camp, where the sentries were] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 7:12

the sons of the east

See how you translated this expression in 6:3. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

like the locust in multitude

The point of this comparison is that just as a **locust** swarm is very great **in multitude**, that is, extremely numerous, so this combined army had a very great number of soldiers. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [in huge numbers, such as in a swarm of locusts] (See: **Simile (p. 834)**)

And to their camels there was not a number

The author is making an overstatement for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [And they had so many camels that one could hardly count them] (See: **Hyperbole (p.743)**)

And to their camels there was not a number, like the sand that {is} along the edge of the sea in multitude

The point of this comparison is that just as the grains of **sand** that are **along the edge of the sea** are very numerous, so this combined army had a very great number of camels. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [And they had a huge number of camels, which seemed as huge as the number of grains of sand along the edge of the sea] (See: **Simile (p.834)**)

Judges 7:13

and behold, a man was recounting & Behold, & and behold

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, the author is using the term **behold** to call attention to what he is about to say. Similarly, the man is saying **Behold ... behold** not to get his comrade to look at something but to get him to pay attention to what he is about to say. Your language may have comparable expressions that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [and what he found was that a man was recounting ... Now listen ... and in my dream] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

I dreamed a dream

It might seem that the expression **I dreamed a dream** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [I had a dream] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 7:14

And his comrade answered and said

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **answered** tells why the comrade **said** this. Alternate translation: [And his comrade said in response] or [And his comrade responded] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

This {is} nothing except if {it is} the sword of Gideon

If, in your language, it would appear that the comrade was making a statement and then contradicting it, you could reword this as a positive statement. Alternate translation: [This can only be the sword of Gideon] (See: **Connect — Exception Clauses (p.694)**)

This {is} nothing except if {it is} the sword of Gideon

The pronoun **this** refers to the loaf of barley bread in the dream. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [The loaf of barley bread in your dream can only represent the sword of Gideon] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

the sword of Gideon

The comrade is using the expression **the sword of Gideon** to mean the army of Gideon, by association with the way that his army would use swords as weapons. Alternate translation: [the army of Gideon] (See: **Metonymy (p. 780)**)

Gideon, the son of Joash, the man of Israel

See the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter for an explanation of why the comrade says that the loaf of barley bread must represent Gideon. Alternate translation: [that poor Israelite farmer, Gideon, the son of Joash] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 7:15

that he bowed down

The author means implicitly that Gideon **bowed down** to worship God in thanks for the victory that he realized the Israelites were going to win. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [that he bowed down in worship] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

And he returned

The author is referring only to Gideon, but he means that both Gideon and Purah **returned** to the Israelite camp. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And he and Purah returned] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Arise, for Yahweh has given the camp of Midian into your hand

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: [Yahweh has given the camp of Midian into your hand, so arise] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Arise

Even though Gideon's men were probably lying in bed, here the term **Arise** does not mean simply that they should get up. It means the same thing that it did in 7:9. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: [Let's get going!] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Arise, & into your hand

The implied "you" in the imperative **Arise** and the pronoun **your** are plural here because Gideon is addressing all of the soldiers in his army, so use plural forms in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

Judges 7:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 7:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 7:18

And you shall say, ‘For Yahweh and for Gideon

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [And you shall shout that you are fighting for Yahweh and for Gideon] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

And you shall say, ‘For Yahweh and for Gideon

Gideon is telling his soldiers to shout something that is not a complete sentence. It is a war cry, and so it is not supposed to be lengthy, and it does not have to be grammatically complete. You may wish to retain it as a brief incomplete sentence in your translation. See the translation suggestion for verse 20, where there is a slightly longer version of this war cry. (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 7:19

Stationing, they had just stationed the guards

The author is repeating forms of the verb “station” in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [The new guards were just coming on duty] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

they had just stationed the guards, and they blew on the shofars

The first instance of the pronoun **they** refers to the Midianites, while the second instance refers to Gideon and his men. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the Midianites had just stationed the guards, and Gideon and his men blew on the shofars] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 7:20

A sword for Yahweh and for Gideon

The soldiers are using the term **sword** by association to mean “army,” since they are an army that uses swords to fight. Alternate translation: [The army of Yahweh and of Gideon] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 7:21

the camp

The author is using the word **camp** by association to mean the soldiers in the camp. Alternate translation: [the soldiers in the camp] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 7:22

and Yahweh set the sword of a man against his comrade

The author is speaking of a **sword** as if it were a living thing that Yahweh could have **set** against a person, that is, caused to attack a person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

the camp. And the camp fled

In both of these instances, the author is using the word **camp** by association to mean the soldiers in the camp. Alternate translation: [the other soldiers in the camp. And the soldiers fled] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 7:23

Then a man of Israel from Naphtali and from Asher and from all of Manasseh was summoned

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: [Then Gideon summoned the men of Israel from Naphtali and from Asher and from all of Manasseh] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Then a man of Israel & was summoned

The author is using the term **man** in a collective sense. It may be more natural in your language to use the plural form of the word and a plural verb. Alternate translation: [Then the men of Israel ... were summoned] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

Judges 7:24

Come down

In a context such as this, your language might say “Go” instead of **Come**. Alternate translation: [Go down] (See: **Go and Come (p.734)**)

the waters unto Beth Barah and the Jordan

The messengers are using the word **waters** by association to mean the shallow places where people can cross rivers and streams. Your language may have a term for such places. Alternate translation: [the fords of the streams in the area of Beth Barah and the fords of the Jordan] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Beth Barah

The term **Beth Barah** is the name of a town. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

So every man of Ephraim was summoned

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 the messengers summoned all of the men of Ephraim] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

So every man of Ephraim was summoned

The author means implicitly that the messengers summoned **every man** who was able to fight as a solider. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [So the messengers summoned all the fighting men of Ephraim] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 7:25

Oreb and Zeeb

The words **Oreb** and **Zeeb** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

at the rock of Oreb, & at the winepress of Zeeb

The expressions **the rock of Oreb** and **the winepress of Zeeb** are the names of places. Some languages may present these names as titles. Alternate translation: [at the Rock of Zeeb ... at the Winepress of Oreb] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

and they brought the head of Oreb and Zeeb

Since the author is referring to two people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **head**. Alternate translation: [and they brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

to Gideon, from across the Jordan

This could mean: (1) that the soldiers from Ephraim pursued the fleeing Midianite soldiers across the Jordan River, bringing the heads of Oreb and Zeeb with them, and when they met Gideon on the east side of the river, they presented the heads to him. This would mean that 8:4 is resuming the story after this episode. Alternate translation: [to Gideon after he crossed the Jordan]; (2) that the soldiers from Ephraim pursued the fleeing Midianite soldiers across the Jordan River, found and killed Oreb and Zeeb on the east side of the river, and then brought their heads back to Gideon on the west side of the river. This would mean that the phrase **they chased after Midian** is a summary of what happened in the first part of the verse. Alternate translation: [back across the river to Gideon] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 8

Judges 8 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

The account of Gideon concludes in this chapter.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The tower in Penuel

Ancient cities and towns often built protective towers. Their citizens could go inside them for safety, and from the top of them their soldiers had an advantage in fighting attacking armies. The leaders of Penuel probably thought that they were safe from the Midianites because they had such a tower. Gideon told them that he was going to tear down their tower to show that they should have taken his side in the fight against the Midianites.

Why did Gideon kill the men of Penuel?

It seems difficult to understand why, when Gideon returned to Penuel (8:17), he "killed the men of the city." He had only said he would tear down their tower, just as he had only told the leaders of Succoth that he would whip them with thorny branches, and that was all he did to them. Here is one possible explanation. In 8:16, the author uses the phrase "the men of Succoth" to mean the same thing as "the elders of the city." So the phrase "the men of the city" in 8:17 may refer to the town leaders of Penuel. The author may be saying that when Gideon tore down the tower, this killed the town leaders. That may have happened because those leaders took refuge in the tower, thinking they would be safe from Gideon there because he would not be able to tear down the tower or that he would not tear it down if they were in it. A note to 8:17 suggests an alternate translation that suggests this meaning.

Why did Gideon tell his son Jether to kill the Midianite kings?

In 8:20, Gideon tells his son Jether, who was still a young man, to kill the Midianite kings Zebah and Zalmunna. This was in some way a symbolic action, but interpreters are not entirely sure of what kind. Here are some possibilities: (1) Gideon could have been intending to give an honor to his son. Gideon had already appeased the Ephraimites by telling them what an honor it had been for them to kill Oreb and Zeeb (8:3), and he may have wanted his firstborn son to have a similar honor. If that is the significance of this action, in your translation you might have Gideon say to Jether, "I will give you the honor of killing these kings." (2) Gideon could have been intending to dishonor Zebah and Zalmunna. They had apparently killed Gideon's brothers by murder rather than in battle, and so Gideon did not consider them worthy of being killed by a person of status, such as himself. (In this culture, it was customary for someone to be executed by a person of equal status; see, for example, 1 Kings 2:29.) If that is the significance, you might have Gideon say to Jether, "I am going to have you, a youth, kill them." (3) Gideon could have wanted to emphasize to Jether that he needed to be prepared to fight against the oppressors of Yahweh's people, just as he had. In that case, you might have Gideon say, "Kill these enemy kings, as you must be prepared to fight to free Yahweh's people from oppression."

Judges 8:1

What {is} this thing you have done to us, not calling to us when you went to fight against Midian

The soldiers from Ephraim are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You should not have acted toward us like this! When you went out to fight against the army of Midian, you should have called us to help you!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

in strength

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **strength**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [vehemently] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 8:2

What have I now done like you? {Are} not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer

Gideon is using the question form in order to make a point without being confrontational. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate these questions as statements or as exclamations, particularly if they would not be regarded as confrontational in your culture. Alternate translation: [What I have done is not like what you have done! The gleanings of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abiezer!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Are} not the gleanings of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer

Gideon is speaking as if he had literally harvested a crop of grapes and the soldiers from Ephraim had come along after him and collected the few grapes that he had left on the vines. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. (You could also express this as a comparison, as the UST does.) Alternate translation: [The specific thing that you did at the end of the battle was more important than what I and my soldiers did during the battle!] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

than the vintage of Abiezer

Gideon is using the name of his clan, **Abiezer** by association to mean himself. Alternate translation: [than the grapes I have harvested] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 8:3

into your hand

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 1:2. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

So what was I able to do like you

Gideon is using the question form for emphasis and to be persuasive without being confrontational. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for those purposes, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. See how you translated the similar expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [So what I have done is not like what you have done!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Then their spirit abated toward him

The author is speaking as if the **spirit** of the Ephraimite soldiers literally became smaller or weaker. In this context, the word **spirit** refers to anger. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Then they had less anger toward him] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

upon him speaking this word

The author is using the term **word** to represent what Gideon said by using words. He is not referring to one specific **word** that Gideon spoke that made the Ephraimite soldiers less angry. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [when he said these things to them] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 8:4

Then Gideon came to the Jordan. Crossing over, he and the 300 men who {were} with him {were} weary, but pursuing

Here the author is introducing a new event in the story. It is possible that he is backing up to a point in the narrative just after 7:24 and that the events of 7:25–8:3 are related out of sequence. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event and that would allow for this possibility. Alternate translation: [Now when Gideon and the 300 men who were with him reached the Jordan and crossed it, even though they were weary, they continued pursuing] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

but pursuing

The author 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: [but still pursuing their enemies] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 8:5

loaves of bread to the people

Gideon asks specifically for **loaves of bread** because they would have been easy to carry and to eat while pursuing the Midianites. But he may also be using one kind of food to mean the various kinds of food that would provide a good meal to strengthen a soldier. You may wish to indicate this in your translation. Alternate translation: [some food to strengthen the people] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

to the people who {are} at my feet

See how you translated the similar expression in 4:10. Alternate translation: [to the men who are under my command] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 8:6

Is} the palm of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that {we are} giving bread to your army

The leaders of Succoth are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [The palm of Zebah and Zalmunna is not now in your hand, that we should give bread to your army!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Is} the palm of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand

The leaders of Succoth are referring by association to Gideon and his men having captured Zebah and Zalmunna. While the source and meaning are not entirely clear of the expression **palm ... in your hand**, it seems to refer to the way captured prisoners would have their hands tied or chained by a rope or chain that one of their captors would hold in his hand to lead them. Alternate translation: [Have you already captured Zebah and Zalmunna] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Is} the palm of

Since the leaders of Succoth are referring to two people, it might be more natural in your language to use the dual or plural form of **palm**. Alternate translation: [Are the palms] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

Judges 8:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 8:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 8:9

In my returning in peace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **peace**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [When I return here peacefully] or [When I return here after winning the war against the Midianites] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 8:10

Now Zebah and Zalmunna {were} in Karkor

The author is introducing a new event in the story. The ULT indicates this with the word **Now**. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

and their camps {& the camp of the sons of the east

The author is using the terms **camps** and **camp** to mean “soldiers” and “army,” by association with the way the soldiers in an army stay in camps. Alternate translation: [and their soldiers … the army of the sons of the east] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

the sons of the east

See how you translated this phrase in 6:3. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and the {ones} having fallen

See how you translated the similar expression in 4:16. Alternate translation: [and the ones who had died] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

drawing the sword

The author is using one thing that a skilled fighter would learn to do to represent all the things that such a fighter would do. The meaning is that such men were trained and experienced soldiers. Use a word or phrase in your translation that would convey that meaning. Alternate translation: [skilled in warfare] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 8:11

the {ones} lodged in tents

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 who live in tents] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

the road of the {ones} lodged in tents

The author is using the phrase **the road of the {ones} lodged in tents** to describe a caravan road, by association with the way that caravan travelers stayed on this road for many days, pitching their tents alongside the road to sleep at night. Alternate translation: [the caravan road] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

from the east to Nobah and Jogbehah

The author is describing the location of places relative to one another in the way that is characteristic of his culture. In your translation, express this in the way your culture customarily describes the location of places relative to one another. Alternate translation: [to the east of Nobah and Jogbehah] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

And he struck the camp, and the camp was {in} security

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **security**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [And he struck the camp while the soldiers were feeling secure] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

And he struck

See the discussion of the term **struck** in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated it in 3:13. Alternate translation: [And he attacked] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

the camp

Here, as in the previous verse, the author is using the word **camp** to mean the soldiers in the camp. Alternate translation: [the enemy soldiers] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

And he struck the camp, and the camp was {in} security

Since the camp was **in security** before Gideon **struck** or “attacked” it, in your translation you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they happened. Alternate translation: [And the soldiers were feeling secure, but he attacked their camp] (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

Judges 8:12

And he made all of the camp tremble

The author is speaking by association of how Gideon made the Midianite army **tremble** to mean that the army panicked and fled. Alternate translation: [And he threw the entire army into a panic] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

And he made all of the camp tremble

Since Gideon first routed the Midianite army and its kings then fled, in your translation you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they happened. You could do that by putting this last sentence first in the verse. (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

Judges 8:13

through the Ascent of Heres

The word **Heres** is the name of a road that passes between two mountains. Alternate translation: [through Heres Pass] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 8:14

and he questioned him

The author means implicitly that Gideon **questioned** this young man in order to find out the identities of all of the town leaders of Succoth. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and he questioned him to find out who the town leaders were] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

And he wrote for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders

The author 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 he wrote for him the names of the leaders of Succoth and its elders] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 8:15

Then he went

In a context such as this, your language might say “came” instead of **went**. Alternate translation: [Then he came] (See: **Go and Come (p.734)**)

you taunted me, saying, ‘Is the palm of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we {are} giving bread to your weary men

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [you taunted me, asking whether the palm of Zebah and Zalmunna was already in my hand, that you should give bread to my weary men!] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Is the palm of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we {are} giving bread to your weary men

If you retain the quotation within the quotation, see how you translated this question in 8:6. Alternate translation: [The palm of Zebah and Zalmunna is not now in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 8:16

And took the elders of the city and thorns of the wilderness and briers

The author 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 he took the elders of the city, and he also took thorns of the wilderness and briers] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

and he taught

The traditional Hebrew text reads **taught** here. The ULT follows that reading. Some ancient versions seem to reflect a different textual reading and say “thrashed,” as in 8:7. 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. However, if the original reading is “taught,” in this context the word would mean “disciplined,” so the two readings mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: [and he disciplined] (See: **Textual Variants (p.843)**)

Judges 8:17

Then he tore down the tower of Penuel and killed the men of the city

See the Introduction to this chapter for a discussion of what the author may be saying implicitly here. Alternate translation: [Then he tore down the tower of Peniel, and that killed the leaders of the city] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 8:18

Where {are} the men whom you killed at Tabor

Gideon's question relates to something that the author has not narrated as part of this story. The author has also not related it as background information. So readers must infer what happened. It appears that at some point, probably before Yahweh called Gideon to lead an army against the Midianites, their soldiers came into Israel and murdered some of Gideon's brothers. Because these forces were under the command or authority of Zebah and Zalmunna, Gideon is going to hold them accountable for his brothers' deaths. You can indicate this in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Now some time ago your forces killed some men at Tabor. You need to answer for that] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Where {are} the men whom you killed at Tabor

This could mean: (1) that Gideon is asking for information. He wants to verify the identity of the men whom these kings killed. Alternate translation: [What did the men look like whom you killed at Tabor?]; (2) that Gideon is using the question form to announce that he is going to hold Zebah and Zalmunna accountable for the deaths of his brothers. This question seems to have had that significance in this culture. For example, for the same purpose, God says to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" (Genesis 4:9). Alternate translation: [I am going to hold you accountable for the men whom you killed at Tabor] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

As you {are}, so they {were}. Each {was} like the form of the sons of the king

Zebah and Zalmunna could be: (1) saying implicitly that they killed these men because they were of regal bearing and so they perceived them to be a potential threat. As Israelites of strength and influence, they could have led resistance to the Midianites. Alternate translation: [They were of regal bearing, just like you, and we killed them because we perceived them as a threat]; (2) answering Gideon's question by providing information. Alternate translation: [They looked just like you. Each one of them looked like a prince] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

the sons of the king

By the expression **the king**, Zebah and Zalmunna could mean: (1) a person of regal bearing and presence in general. Alternate translation: [the sons of a king]; (2) Gideon himself. They may regard him as the "king" of Israel because he has led the Israelite forces into battle. In that case, by **the sons of the king**, they would be referring to Gideon's sons, at least one of whom is present, as 8:20 indicates. Alternate translation: [your sons right there] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 8:19

They {were} my brothers, the sons of my mother

Gideon is specifying that he had not just the same father but also the same mother as these men. Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [They were my full brothers] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

The life of Yahweh

Following the custom of his culture, Gideon is swearing an oath by guaranteeing it by something he holds sacred. Use a natural way in your language to express an oath. The UST models one way to do that. (See: **Oath Formulas (p.787)**)

Judges 8:20

Then he said to Jether his firstborn, “Arise, kill them

Gideon having his son Jether, who was still a young man, kill Zebah and Zalmunna was in some way a symbolic action, but interpreters are not entirely sure what it would have meant. See the Introduction to this chapter for a discussion of the possibilities and for suggestions of how to translate what Gideon told Jether. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Arise

Gideon is using the expression **Arise** to tell Jether to take action. He is not telling him to get up from a seated position. Alternate translation: [Go ahead] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 8:21

Arise & So Gideon arose

See how you translated the word “Arise” in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [Go ahead ... So Gideon took action] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

For like a man {is} his strength

Zebah and Zalmunna may be expressing their meaning by using a short popular saying of the culture. They probably mean that Gideon should not have expected that a boy would have had the strength or courage to kill them. Your culture may have a comparable saying that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [It takes a man to do a man’s job] (See: **Proverbs (p.818)**)

For like a man {is} his strength

You may wish to use punctuation to indicate that Zebah and Zalmunna may be quoting a popular saying of the culture. You could put this sentence within second-level quotation marks, or you could use some other punctuation or convention of your language. (See: **Quote Markings (p.822)**)

the ornaments

The word translated as **ornaments** describes crescent-shaped decorations made of gold. If your readers would not be familiar with such objects, in your translation you could describe them more fully. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 8:22

the men of Israel

By **the men of Israel**, the author seems implicitly to mean Gideon's soldiers. What Gideon says to these men in 8:24 suggests this. Alternate translation: [Gideon's soldiers] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Rule over us, both you and your son and the son of your son

Your language may have its own terms for the relationships described here. You could also use a general expression. Alternate translation: [We want you and your son and your grandson to rule over us] or [We want your family to rule over us to the third generation] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Judges 8:23

and my son will not rule over you

By saying **my son will not rule over you**, Gideon implicitly means that his grandson will not rule over the Israelites either. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and my son and grandson will not rule over you] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 8:24

Let me request a request from you

To make his request politely, Gideon 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 a polite request. Alternatively, your language may have another way of doing that. Alternate translation: [I just have one small thing that I would like to ask of you] (See: **Politeness (p.805)**)

a man

Gideon is not referring to a specific **man**. He means each man in the army. Alternate translation: [each one of you] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

For earrings of gold {were} to them, for they {were} Ishmaelites

Here the author is providing background information to help readers understand what is happening in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

For earrings of gold {were} to them, for they {were} Ishmaelites

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: [For since they were Ishmaelites, they were wearing golden earrings] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Judges 8:25

Giving, we will give

The men are repeating forms of the verb **give** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [We will certainly give you what you want!] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

and a man threw

As in the previous verse, this is not referring to a specific **man**. Alternate translation: [and each man threw] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

Judges 8:26

1,700 gold

The author is using the word **gold** by association to mean golden shekels, a unit of weight. Alternate translation: [1,700 shekels of gold] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

1,700 gold

These 1,700 **gold** shekels weighed about 20 kilograms or over 40 pounds. In your translation, you could use the ancient measurement and spell the word “shekel” the way it sounds in your language. You could also use the metric measurement given in the UST or another measurement that your language and culture customarily use. Alternatively, you could use the ancient measurement in your translation and put a modern measurement in parentheses in the text or in a footnote. (See: **Biblical Weight (p.685)**)

the ornaments

The word translated as **ornaments** is the same word as in 8:21, so it appears that these kings wore crescent-shaped decorations made of gold as their camels did. See how you translated the word there. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

and the pendants & the chains

The word translated as **pendants** refers to some other kind of jewelry that these kings wore. Interpreters are not entirely sure what it was, so it may be best to use a general expression for it. The same is true for the word translated as **chains**, which seems to refer to some kind of decoration that went around the necks of the camels, possibly made of gold chains. Alternate translation: [and the jewelry ... the necklaces] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 8:27

Then Gideon made it into an ephod

The pronoun **it** refers to the 1,700 shekels of gold described in the previous verse. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [Then Gideon made the gold into an ephod] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

and all of Israel whored after it there

The author is speaking as if the Israelites had literally acted as prostitutes for this ephod. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. See how you translated the same expression in 2:17. Alternate translation: [and all of Israel betrayed Yahweh by worshiping this ephod there as if it were a god] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And it was for a snare to Gideon and to his house

The author is speaking as if this ephod had literally been a **snare** in which **Gideon** and **his house** were caught. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. See how you translated the same expression in 2:3. Alternate translation: [and this led to the ruin of Gideon and his house] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

to Gideon and to his house

Here, **house** means all the people descended from a particular person. It does not mean the building in which they lived. Alternate translation: [for Gideon and his descendants] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 8:28

So Midian was subdued to the face of the sons of Israel

In this verse and the next one, the author is saying what happened at the end of the story of the fight that Gideon led against the Midianites. Your language may have its own way of presenting such information. (See: **End of Story (p.718)**)

So Midian was subdued

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 Yahweh subdued Midian] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

So Midian was subdued to the face of

See the discussion of the term **to the face** in the Introduction to Judges. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [So Midian was subdued before] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and they did not continue to lift their head

The author is speaking as if the Midianites were literally looking down, as a subservient person would do in this culture. He means that they no longer assumed a position of dominance over the Israelites. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and they no longer oppressed the Israelites] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

their head

Since the author is referring to a group of people, if you retain this image, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **head**. Alternate translation: [their heads] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

And the land rested forty years

See how you translated the same expression in 3:11. Alternate translation: [And there were no more wars for 40 years] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

in the days of Gideon

See how you translated the word **days** in 2:7. Alternate translation: [throughout the lifetime of Gideon] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 8:29

And Jerubbaal, the son of Joash, went

As 6:32 and 7:1 explain, the word **Jerubbaal** is another name for the man also known as Gideon. The author may be using this name here to recall how Gideon tore down the altar to Baal that his father **Joash** had set up. He may be recalling that action to contrast it with Gideon setting up the golden ephod. So it would be in keeping with the author's purposes to use the name Jerubbaal here in your translation. But if it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain in the text that this is another name for Gideon. Alternate translation: [And Jerubbaal, the son of Joash, that is, Gideon, went] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 8:30

Now to Gideon were 70 sons coming from his thigh, for many wives were to him

In this verse and the next one, the author is providing background information to help readers understand what happens next in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Now to Gideon were 70 sons coming from his thigh, for many wives were to him

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: [Now Gideon had many wives, so he had 70 sons coming from his thigh] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

sons coming from his thigh

The author is using the expression **coming from his thigh** to mean that Gideon was the biological father of all these **sons**. Gideon did not adopt any sons or marry any widows who already had sons by their late husbands. Your language may have its own term or expression that communicates this meaning. Alternate translation: [sons of his own] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Judges 8:31

Abimelech

The author is introducing **Abimelech** as a new participant in the story. He will be the main character in Chapter 9. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

Abimelech

The author could assume that his original audience would know that the Hebrew name **Abimelech** means “my father is king.” While Gideon had refused to become the actual king of Israel, he may have given this name to his son to suggest that he was, in a sense, a king, since he had been offered the kingship. Unfortunately this seems to have made Abimelech ambitious to become an actual king, with disastrous consequences, as Chapter 9 describes. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate the meaning of this name explicitly in your translation. Alternate translation: [Abimelech, which means “my father is king”] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 8:32

in good old age

The author is using a common expression that describes a person being very old. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [when he was very old] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and he was buried

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 his family buried him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 8:33

Now it happened

The author is introducing a new event in the story. The ULT indicates this with the word **Now**. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

that & turned

The author is speaking as if the Israelites literally **turned** and faced or went in a different direction. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. See how you translated the same expression in 2:19. Alternate translation: [that ... changed their behavior] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and whored after the Baals

See how you translated the same expression in 2:17. Alternate translation: [and betrayed Yahweh by worshiping the Baals] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And they made for themselves Baal-Berith as a god

The expression **Baal-Berith** is the name of a false god. It means “master of the covenant.” This name also appears in 9:4 and in the form El-Berith (which means “god of the covenant”) in 9:46. (See: **How to Translate Names (p. 739)**)

Judges 8:34

And the sons of Israel did not remember Yahweh, their God, the one having delivered them from the hand of all of their enemies from around

Since Yahweh **delivered** the Israelites before they failed to **remember** him, in your translation you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they happened. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

And & did not remember

The author is speaking as if the Israelites literally **did not remember** who Yahweh was or what he had done for them. He means that they were not grateful to Yahweh and so did not respond the way grateful people would, with loyal devotion. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And ... did not gratefully worship] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 8:35

And they did not do covenant faithfulness with

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **covenant faithfulness**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [And they did not behave loyally toward] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

the house of Jerubbaal, Gideon

See how you translated the term **house** in 8:27. Alternate translation: [the descendants of Jerubbaal, that is, Gideon] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

the good that he did with Israel

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **good**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the good things that he did for Israel] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 9

Judges 9 Chapter Introduction

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

“upon one stone”

The author says in 9:5 that Abimelech and the men he hired brought all of his half-brothers, the other sons of Gideon, to “one stone” and killed them there. There seems to have been some symbolic significance to this action. The stone might have been a place of formal execution. Abimelech could have killed his half-brothers there to indicate that he had taken authority as king and so no threats to his rule should be allowed to exist. The stone might also have been a religious altar of some kind. Some interpreters believe that Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem were executing Gideon’s sons on a stone altar to avenge his desecration of Baal’s altar. This would explain why money from the temple of Baal-Berith paid for the action. However, since the exact purpose is unclear, it would be best to say no more about this in your translation than the original text does.

Jotham’s curse

In 9:20, Jotham, the one son of Gideon who survived Abimelech’s massacre, says, “may fire go forth from Abimelech and may it consume the lords of Shechem and Beth Millo, and may fire go forth from the lords of Shechem and from Beth Millo and may it consume Abimelech.” This was a curse. Jotham was expressing a desire for bad things to happen to the people who had murdered the sons of the man who had delivered them from the Midianites. What Jotham was ultimately wishing for was God’s justice. He wanted people who had done such bad things to have bad things happen to them. His curse was fulfilled in a literal way when Abimelech burned the lords of Shechem to death in 9:49. (See: **curse, cursed, cursing (p.855)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Jotham’s parable about the trees

In 9:8–15, Gideon’s surviving son, Jotham, tells the lords of Shechem a parable. A parable is a short story that teaches something that is true. It delivers its lesson in a way that is easy to understand and hard to forget. In many cases, the events in a parable could happen, though they did not actually happen. But in this case, they could not have happened, since this parable is about trees talking to each other about appointing a king. However, either way, the events of a parable are told only to teach the lesson that the listeners are meant to learn. See the first note to 9:8 for suggestions about how to introduce and begin this parable in your translation.

Did God send an “evil spirit” to Shechem?

In 9:23, the author says that God sent a “bad spirit” that made the lords of Shechem hostile toward Abimelech. The word that the ULT translates as “bad” can also mean “evil,” depending on the context. Some versions of the Bible in various languages translate it as “evil” here. Translators may have encountered that reading. However, the context does not seem to support it. The teaching of the Bible as a whole suggests that God would not use something evil to accomplish his purposes. Also, evil spirits have rebelled against God, and so they have forfeited the right to be part of what he is doing. Moreover, the word “spirit” does not necessarily refer to a spiritual being here. It could refer instead to the attitude that Abimelech and the lords of Shechem had toward one another. This would be the same meaning as in 8:3, “their spirit abated toward him,” which means, “they no longer had a hostile attitude

toward him." So it seems appropriate to understand the author to be saying in 9:23 that God caused hostility between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem.

Why did Gaal go and stand in the gate of Shechem?

In 9:35, the author says that "Gaal, the son of Ebed, went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city" of Shechem. He does not say explicitly why Gaal did this. Gaal does not seem to have known that Abimelech and his troops were nearby, since Zebul was able to convince him otherwise at first (as the next verse describes). Gaal, given his boast against Abimelech at the temple banquet, may have wanted to watch and see whether there was any danger. He may have expected to be able to see approaching troops while they were still far away and arrange a defense before they arrived. But since the author does not say explicitly why Gaal went out to the city gate, it would probably be best not to suggest any reason for this in your translation.

Why did the people of Shechem go out of their city the day after Abimelech defeated Gaal?

In 9:42, the author says that the people of Shechem went out of their city the day after Abimelech defeated Gaal, but he does not say why. In this verse, "went out" does not seem to describe a military operation, as it does in 9:39 in the case of Gaal. Instead, the people of Shechem seem to have thought mistakenly that they could let Gaal try to defeat Abimelech and become their ruler and that, if he failed, they could still serve Abimelech. So they were probably just going out to work in their fields. You may find it appropriate to use a different expression in your translation for "went out" in 9:42 than you do for that phrase in 9:39.

Judges 9:1

Now Abimelech, the son of Jerubbaal, went to Shechem

The author is introducing a new event in the story. The ULT indicates this with the word **Now**. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

the brothers of his mother, & the father of his mother

Your language may have its own term or expression for these relationships. Alternate translation: [his maternal uncles ... his maternal grandfather] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Judges 9:2

Please speak in the ears of all of the lords of Shechem, ‘What is better for you, 70 men ruling over you, all of the sons of Jerubbaal, or one man ruling over 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: [Please ask all the lords of Shechem out loud whether it is better for them to have 70 men, all the sons of Jerubbaal, ruling over them or to have one man ruling over them] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

speak in the ears of all of the lords of Shechem

Abimelech is using the term **ears** by association to mean hearing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [speak so that all of the lords of Shechem can hear you] or [say out loud to all of the lords of Shechem] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

What is better for you, 70 men ruling over you, all of the sons of Jerubbaal, or one man ruling over you

Abimelech wants his relatives to use the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [It is certainly better for you to have one man ruling over you than to have 70 men, all the sons of Jerubbaal, ruling over you!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

I {am} your bone and your flesh

Abimelech is using the two main components of the human body, **bone** and **flesh**, to mean the whole body, and when he tells the people of Shechem that he is part of the same body with them, he means that he is their close relative. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I am your own flesh and blood] or [I am your close relative] (See: **Merism (p.772)**)

Judges 9:3

in the ears of

See how you translated the same expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [in the hearing of] or [out loud to] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and their heart turned after Abimelech, for they said, “He {is} our brother

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: [and when they considered, “He is our brother,” their heart turned after Abimelech] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

and their heart turned after Abimelech

Here the **heart** represents the will and inclinations. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and they decided to make Abimelech their king] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

their heart

Since the author is referring to a group of people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **heart**. Alternate translation: [their hearts] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

He {is} our brother

The lords of Shechem are using the term **brother** to mean someone descended from the same ancestor. They do not mean that Abimelech is their literal brother, a child of the same parents. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [He is our kinsman] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

He {is} our brother

The lords of Shechem mean implicitly that they expect Abimelech to treat them better than the other sons of Gideon would because he is their relative, while the other sons are not. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [He is our kinsman, so he will treat us well] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

He {is} our brother

It may be more natural in your language to have an indirect quotation here. The UST models one way to do that. (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.711)**)

Judges 9:4

70 silver

The author is using the word **silver** by association to mean silver shekels, a unit of weight. Alternate translation: [70 shekels of silver] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

70 silver

A **silver** shekel weighed about 11 grams, so these **70** shekels weighed a little less than a kilogram, or almost two pounds. In your translation, you could use the ancient measurement and spell the word “shekel” the way it sounds in your language. You could also say “coins” rather than “shekels.” Alternatively, you could use the metric measurement given in the UST or another measurement that your language and culture customarily use, or you could use the ancient measurement in your translation and put a modern measurement in parentheses in the text or in a footnote. Alternate translation: [70 silver shekels] or [70 silver coins] (See: **Biblical Weight (p.685)**)

from the house of Baal-Berith

The author is speaking of the temple of Baal-Berith as if it had been a **house** in which that false god lived. Alternate translation: [from the temple of Baal-Berith] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

worthless and reckless men

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The idea is that because these **men** were **worthless**, that is, unprincipled, they were not careful to do what was right and avoid doing what was wrong, that is, they were **reckless**. So Abimelech could hire them to commit murder, as the next verse describes. Your language may have a comparable expression for people whose consciences do not keep them from doing wrong. Alternate translation: [hardened criminals] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

Judges 9:5

his brothers, the sons of Jerubbaal

The author is specifying that these **brothers** were sons of Abimelech's father **Jerubbaal** (Gideon) but not of his mother. Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [his paternal half-brothers] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

upon one stone

It appears that killing all **70** of these men **upon one stone** was a symbolic action of some kind. See the Introduction to this chapter for a discussion of what the significance of this action might have been and for suggestions of how to represent that in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

But Jotham was left, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, for he had hidden himself

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: [But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerubbaal, hid himself, and so he was left] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 700)**)

But Jotham was left

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [But Jotham survived] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 9:6

and all of Beth Millo

The expression **Beth Millo** could be: (1) an expression meaning “the house of Millo,” that is, the residents of a place that was described by that term, which means a fortification. This could be the same place as the “citadel” described in 9:46. These might therefore have been soldiers or military officers. Alternate translation: [and all of the officers from the citadel]; (2) the name of a town near Shechem. In that case, the author may be leaving the phrase **the lords of** to be understood implicitly in this second instance. Alternate translation: [and all of the leaders of the nearby town of Beth Millo] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

beside the oak of the pillar that {was} in Shechem

The author assumes that readers will know what **oak** and **pillar** he is referring to. Joshua had set up the pillar under that oak there in Shechem as a witness of the covenant that the Israelites had made with Yahweh to worship him alone as their God (Joshua 24:26–27). You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [beside the oak in Shechem under which Joshua had set up a pillar] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

beside the oak of the pillar that {was} in Shechem

Making Abimelech **king** next to this **pillar** under this **oak** tree was a symbolic action, given the history of the place. Since the lords of Shechem had given Abimelech money from the temple of Baal-Berith to establish himself as king, Baal-Berith was Abimelech’s patron god. So the location of this ceremony was intended to signify that, in place of their covenant with Yahweh, the people were installing a king who would lead them in the worship of Baal-Berith. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [under the patronage of Baal-Berith, beside the very same oak tree in Shechem where Joshua had set up a pillar to remind the Israelites of their covenant with Yahweh] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Judges 9:7

And they declared to Jotham

Here the author is not using **they** to refer to specific people. Use an expression for this that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And people told Jotham about this] or [And Jotham was told about this] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

And they declared to Jotham

The author is leaving some information implicit that he assumes readers will understand. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And they declared to Jotham that the leaders of Shechem had made Abimelech their king] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

on the top of Mount Gerizim

The author seems to mean that Jotham stood atop a rocky crag, several hundred feet high, that overlooked Shechem, rather than on the very summit of Mount Gerizim. From there the leaders of Shechem could have heard him but he would have been safe from capture. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [on a crag high up on Mount Gerizim] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Mount Gerizim

Jotham choosing **Mount Gerizim** as the place from which to shout his message was a symbolic action. In Deuteronomy 11:29 and Deuteronomy 27:12–26, Moses had commanded the Israelites to proclaim blessings for keeping Yahweh's law from Mount Gerizim and curses for breaking Yahweh's law from the facing Mount Ebal. Joshua 8:32–34 records how Joshua carried out this command. So the location was a reminder of how the people of Israel would be blessed if they remained faithful to Yahweh and cursed if they did not. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [Mount Gerizim, opposite where curses had been proclaimed against unfaithfulness to Yahweh] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

and he lifted his voice and cried out

The author is using a common expression that means that Jotham spoke very loudly. (The rocky cliffs in this area would have amplified and projected his voice.) If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and in a loud voice he cried out] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Listen to me, lords of Shechem, that God may listen to you

Jotham is making a threat that he assumes the lords of Shechem will understand. He is implicitly threatening that God will not listen to their prayers if they do not listen to him, since God has sent him to them with a message. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [If you do not listen to me, you lords of Shechem, then God will not listen to you when you pray, because I am bringing you a message from God] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Listen & to you

Here and through the end of Jotham's speech in verse 20, the pronouns **you** and "your" are plural and the imperative verbs have plural forms because Jotham is addressing a group of people, the **lords of Shechem**. So use plural forms in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

Judges 9:8

Going, the trees went to anoint a king over them

To make the lords of Shechem recognize that they will have much trouble because they have made Abimelech their king, Jotham tells them a story. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. You could also begin this story in the way that made-up stories usually begin in your language. Alternate translation: [Then Jotham told the lords of Shechem a story to make them realize that they would have much trouble because they had made Abimelech their king. He said, “Once upon a time, the trees went to anoint a king over them] (See: **Parables (p.795)**)

Going, the trees went to anoint a king over them

Jotham is repeating the verb “go” (saying **Going** and **went**) in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [The trees went around looking for someone they could anoint as their king] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

And they said to the olive tree, ‘Reign over us

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [And they asked the olive tree to reign over them] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Reign over us

This is an imperative, but it communicates a respectful request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a respectful request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” to make this clear. Alternate translation: [Please reign over us] (See: **Imperatives — Other Uses (p.750)**)

Judges 9:9

But the olive tree said to them, ‘Should I discontinue my fatness, which, by it, they honor gods and men, that I should go to wave over the trees

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [But the olive tree asked them whether it should discontinue its fatness, by which they honor gods and men, in order to go wave over the trees] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Should I discontinue my fatness, which, by it, they honor gods and men, that I should go to wave over the trees

The olive tree in the story is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [I am not going to discontinue my fatness, by which they honor gods and men, in order to go wave over the trees!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Should I discontinue my fatness

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **fatness**, you could express the same idea in another way. The tree is referring specifically to the oil that is made from its olives. Alternate translation: [Should I stop producing oil] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

which, by it, they honor gods and men

Here the author is not using **they** to refer to specific people. Use an expression for this that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [by which people honor gods and men] or [by which gods and men are honored] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

gods

The word translated as **gods** is plural in form, but it could mean either: (1) gods, as in the ULT. (2) God. Alternate translation: [God] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.848)**)

that I should go to wave over the trees

The olive tree is using the term **wave** to suggest implicitly that being a king over the other trees would not be as worthwhile or productive as continuing to make olives for oil. Trees stay rooted in the ground, so the olive tree is using the word **wave**, meaning to sway back and forth in the wind, to represent how kings go around taking care of various official matters. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:10

So the trees said to the fig tree, ‘Come, you reign over us

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [So the trees asked the fig tree to come and reign over them] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 825)**)

Come, you reign over us

The trees are stating the pronoun **you** separately, even though the verb translated as **reign** already includes this meaning. They are doing that to emphasize what they want the personal role of the fig tree to be. The idea is that if the olive tree will not be their king, then the trees would like the fig tree to be their king. If a speaker of your language would use an explicit pronoun for the same purpose, you may want to use that construction in your translation. If not, your language may have other ways of showing the meaning here. Alternate translation: [Then you be the one to reign over us] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 9:11

But the fig tree said to them, ‘Should I discontinue my sweetness and my good fruit, that I should go to wave over the trees

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [But the fig tree asked them whether it should discontinue its sweetness and its good fruit in order to go wave over the trees] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Should I discontinue my sweetness and my good fruit, that I should go to wave over the trees

See how you translated the similar question in 9:9. Alternate translation: [I am not going to discontinue my sweetness and my good fruit in order to go wave over the trees!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

my sweetness and my good fruit

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **sweetness**, you could express the same idea in another way. (The tree is expressing a single idea by using two phrases connected with **and**.) Alternate translation: [my good, sweet fruit] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

that I should go to wave over the trees

See how you translated the same expression in 9:9. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:12

So the trees said to the vine, ‘Come, you reign over us

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [So the trees asked the vine to come and reign over them] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p. 825)**)

Come, you reign over us

See how you translated the same expression in 9:10. Alternate translation: [Then you be the one to reign over us] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 9:13

But the vine said to them, ‘Should I discontinue my new wine, cheering gods and men, that I should go to wave over the trees

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [But the vine asked them whether it should discontinue its new wine, which cheers gods and men, in order to go wave over the trees] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Should I discontinue my new wine, cheering gods and men, that I should go to wave over the trees

See how you translated the similar question in 9:9. Alternate translation: [I am not going to discontinue my new wine, which cheers gods and men, in order to go wave over the trees!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

gods

The word translated as **gods** is plural in form, but it could mean either: (1) gods, as in the ULT. (2) God. Alternate translation: [God] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.848)**)

that I should go to wave over the trees

See how you translated the same expression in 9:9. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:14

So all of the trees said to the thornbush, ‘Come, you reign over us

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [So all of the trees asked the thornbush to come and reign over them] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

all of the trees

With the word **all**, Jotham is implicitly including the trees that had refused to become king. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [all of the trees, including the ones that could have become king themselves] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Come, you reign over us

See how you translated the same expression in 9:10. Alternate translation: [Then you be the one to reign over us] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 9:15

And the thornbush said to the trees, ‘If in truth you are anointing me as king over you, come, shelter in my shade. But if not, may fire go forth from the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [And the thornbush told the trees that if in truth they were anointing him as king over them, then they should come and shelter in his shade. But if not, then may fire go forth from the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

in truth

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **truth**, you could express the same idea in another way. In this context. the word translated as **truth** refers to faithfully fulfilling relational responsibilities towards another person. The thornbush wants to make sure that the other trees sincerely want it to be their king and that they are not anointing it simply because the other trees refused. Alternate translation: [truly] or [in good faith] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

come, shelter in my shade

In the story, the thornbush is speaking as if the other trees would literally **shelter** in its **shade**, that is, find protection there from the heat of the sun. This was an image that people in this culture used to describe coming under the protection of a ruler and accordingly accepting an obligation to obey that ruler. Isaiah 30:2, for example, speaks of the Judeans sheltering in the shadow of Egypt, meaning that they agreed to allow Pharaoh to rule them in exchange for his protection. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [then obey me as your king] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

come, shelter in my shade

Jotham’s parable is designed to make the lords of Shechem realize that they have made a great mistake by giving Abimelech the means to kill all of his brothers and then anointing him as king. One way the parable does this is by having one of its characters, the thornbush, say something that is the opposite of the way things really are. A thornbush does not create any **shade** in which anyone or anything can **shelter**. Similarly, Abimelech will not do anything worthwhile for the people of Shechem. He will only cause great trouble for them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could reflect in your translation how what the thornbush says is the opposite of the way things are. Alternate translation: [come under the shade of my tiny branches] (See: **Irony (p.761)**)

But if not

The thornbush 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: [But if you are not anointing me in truth] or [But if you are not sincerely intending to obey me as your king] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

may fire go forth from the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon

The thornbush is speaking of **fire** as if it were a living thing that could **go forth** by itself. It is actually making a threat that it will start a fire if it discovers that the other trees have not anointed it king sincerely, that is, if they are

not going to obey it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [then I will start a fire that will burn up even the cedars of Lebanon] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

the thornbush

The thornbush is speaking about itself in the third person, as subjects would speak of and to a king in this culture. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: [me] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.726)**)

Judges 9:16

So now, if you have acted in truth and in integrity and made Abimelech reign, and if you have done good with Jerubbaal and with his house, and if according to the deserving of his hands you have done to him

In verses 16–19, Jotham is describing a condition in which a second event should take place only if a first event has taken place. He makes a series of "if" statements in verses 16 and 19 (suggesting in verses 17 and 18 that these statements are not actually true), and then in the second half of verse 19 he says what the lords of Shechem should do if they have done what he has described. These verses are all one long sentence. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could translate them as a series of shorter sentences. Alternate translation: [So now, suppose you have acted in truth and in integrity and made Abimelech reign. Suppose you have done good with Jerubbaal and with his house. Suppose that according to the deserving of his hands you have done to him] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.698)**)

So now, if you have acted

Jotham has finished telling the story of the trees, and he is using the expression **So now** to introduce his explanation of the implications of the story. You could indicate this more explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Now this is how my story applies to you: if you have acted] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.705)**)

if you have acted in truth and in integrity and made Abimelech reign

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **truth** and **integrity**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [if you have acted truly and genuinely and made Abimelech reign] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

if you have acted in truth and in integrity and made Abimelech reign

In his explanation of the parable, Jotham carries the implications of the idea of **truth** one step farther than in the parable. That term refers to faithfully fulfilling relational responsibilities towards another person. In a sense, just as the trees were not doing right by the thornbush by anointing it king just because the other trees refused, so the lords of Shechem are not doing right by Abimelech by supporting his murderous plot to become king. They should have encouraged him to be honest and humble and peaceful instead. But the person they are most significantly not doing right by is Gideon. Jotham will develop this idea at length in the verses that follow. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [if you have really been fair to Gideon by making Abimelech reign] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

in truth and in integrity

The terms **truth** and **integrity** mean similar things. Jotham 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: [in complete sincerity] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

his house

Here, **house** means all the people descended from a particular person. Alternate translation: [his descendants] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

according to the deserving of his hands

Jotham is using the word **hands** to mean what his father **Jerubbaal** (Gideon) did for the Israelites, by association with the way people use their hands to do things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [according to what his actions deserved] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 9:17

that my father fought for you and threw his life in front and delivered you from the hand of Midian

If you have decided to translate the long sentence in verses 16–19 as a series of shorter sentences, you could make this verse a sentence of its own. Alternate translation: [Now consider how my father fought for you and threw his life in front and delivered you from the hand of Midian] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.698)**)

that

Jotham is providing background information to remind the lords of Shechem what Gideon had done for the Israelites. They already know this information, but he is bringing it their attention and emphasizing it to show that they have not treated Gideon and his family "according to the deserving of his hands," as he said in the previous verse. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. Alternate translation: [considering that] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

and threw his life in front

Jotham is using a common expression that means that Gideon risked his life by leading the armies of Israel and thus going **in front** of them into battle against the Midianites. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and put his life on the line] or [and risked his life] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 9:18

but today you have arisen against the house of my father and have killed his sons, 70 men upon one stone, and you have made Abimelech, the son of his female slave, reign over the lords of Shechem because he is your brother

The word translated as **but** shows that in this verse, Jotham is drawing a contrast between the way the lords of Shechem should implicitly have treated Gideon and what they actually did to his descendants. In your translation, introduce this contrast in a way that is natural in your language. Since this contrasting material is supplemental to the if-then condition that Jotham develops over the course of verses 16–19, you may want to use punctuation to set it apart in some way, such as by setting it off with dashes, as the ULT does, or by putting it in parentheses. (See: **Connect — Contrast Relationship (p.692)**)

but today you have arisen against the house of my father and have killed his sons, 70 men upon one stone, and you have made Abimelech, the son of his female slave, reign over the lords of Shechem because he is your brother

If you have decided to translate the long sentence in verses 16–19 as a series of shorter sentences, you could make this verse a sentence of its own. You may wish to state some implicit ideas explicitly for the sake of continuity. Alternate translation: [But you have not treated my father and his family fairly. Instead, today you have arisen against them and have killed his sons, 70 men upon one stone, and you have made Abimelech, the son of his female slave, reign over the lords of Shechem because he is your brother] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.698)**)

have arisen

Jotham is using the word **arisen** within a common expression in which it ordinarily describes subjects revolting against their rulers. In 8:23, Gideon refused to become king and to have his son and grandson be kings after him, so the lords of Shechem did not literally revolt against the rule of Gideon's family. Jotham's point may be that if anyone were to be their king, it should have been Gideon's legal heirs (just as the olive tree, fig tree, and grapevine would have made better kings than the thornbush), so in that sense making Abimelech king was a revolt against those who should have been accepted as authorities. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [have revolted] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

the house of

See how you translated the term **house** in 9:16. Alternate translation: [the descendants of] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

the son of his female slave

The author says in 8:31 that Abimelech's mother was Gideon's "concubine." This means that she was a legal but secondary wife whose children did not have inheritance rights. While female slaves sometimes did become the concubines of their masters, not every concubine was a female slave. Abimelech's mother seems to have come from a family of standing in Shechem; Gideon may have married her as a concubine rather than as a full wife because she was a foreigner, from the surviving Canaanite population of Shechem. So Jotham is disparaging her by calling her a **female slave**. His main point seems to be that Abimelech has no rights of inheritance and thus no claim to become king. (Unfortunately Gideon suggested otherwise when he named this son Abimelech, meaning "my father is king.") You could bring out this emphasis in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [who has no rights of inheritance and so no claim to become king as Gideon's son] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

is your brother

See how you translated the term **brother** in 9:3. Alternate translation: [is your kinsman] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 9:19

now if you have acted in truth and in integrity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, rejoice in Abimelech, and may he also rejoice in you

Jotham is concluding the long hypothetical statement he began in 9:16. He is repeating the **if** part of it for clarity, since he has said many other things after first stating that part. If it would be helpful in your language, you could explicitly state the implied "then" before that part of the statement. If you have been translating verses 16–19 as a series of shorter sentences, you could make this verse a sentence of its own and indicate that Jotham is introducing his conclusion here. Alternate translation: [So to conclude, if you have acted in truth and in integrity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, then rejoice in Abimelech, and may he also rejoice in you] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.698)**)

in truth and in integrity

See how you translated the same expression in 9:16. Alternate translation: [in complete sincerity] (See: **Doublet (p. 713)**)

Judges 9:20

But if not, may fire go forth

Jotham is describing a further condition in which a second event would take place if a first event had. If it would be helpful in your language, you could explicitly state the implied “then” before the second part of this statement. Alternate translation: [But if not, then may fire go forth] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.698)**)

But if not

Jotham 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: [But if you have not acted in truth and in integrity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

may fire go forth from Abimelech, and may it consume the lords of Shechem and Beth Millo, and may fire go forth from the lords of Shechem and from Beth Millo, and may it consume Abimelech

Jotham is speaking as if **fire** would literally **go forth** from Abimelech and burn up the lords of Shechem and Beth Millo and as if fire from them would also burn up Abimelech. Jotham is using fire to represent the destruction of warfare. He means that, if Abimelech and the lords of Shechem have not treated Gideon and his family right, then he hopes and expects that they will turn against each other and fight a war and destroy each other. (Part of what he said actually was fulfilled literally, when Abimelech burned the tower of Shechem, as verse 49 describes.) If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [may Abimelech and you lords of Shechem fight a war against each other that destroys all of you] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 9:21

Then Jotham escaped and fled

While the words **escaped** and **fled** mean similar things, the author does not seem to be using them together for emphasis (for example, to mean “hurriedly ran away”) or to express a single idea through them (for example, to mean “escaped by running away”). He seems to mean implicitly that Jotham **escaped** from Shechem, that is, he was able to shout his message without being captured, and then **fled** to the city of Beer where he was apparently safe from Abimelech. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Then Jotham escaped from Shechem and fled for safety] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

from the face of

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:3. Alternate translation: [away from the presence of] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

his brother

Jotham and Abimelech had the same father but not the same mother. Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [his father’s son] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Judges 9:22

Israel

The author is using all of **Israel** to mean one part of Israel. The narrative suggests that Abimelech ruled primarily over the city of Shechem and its surrounding towns. (Recall from 1:7 that in Canaan at this time, each city and town had a ruler who had the title of “king.”) His authority and influence may have extended somewhat farther from there, through the territory of Ephraim and possibly into neighboring tribes. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [that part of Israel] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 9:23

Then God sent a bad spirit between Abimelech and between the lords of Shechem

See the discussion of this statement in the Introduction to this chapter. The word **spirit** could refer to: (1) the attitude that Abimelech and the lords of Shechem had towards one another. Alternate translation: [Then God caused hostility between Abimelech and the lords of Shechem]; (2) a spiritual being. Alternate translation: [Then God sent a spiritual being that caused Abimelech and the lords of Shechem to fight with each other] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Then God sent

The author is introducing a new event in the story. The ULT indicates this with the word **Then**. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

Judges 9:24

the violence of the 70 sons of Jerubbaal to come, and their blood to put, upon Abimelech

This verse is giving the reason why God “sent a bad spirit,” as the previous verse described. It is not indicating why or how the lords of Shechem “dealt treacherously” with Abimelech. You may wish to clarify this for your readers. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [God did this so that the violence of the 70 sons of Jerubbaal would come upon, and to put their blood upon, Abimelech] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

the violence of the 70 sons of Jerubbaal

The author is using this possessive form to describe the **violence** that was committed against **the 70 sons of Jerubbaal**, not to describe any violence that they committed. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the violence that was committed against the 70 sons of Jerubbaal] or [the violence that the 70 sons of Jerubbaal suffered] (See: **Possession (p.809)**)

and their blood to put, upon Abimelech their brother who killed them

The expression **to put** the **blood** of one person on another means to hold responsible and punish that other person for killing the first one. This expression uses the term **blood** by association to mean death. Alternate translation: [and to hold their brother Abimelech, who killed them, responsible for their deaths] or [and to avenge their deaths by punishing their brother Abimelech, who killed them] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

their brother & his brothers

See how you translated the term “brother” in 9:21. Alternate translation: [their father’s son … his father’s sons] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

who strengthened his hands

This expression means that the lords of Shechem enabled Abimelech to do something he could not otherwise have done. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who enabled him] or [who gave him the means] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 9:25

against him

The phrase **against him** could mean: (1) to the disadvantage of Abimelech, that is, discrediting his authority and undermining the stability of his rule. Alternate translation: [to his disadvantage]; (2) to watch for Abimelech and try to capture him. Alternate translation: [to try to capture him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

on the tops of the hills

By **hills**, the author may mean Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. (This word can describe either hills or mountains.) The city of Shechem was in a valley between those two mountains. See how you translated the expression “on the top of Mount Gerizim” in 9:7. Alternate translation: [up high on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

and it was told to Abimelech

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 someone told Abimelech about this] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 9:26

Gaal, & Ebed

The word **Ebed** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

with his brothers

Here the term **brothers** probably does not describe men who have the same parents. It could be referring to: (1) a band of men who traveled about with Gaal. Some of them may have been related to him, but they were not all necessarily his relatives. Alternate translation: [with a band of men]; (2) men who were related to Gaal but who were not all necessarily his literal brothers. Alternate translation: [with some of his kinsmen] (See: **Metaphor (p. 774)**)

Judges 9:27

And they went out

The author is using the pronoun **they** to mean the people of the city of Shechem. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And the people of Shechem went out] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

and cut off their vineyards

The author is using the term **vineyards** by association to mean the grapes on the vines in the vineyards. Alternate translation: [and cut clusters of grapes off the vines in their vineyards] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and trod

The author is leaving some information implicit that he assumes readers will understand. He means that the people of Shechem **trod** on the grapes that they had picked. That is, they stepped on them to squeeze the juice out of them so that they could make wine from it. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and squeezed the grapes to make wine] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

and they made offerings

Based on its one other use in Leviticus 19:24, the term translated as **offerings** refers to fruit that people brought into a temple and ate, or drank as juice, as part of a harvest thanksgiving celebration. Alternate translation: [and they prepared fruit offerings to give thanks for their harvest] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

into} the house of their god

The author is speaking of the temple of the **god** that the people of Shechem worshiped as if it were a **house** in which that false god lived. See how you translated the similar expression in 9:4. Alternate translation: [into the temple of their god] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 9:28

Who {is} Abimelech, and who {is} Shechem, that we should serve him? {Is he} not the son of Jerubbaal, and {is not} Zebul his deputy

Gaal is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate these questions as statements or exclamations. Alternate translation: [We should not serve Abimelech, even though he is from Shechem! After all, he is the son of Jerubbaal! And Zebul is just somebody he appointed] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Who {is} Abimelech, and who {is} Shechem, that we should serve him

Gaal is using the name **Shechem** by association to mean Abimelech, probably because Abimelech is from Shechem. Alternate translation: [Who is Abimelech? Who is this man from Shechem, that we should serve him?] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Who {is} Abimelech, and who {is} Shechem, that we should serve him

The first two phrases mean basically the same thing. Gaal is referring to the same person by the names **Abimelech** and **Shechem**. However, there is a slight difference in meaning. The second phrase makes a mild concession, indicating that perhaps there is some basis to serve Abimelech, since he is from the city of Shechem and his mother is related to the people who live there. (In 9:3, the people of the city say of Abimelech, “He is our brother,” meaning “our kinsman.”) You may wish to indicate this in your translation. Alternate translation: [Why should we serve Abimelech, even though he is from Shechem?] (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

we should serve him

Gaal is using the pronoun **we** to refer to himself and his listeners, so use the inclusive form of that word if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.724)**)

Is he} not the son of Jerubbaal

Gaal is implicitly suggesting a reason why the people of Shechem should not serve Abimelech. His point is that Abimelech is the son of somebody outside their people group, an Israelite. Gaal may be using the name Jerubbaal instead of Gideon to make a further point, that Abimelech’s father opposed the worship of Baal, while the people of Shechem are devoted to Baal. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [He is the son of Jerubbaal, an Israelite who opposed the worship of Baal] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

and {is not} Zebul his deputy

The author could have indicated in 9:22, when he briefly described Abimelech’s reign, that Abimelech appointed a man named Zebul as his **deputy** to govern Shechem whenever he was not present there. However, the author is instead reporting what Gaal said at this festival as a way of introducing **Zebul** as a new participant in the story. If this would not be clear to your readers, you could explain in a footnote that Zebul was a man whom Abimelech had appointed to govern Shechem whenever he himself was away from the city. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

and {is not} Zebul

The word **Zebul** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Serve the men of Hamor

Gaal may be using the plural form **men** to indicate what the people of Shechem should regularly do. However, on this occasion, he means that they should serve a specific descendant of Hamor, their ancestor, instead of Abimelech. Alternate translation: [You should always be serving one of the descendants of Hamor] or [You should be serving a fellow descendant of Hamor instead] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.848)**)

the father of Shechem

While a man named **Hamor** had literally been the **father** of a man named **Shechem** (Genesis 34:2), Gaal probably means that Hamor was the ancestor of the people who lived in Shechem. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the founder of Shechem] or [the ancestor of the people of Shechem] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

But we, why should we serve him

Gaal is stating the pronoun **we** separately, even though the verb translated as **should we serve** already includes this meaning. He is doing that in order to contrast Abimelech's ancestry with the ancestry of the people of Shechem. If a speaker of your language would use an explicit pronoun for the same purpose, you may want to use that construction in your translation. If not, your language may have other ways of showing the meaning here. Alternate translation: [But why should we, who are descendants of Hamor, serve Abimelech, who is an Israelite?] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

But we, why should we serve him

Gaal is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [But we, we should not serve Abimelech!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 9:29

Now who will give this people into my hand

The question **who will give** was a characteristic way for a Hebrew speaker to introduce a wish. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this question as a statement or exclamation expressing a wish. Alternate translation: [I wish that someone would give this people into my hand!] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

And he said to Abimelech, “Increase your army and come out

Gaal is speaking to Abimelech even though he is not present and cannot hear him. Gaal is doing this to show in a strong way how he feels about Abimelech. He is actually speaking to the people who can hear him, the others who are present at this feast. If your readers might not understand why Gaal is speaking to someone who is not present, you could translate his words as if he were speaking directly to others who are present. You could also describe what Gaal is doing here, as the UST does. Alternate translation, continuing the direct quotation: [I would fight against him and his whole army and defeat him!] (See: **Apostrophe (p.670)**)

Increase your army

Gaal is probably not saying that Abimelech should seek a larger number of troops than are already at his disposal. He is probably saying that even if Abimelech summoned all of the men who would willingly serve in his army, he would not be afraid to fight a battle with him. (Abimelech probably ordinarily traveled with just a small number of bodyguards, and Gaal is boasting that he could defeat a much larger force than that.) You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [mobilize your forces] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:30

the words of Gaal

The author is using the term **words** to represent what Gaal said by using words. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [what Gaal said] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and his nose burned

See the discussion of this term in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:14. Alternate translation: [and he became furious] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 9:31

in deceit

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **deceit**, you could express the same idea in another way. The idea is that Zebul sent the messengers openly but pretended that he was sending them for some other reason. The idea is not that Zebul sent the messengers secretly so that no one knew he had sent them. Alternate translation: [deceitfully] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Behold, & and behold

See the discussion of this term in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 1:2. Alternate translation: [Now listen ... and pay attention] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and his brothers {are} come to Shechem

See how you translated the similar expression in 9:26. Alternate translation: [has come to Shechem with a band of men] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

the city

Zebul's messengers are using the term **city** by association to mean the people of the city. Alternate translation: [the people of the city] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 9:32

So now

The messengers are not using the word **now** to mean “at this moment.” They are using the word to draw attention to the important point that follows. Alternate translation: [So this is what you should do:] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.705)**)

arise {& and hide

While these are imperatives, the messengers are using them to communicate a recommendation from Zebul rather than a command. Translate them with a form that someone would use in your language to address a superior. Alternate translation: [I would recommend that you arise ... and hide] (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p. 764)**)

arise

See how you translated the word **arise** in 4:14. While Abimelech and his troops would have to get up out of bed in order to travel to Shechem **at night**, the meaning is not simply that they should do that, but that they should take action to defeat the rebellion. Alternate translation: [get going] or, perhaps more deferentially, [take action] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

in the field

Since 9:36 indicates that Abimelech and his troops launched their attack from “the tops of the hills,” and the people of Shechem grew their crops in the valley between the hills, not up on the hills, the messengers are probably using the word **field** to mean the open area outside the city. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [in the countryside] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:33

you shall start early and you shall rush & against you, and you shall do & your hand

The words **you** and **your** are singular throughout this verse because the messengers are addressing Abimelech directly. However, they are speaking of what he and his troops will do, so it may be more natural for you to use plural forms if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

he

The pronoun **he** refers to Gaal. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [Gaal] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

according to what your hand finds

The messengers are using a common expression that means that Abimelech would do what the opportunity allowed and the situation directed. In other words, Zebul was not making any further recommendation about what Abimelech should do at this point but leaving it to his discretion. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [as the opportunity presents] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

And it shall happen in the morning, as the sun rises, you shall start early and you shall rush against the city

The messengers are continuing to communicate a recommendation from Zebul. Translate this using forms that someone would use in your language to address a superior. Alternate translation: [And I would recommend that in the morning, as the sun rises, you start early and rush against the city] (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.764)**)

Judges 9:34

So & arose

See how you translated the similar expression in 9:32. Alternate translation: [So ... got going] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and they ambushed against Shechem

The verb translated as **ambushed** here is the same one that was translated as “ambushers” in 9:25 and as “hide” in 9:32. Abimelech and his troops followed Zebul’s advice to hide so that they could not be seen and so that they could launch a surprise attack in the morning. Alternate translation: [and they set up an ambush against Shechem] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:35

And Gaal, the son of Ebed, went out and stood in the entrance of the gate of the city

See the discussion of this verse in the Introduction to this chapter. Since the author does not say explicitly why Gaal **stood in the entrance of the gate of the city**, it would probably be best to say no more about this in your translation than the original text does. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

and & arose from the ambush

In this context, the word **arose** does refer literally to standing up from a sitting or lying position. Alternate translation: [and ... stood up from where they had been hiding] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 9:36

to Zebul

The author expects readers to understand implicitly that Zebul had gone out to the city gate with Gaal. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [to Zebul, who had gone out to the gate with him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

But Zebul said to him

The author expects readers to understand implicitly that Zebul is not sharing an honest opinion with Gaal. Zebul is trying to deceive him into thinking that Abimelech has not yet arrived, so that Gaal will not be able to prepare his defenses sufficiently. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [But Zebul said to him deceptively] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 672)**)

Judges 9:37

people {are} coming down

Here the expression **coming down** is plural, even though the subject, **people**, is singular. In the previous verse, with the same subject, “coming down” was singular. This suggests that Gaal was speaking of a single group of people in the previous verse and that here he is using **people** in a collective sense to mean several groups of people. He is now able to distinguish the separate companies, as Abimelech’s troops get closer. If it would be helpful to your readers, you may wish to reflect this distinction in your translation. The UST models one way to do that. (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.848)**)

the navel of the land

This expression could be: (1) a description of some geographic feature. Alternate translation: [the center of the land] or [the crest of that hill]; (2) the name of one of the hills around Shechem. Gaal could be pointing out a specific location by name, as he does later in the verse by naming a large tree. If you represent this as a name, you could translate the meaning into your own language, or you could use the words of the Hebrew text and spell them the way they sound in your language. Alternate translation: [the Navel of the Land] or [Tabbur Haarets] (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.709)**)

the Oak of the Diviners

This expression could be: (1) the name of a large tree near Shechem. You could translate the meaning of this name into your own language, or you could use the words of the Hebrew text and spell them the way they sound in your language. Alternate translation: [the Fortunetellers’ Tree] or [Elon Meonenim]; (2) a description of some geographic feature. Alternate translation: [that large tree over there where people tell fortunes] (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.709)**)

Judges 9:38

Where now {is} your mouth

Zebul is referring to the confidence that led Gaal to boast against Abimelech by association with the **mouth** with which Gaal made this boast. Alternate translation: [Where now is your confidence] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Where now {is} your mouth, {by} which you said

Zebul is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You no longer seem as confident as when you said] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

by} which you said, 'Who {is} Abimelech, that we should serve him

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [by which you asked who Abimelech was, that you should serve him] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Who {is} Abimelech, that we should serve him

Gaal was using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [We should not serve Abimelech!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

that we should serve him

In the statement he made in 9:28, which Zebul is quoting here, Gaal was using the pronoun **we** to refer to himself and his listeners, so use the inclusive form of that word if your language marks that distinction. If you translate this statement as an indirect quotation, the word "you" that is equivalent to **we** should be plural. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive 'We' (p.724)**)

Is} this not the people that you despised

Zebul is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [This is the people that you despised!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Is} this not the people & with it

Gaal is thinking of these **people** as a group and so he is using the singular pronoun **it**. It may be more natural in your language to use a plural pronoun. Alternate translation: [Are these not the people ... with them] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

Judges 9:39

So Gaal went out & and he fought with Abimelech

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, the author is using **Gaal** and **Abimelech** to represent them and their armies. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [So Gaal led his soldiers into battle ... against Abimelech and his soldiers] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

to the face of the lords of Shechem

See the discussion of the term **to the face** in the Introduction to Judges. Alternate translation: [before the lords of Shechem] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 9:40

And Abimelech pursued him

The author is using the last thing that happened in this battle to mean everything that happened in the battle. Abimelech and his army defeated Gaal and his men, so they retreated, and Abimelech **pursued** them. Alternate translation: [And Abimelech routed him] or [And Abimelech defeated him so that he gave up and retreated] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

wounded

The author is using the adjective **wounded** 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 adjective with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [wounded soldiers] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.782)**)

And & fell

The author is using the word **fell** to mean ”died,” by association with the way that people fall down when they die. Alternate translation: [And ... died] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

up to the entrance of the gate

The implication is that Gaal’s men would have been safe if they had been able to go through the **gate** back into the city. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [before they could get safely back inside the city gate] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:41

in Arumah

The word **Arumah** is the name of a town. It was about five miles away from Shechem. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

and his brothers

See how you translated the same expression in 9:26. Alternate translation: [and his band of men] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 9:42

that & went out

It is clear from the narrative that this action was not completed by the time it was **reported** to Abimelech. It was something that the people were planning to do and that was in process. It may be more natural in your language to use a different verb tense to indicate this. Alternate translation: [that ... were going out] (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.764)**)

to} the field

The author is using the word **field** to mean all of the cultivated land around Shechem. It may be more natural in your language to use the plural form of that word, here and in the next two verses. Alternate translation: [to the fields] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

and they reported {this} to Abimelech

Here the author is not using **they** to refer to specific people. Use an expression for this that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and the people reported this to Abimelech] or [and this was reported to Abimelech] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 9:43

the people & the people

In its first instance in this verse, the expression **the people** refers to Abimelech's army, as in 9:34–38. In its second instance, this expression refers to the citizens of Shechem, as in 9:42. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

and hid

See how you translated the word "hide" in 9:32. Alternate translation: [and set an ambush] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:44

For Abimelech

In this verse, the author provides fuller details about how Abimelech and his soldiers killed the people of Shechem who had gone out into the fields, as he described briefly at the end of the previous verse. The ULT indicates this with the word **For**. Your language may have a connecting word or phrase that you can use in your translation to indicate that this verse is providing fuller details about what the author has just said. Alternate translation: [They were able to do this because Abimelech] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.705)**)

And they stood

The context indicates that the pronoun **they** refers to Abimelech and the soldiers who were with him in one of the three **companies** into which he had divided his army. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And Abimelech and the men who were with him in one company stood] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

at} the entrance of the gate of the city

The author means implicitly that Abimelech and one group of soldiers went to the **gate of the city** to keep anyone who was in the fields from getting back into the city for safety. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [at the entrance of the gate of the city to keep anyone from getting back into the city for safety] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:45

and sowed it {with} salt

The author is speaking as if Abimelech literally took **salt** and **sowed** it as seed that would grow up from the ground. He means that Abimelech scattered salt all over the ruins of Shechem the way people in this culture scattered seed that they were planting. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and scattered salt all over it] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and sowed it {with} salt

Scattering salt all over the ruins of Shechem was a symbolic action. Abimelech did this to express the wish that the city would always be an uninhabited wasteland, like a salt desert. It was as if he was saying, “May no one ever live here again.” If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [and sowed it with salt to express the wish that it would always be an uninhabited wasteland] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Judges 9:46

the lords of the tower of Shechem

Here the author is probably re-introducing participants to the story whom he has mentioned earlier. They seem to be the same people who are described in 9:6 as “Beth Millo,” officers from a military post near the city that included its defensive tower. If your language has its own way of re-introducing participants, you can use it here in your translation. Alternate translation: [the officers of the military post that included the tower of Shechem] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

the house of

See how you translated the same expression in 9:4. Alternate translation: [the temple of] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

El-Berith

The expression **El-Berith** seems to be another name for the false god that is called Baal-Berith in 8:33 and 9:4. El-Berith means “god of the covenant,” while Baal-Berith means “master of the covenant.” So that readers will know that this is the same false god, you could use the name Baal-Berith here, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: [their false god] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 9:47

And it was reported to Abimelech

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 someone reported to Abimelech] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 667)**)

Judges 9:48

and Abimelech took axes in his hand

In this context, as the similar uses in 1 Samuel 14:34 and Jeremiah 38:10 show, this expression means that Abimelech brought axes with him. That is, he had his men bring as many axes with them as they could. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and Abimelech brought axes with him] or [and Abimelech had his men bring axes with them] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 9:49

and they burned the citadel upon them with fire

It might seem that the expression **burned ... with fire** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [and they used them to set fire to the citadel] or [and they burned the citadel with them] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 9:50

Then Abimelech went to Thebez and encamped against Thebez

The author is leaving some information implicit that he assumes readers will understand. The people of **Thebez** had apparently also rebelled against Abimelech. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:51

all of the men and women and all of the lords of the city

The author is making an overstatement for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [and a large number of the men and women and of the lords of the city] (See: **Hyperbole (p.743)**)

Judges 9:52

and fought with it

The author is using the tower, represented by the pronoun **it**, by association to mean the people who were in the tower. Alternate translation: [and fought with the people who were in the tower] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

to burn it with fire

See how you translated the similar expression in 9:49. Alternate translation: [to set it on fire] or [to burn it down] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 9:53

one woman

The author is using the phrase **one woman** to introduce this woman as a participant in the story. While she has only a brief role, it is an important one. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. Alternate translation: [a certain woman] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

an upper millstone

A **millstone** was a large, flat, round stone that was used to grind grain. Two of these stones were used together, with the grain between them. The **upper millstone** was the top one that was rolled on the lower one to crush the grain. If your readers would not be familiar with this object, in your translation you could use the name of a similar thing that your readers would recognize, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: [a heavy stone] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 9:54

lest they say about me, ‘A woman killed him

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [lest they say about me that a woman killed me] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Judges 9:55

the men of Israel

The author assumes that his readers will know that the people of Thebez were Canaanites and that he can therefore use the phrase **the men of Israel** to mean the soldiers who were fighting with Abimelech against Thebez. (Apparently many Israelites were loyal to Abimelech, even though it was the Canaanites who lived in Shechem who first made him king on the basis that he had a Canaanite mother.) You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the Israelites who had been supporting Abimelech] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 9:56

So God turned back the evil of Abimelech, which he did to his father by killing his 70 brothers

In this verse and the next one, the author concludes the story by explaining that God punished Abimelech and the men of Shechem for what they did to Gideon's family. Your language may have its own way of concluding a story. (See: **End of Story (p.718)**)

So God turned back the evil of Abimelech, which he did to his father by killing his 70 brothers

The author is speaking as if the **evil** that Abimelech did had literally been moving away from him and God **turned** it **back** so that it returned to him and harmed him. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [So God made Abimelech experience the same kind of harm he had done to his father by killing his 70 brothers] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

the evil of Abimelech, which he did to his father

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **evil**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the evil thing that Abimelech had done to his father] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 9:57

And all of the evil of the men of Shechem, God turned back upon their head

The expression **turned back** has the same meaning here as in the previous verse, except that the author speaks more fully of the **evil** that the **men of Shechem** did as if God literally made it come back and land **upon their head**. While he is using one part of them, their **head**, to represent all of them, this expression is especially apt in light of the story, in which Abimelech dies when a heavy stone lands on his head. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And God also made the people of Shechem experience painfully the same kind of harm that they had done to other people] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And all of the evil of the men of Shechem

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **evil**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [And all of the evil things that the men of Shechem had done] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p. 665)**)

the men of Shechem

Here the masculine term **men** seems to have a generic sense. The author specifies in 9:49 that both “men and women” died when the tower of Shechem burned, so this summary reference to that punishment would include both men and women. Alternate translation: [the people of Shechem] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.852)**)

upon their head

Since the author is referring to a group of people, if you retain this image in your translation, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **head**. Alternate translation: [upon their heads] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

and the curse of Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal, came upon them

The author is speaking as if the **curse of Jotham** literally **came upon** the people of Shechem. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and everything happened to them just as Jotham, the son of Jerubbaal, said it would when he cursed them] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 10

Judges 10 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter introduces the account of Jephthah, which continues in Chapters 11 and 12.

Literary devices that point to structure

Possessive forms

Within the list of people groups in 10:6, the author uses slightly different possessive forms to make a distinction that is significant for what happens as the book continues. He uses the name of a country or city to speak of the gods of Aram, Sidon, and Moab. But he describes the inhabitants of a country or cities when he speaks of the gods of "the sons of Ammon" and "the Philistines." This is because, as the next verse indicates, it was the Ammonites and the Philistines who next conquered and oppressed the Israelites and whom the next two judges opposed. Jephthah defeated the Ammonites, as chapters 11 and 12 describe, and Samson fought against the Philistines, as chapters 13–16 describe. If possible, use slightly different possessive forms in your own translation to reflect this distinction. The UST models one way to do this.

Order of information

In 10:7, the author presents new information in a particular order for a specific reason. In the book, he relates the oppression by the Ammonites and the deliverance by Jephthah in chapters 10–12, before he describes the oppression by the Philistines and the resistance of Samson in chapters 13–16. But in this verse he is creating a special arrangement between the phrase "into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the sons of Ammon" and those next sections of the book. This arrangement is known as a chiasm. In it, the first and last parts match and the middle parts match. In other words, the author is creating this arrangement: Philistines—Ammonites (this phrase); Ammonites—Philistines (the next sections of the book). However, if it would better help your readers to recognize how this phrase introduces the following accounts of Jephthah and Samson, you could name these people groups in the order in which they feature in the narrative. You might say, in other words, "into the hand of the sons of Ammon and into the hand of the Philistines"

Judges 10:1

Tola, & Puah, & Dodo

The words **Tola**, **Puah**, and **Dodo** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Now after Abimelech, Tola, & arose to save Israel

See the discussion of the term **arose** in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 5:7. Alternate translation: [Now After Abimelech, Tola ... became the next person to deliver Israel] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 10:2

and was buried

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 they buried him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 10:3

Jair

The word **Jair** is the name of a man. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 10:4

riding on 30 donkeys

In this culture at this time, Jair's sons **riding** on these **donkeys** was a symbolic action that indicated that they were young men of wealth and status. This, in turn, indicated that Jair himself was wealthy and influential. Alternate translation: [each of whom he could afford to give a donkey to ride] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

they call them

Here the author is using **they** to refer to people in general. Use an expression for this that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [people call them] or [they are called] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 815)**)

Havvoth Jair

Havvoth Jair is the name of a group of cities. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Havvoth Jair

In your translation, you could spell this name the way it sounds in your language, the way the ULT does. However, this name means the Cities of Jair, and if it would be helpful to your readers, you could say that in your translation instead. Alternate translation: [the Cities of Jair] (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.709)**)

to this day

By **this day**, the author means the time when he was writing. He and his audience knew when that was, but we are not entirely sure of it today. It may be helpful to use a general expression in your translation. Alternate translation: [at this time] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 10:5

and he was buried

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 they buried him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 10:6

the sons of Israel

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:4 (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

in the eyes of Yahweh

See the discussion of the phrase **in the eyes of** in the Introduction to Judges, and see how you translated the similar expression in 2:11. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

the Baals and the Ashtoreths

See how you translated the similar expression in 2:11. Alternate translation: [many false gods and goddesses] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

and the gods of Aram and the gods of Sidon and the gods of Moab and the gods of the sons of Ammon and the gods of the Philistines

See the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter for a suggestion about how to use slightly different possessive forms here in your translation to reflect a distinction that the author is making. (See: **Possession (p. 809)**)

And they forsook Yahweh and did not serve him

For emphasis, the author is saying basically the same thing twice, first positively and then negatively. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine these statements. Alternate translation: [And they completely stopped worshiping Yahweh] (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

Judges 10:7

Then the nose of Yahweh burned against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the sons of Ammon

See how you translated the expressions “the nose of Yahweh burned” and “he sold them into the hand of” in 3:8. Alternate translation: [Then Yahweh became furious with Israel, and he made them subjects of the Philistines and the Ammonites] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Then the nose of Yahweh burned

The author is introducing a new event in the story. The ULT indicates this with the word **Then**. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the sons of Ammon

See the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter of the order in which the author presents this information. Alternate translation: [into the hand of the sons of Ammon and into the hand of the Philistines] (See: **Information Structure (p.753)**)

Judges 10:8

And they shattered and crushed the sons of Israel in that year. {For} 18 years, all the sons of Israel who {were} on the other side of the Jordan in the land of the Amorites, which {is} in Gilead

The author is describing one event before describing an event that preceded it. In your translation, you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they happened. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

And they shattered and crushed the sons of Israel in that year

The author is using the phrase **in that year** to mean implicitly that the Ammonites began to oppress all of the Israelites, not just the ones living east of the Jordan, as soon as Yahweh decided in his anger to punish and discipline the Israelites. If you decide to relate the events in this verse in the same order that the author does, you could indicate this explicitly in your translation. Alternate translation: [Right away the Ammonites began to shatter and crush all of the Israelites] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

And they shattered and crushed

The pronoun **they** refers to the "sons of Ammon" or Ammonites, as the next verse makes clear. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And the Ammonites shattered and crushed] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

And they shattered and crushed

The author is speaking as if the Israelites had literally been an object such as a clay jar that could be **shattered** or a skull that could be **crushed**. (The author uses the same verb for "crush" in 9:53 to describe what the millstone did to Abimelech's skull.) If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And they afflicted and oppressed] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And they shattered and crushed

The terms **shattered** and **crushed** mean similar things. The author 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: [And they severely oppressed] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

For} 18 years, all the sons of Israel who {were} on the other side of the Jordan

The author 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: [For the previous 18 years, they had oppressed all the sons of Israel who were on the other side of the Jordan] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

were} on the other side of the Jordan

The author is speaking from a vantage point west of the Jordan River, so **the other side** implicitly means the east side. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [were on the east side of the Jordan] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

in the land of the Amorites

The author is using this possessive form to provide a more specific description of where these Israelites were living. He is referring to the land that the Israelites conquered from the Amorites. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [in the land that the Israelites conquered from the Amorites] (See: **Possession (p.809)**)

which {is} in Gilead

The author is using this phrase to indicate that the land he is describing is the area that his readers probably know better as **Gilead**. Alternate translation: [which is now known as Gilead] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Judges 10:9

and with the house of Ephraim

The author is using the word **house** to mean all the people descended from a particular person. So by **the house of Ephraim**, he means all the people descended from Ephraim, who was one of the twelve sons of Jacob. It is not clear why he uses this expression for this tribe but not for the other two tribes he mentions. In your translation, you could speak of **Ephraim** the same way the author speaks of **Judah** and **Benjamin**. Alternate translation: [and with Ephraim] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and it narrowed to Israel greatly

See how you translated the same expression in 2:15. Alternate translation: [and Israel was in great distress] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and it narrowed to Israel greatly

See the discussion in the Introduction to Judges of the use of a person's name to mean his descendants, and see how you translated the similar expression in 1:1. Alternate translation: [and the Israelites were in great distress] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 10:10

our God

Although the Israelites are praying to Yahweh, they are speaking about him in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the second person. Alternate translation: [you, our God] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.726)**)

Judges 10:11

וַ יֹּאמֶר יְהוָ ה אֶל־בְּנֵ י יִשְׂרָאֵ ל הֲל א מִמִּצְרַ יִם וּמִן־הָ אֱמֹרִ י וּמִן־בְּנֵ י עַמ וֹן וּמִן־פְּלִשְׁתִּים:
וְצִידוֹנִ ים וָעֲמָלֵק וּמָע וֹן לָחֲצ וּ אֶתְכֶ ם וַתִּצְעֲק וּ אֵלַ י וָאוֹשִׁ יעָה אֶתְכֶ ם מִיָּדָם

In this verse and the next verse, Yahweh is asking the Israelites a long question, using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. In order to do that, you could create a verse bridge for verses 11–12. Alternate translation: [When the Egyptians and Amorites and Ammonites and Philistines and Sidonians and Amalekites and Maonites oppressed you, you cried out to me, and I saved you from their hand!] (See: **Verse Bridges (p.850)**)

Judges 10:12

and Maon

The word **Maon** is the name of a people group. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

from their hand

See how you translated the same expression in 2:14. Alternate translation: [from their power] (See: **Metonymy (p. 780)**)

Judges 10:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 10:14

Go and cry out to the gods upon whom you have chosen. Let them save you in the time of your distress

Yahweh does not really want the Israelites to **cry out** to other **gods** for help. He means to communicate emphatically the opposite of the literal meaning of his words. Alternate translation: [Just try crying out to the gods you have chosen! They will not be able to save you in the time of your distress] (See: **Irony (p.761)**)

upon whom you have chosen

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 you have chosen] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 10:15

according to all of the good in your eyes

See how you translated the similar expression in 2:11. Alternate translation: [according to everything that you judge to be good] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

this day

The Israelites are using the term **day** to refer to a specific time. They are not asking Yahweh to **deliver** them on that specific day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [at this time] or [right away] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 10:16

the foreign gods

The author is using the expression **foreign gods** by association to mean idols that represented these gods. Alternate translation: [the idols] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

And his soul wore out with the trouble of Israel

The author is speaking as if Yahweh's **soul** were an item of clothing that **wore out** from continual use. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And Yahweh did not want the Israelites to suffer any longer] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And his soul wore out with the trouble of Israel

The author is using one part of Yahweh, his **soul**, to mean all of him. Alternate translation: [And the trouble of Israel was too much for him to bear] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 10:17

Now the sons of Ammon were summoned

The author is introducing a new event in the story. The ULT indicates this with the word **Now.** Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

Now the sons of Ammon were summoned

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Now the Ammonite commanders summoned their soldiers] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 10:18

Then the people, the leaders of Gilead, said

This could mean: (1) that the author is using the term **people** to introduce these **leaders** as new participants in the story. (This would be similar to the usage in 4:4, where the author describes Deborah as “a woman, a prophetess.”) Alternate translation: [Then the people who were the leaders of Gilead said]; (2) that the author is describing how both the ordinary **people** and the **leaders** of Gilead met to discuss this question. Alternate translation: [Then the people and leaders of Gilead said] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

Then & said, a man to his fellow

See how you translated the same expression in 6:29. Alternate translation: [Then ... all asked each other] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Who {is} the man who will begin to fight with the sons of Ammon

The leaders of Gilead are using a common expression to ask who should lead their army against the Ammonites. They are not asking which soldier will be the first to engage in combat with them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Who will lead our army to fight against the Ammonites?] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

the head

The leaders of Gilead are using the word **head** to mean “ruler,” not just “military commander,” as 11:11 shows, where the people make Jephthah both their “head” (ruler) and commander. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the ruler] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 11

Judges 11 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

The account of Jephthah continues in this chapter.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Why did Jephthah sacrifice his daughter?

The story of Jephthah defeating the Ammonites has a tragic ending. He vows that if Yahweh will give him victory, upon his return, he will sacrifice the first person who comes out of his house as a burnt offering. This person turns out to be his daughter, his only child. But he fulfills his vow anyway and sacrifices her. Part of the explanation for this is that Jephthah's half-brothers drove him away from their home in Israel so that he had to live in Syria. The Syrians practiced human sacrifice, and Jephthah apparently came to regard it as a way of influencing a deity. The rest of the explanation is that Jephthah did not know the provisions of the law of Moses. In Leviticus 27:1–8, Yahweh tells Moses that if someone dedicates a person, he must redeem that person by paying a certain amount of silver shekels. That is what Jephthah was supposed to do. It was all right for him to devote a family member to Yahweh as long as he then redeemed that person. The author of Judges is using this story to show what happens when, as he says in 17:6 and 21:25, everyone does what is right in his own eyes, rather than what Yahweh has commanded. This supports the overall argument of the book that Israel should have a good king who makes sure that the Israelites follow the law of Moses.

Judges 11:1

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a warrior of valor, but he {was} the son of a whoring woman. Now Gilead had begotten Jephthah

Here and in the next two verses, the author is providing background information to help readers understand what happens next in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a warrior of valor

The author is using introducing **Jephthah** as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. Alternate translation: [Now there was a man named Jephthah, a Gileadite, who was a warrior of valor] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

a warrior of valor

See how you translated the same expression in 6:12. Alternate translation: [a valiant warrior] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Gilead

Here the word **Gilead** is the name of a man, not the name of a region. But the word **Gileadite** does refer to someone who came from the region called Gilead. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 11:2

And the wife of Gilead bore sons to him

The author does not say specifically whether Gilead became the father of Jephthah before or after he was married. However, the story seems to suggest that it was before and that Jephthah was somewhat older than his half-brothers, since they had to wait until they grew up to drive him away from the family. Your language may have a connecting phrase that you can use to indicate this. Alternate translation: [Later, when Gilead had a wife, she bore sons to him] (See: **Connect — Sequential Time Relationship (p.703)**)

and they drove out Jephthah and said to him, “You will not inherit in the house of our father, for you are the son of another woman

Since the **sons of the wife** said this to Jephthah before they **drove** him **out**, in your translation you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they happened. Alternate translation: [and they said to Jephthah, “You will not inherit in the house of our father, for you are the son of another woman.” And they drove him out] (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

in the house of our father

Here, **house** represents the family of Gilead. (He may have died by this point, since it appears that Jephthah was a member of the household while he was alive.) Alternate translation: [as if you were a proper member of family] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

in the house of our father

Gilead was the father of Jephthah and his half-brothers, so it may be natural for you to use the inclusive form of **our** if your language marks that distinction. However, since the half-brothers are describing **the house of our father** to Jephthah as something that he has no place in, some languages, considering the entire phrase, might use the exclusive form. (See: **Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’ (p.724)**)

Judges 11:3

from the face of

Here, **from the face of** is a common expression of the culture that means “because of” or “on account of.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [on account of] or [because of] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

his brothers

These brothers were sons of Jephthah’s father but not of his mother. Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [his half-brothers] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Tob

The word **Tob** is the name of a region. It seems to have been a part of Aram (Syria) that was near Gilead. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

and they went out with him

This expression means that Jephthah led these men on raids to get plunder. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and they all formed a gang of bandits] (See: **Idiom (p. 747)**)

Judges 11:4

Now it happened after some days that the sons of Ammon fought with Israel

The author is using this phrase to return to the main story after providing background information about Jephthah. This is the same event that was described in 10:17. Alternate translation: [It was some days after that when the sons of Ammon fought with Israel] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

after some days

The author is using the term **days** to mean “time.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [after some time] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 11:5

And it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a further development in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for this purpose. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

Judges 11:6

Come, and you shall be a commander for us

The elders are making a polite request of Jephthah. Translate this with a form that is suitable for a polite request in your language. Alternate translation: [Please come and be our commander] (See: **Irregular Use of Tenses (p.764)**)

Judges 11:7

Do you not hate me, since you drove me from the house of my father

Jephthah is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [It is clear that hate me, since you drove me from the house of my father!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Do you not hate me, since you drove me from the house of my father

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [You drove me from the house of my father, and that shows that you hate me!] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

since you drove me from the house of my father

It was Jephthah's half-brothers, not the elders of Gilead, who drove him from the house of his father. Jephthah may mean that the elders were implicated in this action because they did nothing to help him. Alternate translation: [since you did nothing to help me when my brothers drove me from the house of my father] (See: **Metonymy (p. 780)**)

from the house of my father

See how you translated the similar expression in 11:2. Alternate translation: [from my family] (See: **Metaphor (p. 774)**)

So why have you come to me now, when trouble {is} to you

Jephthah is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. The UST models one way to do this. (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 11:8

Therefore we have now returned to you

The elders are using the word translated as **Therefore** to acknowledge the reason why they have **returned** to Jephthah to ask for his help. They do not mean that they have come because they hate Jephthah or because they drove him out. They mean that they have come because they have trouble. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [Yes, it is because we are in trouble that we have returned to you] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

So you shall come with us and fight with the sons of Ammon, and you shall be for us the head of all of the dwellers of Gilead

The elders are actually describing a condition in which a second event will take place if a first event does. Alternate translation: [Now if you come with us and fight with the sons of Ammon, then you shall be for us the head of all of the dwellers of Gilead] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.698)**)

the head of

See how you translated the same term in 10:18. Alternate translation: [the ruler] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 11:9

If you have brought me back to fight with the sons of Ammon and Yahweh gives them over to my face, I will be the head for you

This could mean: (1) that Jephthah is restating the condition that the elders described in order to confirm it. Your language may have an expression that you can use to indicate this. Alternate translation: [Now let me get this straight: If you have brought me back to fight with the sons of Ammon and Yahweh gives them over to my face, I will be the head for you]; (2) that Jephthah is asking the elders to confirm the description they have described. Alternate translation: [If you have brought me back to fight with the sons of Ammon and Yahweh gives them over to my face, will I really be the head for you?] (See: **Connect — Hypothetical Conditions (p.698)**)

and Yahweh gives them over to my face

Jephthah is using this expression to mean that Yahweh would enable him to defeat the Ammonites. (Gideon used a very similar expression in 8:7 when he spoke of Yahweh “giving” Zebah and Zalmunna into his “hand.”) If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and Yahweh enables me to defeat them] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

the head for you

See how you translated the same term in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [your ruler] (See: **Metaphor (p. 774)**)

Judges 11:10

May Yahweh be hearing {the things} between us if not, according to your word, thus we do

The elders are swearing an oath by describing a condition. If it would be clearer in your language, you could put the first part of the condition (**if**) before the second part of the condition (the implied “then”). Alternate translation: [If we do not do according to your word, then may Yahweh be hearing the things between us] (See: **Oath Formulas (p.787)**)

May Yahweh be hearing {the things} between us if not, according to your word, thus we do

In this context, the idea of Yahweh **hearing** includes the aspect of Yahweh judging and punishing people for not doing the things he has heard them promise. Alternate translation: [If we do not do according to your word, then may Yahweh punish us for not keeping the promises he has heard us make to you] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

the things} between us

The elders are speaking of the commitments that they and Jephthah have made to each other as if they were literally something that had taken on actual form in the space **between** them. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also use plain language. Alternate translation: [the things that have passed between us] or [the commitments we have made to each other] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

if not, according to your word, thus we do

The elders are using the term **word** to represent what Jephthah has just said by using words. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [if we do not do exactly what you have said] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 11:11

and the people set him over them as head and as commander. And Jephthah spoke all of his words to the face of Yahweh at Mizpah

It may be that Jephthah reaffirmed the commitments that he and the elders had made to each other before he formally became the **head** and **commander** of the **people**. In your translation, you may wish to relate these events in that order. Alternate translation: [And after Jephthah spoke all of his words to the face of Yahweh at Mizpah, the people set him over them as head and as commander] (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

as head and as commander

See how you translated the word **head** in 11:8–9. Alternate translation: [not only as their military commander but also as their ruler] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

all of his words

The author is using the term **words** to represent something that Jephthah said by using words. It seems that he repeated **at Mizpah** the same thing he said to the elders in 11:9. Alternate translation: [the same thing he had said to the elders] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

to the face of Yahweh

Here, **to the face of** represents being in the presence of Yahweh. This is probably a reference to a solemn assembly of **the people**, where it was understood that Yahweh would be present. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in a solemn assembly of the people, where Yahweh was present] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 11:12

What to me and to you, that you have come against me to fight in my land

Jephthah's messengers are speaking on his behalf, and so they use the singular pronouns **me** and **my**. They are addressing the Ammonite king, so **you** is also singular. However, Jephthah is speaking as a representative of all the Israelites, and he is addressing the Ammonite king as a representative of his own people and army. So it may be more natural in your language to use the plural pronouns "us" and "our" and plural forms of **you** if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups (p.837)**)

What to me and to you, that you have come against me to fight in my land

Jephthah is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [There is nothing to me and to you, that you should come against me to fight in my land!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 830)**)

What to me and to you

This is a common expression that, in this context, inquires what quarrel the Ammonite king has with Jephthah, who represents the Israelites. The implication is that he really has no just cause to invade their land. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [What quarrel is there between us] or [There is no quarrel between us] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

in my land

This could mean: (1) that Jephthah is objecting to the presence of the Ammonite army on Israelite territory. Alternate translation: [and have invaded my land]; (2) that Jephthah is using the term **land** by association to mean the people who live in the land. Alternate translation: [against my people]; (3) that Jephthah is saying that the Ammonite king wants to contest possession of the land. Alternate translation: [over my land] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 11:13

Because Israel took my land

The Ammonite king 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 have come against you to fight because Israel took my land] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

them

The Ammonite king is using the plural pronoun **them** to refer to the areas bounded by the rivers he names. However, since he uses the singular term **land** to describe this entire territory, it may be more natural in your language to use a singular pronoun. Alternate translation: [it] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

in peace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **peace**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [peacefully] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 11:14

Then Jephthah resumed and sent messengers again

It might seem that saying both **resumed** and **again** would be to state extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you could represent just one of these terms. Alternate translation: [Then Jephthah sent messengers once again] or [Jephthah continued to send messengers] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 11:15

and said

The verb **said** is singular. It refers to Jephthah, and it means that Jephthah said this to the king of Ammon through his messengers. However, since a group of messengers actually spoke these words to the king, it might be more natural in your language to use the pronoun “they” with a plural verb. Alternate translation: [and they said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Thus says Jephthah: ‘Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the sons of Ammon

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [Jephthah says that Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the sons of Ammon] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the sons of Ammon

Jephthah recognizes that the Ammonite king is speaking of land that formerly belonged partly to Ammon and partly to Moab. It appears that at this time, the Moabites were either allies or subjects of the Ammonites, and so the Ammonite king regards the Moabites’ interests as his own. The author assumes that his readers will have this knowledge and so he does not explain it as background information. But you could indicate it in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Israel did not take any land from you Ammonites or from your allies the Moabites] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 11:16

in their coming up & and he came

The messengers are using both plural (**their**) and singular (**he**) pronouns to refer to **Israel**, as a group of people and as a nation. It may be more natural in your language to use either plural or singular pronouns consistently. Alternate translation: [when they came up ... and they came] or [when he came up ... and he came] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

Judges 11:17

saying, “Please may I pass through your land

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [asking for permission to pass through his land] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

But & did not listen

The word translated as **listen** here is the same one that is translated as **heard** in 2:2 and similar contexts. As the Introduction to Judges discusses, in these contexts the word has the specific sense of complying with what someone has said, by association with the way someone would need to hear what was said in order to obey it. Alternate translation: [But ... did not consent] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

And he also sent to the king of Moab

The messengers are 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 the Israelites also sent messengers to the king of Moab requesting safe passage through his country] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

So Israel dwelled in Kadesh

The messengers are leaving some information implicit that they assume the Ammonite king will understand. This information supports Jephthah’s claim that the Israelites did not take any territory from the Ammonites or their allies the Moabites. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [In response, the Israelites did not try to force their way through Edom or Moab. Instead, they waited in Kadesh and considered what they should do next] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 11:18

and he went from the rising of the sun to the land of Moab

The messengers are describing the location of one place relative to another in the way that is characteristic of their culture. In your translation, express this in the way your culture customarily describes the location of places relative to one another. See how you translated the comparable expression in 8:11. Alternate translation: [and he traveled to the east of the land of Moab] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

on the other side of the Arnon

The messengers are speaking from a vantage point south of the Arnon River, since the Israelites approached it from the south on their journey from Egypt. So **the other side** implicitly means the north side. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. See how you translated the similar expression in 10:8. Alternate translation: [on the north side of the Arnon River] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 11:19

and Israel said to him, “Please, may we pass through your land to my place

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [and Israel asked him for permission to pass through his land to his own place] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

and Israel said to him, “Please, may we pass through your land to my place

Jephthah’s messengers are speaking of **Israel** as if it were an individual person who could speak to Sihon. They mean that the messengers whom the Israelites sent to him spoke this message. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and the messengers said to him, “Please, may we Israelites pass through your land unto our place] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

may we pass through your land to my place

The Israelite messengers used both plural (**we**) and singular (**my**) pronouns to refer to themselves, as a group of people and as a nation. It may be more natural in your language to use either plural or singular pronouns consistently. Alternate translation: [may we pass through your land unto our place] or [may I pass through your land unto my place] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

Judges 11:20

passing through his border

Jephthah's messengers are using the term **border** by association to refer to all of Sihon's territory. However, it is significant that they do not say "land," as they report the Israelite messengers saying in the previous verse. The idea is that not only did Sihon not want the Israelites to walk across his land, he did not want them even to cross the border and come into any part of his territory. Alternate translation: [coming into his territory] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 11:21

and they struck them

See how you translated the same expression in 1:5. Alternate translation: [and they beat them] or [and they defeated them] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 11:22

And they possessed

In this verse, Jephthah's messengers are saying the same thing as in the last sentence of the previous verse. They are describing the same territory as "all the land of the Amorite." However, they are naming the same specific borders that the Ammonite king did in 11:13 in order to establish Israel's claim to that land. So it would be good to include this information. However, it may be clearer in your language to introduce it with a word other than **And** in order to show that this sentence is not saying something additional to the last sentence of the previous verse. It is repeating the meaning, although with further information. Alternate translation: [Indeed, they possessed] (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

all of the border of the Amorite

The messengers are using the term **border** by association to mean the territory that was enclosed within the borders they describe. Alternate translation: [the entire territory of those Amorites] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 11:23

And now

The phrase translated as **And now** is an expression that was used in letters and messages of this time to introduce the main topic that the sender wished to address. If your language has a comparable expression that it uses for this same purpose, you can use it in your translation. If not, you do not have to translate this phrase explicitly; you can indicate in other ways that this is the main point that Jephthah wanted his messengers to make. Alternate translation: [Here is my main point:] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.705)**)

So will you possess it

Jephthah's messengers are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [So do not think that you can possess it!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

So will you possess it

As in 11:19, the word **you** is singular here, and it is also singular for the rest of this speech (with one exception that these notes will indicate), because the messengers are addressing the Ammonite king. So use the singular form in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

Judges 11:24

What Chemosh your god causes you to possess, will you not possess it

The messengers are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You should just possess what Chemosh, your god, causes you to possess] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Chemosh

The word **Chemosh** is the name of a false god. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 11:25

And now

See how you translated the same expression in 11:23. Alternate translation: [And here is another important point:] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

being better, are you being better than Balak, & Contending, did he contend with Israel, or fighting, did he fight with them

The messengers are repeating forms of the verbs translated as **being better**, **Contending**, and **fighting** in order to intensify the ideas that they express. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [are you really better than Balak ...? Did he contend at all with Israel, or did he fight with them at all?] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

being better, are you being better than Balak, & Contending, did he contend with Israel, or fighting, did he fight with them

The messengers are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate these questions as statements or as exclamations. Alternate translation: [you are not really better than Balak ...! He did not contend at all with Israel, no, he did not fight with them at all!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

did he fight with them

The messengers are leaving some information implicit that they know the Ammonite king will understand. Most modern readers, however, will not have this information. It is that the land that the Israelites acquired when they defeated Sihon had previously belonged to the Moabites and Ammonites. Sihon had taken it from them. But Balak did not try to get it back. The implication is that unless the Ammonite king thinks that he is greater than Balak, he should not try to get it back either. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [did he fight with them to get back the part of that land that Sihon had earlier taken from the Moabites and Ammonites? No, and you should not either!] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 11:26

and in its daughters & and in its daughters

See how you translated the same expression in 1:27. Alternate translation: [and in the surrounding villages ... and in the surrounding villages] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

why then did you not deliver during that time

The messengers are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [but you did not deliver during that time!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

did you not deliver

The word **you** is plural here because the messengers are asking why none of the Ammonites tried to recapture the land during the time they are describing. If your language marks that distinction, you could use the plural form in your translation. Other languages may have other ways of indicating this. Alternate translation: [did you Ammonites not deliver] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

Judges 11:27

but you are doing me wrong

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **wrong**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [but you are doing to me what is wrong] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 11:28

But & did not listen to

See how you translated the word “listen” in 11:17. It has the same meaning here. Alternate translation: [But ... did not agree not to fight after he heard] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

the words of Jephthah that he sent to him

The author is using the term **words** to represent what Jephthah said by using words. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the message that Jephthah sent to him] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 11:29

Then the Spirit of Yahweh was upon Jephthah

See how you translated the similar expression about Othniel in 3:10. Alternate translation: [Then the Spirit of Yahweh powerfully influenced Jephthah] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh

The author means implicitly that Jephthah **passed through** these areas to summon Israelite men to fight, as Barak did in 4:10 and Gideon did in 6:34–35. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh summoning troops to fight against the Ammonites] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 11:30

And Jephthah vowed a vow to Yahweh and said

Here the author is providing background information to help readers understand what happens in the story. Since the first sentence of 11:32 describes the same thing as the last sentence of 11:29, the Israelite attack against the Ammonites, this verse and the next one are describing something that happened just before that. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [But before he led that attack against the Ammonites, Jephthah vowed a vow to Yahweh and said] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

And Jephthah vowed a vow to Yahweh and said

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The vowing and saying were not two different actions. The word **vowed** indicates what Jephthah was doing when he **said** this. Alternate translation: [And Jephthah solemnly promised Yahweh] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

And Jephthah vowed a vow

It might seem that the expression **vowed a vow** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [And Jephthah made a vow] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

If giving, you will give

Jephthah is repeating forms of the verb **give** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [If in fact you give] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

Judges 11:31

whoever comes out of the doors of my house to greet me

Jephthah is using one part of his **house**, its **doors**, to mean all of the house as a place for human habitation. In other words, he is specifying a person, rather than an animal that might come from a field or a stall. (See the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter of how wrong Jephthah was to offer a human sacrifice and for what purpose the author includes this account in the book of Judges.) Alternate translation: [the first member of my household who comes out to greet me] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

in peace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **peace**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [peacefully] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 11:32

Then Jephthah passed through to the sons of Ammon to fight with them

Here the author is returning to the main story after providing background information in 11:30–31. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [It was after making this vow that Jephthah passed through to the sons of Ammon to fight with them] (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Judges 11:33

So the sons of Ammon were subdued from the face of the sons of Israel

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 the sons of Israel subdued the sons of Ammon before their face] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

from the face of

Here, **from the face of** is a common expression of the culture that means “because of” or “on account of.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [because of] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 11:34

with timbrels and with dances

Jephthah's daughter was probably not carrying and playing several **timbrels**. The author may be using the plural forms **timbrels** and **dances** to indicate that she was leading a group of young women from the community who were together celebrating Jephthah's victory. (This would be similar to what happens in 1 Samuel 18:6.) Alternate translation: [leading a group of women who were playing timbrels and dancing] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.848)**)

with timbrels

The term **timbrels** describes small percussion instruments. A timbrel is a hand-held drum that may also have pieces of metal around its sides that make sounds when a person shakes or hits the drum. If your readers would not be familiar with what a timbrel is, in your translation you could use the name of a similar thing that your readers would recognize, or you could use a general expression. (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

And except her alone, {there was} not to him a son or daughter apart from her

It might seem that this sentence contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [And except for her, he did not have a son or daughter] or [And he did not have a son or daughter apart from her] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 11:35

that he tore his garments

When Jephthah **tore his garments**, this was a symbolic action that expressed great distress and grief. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [that he tore his garments to show his great distress] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Causing to bow, you have caused me to bow

Jephthah is repeating forms of the verb **Causing to bow** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [You have certainly caused me to bow] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

Causing to bow, you have caused me to bow

Jephthah probably does not mean that he is literally bowing down. He is speaking of his grief and distress as if those emotions were so strong that they were keeping him from standing up. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also use plain language. Alternate translation: [You have brought me very low] or [You have caused me very great grief] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and you are among the ones troubling me

Jephthah may be implicitly comparing his distress at seeing his daughter with the distress that the Ammonites caused the Israelites when they invading their land. (In 11:7, Jephthah complained to the elders of Gilead that they were only seeking his help because they were in "trouble." The author speaks similarly in 10:16 of the Ammonite invasion as "the trouble of Israel.") You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and my distress at seeing you is as great as the distress that the Ammonites caused us] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

For I have opened my mouth to Yahweh

Jephthah is referring to what he vowed to Yahweh, by association with the way he **opened** his **mouth** in order to speak his vow. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [For I have spoken a vow to Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and I am not able to turn back

Jephthah is speaking as if he were literally walking somewhere and could not **turn back** to return to where he was before he started walking. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and I am not able to break my vow] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 11:36

you have opened your mouth to Yahweh

See how you translated the same expression in 11:35. Alternate translation: [you have spoken a vow to Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

according to what came forth from your mouth

Jephthah's daughter is referring to what he said, by association with the way it **came forth from** his **mouth** when he said it. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [according to what you said] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

vengeances

Jephthah's daughter is using the plural form **vengeances** in a context where the singular term "vengeance" would suffice. This suggests that she is using the plural form for emphasis. Your language may use plural forms in the same way. If not, you could express the meaning in another way. Alternate translation: [great vengeance] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.848)**)

Judges 11:37

May this thing be done for me

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Please do this thing for me] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

and I will go down upon the hills

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, in Hebrew, writers and speakers generally indicated whether people were going up to a higher elevation or going down to a lower elevation when they traveled. The town of Mizpah was located at a high elevation, and Jephthah's daughter is indicating that she would like to go down from there and wander the hills in the area. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and I will wander the hills in this area] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 11:38

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 11:39

and he did to her his vow that he had vowed

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: [and he did to her what he had vowed to do] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

And she had not known a man

The author is using this expression to speak of a private matter in a delicate way. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use in your translation. You could also use plain language. Alternate translation: [And she had never slept with a man] or [And she had never had sexual relations with a man] (See: **Euphemism (p.720)**)

Judges 11:40

From days to days

This is a common expression that means “every year.” (In this context, **days** in the plural means “year.” The usual word for “year” occurs at the end of the verse.) Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also use plain language. Alternate translation: [Year by year] or [Every year] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 12

Judges 12 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

12:1–7 Jephthah (conclusion) 12:8–10 Ibzan 12:11–12 Elon 12:13–15 Abdon

This short chapter concludes the story of Jephthah and gives brief accounts of three further judges, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon.

Judges 12:1

And a man of Ephraim was summoned, and he crossed over

The phrase **a man of Ephraim** is referring to all the fighting men of the tribe of Ephraim, not just one man. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express this meaning with a plural form. Alternate translation: [The men of Ephraim were summoned, and they crossed over] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

And a man of Ephraim was summoned, and he crossed over

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And the leaders of Ephraim summoned their men, and they crossed over] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

and he crossed over

The author assumes that his readers will understand that the Ephraimites **crossed over** the Jordan River. Alternate translation: [and they went across the Jordan River] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

northward

The author is describing the Ephraimites' travel from the perspective of their location. After crossing the Jordan River, they went northeast to Mizpah, where Jephthah was. Alternate translation: [and went to Mizpah] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

with the sons of

See the Notes to this chapter for a discussion of this phrase. Alternate translation: [with the descendants of] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

We will burn your house over you with fire

It might seem that the expression **burn ... with fire** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [We will burn down your house around you] or [We will set fire to your house with you in it] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 12:2

I was a man of strife, I and my people and the sons of Ammon, exceedingly

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **strife**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [I and my people were fighting a great war against the sons of Ammon] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

from their hand

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of this meaning of the word **hand**. Alternate translation: [from them] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 12:3

you {were} not a savior

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **savior**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [you were not going to save me] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

and I put my life in my palm

Gideon is using a common expression to indicate that he risked his life. Alternate translation: [so I risked my life] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and crossed over against

The author assumes that his readers will understand that Jephthah **crossed over** the Jordan River to fight the Ammonites. Alternate translation: [and crossed the Jordan River to fight] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

So why have you come up to me this day to fight with me

Jephthah is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this as a statement or exclamation. Alternate translation: [So you should not have come to fight with me today!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 12:4

And Jephthah assembled all of the men of Gilead and fought with Ephraim. And the men of Gilead struck Ephraim because they said, “You, Gilead, {are} fugitives of Ephraim in the midst of Ephraim, in the midst of Manasseh

If it would be more natural in your language, you could put the last clause first in the verse, since it gives the reason for the actions that the other clauses describe. Alternate translation: [Then the men of Ephraim said, “You, Gilead, are fugitives of Ephraim in the midst of Ephraim, in the midst of Manasseh.” For that, Jephthah assembled all of the men of Gilead and fought with Ephraim. And the men of Gilead struck Ephraim] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

all of the men of Gilead

The author is making an overstatement for emphasis. Alternate translation: [his entire Gileadite army] (See: **Hyperbole (p.743)**)

And the men of Gilead struck

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of this meaning of the word **struck**. Alternate translation: [And the men of Gilead attacked] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

they said

Since the referent for **they** might be unclear, you could state it explicitly. Alternate translation: [the Ephraimites had said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

in the midst of Ephraim, in the midst of Manasseh

The people of this culture commonly used the expression **in the midst of ... in the midst of** to mean “in between.” The Ephraimites from the west side of the Jordan River are insulting the Gileadites by suggesting they are **fugitives** with no permanent territory. Alternate translation: [who live between Ephraim and Manasseh] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 12:5

to Ephraim

The author is using the name **Ephraim** to mean something associated with that tribe. This could mean: (1) Alternate translation: [at the place where people would cross into the territory of the tribe of Ephraim]; (2) Alternate translation: [before the soldiers from the tribe of Ephraim could reach them and cross safely back over] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

the fugitives of Ephraim

The author is using a plural form to refer to individuals. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express this with a singular form. Alternate translation: [a fugitive of Ephraim] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

Judges 12:6

Please say ‘Shibboleth

The word **Shibboleth** could mean either a stream or an ear of corn, but the meaning of the word was not important. What mattered was its pronunciation. Alternate translation: [Please say ‘Shibboleth,’” because they wanted to hear whether he could make the “sh” sound] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 672)**)

And at that time 42,000 from Ephraim fell

The author is using the action of falling to represent dying in battle, by association with the way soldiers fall down when they die. Alternate translation: [And at that time 42,000 from Ephraim died in battle] (See: **Metonymy (p. 780)**)

Judges 12:7

and was buried

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 his family buried him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 12:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 12:9

And 30 daughters he sent outside

The expression **sent outside** is one that people of this culture commonly used to describe marriages outside of one's clan. However, Israelites had to arrange marriages for their children within their own tribe. Alternate translation: [And he arranged marriages for his 30 daughters with families that were from his tribe but not part of his clan] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and 30 daughters he brought in for his sons from outside

See how you translated the similar expression earlier in the verse. Alternate translation: [and he arranged for his 30 sons to marry women from families that were from his tribe but not part of his clan] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 12:10

and was buried

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 his family buried him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 12:11

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 12:12

and was buried

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 his family buried him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 12:13

Abdon, & Hillel

The words **Abdon** and **Hillel** are the names of men. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

the Pirathonite

The word **Pirathonite** is a name for a person from the town of Pirathon. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 12:14

sons of sons

Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. The UST demonstrates how this relationship is expressed in English. (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

riding on 70 donkeys

In this culture at this time, Abdon's sons **riding** on these **donkeys** was a symbolic action that indicated that they were young men of wealth and status. This, in turn, indicated that Abdon himself was wealthy and influential. Alternate translation: [each of whom he could afford to give a donkey to ride] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Judges 12:15

and was buried

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 his family buried him] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

the Amalekite

The author is using a singular noun to refer to a group. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express this with a plural form. Alternate translation: [the Amalekites] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

Judges 13

Judges 13 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter begins the account of Samson, which continues through Chapter 16.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Warning not to cut Samson's hair

The angel of Yahweh gave Samson's parents special instructions about how they were to raise the boy they would have. They were to make a Nazirite vow, a special type of vow dedicating Samson to Yahweh. Part of this vow prohibited cutting the person's hair. The person also could not drink beer or wine or even eat grapes. Samson's mother was to observe those prohibitions even while she was pregnant, since anything she ate or drank would also nourish the baby in her womb. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/nazirite]], and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/oath]])

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The angel of Yahweh

A character whom the author calls "the angel of Yahweh" figures prominently in this chapter. See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to Judges and see how you translated the phrase "the angel of Yahweh" in Chapters 2, 5, and 6.

Judges 13:1

the sons of

See the Notes to this chapter for a discussion of this phrase. Alternate translation: [the descendants of] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

evil in the eyes of Yahweh

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **evil**, you could express the same idea in another way. See how you translated the same expression in 2:11. Alternate translation: [what Yahweh considered to be evil] or [what was evil in Yahweh's judgment] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

so Yahweh gave them into the hand of the Philistines

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the meaning of the phrase **into the hand of**. (See: **Metonymy (p. 780)**)

Judges 13:2

Now there was one man from Zorah

The author is introducing a new character to the story. Use a natural way in your language to introduce new characters in a story. Alternate translation: [Now there was a certain man from Zorah] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

from the clan of the Danite

The author assumes that his readers will understand that he is referring to the tribe of Dan as a **clan** because it was a small tribe. He also uses the term **clan** elsewhere in the book, but sometimes he also uses the term “tribe” Alternate translation: [from the tribe of Dan] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

the Danite

The author is using a singular noun to refer to a group. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express this with a plural form. Alternate translation: [the Danites] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

was} barren and had not given birth

These phrases mean similar things. The author is using them together for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the meaning with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [was unable to have children] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

Judges 13:3

the angel of Yahweh

See the Notes to this chapter for a discussion of this phrase.

Behold

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of **Behold**. If you have a word you use in your language for the purpose of drawing attention to something, consider using it here. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

you {are} barren and have not given birth

See how you translated the similar expression in 13:2. (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

Judges 13:4

And now

This is an expression that people of this culture commonly used to mean “Now here is my main point.” See how you translated the same expression in 11:23. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 13:5

And a razor will not go up on his head

This is an expression that people of this culture commonly used to describe cutting the hair on a person's head. Alternate translation: [He must never cut his hair] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

And a razor will not go up on his head

See the discussion in the Notes to this chapter of what Samson's long hair symbolized. (See: **Symbolic Action (p. 839)**)

from the womb

The author is using the term **womb** by association to mean "birth." Alternate translation: [from birth] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 13:6

saying

The author is using the term **saying** to introduce a direct quotation. In your translation, use a natural way of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: [as follows:] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.820)**)

Judges 13:7

And he said to me, ‘Behold, you will conceive and bear a son. And now, do not drink wine or beer, and do not eat any unclean {thing}, for the boy will be a Nazirite of God from the womb until the day of his death

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [And he told me that I would conceive and bear a son, and that I should not drink wine or beer or eat any unclean thing, because the boy would be a Nazirite of God from birth until the day of his death] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Judges 13:8

the one to be born

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 my wife will bear] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 13:9

And God listened to the voice of Manoah

The author is using the term **listened** to mean that God answered the prayer, by association with the way that a person must listen to or hear a request in order to grant it. Alternate translation: [And God answered Manoah's prayer] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

And God listened to the voice of Manoah

The author is using the term **voice** by association to mean the prayer that Manoah used his voice to speak. Alternate translation: [And God listened to Manoah's prayer] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 13:10

hurried and ran

The author is expressing a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **hurried** tells in what way Manoah's wife **ran** as shown by the UST. (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

and declared to her husband and said to him

The author is using two phrases to emphasize a single idea. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the meaning with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [and said excitedly to her husband] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

on a day

This is an expression that people of this culture commonly used to refer to a day or time that their listener would recognize. Your language may have a comparable expression of its own that you can use in your translation. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 13:11

this woman

This was how a man in this culture would refer to his wife when speaking with another man he did not know well. In your translation, use the term for this kinship relationship that would be appropriate in your culture. (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Judges 13:12

your words

Manoah is using the term **words** by association to mean what the angel said by using words. Alternate translation: [what you have said] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

may & come {to pass

This is an expression that people of this culture commonly used to mean “happen.” Alternate translation: [may … happen] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 13:13

this woman

See how you translated this in 13:11. Alternate translation: [your wife] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 13:14

Of all that comes forth from the vine of wine

It might seem that the expression **comes forth from the vine of wine** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [Of all that comes from grapes] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 13:15

Please let us detain you, and we will prepare

Manoah is politely inviting the angel to receive his hospitality and asking him to wait while he and his wife prepare a meal. In your translation, use comparable forms for these purposes in your own language. Alternate translation: [Please be so kind as to wait while we prepare] (See: **Politeness (p.805)**)

to your face

Here, **face** represents the presence of a person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [in your presence] or [before you] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

a kid of goats

This is an expression that people of this culture commonly used to mean “a young goat.” Alternate translation: [a young goat] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 13:16

If you detain me

The angel is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what the angel is saying is not certain, then you could translate his words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: [I will wait while you prepare a meal, but] (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.696)**)

of your bread

The angel is using one kind of food, **bread**, to mean food in general. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [of your food] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

For Manoah did not know

Here the author is using the word **For** to introduce an explanation of why Manoah invited the **angel of Yahweh** to stay for a meal even though he would not eat it. Alternate translation: [Now Manoah had invited him not knowing] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p.705)**)

Judges 13:17

that} when your words come {to pass

See how you translated the similar expressions in 13:12. Alternate translation: [that when what you have said happens] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 13:18

Why do you ask this about my name, since it {is} wonderful

The angel is using the question form for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: [You should not ask about my name, because it is too wonderful for you to understand] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 13:19

And he was being wonderful in doing

The author is introducing a significant development in the story. He gives the details of it in the next verse. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. Alternate translation: [And then the angel did an amazing thing] (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

And he was being wonderful in doing

The author assumes that his readers will understand that **he** refers to the angel. Alternate translation: [And the angel was being wonderful in doing] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

And he was being wonderful in doing

Here, the verb **being wonderful** tells in what way the angel was **doing** something. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express this in a different way. Alternate translation: [And he was doing wondrously] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

Judges 13:20

For it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce the details of the significant development he mentioned in the previous verse. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for providing such details. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

and they fell on their faces to the ground

The expression **fell on their faces** means that Manoah and his wife intentionally got down on their knees and bowed their faces **to the ground** as a symbolic action. In that culture, this act was an expression of reverence and worship. It was a way that a person showed great respect and reverence for someone else. If there is a gesture with similar meaning in your culture, you could consider using it here in your translation. You could also explain the purpose of this action. Alternate translation: [and they bowed down to the ground in fear and reverence] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Judges 13:21

And the angel of Yahweh did not resume again to appear

It might seem that this expression contains extra information that would not be natural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [And the angel of Yahweh did not appear again] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 13:22

Dying, we shall die

The author is using repetition for emphasis. If your language uses repetition for emphasis, it would be appropriate to use it here. If not, you can use another way of emphasizing the idea. Alternate translation: [We will certainly die] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

Judges 13:23

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 13:24

and she called his name

It might seem that the expression **called his name** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [and she called him] or [and she gave him the name] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 13:25

And the Spirit of Yahweh began to agitate him

Here and in the last sentence of the previous verse, the author is saying what happened at the end of the story of Samson's birth. He leads into the stories of Samson's young adulthood in the following chapters by saying that "the boy grew" and "Yahweh blessed him" and noting that the **Spirit of Yahweh** began to **agitate** him, that is, to make him dissatisfied with living under Philistine occupation. Your language may have its own way of bringing one part of a story to a close and introducing the next part. (See: **End of Story (p.718)**)

Judges 14

Judges 14 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

The story of Samson continues in this chapter.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text. The ULT does this with the poetry in 14:14 and 14:18.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Why did Samson's parents not want him to marry a Philistine woman?

The law of Moses forbade Israelites to marry a Canaanite or anyone from a different people group. This is why Samson's parents did not want him to marry a Philistine woman.

How could Samson do such great feats of strength?

The author says of Samson in 14:6 and 14:19 that "the Spirit of Yahweh rushed on him." This means that Yahweh gave Samson extraordinary strength. Samson's power was the power of Yahweh himself. He was an agent of Yahweh's judgment against the Philistines.

Judges 14:1

from the daughters of the Philistines

This expression is similar to the common use in this culture of the term “sons” to mean the members of a people group, but here it seems to have a more specific meaning. Alternate translation: [among the Philistine young women] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 14:2

and declared to his father and to his mother and said

The expression **and said** introduces a direct quotation. In your translation, use a natural way of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: [and told his father and mother about this, saying] (See: **Quotations and Quote Margins (p.820)**)

And now

As a note to 11:22 explains, the phrase **And now** introduces a speaker's main point. See how you translated it there. Alternate translation: [So this is what I want you to do for me:] (See: **Connecting Words and Phrases (p. 705)**)

get her for me for a wife

Samson assumes that his parents will know that by **get her for me for a wife** he means that he wants them to arrange with this woman's family a marriage between him and this woman. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [arrange with her family a marriage between me and her] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 14:3

Is there} not among the daughters of your brothers and among all of my people a woman, that you {are} going to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines

Samson's parents are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [Surely there must be a suitable woman among our own relatives or among all our people. You should not take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

among the daughters of your brothers

Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [among the young women of our own tribe] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

my people

Since Samson and his father belong to the same **people**, it may be more natural in your language to use an inclusive plural pronoun here. Alternate translation: [our people] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

a woman

Samson's parents assume that Samson will know that by **a woman** they mean a woman he could marry. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [a woman you could marry] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

from the uncircumcised Philistines

Samson's father is using the word **uncircumcised** by association to refer to the Philistines as a group that did not worship Yahweh, since they did not practice circumcision, as Yahweh's covenant with the Israelites required. The Philistines did not follow the law of Moses at all, and they worshiped other gods. Alternate translation: [from the Philistines, who do not worship Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

for she {is} right in my eyes

See the discussion of the related phrase, "in the eyes of" in the Introduction to Judges. Alternate translation: [for I think she is the right one for me] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 14:4

But his father and his mother did not know that it {was} from Yahweh, for he {was} seeking an occasion against the Philistines. For at that time the Philistines {were} ruling over Israel

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: [Now at that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel, and Yahweh was seeking an occasion against them. That was why this happened. But his father and mother did not realize that] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p. 700)**)

For at that time the Philistines {were} ruling over Israel

The author is providing background information that will help readers understand what happens next in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Judges 14:5

and behold

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of **behold**. If you have a word you use in your language for the purpose of drawing attention to something, consider using it here. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

a young lion of lions

This possessive form is similar in meaning to the expression “a kid of goats” in 6:19. See how you translated that expression. Alternate translation: [a lion in the prime of its youth] (See: **Possession (p.809)**)

was} roaring to meet him

While the author says that both Samson and his parents went to Timnah, he uses the singular pronoun **him** here. The implication is that Samson was walking somewhere alone at this point. You could indicate that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [roared and attacked Samson as he was walking alone] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 14:6

Then the Spirit of Yahweh rushed on him

This expression indicates that the Spirit of Yahweh empowered Samson. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also use plain language. Alternate translation: [Then the Spirit of Yahweh filled him] or [Then the Spirit of Yahweh came and empowered him] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and he tore it as the tearing of a kid, and {there was} not anything in his hand

In the second clause, the author provides background information to help readers appreciate what a feat of strength and courage this was. You may find it more natural to provide the background information first. Alternate translation: [and even though he was bare-handed, he tore it as easily as he could have torn a young goat] (See: **Information Structure (p.753)**)

Judges 14:7

and she was right in the eyes of Samson

See the discussion of the expression “in the eyes of” in the Introduction to Judges. Alternate translation: [and Samson thought that she was the right one for him] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 14:8

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 14:9

and going, he walked, and eating, he walked

The author is repeating the verb **walked** to indicate that Samson did not stop to eat the honey but instead ate it as he continued on his way. Alternate translation: [and he kept walking, eating as he went] (See: **Reduplication (p. 828)**)

Judges 14:10

to the woman

When the author says that Samson's father went and met with **the woman**, he means by association that he met with her family. Alternate translation: [to speak with the woman's family] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and Samson made a feast there, for thus the young men would do

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: [and since it was customary for young men who were getting married to host a feast, that is what Samson did] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Judges 14:11

And it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

in their seeing him

The phrase **in their seeing him** could mean: (1) that the young Philistine men provided **30 companions** for Samson when they saw that he had not brought any young men to accompany him. Alternate translation: [when they saw that he had not brought any young men to accompany him]; (2) that they did this for their own safety when they saw how strong and powerful Samson was. Alternate translation: [when they saw how strong and powerful he was] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

that they took 30 companions, and they were with him

Your language may have its own term or expression for the relationship between a man who is getting married and the other men who accompany him. Alternate translation: [that they provided 30 of their own young men to be his bridegroom's party] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Judges 14:12

If declaring, you declare it to me {during} the seven days of the feast and you find {it

Samson is describing one event before describing another event that would have to precede it. In your translation, you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they happened. Alternate translation: [If you are able to figure it out and tell me the answer during the seven days of the feast] (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

If declaring, you declare it

Samson is repeating forms of the verb **declare** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [If in fact you are able to declare it] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

Judges 14:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 14:14

for} three days

The implication is that the Philistine young men tried for **three days** to solve the riddle and then gave up and forgot about it until the end of the feast. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [for three days, so they gave up and forgot about it until the end of the feast] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 14:15

And it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a new development in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

on the seventh day

The author assumes that his readers will know that by saying **on the seventh day** he means the last day of the feast, when the Philistine young men would have to give Samson many expensive garments if they could not solve the riddle. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [on the last day of the feast, when they would have to give Samson many expensive garments if they could not solve the riddle] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

to the wife of Samson, “& your husband

In this culture, people would speak of a woman who was engaged to a man as his **wife**, and they would speak of a man who was engaged to a woman as her **husband**, even before the two were yet married. Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [to the fiancée of Samson ... your fiancé] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

we burn you and the house of your father with fire

It might seem that the expression **we burn you and the house of your father with fire** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [we burn you to death you and the house of your father] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

and the house of your father

Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [and your whole extended family] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Did you invite us to dispossess us? {Is it} not {so

The Philistine young men are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [It certainly seems as if you invited us here to rob us!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 14:16

And the wife of Samson wept on him

While it is likely that Samson's **wife** may have literally **wept on him**, throwing herself on him, sobbing, so that her tears fell on him, this expression is speaking of her weeping as if it had literally been a burden that was heavy and wearying for Samson to carry. Alternate translation: [And Samson's wife wore him out with her weeping] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

to the sons of my people

See how you translated the similar expression "the daughters of the Philistines" in 14:1. The meaning of **sons** here does not seem to be as general as the use of that word to describe the members of a people group. Alternate translation: [to the young Philistine men at our wedding feast] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

so will I tell {it} to you

Samson is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [so I certainly will not tell it to you!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 14:17

for} the seven days {during} which the feast was to them

Since the author says in 14:15 that it was only on the “seventh day” of the feast that the Philistine young men came to Samson’s bride and threatened her, he is apparently using the whole period here, **seven days**, to represent the time that remained in that period. Alternate translation: [for the remainder of the seven days during which they held their feast] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

And it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a new development in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

that he declared {it} to her, for she had pressed him

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: [that, because she had pressed him, he declared it to her] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Judges 14:18

came in

In a context such as this, your language might say “went” instead of **came**. Alternate translation: [went down] (See: **Go and Come (p.734)**)

What {is} sweeter than honey? And what {is} stronger than a lion

The Philistine young men are using the question form to give the answer to Samson’s riddle triumphantly. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [Nothing is sweeter than honey, and nothing is stronger than a lion!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

If you had not plowed with my heifer

Samson is speaking as if the Philistine young men had literally **plowed** with a **heifer** that he owned. He is using the heifer to represent his wife, with the suggestion that they had no business using her in the way they did. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [If you had not gotten the answer from my wife] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 14:19

And the Spirit of Yahweh rushed on him

See how you translated the same expression in 14:6. Alternate translation: [And the Spirit of Yahweh came and empowered him] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and he struck

See the discussion of the term **struck** in the Introduction to Judges. Alternate translation: [and he killed] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

And his nose burned

The author is speaking as if Samson's **nose** had literally **burned**. The Introduction to Judges discusses this usage. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And he became extremely angry] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and he went up {to} the house of his father

The author means implicitly that Samson did not officially marry the Philistine woman, but instead returned to the house of his father. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and he did not officially marry the woman, but instead returned to the house of his father] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 14:20

And the wife of Samson became to his companion who had accompanied him

Since the author speaks of this **companion** in the singular and adds a descriptive phrase about him, he must have had a special role in the bridegroom's party. Your language may have its own term or expression for this role.
Alternate translation: [And the woman's father gave her to Samson's best man to be his wife instead] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Judges 15

Judges 15 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

The account of Samson continues in this chapter.

Some translations set each line of poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to make it easier to read. The ULT does this with the poetry in 15:16.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Samson’s strength

The phrase “the Spirit of Yahweh rushed upon Samson” means the same thing in 15:14 as in 14:6 and 14:19. The author is saying once again that Yahweh gave Samson extraordinary strength to be the agent of his judgment against the Philistines.

Judges 15:1

And it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

in the days of

The author is using the word **days** by association to mean ”time.” Alternate translation: [at the time of] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

with a kid of goats

Bringing a **kid of goats** was a symbolic action that showed Samson wanted to reconcile with his wife. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [with a young goat as a gift to show he was no longer angry] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

with a kid of goats

See how you translated the same expression in 6:19. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

I will go in to my wife, to the chamber

Samson is speaking in a polite way about a private or uncomfortable matter. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [I would like to sleep with my bride] or [I would like to make the marriage official by consummating it] (See: **Euphemism (p.720)**)

my wife

In this culture, people would speak of a woman who was engaged to a man as his **wife**, and they would speak of a man who was engaged to a woman as her **husband**, even before the two were yet married. Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [my fiancée] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Judges 15:2

Saying, I said that hating, you hated her

The father is repeating forms of the verbs **say** and **hate** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [I said to myself that you truly hated her] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

Is not her younger sister better than she

The father is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [Her younger sister is certainly better than she is!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 15:3

to them

The pronoun **them** refers to the extended family present. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [to his wife's family] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

regarding the Philistines when I do harm to them

Samson is speaking about the Philistines in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: [regarding you Philistines when I do harm to you] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.726)**)

when I do harm to them

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **harm**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [when I harm them] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 15:4

foxes

A **fox** is a small wild dog. If your readers would not be familiar with what a fox is, in your translation you could use the name of a similar thing that your readers would recognize, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: [coyotes] or [wild dogs] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

and he turned tail to tail, and he put one torch between two of the tails, in the middle

The author assumes that the reader will know that Samson tied the foxes' tails together in pairs. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and he tied the foxes' tails together in pairs, and he put one torch between each pair of tails] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 15:5

and sent {them

The pronoun **them** refers to the foxes with torches tied to their tails. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [and sent the foxes with burning torches] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 815)**)

Judges 15:6

the Philistines

The author assumes that the reader will know that by **the Philistines**, he means the leaders of the Philistines. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the leaders of the Philistines] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

And they said

Here the author is not using **they** to refer to specific people. Use an expression for this that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And people told them] or [And they were told] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife

Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [who was engaged to marry the daughter of the Timnite, because her father took her] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

the Timnite

The word **Timnite** is the name for a person from the town of Timnah. Alternate translation: [that man from Timnah] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

and burned her and her father with fire

It might seem that the expression **burned ... with fire** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [and burned her and her father to death] or [and killed her and her father by setting them on fire] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 15:7

If you have done like this, then if I avenge

Samson is speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but he means that it is actually true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, then you could translate this as a confident statement. Alternate translation: [Since you have done such a thing, I am entitled to avenge myself] (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.696)**)

then afterward I will stop

Samson assumes that the Philistines will understand that he means he will stop fighting once he has avenged himself because he feels that will make them even. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [then that will make us even, so I will stop fighting] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 15:8

Then he struck them leg on thigh

This is an expression that people of this culture commonly used to mean to kill opponents violently. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also use plain language.
Alternate translation: [Then he tore them limb from limb] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Etam

The word **Etam** is the name of a place. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 15:9

in Lehi

The word **Lehi** is the name of a place. It is a shortened form of **Ramath Lehi**. The author explains the origin of this name in 15:17. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 15:10

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 15:11

Do you not know that the Philistines are ruling over us? So what is this you have done to us

The men of Judah are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You must know that the Philistines are ruling over us! What you have done to us is terrible!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 15:12

into the hand of the Philistines

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the meaning of the phrase **into the hand of**. (See: **Metonymy (p. 780)**)

that you will not strike me

Samson is implicitly seeking assurance that the men of Judah will not **strike** him in such a way as to kill him. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation, as the UST does, if that would be helpful to your readers. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 15:13

but binding, we will bind you & but putting to death, we will not put you to death

The men of Judah are repeating forms of the verbs **bind** and **put to death** in order to intensify the ideas that they express. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [we will definitely bind you ... but we will certainly not put you to death] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

Then they bound him with two new ropes

The author assumes that readers will know that the men of Judah used **new ropes** because they were strong and not worn out. The next verse indicates that they used one rope for Samson's hands and another for his arms. Alternate translation: [Then they tied his hands together with one new, strong rope and they tied his arms together with another new, strong rope] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 15:14

Then the Spirit of Yahweh rushed on him

See how you translated the same expression in 14:6. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and the ropes that {were} on his arms became like flax that they burn with fire

The point of this comparison is that just as **flax** breaks easily when people **burn** it with **fire**, so the ropes on Samson's arms broke easily. That was because the Spirit of Yahweh made him very strong. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [and he became so strong that he was able to break the ropes that were on his arms as easily as flax breaks when people burn it] (See: **Simile (p.834)**)

that they burn with fire

It might seem that the expression **burn with fire** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [that they burn] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

that they burn

Here the author is using **they** to refer to people in general. Use an expression for this that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [that people burn] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

and his bonds melted from on his hands

The author is speaking as if these **bonds** literally **melted**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and he was able to break the rope that bound his hands so easily that it seemed to melt away] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 15:15

and he stretched out his hand and took 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: [and he took it] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 15:16

With the jawbone of a donkey, a heap, two heaps

Samson is using words with similar sounds for poetic effect. In Hebrew, the word for **donkey** sounds similar to the word for **heap**. You may be able to reproduce this effect in your language. Alternate translation: [With the jawbone of an ass, a mass, two masses] (See: **Poetry (p.802)**)

a heap, two heaps

In order to make an emphatic statement, Samson is naming a number that should be sufficient to illustrate his point and then increasing that number by one. This was a common device in Hebrew poetry. If a speaker of your language would not do this, in your translation you could express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [I have killed enough men to make an enormous heap] (See: **Poetry (p.802)**)

Judges 15:17

Ramath Lehi

Ramath Lehi is the name of a place. It is the full name of the place that is called “Lehi” in 15:9. The ULT has spelled out this name using English letters so that readers will know how it sounds. However, it means “The Throwing of the Jawbone”; the author is explaining how the place got its name. In your translation, you could spell this name the way it sounds in your language but then add an explanation of its meaning. Alternate translation: [Ramath Lehi, which means “The Throwing of the Jawbone”] (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.709)**)

Judges 15:18

You have given this great salvation by the hand of your servant

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: [You have enabled your servant to do this great deed to help save your people] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

by the hand of your servant

Samson 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: [by my hand] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.726)**)

and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised

Samson is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [and now I do not want to die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

into the hand of the uncircumcised

Samson is using the word **uncircumcised** by association to mean the Philistines, who did not practice circumcision. Alternate translation: [into the hand of the Philistines] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 15:19

and his spirit returned

The author is speaking as if Samson's spirit had literally left his body and then **returned**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and his energy returned] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

he called its name

It might seem that the expression **called its name** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [he named it] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

En-Hakkore

The word **En-Hakkore** is the name of a place. It means "The Spring of the Caller." Samson gave it this name because Yahweh provided this spring when he called out to him. In your translation, you could spell this name the way it sounds in your language but then add an explanation of its meaning. Alternate translation: [En-Hakkore, which means "The Spring of the Caller"] (See: **Copy or Borrow Words (p.709)**)

to this day

The author assumes that the reader will understand that by **day**, he means the time at which he is writing. You could say that explicitly if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [at the present time] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 15:20

in the days of the Philistines

The author is using the term **days** to refer by association to the time period when the Philistines ruled over Israel. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express this meaning in another way. Alternate translation: [during the time when the Philistines ruled over Israel] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 16

Judges 16 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

The account of Samson concludes in this chapter.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Why did Samson wear his hair long in seven locks?

In 16:13, Samson speaks of the “seven locks of my head,” meaning the seven braids of his long hair. In Numbers 6:5, the law of Moses forbade Nazirites to cut their hair. Samson kept his hair long because he was a Nazirite. The law of Moses did not specify that Nazirites needed to wear their hair in seven locks or braids. But Samson was doing that as a symbolic action that represented his dedication to God. The number seven symbolized completeness, so the seven braids could have represented the perfection of God or the complete devotion that the Nazirite vow entailed. However, it would not be appropriate to explain the significance of this action in your translation by having Samson say something such as “the seven braids that show I am dedicated to God.” That is the secret that Samson is trying to keep from Delilah. Though he eventually divulges it, he does not do so when he first mentions the seven braids of his hair. But you might put something about this in a footnote if that would be helpful for your readers.

Judges 16:1

and he went in to her

The author is speaking in a polite way about a private matter. Your language may have a similar expression that you can use in your translation or you could express the meaning plainly as in the UST. Alternate translation: [and he had sexual relations with her] (See: **Euphemism (p.720)**)

Judges 16:2

And it was told} to the Gazites, saying

Ancient translations of the book of Judges all have the words **And it was told.** The text does not make sense without them. So it appears that these words dropped out of the Hebrew text during the process of copying and transmission. Modern versions of the Bible include them or the equivalent, and we recommend that you do the same in your translation. If your language does not use passive verbal forms, you could express this idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [And the Gazites learned] (See: **Textual Variants (p.843)**)

So they encircled

The author 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: [So they encircled the house that Samson was in] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 16:3

to the head of the hill

The author is speaking of the **hill** as if it were a living thing that could have a **head**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly as in the UST. (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

Judges 16:4

Now it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, and her name {was} Delilah

The author is using this phrase to introduce Delilah as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

Judges 16:5

And the lords of the Philistines came up to her

See the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter for an explanation of the author's use of the words **up** and "down" with descriptions of travel. Alternate translation: [And the lords of the Philistines came to her] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

And we ourselves will give to you, a man

The Philistine lords are using a common expression to mean that each one of them will give Delilah the amount specified. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And each one of us will give you] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

1,100 silver

The lords are 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, as in the UST, if that would be clearer in your language. (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

1,100 silver

It is not clear why the Philistine lords offer to give Delilah 1,100 silver pieces each. Usually people offer a large, round number such as 1,000. Some interpreters suggest that in this culture, adding 100 to a number was a way of specifying exactly that amount and no less. See the similar instance in 20:35. Alternate translation: [no less than 1,000 pieces of silver] (See: **Numbers (p.784)**)

Judges 16:6

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 16:7

If they bind me

Here the author is not using **they** to refer to specific people. Use an expression for this that would be natural in your language. Alternate translation: [If anyone binds me] or [If I am bound] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

that have not been dried

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 no one has dried] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

and I will be like one of man

Samson is using a common expression to mean he would become as weak as an ordinary person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly, here and in the rest of the chapter. Alternate translation: [and I will have no more strength than anyone else] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 16:8

that had not been dried

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 no one had dried] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 16:9

The Philistines {are} upon you, Samson

Delilah is using a common expression to mean that the Philistines are approaching to attack. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The Philistines are coming to attack you, Samson] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

just as a string of flax is broken in its touching fire

The point of this comparison is that just as **fire** has no difficulty causing a string made of flax to break, so Samson remained strong enough to break the cords very easily. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [as easily as a string of flax breaks when it touches fire] (See: **Simile (p.834)**)

So his strength was not known

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 no one discovered the source of his strength] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 16:10

Behold

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the term **Behold**. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 16:11

If binding, they bind me

Samson is repeating forms of the verb **bind** in order to intensify the idea that he is expressing. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [If in fact they bind me] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

work has not been done

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 has done work] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 16:12

like thread

The point of this comparison is that just as **thread** breaks easily, so Samson broke these ropes very easily. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly as in the UST. (See: **Simile (p.834)**)

Judges 16:13

If you weave the seven locks of my head with the warp

Samson 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. It is likely that Samson used the same expression as on the previous two occasions. Alternate translation: [If you weave the seven locks of my head with the warp, then I will weaken and I will be like one of man] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

the seven locks of my head

Samson is using the word **head** by association to mean the hair on his head. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the seven locks of my hair] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

the seven locks of my head

See the discussion in the Notes to this chapter of the reason why Samson kept his hair long and wore it in **seven locks** or braids. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

with the warp

A **warp** is a set of threads running lengthwise on a loom for weaving cloth. If your readers would not be familiar with what a warp is, in your translation you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: [the threads on your loom] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

Judges 16:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 16:15

How do you say, ‘I love you,’ yet your heart {is} not with me

Delilah is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You say, ‘I love you,’ but your heart is not with me!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

How do you say, ‘I love you,’ yet your heart {is} not with me

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [How can you say that you love me when your heart is not with me] or [You say that you love me, but your heart is not with me!] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

yet your heart {is} not with me

Here the **heart** represents a person’s inner thoughts and emotions. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [yet you have not shared your innermost secrets with me] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 16:16

she pressed him with her words all of the days and she urged him

The terms **pressed** and **urged** mean similar things. The author 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: [she pressed him continually with her words all of the days] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

she pressed him with her words

The author is speaking as if Delilah could have physically **pressed** against Samson with her **words**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [she kept asking him persistently] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

with her words

The author is using the term **words** by association to mean what Delilah said by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [by what she said] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and his soul wore out to death

The author is using one part of Samson, his **soul**, to mean all of him in the act of wearing out from continual pestering. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and he wore out to death] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

and his soul wore out to death

The author is making an overstatement for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [and he became so worn out that he could not stand it any longer] (See: **Hyperbole (p.743)**)

Judges 16:17

all of his heart

See how you translated the similar expression in 16:15. Alternate translation: [everything about his innermost secret, the source of his strength] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

A razor has not gone up on my head

See how you translated the similar expression in 13:5. Alternate translation: [I have never cut my hair] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

from the womb of my mother

Samson is using the term **womb** by association to mean birth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [since I was born] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

I were shaved

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 someone shaved off my hair] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

then my strength would turn from me

Samson is speaking of his **strength** as if it were a living thing that could **turn** away and leave him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly as in the UST. (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

Judges 16:18

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 16:19

and she shaved

Since the author says that Delilah **called to a man**, it appears that he was the one who **shaved** Samson's hair while she held him quietly on her knees. So the author is using one person who was involved in the process of shaving Samson's hair, Delilah, to represent everyone who was involved. But since the man himself apparently did the shaving, it may be more natural in your language to use a pronoun here that represents him. Alternate translation: [and he shaved] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 16:20

I will go out like time upon time, and I will shake myself

Samson is describing one event before describing another event that would precede it. In your translation, you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they happened. Alternate translation: [I will shake myself and go out like time upon time] (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

like time upon time

Samson is using a common expression to mean that he would do what he had done previously. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [like all the other times] or [as I did before] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and I will shake myself

Samson seems to be saying that he will **shake** himself free from bonds of some kind. This suggests implicitly that Delilah or the man who shaved Samson also bound him in some way while he was still sleeping. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and I will shake myself free of these bonds that someone has put on me] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 672)**)

Yahweh had turned from upon him

The author is speaking as if Yahweh had physically **turned** away from Samson. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Yahweh was no longer giving him great strength] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 16:21

with bronze fetters

The Hebrew text uses a dual form to describe these **fetters**. If your language does not use that form, you can use an equivalent expression that conveys the same meaning. Alternate translation: [with a pair of bronze fetters] (See: **Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (p.728)**)

Judges 16:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 16:23

to sacrifice a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and for celebration

It may be more natural in your language to put the information about the **celebration** before the information about the **sacrifice**, since celebrating the capture of Samson provided the occasion for the sacrifice. Alternate translation: [to celebrate by sacrificing a great sacrifice to Dagon their god] (See: **Information Structure (p.753)**)

to sacrifice a great sacrifice

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: [to offer a great sacrifice] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

and for celebration

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **celebration**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [and to celebrate] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Our god has given into our hand Samson, our enemies

It may be more natural in your language to put your translation of the phrase **our enemies** with the information about **Samson**. Alternate translation: [Our god has given our enemy Samson into our hand] (See: **Information Structure (p.753)**)

Our god has given into our hand

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of this phrase. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

our enemies

The Philistines are using the plural form **enemies** in a context where one enemy, Samson, seems to be in view. This suggests that they are using the plural form for emphasis. Your language may use plural forms in the same way. If not, you could express the meaning in another way. Alternate translation: [our great enemy] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.848)**)

Judges 16:24

and they praised their god, for they said, “Our god has given into our hand our enemy and the devastator of our land, and who multiplied our slain

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: [and they said, “Our god has given into our hand our enemy and the devastator of our land, who multiplied our slain,” so they praised their god] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

our enemy and the devastator of our land

The people are expressing a single idea by using two phrases connected with **and**. The phrase about Samson being a **devastator** tells in what way he was their **enemy**. Alternate translation: [our enemy who devastated our land] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

and who multiplied our slain

The Philistines are using the adjective **slain** as a noun to mean people who have been killed. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can use a different form of the same root. Alternate translation: [who slew so many of our people] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.782)**)

Judges 16:25

And it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

when their heart {was} good

The author is using a common expression to mean that the Philistines were beginning to become drunk from drinking wine. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [when they were feeling giddy from the wine they were drinking] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

So they called for Samson from the house of prisoners, and he caused laughter to their faces. And they made him stand between the columns

The author is describing one event before describing another event that preceded it. In your translation, you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they happened. Alternate translation: [So they called for Samson from the house of prisoners and made him stand between the columns, and he caused laughter to their faces] (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

Judges 16:26

upon which the house is set

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 support the house] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

the house

Samson is speaking as if the temple of Dagon were actually a **house** in which he lived. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly, here and in the rest of the chapter. Alternate translation: [this temple] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 16:27

Now the house was full {of} men and women

The author is providing background information that will help readers understand what happens next in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

watching to laughing of Samson

The author is using the possessive expression **laughing of Samson** not to describe Samson himself laughing, but the Philistines **laughing** as they were **watching** him. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [who laughed at Samson when they saw him] (See: **Possession (p.809)**)

Judges 16:28

remember me

Samson is using a common expression to mean that he wants Yahweh to help him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [help me] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

so I may avenge myself {with} one vengeance against the Philistines for my two eyes

Samson is contrasting **one** act of vengeance with his **two** eyes, but it might seem that the expression **avenge ... with one vengeance** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [so I may avenge myself against the Philistines for both of my eyes at once] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 16:29

upon which the house was set

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 supported the house] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 16:30

My soul shall die with the Philistines

Samson is using one part of himself, his **soul**, to mean all of himself in the act of dying. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I shall die with the Philistines] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 16:31

Then his brothers and all of the house of his father went down

The author 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: [Then his brothers and all of the house of his father went down to Gaza to retrieve Samson's body] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

between Zorah and between Eshtaol

See how you translated the names **Zorah** and **Eshtaol** in 13:25 and translate them that way here and in Chapter 18, where they occur several times. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 17

Judges 17 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter begins the final section of the book of Judges. In this section, the author describes the atrocities and chaos that characterized the nation in the absence of a godly leader. Many of the judges had been godly leaders who made sure that the people of Israel obeyed Yahweh. But since they were all individuals whom God raised up at specific times, there was not a continuity of godly leadership. As the author says earlier in the book, "when Yahweh raised up for them judges, then Yahweh was with the judge and he saved them from the hand of their enemies all of the days of the judge. ... But it happened, at the death of the judge, they turned and acted corruptly more than their fathers, to walk after other gods, to serve them, and to bow down to them. They did not drop {any} of their deeds or {any} of their stubborn ways" (2:18–19). So in this section, the author is showing how important and helpful it would have been to have a continuity of godly leadership such as a line of good kings would provide. A godly leader would guide the people in the true worship of Yahweh and ensure justice and righteousness. This was fulfilled partially by David, and it has now been fulfilled definitively by God's Messianic king, Jesus.

In this chapter and the next one, the author describes how idolatry took root in Israel, in the additional territory that the tribe of Dan conquered for itself.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Idols and figures

The law of Moses forbade the Israelites to make any idols. While the instructions Yahweh gave Moses for the tabernacle included making metal figures, the Israelites were not to make any figures that represented gods that they would worship. This practice was common in Canaan, and it shows the influence the Israelites allowed these people to have on them. Micah's mother should not have had an image made out of silver, and Micah should not have set it up as an idol and gotten a priest to serve at the shrine where he put it. (See: **god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry (p.857)**)

Translation Issues in This Chapter

"an idol and a cast image"

The author speaks of what Micah's mother had a refiner make from her silver as "an idol and a cast image." Some interpreters understand this to be two things, while other interpreters understand it to be one thing. Like many languages, Hebrew sometimes expresses a single idea by using two words connected with "and." If that is what the author is doing here, he means that this was a cast image that served as an idol. In 18:20, he speaks simply of "the idol" apparently to mean the same thing as "an idol and a molded image" in 18:14. That suggests that the phrase "an idol and a cast image" does mean a cast image that served as an idol or an idol that was made by casting an image. In your translation, you may wish to use a phrase such as "a molded idol" as the UST does. (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

Judges 17:1

Now there was a man from the hill country of Ephraim, and his name {was} Micah

The author is using this sentence to introduce Micah as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

Judges 17:2

The 1,100 silver

See how you translated the same number in 16:5. (See: **Numbers (p.784)**)

was taken from you

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 took from you] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

and you swore

Micah 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 you swore a curse on whoever took it] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

and also you spoke in my ears

Micah is using the term **ears** by association to mean that he heard what his mother said. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and I also heard what you said] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

behold

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, Micah is using the word **Behold** to call attention to what he is about to say. Alternate translation: [Listen] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Blessed {be} my son by Yahweh

The mother is speaking a blessing. She is saying something that she hopes will cause good and beneficial things to happen to her son. In your translation, use a form that people would recognize as a blessing in your language. You might express this as a prayer, if that would be more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [May Yahweh bless my son] (See: **Blessings (p.687)**)

Blessed {be} my son by Yahweh

The mother is speaking about her son in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the second person. Alternate translation: [May Yahweh bless you, my son] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.726)**)

Judges 17:3

Consecrating, I consecrate the silver to Yahweh

The mother is repeating forms of the verb **consecrate** in order to intensify her expression of the idea that it conveys. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [I sincerely consecrate the silver to Yahweh] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

from my hand to my son

The mother is using one part of herself, her **hand**, to mean all of herself in the act of giving. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I hereby give it to my son] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

an idol and a molded image

See the discussion of this phrase in the Notes to this chapter. Alternate translation: [a cast metal idol] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

I return it to you

The pronoun **it** refers to the silver from which the idol would be made. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [I return that much of the silver to you] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p. 815)**)

Judges 17:4

200 silver

The author 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: [200 pieces of silver] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

and she gave it

The pronoun **it** refers to the 200 pieces of silver. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [and she gave that silver] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

into} an idol and a molded image

See how you translated the same expression in 17:3. (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

Judges 17:5

And the man Micah

The author is using this phrase to reintroduce Micah as the leading participant in the next part of this story. If your language has its own way of reintroducing participants, you can use it here in your translation. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

was} a house of gods

The author is speaking about the shrine where Micah kept his idols as if it were a **house** in which the gods lived whom these idols represented. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [was a shrine where he kept idols] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and teraphim

The term **teraphim** describes small idols that people kept in their homes. If your readers would not be familiar with what these were, in your translation you could use the name of a similar thing that your readers would recognize, or you could use a general expression. Alternate translation: [domestic deities] (See: **Translate Unknowns (p.845)**)

and he filled the hand of one of his sons

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that Micah appointed his son as a priest. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and he chose one of his sons to serve at the shrine] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 17:6

In those days

The author 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: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

A man

Here the masculine term **man** has a generic sense that includes both men and women. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use language in your translation that is clearly inclusive of both men and women. Alternate translation: [Each person] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.852)**)

the right in his eyes

The author is using the adjective **right** as a noun to mean what a person considers to be right. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this adjective with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [what he thought was right] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.782)**)

the right in his eyes

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, here the author is using the common expression of his culture, **in the eyes of**, to mean “in the judgment of” or “in the opinion of.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [what he thought was right] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 17:7

Now there was a young man from Bethlehem {in} Judah, from the clan of Judah. Now he was a Levite, and he was sojourning there

The author is using this sentence to introduce a young Levite as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

from the clan of Judah

The author is using the term **clan** by association to mean the territory assigned to the clans of Judah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from the land assigned to the clans of Judah] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 17:8

to sojourn in where he might find

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the Levite was trying to find a place to live and work. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to find a place to live and work] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 17:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 17:10

for a father

Micah is speaking as if the Levite would become his actual father. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [as my spiritual advisor] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

ten silver

Micah 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, as the UST does, if that would be clearer in your language. (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

for the days

In Hebrew, the plural of **days** can mean a year. That is the meaning in this context. Alternate translation: [each year] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.848)**)

Judges 17:11

and the young man became to him like one from his sons

The point of this comparison is that just as a father feels great affection toward his **sons**, so this Levite became very dear to Micah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [and the young man became very dear to him, as if he were one of his sons] (See: **Simile (p.834)**)

Judges 17:12

And Micah filled the hand of the Levite

See how you translated the same expression in 17:5. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 17:13

Now I know that Yahweh will be good to me, because the Levite is to me for a priest

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 the Levite has become my priest, now I know that Yahweh will be good to me] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Judges 18

Judges 18 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

In this chapter, the author continues to describe how idolatry took root in Israel, in the additional territory that the tribe of Dan conquered for itself.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The conquest of Laish by soldiers from the tribe of Dan

While the author does not say specifically that it was not right for the tribe of Dan to kill all the inhabitants of the city of Laish and take their territory, he indicates this implicitly. He notes that they were Sidonians, not Canaanites such as Yahweh had told the Israelites to drive out, and that they were living peacefully, not posing any threat. The Israelites had been given exceptional instructions to kill all of the Canaanites. Most interpreters believe that this was so that the Canaanites would not influence the Israelites to follow their practices, which were very wicked and destructive. But Yahweh did not tell the Israelites to kill all the people from other groups. So readers are meant to understand implicitly that the soldiers from Dan committed an atrocity against the people of Laish. The author is presenting this as evidence that if Israel had a godly king, he would maintain order and justice throughout the land, protect vulnerable people, and lead Israel away from idolatry and toward proper worship and obedience of Yahweh.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“an idol and a cast image”

See the discussion of this phrase, which occurs several times in this chapter, in the Introduction to Chapter 17.

Judges 18:1

In those days

The author is using the term **days** by association to mean a particular time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language as in the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Now in those days

The author is using this phrase to introduce background information that will help readers understand what happens next in the story. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

the tribe of the Danite {was} seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell, for one had not fallen to it up to that day in the midst of the tribes of Israel for an inheritance

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 the tribe of the Danite had not received an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, it was seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

the Danite

The author is not referring to a specific **Danite**. He means the people of the tribe of Dan in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. Alternate translation: [the Danites] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

an inheritance to dwell

The author is using the term **inheritance** by association to mean a lasting possession that would be passed down to future generations. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [a lasting possession of territory in which they could live] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

one had not fallen to it

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that no territory had been assigned to the tribe. The word **fallen** suggests assignment by lot. In actuality, the Danites had failed to conquer enough of the territory that had been assigned to them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly in light of the historical context. Alternate translation: [they had not secured a sufficient one] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

for an inheritance

It might seem that this expression contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can leave it out, since the word **inheritance** already occurs earlier in the verse. (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 18:2

men from their borders

The author is using the term **border** by association to mean the territory that was enclosed within the borders they describe. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [men from their territory] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

sons of valor

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, in certain contexts, the biblical text uses the expression **sons of** to mean that people are characterized by a particular quality. That is the case here. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [valiant warriors] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

to spy on the land and to examine it

The terms **spy on** and **examine** mean similar things. The author 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: [to explore the land thoroughly] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

And they said to them

The pronoun **they** refers to the leaders of the tribe of Dan, and the pronoun **them** refers to the five men. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And the leaders of Dan said to these five men] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

there

The pronoun **there** refers to the **hill country of Ephraim**. The next verse shows that the men were near but not in the **house of Micah**. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [in that area] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 18:3

and they recognized the voice of the young man, the Levite

The author assumes that readers will know that by **voice** he does not mean that the men knew who the Levite was from his individual voice. Rather, he is referring to the accent with which the Levite spoke. They recognized that he was from their area in Israel, since Zorah and Eshtaol were near Bethlehem. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and they recognized from the Levite's accent that this young man was from their area of the country] or [and they recognized from the Levite's accent, that this young man, was from] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

And what {is} to you here

The men are using a common expression of their culture to ask what means and possessions the young man has. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And how are you making your living] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 18:4

Like this and like this

The Levite is using a common expression of his culture. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [This is exactly what] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 18:5

Please inquire of God that we may know, will our way prosper, upon which we {are} going

The men word their inquiry as if they were asking their question directly of God. It may be natural in your language to make this a direct quotation here. Alternate translation: [Please ask God for us something that we would like to know: 'Will our way prosper, upon which we are going?'] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.711)**)

will our way prosper, upon which we {are} going

In some languages, this may appear to be a quotation within a quotation, which the language would not use. If that is the case for your language, you could express this more indirectly. Alternate translation: [whether the way upon which we are going will prosper] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

will our way prosper, upon which we {are} going

The men are speaking of their **way** as if it were a living thing that could **prosper**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [will we succeed in what we are trying to do] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

Judges 18:6

in peace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **peace**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [confidently] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

your way upon which you are going is before Yahweh

The Levite is using the term **before** by association to mean that Yahweh would watch over them, since they would be in front of him where he could see them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [Yahweh will watch over you on your way] (See: **Metonymy (p. 780)**)

Judges 18:7

in security

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **security**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [securely] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

according to the manner of the Sidonians

The author assumes that readers will know that the Sidonians were merchants who made their living peacefully through commerce. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [making their living peacefully through commerce as the Sidonians do] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

reposing and being secure

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **secure** tells in what way they were **reposing**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning with an equivalent phrase that does not use **and**. Alternate translation: [securely reposing] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

And no one possessing restraint {was} humiliating {for} a thing in the land

The author assumes that readers will know that the expression **possessing restraint** refers to a leader who would control what people could do and that the word **humiliating** means that such a leader would oppress the people so that they had a poor quality of life. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And no tyrant was oppressing them in any way] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

and no thing {was} to them with man

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the people of Laish had no alliances with nearby cities or people groups. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and they did not interact with others] or [and they had no alliances with nearby cities or people groups] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 18:8

their brothers

The author is speaking as if these fellow members of the tribe of Dan were actual **brothers** of the men who had spied on the land. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [their fellow tribesmen] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

What you

The men are 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: [What did you find] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 18:9

Arise

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of **Arise**. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and behold

The five men are using the word **behold** to call attention to and emphasize what they are about to say. See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of this word. Alternate translation: [and indeed] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And {are} you being silent

The men are speaking as if **being silent** were the same thing as not taking action. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And are you not taking action?] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And {are} you being silent

The men are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You should not be silent!] or [You should really take action!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 18:10

at} two hands

The author is using the term **hands** to mean the sides or extent of the land, by association with the way that people's hands are at their sides. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from one side to the other] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

God has given it into your hand

The men are using the past tense to describe something that they believe will happen in the future in order to show that they are confident the event will happen. If it would be clearer in your language, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: [God will give it into your hand] or [God clearly intends to give it into your hand] (See: **Predictive Past (p.813)**)

God has given it into your hand

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the phrase **into your hand**. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

no lack {is} there of any thing that {is} on the earth

The men are making an overstatement for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [there is abundant provision for human needs] (See: **Hyperbole (p.743)**)

Judges 18:11

from the clan of the Danite

The author is using the term **clan** by association to mean the territory assigned to the clans of Dan. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [from the territory assigned to the tribe of Dan] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

girded {with} weapons of 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: [carrying weapons to use in battle] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 18:12

Mahaneh Dan

The word **Mahaneh Dan** is the name of a place. As the context suggests, it means “Camp of Dan.” You may wish to indicate that in a footnote. (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 18:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 18:14

answered and said

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **answered** tells in what regard they **said** this. They were not answering a question but speaking in light of the situation. Alternate translation: [remarked] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

their brothers

The author is speaking as if these fellow members of the tribe of Dan were the actual **brothers** of the five men. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [their kinsmen] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Do you know that in these houses {are} an ephod and teraphim and an idol and a molded image

The men are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You should know that these houses contain an ephod and teraphim and an idol and a molded image!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

in these houses

The plural term **houses** suggests that the phrase “the house of Micah,” which the author uses several times in this chapter and the previous one, actually refers to a compound on which there were several houses. The reference to “the house of the young man” in the next verse supports this understanding. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [in this compound] or [in this complex of houses] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

and an idol and a molded image

See how you translated the same expression in 17:3. Alternate translation: [and a cast metal idol] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

Judges 18:15

and they asked of him concerning peace

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **peace**, you could express the same idea in another way. Since the word **peace** was a greeting in this culture, that could be the meaning here. Alternate translation: [and they asked about his welfare] or [and they greeted him] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 18:16

girded with weapons of war

See how you translated the same expression in 18:11. (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 18:17

the idol and the ephod and the teraphim and the molded image

While in this instance the terms **idol** and **molded image** do not occur together, the author nevertheless seems to be using them together to mean one thing, as in 17:3 and several other places. See the discussion in the Introduction to this chapter. Alternate translation: [the cast metal idol and the ephod and the teraphim] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

girded {with} weapons of war

See how you translated the same expression in 18:11. (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 18:18

And these entered

The pronoun **these** refers to the five men who had previously spied on the land. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And the five spies entered] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

the idol, the ephod and the teraphim and the molded image

See how you translated the similar expression in 18:17. Alternate translation: [the cast metal idol and the ephod and the teraphim] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

What {are} you doing

The priest is using the question form to rebuke the five men. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [You should not be doing that!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 18:19

Be quiet! Put your hand over your mouth

The terms **Be quiet** and **Put your hand over your mouth** mean similar things. The men are using the two terms together for emphasis. They are emphasizing specifically that the Levite should not express any objections to what they are doing. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [Keep completely silent!] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

Put your hand over your mouth

The men are speaking as if the priest would actually cover his mouth to keep from speaking. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Do not say anything] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

for a father

The men are speaking as if the priest would become their actual **father**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. See how you translated the similar expression in 17:10. Alternate translation: [as our spiritual advisor] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Is} the good your being a priest for the house of one man or your being a priest for a tribe and for a clan in Israel

The men are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [Surely it would be better for you to be a priest for a tribe and clan in Israel than for the house of one man!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Is} the good

The men are using the adjective **good** as a noun to mean what would be better. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can use this adjective in such a way that it is not a noun. It may be natural in some languages to use the comparative form where Hebrew uses the positive form. Alternate translation: [What would be good for you] or [What would be better for you] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.782)**)

for the house of one man

The men are using the term **house** by association to mean household. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [one man's household] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

for a tribe and for a clan in Israel

The terms **tribe** and **clan** mean similar things. The men 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: [for an entire Israelite tribe] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

Judges 18:20

And the heart of the priest was good

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the priest was pleased to accept this offer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And the priest was pleased to accept this offer] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and he went in the midst of the people

The author assumes that readers will know that by **the people**, he implicitly means the group of Danites. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and he joined the group of Danites] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 18:21

And they put the children and the livestock and the wealth to their faces

The author assumes that readers will understand that the Danites put these vulnerable people and valuable possessions in front of them because they expected Micah and his neighbors to pursue them. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And they put their children, cattle, and valuable possessions in front of their soldiers, expecting that Micah and his neighbors would pursue them from behind] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 18:22

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 18:23

And they called to the sons of Dan, and they turned their faces and they said

The pronoun **they** in the first instance refers to Micah and his neighbors, and it refers in the second two instances to the Danites. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And Micah and his neighbors called to the Danites, and the Danites turned their faces and said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

What to you, that you have assembled yourself

The Danites are using a common expression of their culture to ask Micah what reason he has for assembling a group of men to pursue them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [For what reason have you assembled yourself] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

What to you, that you have assembled yourself

Since the Danites are asking about a group of people, it might be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **yourself**. Alternate translation: [For what reason have you assembled yourselves] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

Judges 18:24

And what {is} still to me

Micah is using a common expression of his culture to suggest that nothing of value remains to him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And what do I have left] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

And what {is} still to me

Micah is using the question form to express his distress. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [And I have absolutely nothing left!] or [And you have left me with nothing!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

And what {is} still to me

Micah is making an overstatement for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [And compared with what you took, what I have left is of little value] (See: **Hyperbole (p.743)**)

So what is this, you say to me, ‘What to 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: [So what is this, that you ask me why these men and I have assembled ourselves] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

So what is this, you say to me, ‘What to you

Micah is using a common expression of his culture, **what is this**, to protest that the Danites’ question is unfair and has an obvious answer. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [So how dare you ask me, ‘What to you’?] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

So what is this, you say to me, ‘What to you

Micah is using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [So it is very inappropriate for you to ask me, ‘What to you?’!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

What to you

Micah is repeating part of the question that the Danites asked him in the previous verse. See how you translated the expression “What to you” there. Alternate translation: [For what reason] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 18:25

You should not make your voice heard among us

The Danites are using the term **voice** by association to mean speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [You should not say anything more to us] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

men bitter of soul

The Danites are speaking as if these men actually had souls that were **bitter**. They mean that these men were easily provoked to violence. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [violent men] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and you gather your soul and the soul of your house

The Danites are using a common expression of their culture to mean that Micah and the people of his household would lose their lives. (While the first instance of **soul** in this verse refers to the character of the Danite men, in these further instances **soul** means “life.”) If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and you lose your life and the life of your house] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

and the soul of your house

The Danites are using the singular term **soul** to mean the lives of all the members of Micah’s household. If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a plural form. Alternate translation: [and the lives of your household members who are here] (See: **Collective Nouns (p.689)**)

and the soul of your house

The Danites are using the term **house** by association to mean household. The context suggests that many of Micah’s household members, both family and servants, were among the men he gathered to pursue the Danites. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and the life of your household] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 18:26

And the sons of Dan went on their way, for Micah perceived that they were stronger than him

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [Since Micah realized that the Danites were stronger than he was, they were able to go on their way] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

Judges 18:27

reposing and being secure

See how you translated the same expression in 18:7. (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

to the mouth of the sword

See how you translated the same expression in 1:8. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 18:28

And there was not a deliverer, for it was far from Sidon and no thing {was} to them with man

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [Since the city was far from Sidon and it had no alliances with nearby cities or people groups, there was no one to rescue them] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

and no thing {was} to them with man

See how you translated the same expression in 18:7. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Now it {was} in the valley that {is} to Beth Rehob

The author is providing background information to help readers recognize where Laish was located. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Judges 18:29

And they called the name of the city Dan

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: [And they named the city Dan] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

their father Dan

The author is speaking as if Dan were the actual **father** of these people. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [their ancestor Dan] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

who was born to Israel

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 Israel fathered] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

at the first

The author is using the adjective **first** as a noun to mean the earlier time. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this so that this adjective is not a noun or use an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [in the first place] or [originally] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.782)**)

Judges 18:30

And the sons of Dan raised up the idol for themselves

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the Danites set up the idol for worship. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And the Danites set up the idol as an object of worship] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

the Danite

The author is not referring to a specific **Danite**. He means the tribe of Dan in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. Alternate translation: [the Danites] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

the exile of the land

The author is using the term **land** by association to mean the people who lived in the land. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the exile of the people who lived in that land] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 18:31

the house of God

The author is speaking of the tabernacle as if it were a **house** in which God lived. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the tabernacle] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 19

Judges 19 Chapter Introduction

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, the author begins to tell a story that provides further evidence of the benefits of Israel having a godly king. He describes an outrageous crime that Israelite men in the city of Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin committed against a helpless person.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Why did the Levite push his concubine out to the mob?

This chapter describes how a mob of men in the city of Gibeah wanted to rape a Levite man who was staying in the city overnight. While the men were going to use sex as a weapon, what they intended was ultimately a crime of power and violence. The Levite believed they were going to kill him (see 20:5). So to save his own life, he pushed his concubine out to the mob, and they raped and killed her. The author describes this crime as further evidence that Israel needed a godly king who would maintain order and justice and protect vulnerable people. The author is not presenting what the Levite did, or what his host offered to do (surrendering his daughter and the Levite's concubine to the mob), as exemplary. The Bible is not saying through this story that a sexual crime against a woman is not as bad as a sexual crime against a man. It is not saying that men may or should sacrifice family members in order to save their own lives. The example that the Bible presents for us to imitate is that of Jesus, who sacrificed himself in order to save others.

Why did the Levite cut up the dead body of his concubine?

The author describes in 19:29 how the Levite brought the body of his murdered concubine home and cut it into twelve pieces and sent the pieces throughout the land of Israel. He probably had messengers carry pieces through the territory of each of the twelve tribes and explain what had happened. Cutting the woman's body into twelve pieces was a symbolic action that called for collective vengeance by all twelve tribes of Israel. The implicit message was that this outrageous crime had defiled the entire land and that the Israelites corporately had a responsibility to cleanse the land by executing justice on the perpetrators. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action in your translation. You might say, for example, "and he cut her body into twelve pieces, one to send to each tribe of Israel to call for collective vengeance."

Judges 19:1

Now it happened

The author is using this phrase to introduce a new event in the story. Use a word, phrase, or other method in your language that is natural for introducing a new event. (See: **Introduction of a New Event (p.755)**)

a man, a Levite

The author is using this phrase to introduce the Levite as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. Alternate translation: [there was a certain Levite] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

in the flanks of the hill country of Ephraim

The author is speaking as if the hill country were a living creature with **flanks**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [in the remote parts of the hill country of Ephraim] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

a woman, a concubine

The author is using this phrase to introduce the concubine as a new participant in the story. If your language has its own way of introducing new participants, you can use it here in your translation. Alternate translation: [a woman to be his concubine] (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

Judges 19:2

But & whored against him

The expression that the ULT translates as **whored against him** could also mean that the man's concubine became angry with him because of something that he did. Many versions translate it that way. 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. Alternate translation: [became angry with him] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

days

The author is using the term **days** by association to mean a period of time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [for some time] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 19:3

to speak to her heart

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the Levite wanted to speak tenderly to his concubine to persuade her to return. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to speak tenderly to her] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 19:4

his father-in-law

Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. If so, use the term your language uses to express this relationship. The UST and ULT demonstrate different ways this relationship is expressed in English. (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

And they ate and they drank and they lodged there

While the pronoun **they** probably refers in its first two instances to the Levite, his concubine, his servant, and his father-in-law, in the third instance, it may not include the father-in-law. Since he already lived in the house, the author may not be saying that he was among those who **lodged** or stayed overnight there. Your language might naturally indicate this distinction in some way. (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 19:5

on the fourth day

If your language does not use this type of number, you could use a different type of number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: [on day four] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.793)**)

his son-in-law

Your language may have its own term or expression for this relationship. Alternate translation: [the husband of his daughter] (See: **Kinship (p.768)**)

Strengthen your heart

The father is using one part of his son-in-law, his **heart**, to mean all of him. The suggestion is that he would not only be strengthened physically by the food, he would also be cheered up. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Refresh yourself] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

with} a piece of bread

The father is using the courteous language of hospitality. He is intentionally understating what he has to offer and what would be involved in entertaining his guests. You may be able to express this in terms of the hospitality conventions of your own language and culture. Alternate translation: [with a bite to eat] (See: **Politeness (p.805)**)

Judges 19:6

and may your heart be good

The father is using a common expression of his culture to mean that he wanted the Levite to enjoy himself. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and enjoy yourself] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 19:7

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 19:8

on the fifth day

If your language does not use this type of number, you could use a different type of number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: [on day five] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.793)**)

Please strengthen your heart

See how you translated the same expression in 19:5. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

So they lingered until the declining of the day, and the two of them ate

The author is describing one event before describing another event that preceded it. In your translation, you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they happened. Alternate translation: [So the two of them ate, and they lingered until the declining of the day] (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

the declining of the day

The author says that the **day** was **declining** by association to mean that the sun was going down. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the sun began to go down] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and the two of them ate

The author assumes that readers will know that this means the Levite and his father-in-law ate together. He does not mean that the concubine and the servant went without food, but he is focusing on the hospitality that the father-in-law extended and the Levite accepted. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and the Levite and his father-in-law ate together] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 19:9

Behold

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of **Behold**. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

the day has subsided toward evening

The father-in-law says that the **day** has **subsided** by association to mean that the sun has gone down. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [the sun has gone down] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

the declining of the day

See how you translated the same expression in 19:8. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and may your heart be good

See how you translated the same expression in 19:6. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Then you shall get up early tomorrow to your road, and you shall go to your tent

The word **you** is plural in **you shall get up** and **your road** because the father is speaking to the whole group, and it is singular in **you shall go** and **your tent** because he is speaking just to the Levite. Use the appropriate forms in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

Judges 19:10

it {is} Jerusalem

The author is providing background information to help readers recognize that the city he calls **Jebus** is the one they know as **Jerusalem**. In your translation, present this background information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Judges 19:11

and the day had gone down greatly

The author is using the term **day** by association to mean the sun. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [and the sun had nearly set] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

the Jebusite

The author is not referring to a specific **Jebusite**. He means the Jebusite people in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. Alternate translation: [the Jebusites] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

Judges 19:12

a city of a foreigner

The Levite is not referring to a specific **foreigner**. He means foreigners in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. Alternate translation: [a city of foreigners] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

from the sons of Israel

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the phrase **sons of**. Alternate translation: [from the descendants of Israel] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 19:13

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 19:14

And the sun went down on them near Gibeah

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the sun set while they were traveling near Gibeah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And they were near Gibeah when the sun set] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 19:15

and they sat down in the open area of the city

Sitting in the open area was a symbolic action that showed they were looking for lodging. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of this action. Alternate translation: [and they sat down in the city square to show that they needed a place to stay] (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

Judges 19:16

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 19:17

And he lifted his eyes

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the old man looked at something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And he looked up] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Where are you going and from where are you coming

The author is describing one event before describing another event that preceded it. In your translation, you may wish to relate these events in the order in which they happened as in the UST. (See: **Order of Events (p.791)**)

Judges 19:18

to the flanks of the hill country of Ephraim

See how you translated the same expression in 19:1. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and I {am} going {to} the house of Yahweh

The author assumes that readers will infer that the Levite had made a vow to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to Yahweh at the tabernacle if he was successful in bringing back his concubine. So while the Levite says that ultimately he is heading back home to the **hill country of Ephraim**, he is indicating that he will be going to Shiloh first. (He may be saying this in case the old man is God-fearing and this would be an additional incentive for him to provide hospitality.) You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [and before returning home I will be going to the tabernacle to offer a thanksgiving sacrifice] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

and I {am} going {to} the house of Yahweh

The Levite is speaking of the tabernacle as if it were a **house** in which Yahweh lived. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and I am going to the tabernacle] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 19:19

But there is even straw and even fodder for our donkeys, and there is even bread and wine for me and for your maidservant and for the young man with your servants. {There is} no need of anything

The Levite is using the courteous language of hospitality. Although he has sat in the open square to show that he needs lodging, he is intentionally understating his needs in order to show that he does not wish to impose too much on this potential host. You may be able to express this in terms of the hospitality conventions of your own language and culture. (See: **Politeness (p.805)**)

and for your maidservant & with your servants

The Levite is humbly and politely speaking about himself and his concubine in the third person as the **servants** of their potential host. If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: [and for my concubine ... who is with us] (See: **First, Second or Third Person (p.726)**)

Judges 19:20

Peace to you

The old man is using a common expression of his culture to mean that he will attend to the welfare of the Levite. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I will attend to your welfare] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

to you! & your need {& you must not lodge

The words **you** and **your** are singular in all instances because the old man is speaking directly to the Levite. So use singular forms in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (See: **Forms of 'You' — Singular (p.730)**)

all of your need {is} upon me

The old man is using a common expression of his culture to mean that he will provide everything that the Levite needs. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I will provide everything that you need] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 19:21

So he brought him into his house

The author is using one part of the group, the Levite (**him**), to mean all of them. Your language might naturally convey this meaning with a plural pronoun. Alternate translation: [So he brought them into his house] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

and he mixed for the donkeys

The author 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 he mixed fodder for the donkeys and gave it to them] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

and they washed their feet

The author is using one thing that guests in this culture did to to settle in for the night at the old man's house, washing the dust of travel off their **feet**, to mean everything they did for that purpose. Your language may have an expression for this that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [and they made themselves at home] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 19:22

They were making their heart good

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the old man and his guests were enjoying themselves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [They were enjoying themselves] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

men of sons of wickedness

As the Introduction to Judges explains, the phrase **sons of** can be used to refer to people who have a particular characteristic. Here the phrase **men of sons of wickedness** refers to men who were wicked. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent idiom or use plain language. Alternate translation: [men who were very wicked] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

the master of the house

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that this man owned the house. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the owner of the house] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

that we may know him

The men are using a common expression of their culture to mean that they want to have sexual relations with this man. The context indicates that this would be forcible and without consent. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [so we can rape him] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 19:23

my brothers

The old man is speaking to these men as if they were his **brothers**. He is appealing to them as fellow members of the community. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [my fellow townsmen] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

After that this man has come into my house

The old man assumes that the men of Gibeah will understand from this phrase that the old man considers the Levite, as a guest in his home, to be under his protection. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Since this man is a guest under my protection] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 19:24

and you may humble them

The old man is describing sexual assault, but he does not wish to speak about it directly. Your language may have a similar indirect expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [and you may have your way with them] (See: **Euphemism (p.720)**)

the good in your eyes

See how you translated the same expression in 17:6. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 19:25

And they knew her and they abused her

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **knew**, referring to sexual relations, tells in what way they **abused** her. Alternate translation: [And they sexually abused her] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

at the rising of the dawn

The author is using the term **dawn** by association to mean the sun. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [as the sun was rising] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 19:26

And the woman came

The author 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 the woman came back to the house] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

at the turning of the morning

The author is using a common expression of his culture to describe **morning** as the time when this night was **turning** into day. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [at daybreak] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

until the light

The author 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 she lay there until it became light] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 19:27

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 19:28

But {there was} no answering

The author assumes that readers will know that this means the woman was dead. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [But she did not answer, because she had died] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Arise

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of this word under the heading “arose.” See how you translated this word in Joshua 1:02. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 19:29

and he cut her to her bones, into 12 pieces

See the Notes to this chapter for a discussion of why the Levite cut up the body of his murdered concubine and for a suggestion of what you might say here in your translation. (See: **Symbolic Action (p.839)**)

and he sent her

The pronoun **her** refers to the pieces of the woman's body. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [and he sent the pieces of her body] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

into all of the border of Israel

The author is using the term **border** by association to mean the territory of Israel. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [throughout the territory of Israel] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 19:30

everyone was seeing, and he said

The pronoun **he** refers to each person who saw the pieces of the woman's body. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [everyone who saw this said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Like this has not been done and has not been 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: [No one has ever done or seen anything like this] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

from the day of the coming up of the sons of Israel from the land of Egypt

The author is using the term **day** by association to mean the time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [since the time when the sons of Israel came up from the land of Egypt] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Set for yourselves upon it

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the people should think carefully about what had happened. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Think carefully about what has happened] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 20

Judges 20 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

In this chapter, the author continues the story he began in Chapter 19 which provides evidence of the benefits of Israel having a godly king in the future. He tells how the Benjaminites refused to surrender the men who had committed the outrageous crime and how the Israelites fought a very destructive war against them to purge Israel from the guilt and defilement of this crime.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Why does the Levite say that the “lords of Gibeah” encircled the house?

As the Levite is giving an account of the crime to the Israelite assembly, he says that “the lords of Gibeah arose against me, and they encircled the house at night against me” (20:5). He probably does not mean that the legal rulers of the city of Gibeah did this, even though he is using the same term that the author uses for such rulers several times in Chapter 9 when he speaks of the “lords of Shechem.” (The phrase “the lords of the Philistines,” which occurs several times in Chapter 16, uses a different term for “lords,” but it has the same meaning.) Rather, the Levite probably means that the wicked men who surrounded the house where he was staying could do whatever they wanted in the city and no one could stop them. It was as if they actually were the “lords” of the city. The UST models one way to convey this meaning.

Why does the Levite say that the men of Gibeah intended to “kill” him?

The wicked men in Gibeah shout in 19:22 to those inside the house that they want to “know” the Levite, that is, to assault him sexually. When the Levite gives an account of their crime in 20:5, he says that they intended to kill him. He probably says this because he recognizes that while the men were going to use sex as a weapon, they intended to commit a crime of power and violence that would likely have involved killing him in the end. That is what they did to his concubine. The UST models one way to convey this meaning.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

“drawing the sword”

Several times in this chapter, the author describes men as “drawing the sword.” He is using one thing that a skilled fighter would learn to do to represent all the things that such a fighter would do. The meaning is that such men were experienced soldiers. Use a word or phrase in your translation that would convey that meaning. (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

Judges 20:1

Then all of the sons of Israel came forth, and the congregation was assembled as one man, from Dan and unto Beersheba and the land of Gilead, to Yahweh at Mizpah

It may be more natural in your language to put the information about where the Israelites came from with the statement that they **came forth**. Alternate translation: [Then all of the sons of Israel came forth, from Dan and unto Beersheba and the land of Gilead, and the congregation was assembled as one man to Yahweh at Mizpah] (See: **Information Structure (p.753)**)

Then all of the sons of Israel came forth

The author is making an overstatement for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [Then a great number of Israelites gathered] (See: **Hyperbole (p. 743)**)

the sons of Israel

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the phrase **sons of**. Alternate translation: [the descendants of Israel] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

and the congregation was assembled

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 the congregation assembled] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

as one man

The point of this comparison is that just as one person acts with single intention, so the Israelites who gathered all had the same intention, to punish the outrageous act that they had heard about. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [with the same intention] (See: **Simile (p.834)**)

Judges 20:2

drawing the sword

See the discussion of this phrase in the Introduction to this chapter. Alternate translation: [skilled in warfare] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

the cornerstones of

The author is speaking of the leaders of the people as if they were **cornerstones**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning using an equivalent expression or you could state the meaning plainly as in the UST. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 20:3

Now the sons of Benjamin heard that the sons of Israel had gone up {to} Mizpah

The author assumes that readers will recognize that he means the Benjaminites **heard** about this assembly but did not join it. This indicates that they were going to defend the men of Gibeah rather than join in punishing them. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Now the sons of Benjamin heard that the sons of Israel had gone up to Mizpah, but they did not join the assembly, because they were going to defend rather than punish men from their own tribe] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

And the sons of Israel said

The author assumes that readers will know that the Israelites were speaking to the Levite. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And the sons of Israel said to the Levite] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 20:4

So the man, the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, answered

The author is using this phrase to remind readers who this person is. If your language has its own way of reminding readers about participants, you can use it here in your translation. (See: **Introduction of New and Old Participants (p.758)**)

answered and said

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **answered** tells in what way the Levite **said** this. Alternate translation: [replied] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

Judges 20:5

the lords of Gibeah

The author says in 19:22 that “men of the city” who were “sons of wickedness” were the ones who **encircled the house**. See the discussion in the Notes to this chapter for an explanation of why the Levite says that it was the **lords of Gibeah** who did this. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Me, they intended to kill

See the discussion in the Notes to this chapter of why the Levite says that the men of Gibeah intended to **kill** him rather than that they intended to assault him sexually. (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p. 672)**)

they humbled

See how you translated the same expression in 19:24. (See: **Euphemism (p.720)**)

Judges 20:6

into every field of the inheritance of Israel

The author is using one kind of the land, a **field**, to mean land of all kinds. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [into every part of the inheritance of Israel] (See: **Synecdoche (p.841)**)

the inheritance of Israel

See how you translated the term “inheritance” in 18:1. Alternate translation: [the territory of Israel] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

lewdness and outrage

The terms **lewdness** and **outrage** mean similar things. The Levite 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 terrible outrage] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

Judges 20:7

Behold

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of this word. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

a word and advice

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **advice** tells what kind of **word** is needed. Alternate translation: [a word of advice] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

a word and advice

The Levite is using the term **word** to represent counsel that the assembled Israelites would give by using words. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [some wise counsel] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 20:8

as one man

See how you translated the same expression in 20:1. (See: **Simile (p.834)**)

We will not go back, a man to his tent, and we will not return, a man to his house

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine them. Alternate translation: [None of us will return home] (See: **Parallelism (p.797)**)

We will not go back, a man to his tent, and we will not return, a man to his house

The author 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: [None of us will return home until we have dealt with this matter] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 20:9

against it by lot

The author 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: [we should choose an army of soldiers by lot to attack it] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 20:10

ten men of a hundred from all of the tribes of Israel, and a hundred from a thousand, and a thousand from a myriad

These three phrases mean similar things. The people are using them together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [one tenth of all of our men] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

for the people

The author assumes that readers will know that in this context, the term **people** refers to the army that would attack Gibeah. The author uses the term in this way frequently in the rest of the chapter. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [for the army] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

to do at their coming to Gibeah in Benjamin according to all of the outrage that it did in Israel

It may be more natural in your language to put the information about what the army would do with the information about when they would do it. Alternate translation: [so that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they can do to it what it deserves for all of the outrage that it did in Israel] (See: **Information Structure (p.753)**)

Judges 20:11

So every man of Israel was gathered

The author is using an overstatement to emphasize how many Israelite men came. Not literally **every man** came, but a very large number did. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [So a great number of Israelite men were gathered] (See: **Hyperbole (p.743)**)

So every man of Israel was 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: [So every man of Israel gathered] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

as one man, associates

The terms **as one man** and **associates** mean similar things. The author 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: [in complete unity of purpose] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

as one man

See how you translated the same expression in 20:1. (See: **Simile (p.834)**)

Judges 20:12

of the tribes of Benjamin

The author assumes that readers will know that he is using the word **tribes** to mean the different clans within the tribe of Benjamin. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the clans of Benjamin] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

What is this evil that has been done among you

The Israelites are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [A terrible evil has been done among you!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p.830)**)

Judges 20:13

the men, the sons of wickedness

See how you translated a similar expression in 19:22. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

so that we may burn up evil from Israel

The Israelites are speaking of purging their land from the defilement that this **evil** had caused as if they were going to **burn up** the evil. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [so that we may purge the land of Israel from the defilement of this evil] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

to listen to the voice of their brothers, the sons of Israel

The author is using the term **voice** by association to mean what the Israelites were saying. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [to do what their brothers, the sons of Israel, were telling them to do] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

their brothers, the sons of Israel

The author is speaking of the other Israelites as if they were the actual **brothers** of the Benjaminites. He is using the term to mean descendants of the same ancestor. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [their fellow Israelites] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 20:14

from the cities

The author 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: [from the other cities in their tribal territory] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 20:15

on that day

This probably took more than a single **day**. The author seems to be using the term **day** by association to mean a particular time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [at that time] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

chosen men

The author assumes that readers will know that these men were specially selected because they were the best soldiers. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [elite troops] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 20:16

impeded in his right hand

See how you translated the similar expression in 3:15. Alternate translation: [who were left-handed] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

each of them slinging with a stone at a hair and he would not miss

The author is using an overstatement to emphasize how accurate these soldiers were with their slings. In your translation, you could keep the image but show that it is a comparison. Alternate translation: [who were so accurate with a sling that it seemed they could even aim at a hair and not miss] (See: **Hyperbole (p.743)**)

Judges 20:17

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 20:18

Judah at the start

The author 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 soldiers from the tribe of Judah should go up at the start] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judah

See the section titled “name of tribe, city, or kingdom representing its people” in the Introduction to Judges for a discussion of how the word **Judah** is being used here. The UST expresses how the word **Judah** is being used here. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 20:19

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 20:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 20:21

and they destroyed down to the ground 22,000 men from Israel

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that they killed all of these men. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and they killed a full 22,000 Israelite men] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 20:22

at the place where they had arrayed there

It might seem that the expression **where they had arrayed there** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it. Alternate translation: [where they had arrayed] (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

on the first day

If your language does not use this type of number, you could use a different type of number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: [on day one] or [the day before] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.793)**)

Judges 20:23

For the sons of Israel had gone up and wept to the face of Yahweh

The author is providing background information to help readers understand the reasons for what he said in the previous verse. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

For the sons of Israel had gone up

The author 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. The meaning is clarified in 20:26–27. Alternate translation: [For the sons of Israel had gone up to Bethel] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

to the face of Yahweh

As the Introduction to Judges discusses, here, **to the face of** represents being in the presence of Yahweh. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [in the presence of Yahweh] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Shall I resume to approach to battle with the sons of Benjamin, my brother

The Israelites are speaking as if they and the Benjaminites were individuals who were brothers. It may be more natural in your language to use plural forms here. Alternate translation: [Should we resume to approach to battle with the sons of Benjamin, our brothers] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

my brother

The Israelites are speaking of the tribe of Benjamin as if it were their actual **brother**. They mean it is descended from the same ancestor as their tribes. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [our fellow Israelites] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 20:24

on the second day

If your language does not use this type of number, you could use a different type of number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: [on day two] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.793)**)

Judges 20:25

on the second day

See how you translated this expression in 20:24. (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.793)**)

and they destroyed to the ground

See how you translated this expression in 20:21. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 20:26

Then all of the sons of Israel went up, and all of the people

The author assumes that readers will know that by **all of the sons of Israel**, in this context, he means the army, and that by **all of the people** he means the other Israelites who were there. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Then the whole army and all of the other Israelites who were there went up] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 20:27

Then the sons of Israel inquired of Yahweh, for the Box of the Covenant of God {was} there in those days

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: [Then, because the Box of the Covenant of God was there in those days, the sons of Israel inquired of Yahweh] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

in those days

The author is using the term **days** by association to mean a particular time, since time is made up of days. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language as in the UST. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 20:28

was} standing to the face of it

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that Phinehas was serving as priest at the tabernacle where the Box of the Covenant was. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [was serving as a priest at the tabernacle where it was] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

in those days

See how you translated the same expression in 20:27. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Shall I resume again to go out to battle with the sons of Benjamin, my brother, or shall I stop

See how you translated the similar expression in 20:23. Alternate translation: [Should we resume again to go out to battle with the sons of Benjamin, our fellow Israelites, or should we stop] (See: **Personification (p.800)**)

I will give him into your hand

Yahweh is using the pronoun **him** to refer to **the sons of Benjamin**, about whom the Israelites are asking. It may be more natural in your language to use a plural pronoun. Alternate translation: [I will give them into your hand] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

I will give him into your hand

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the phrase **into your hand**. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 20:29

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 20:30

on the third day

If your language does not use this type of number, you could use a different type of number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: [on day three] or [for yet another day] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.793)**)

as time upon time

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that they did this the same way they had done it the previous times. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [as they had done the previous times] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 20:31

They were drawn from the 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: [The Israelites drew them away from the city] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

slain

The author 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: [whom they killed] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

as time upon time

See how you translated this expression in 20:30. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

about 30 men of Israel

The author 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. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [They killed about 30 men of Israel] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 20:32

They {are} being beaten

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: [We are beating them] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

as at the first

The author is using the adjective **first** as a noun to mean the first battle. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this with an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [as in the first battle] (See: **Nominal Adjectives (p.782)**)

and let us draw him

The pronoun **him** refers to the army of Benjamin. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [and let us draw their army] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 20:33

And the ambush of Israel gushed from his place

The author is speaking of the Israelite soldiers who were hiding in ambush as if they had been water that **gushed** out. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And the ambush of Israel rushed out of its place] or [And the Israelite soldiers rushed out from their hiding place] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

from Maareh Gibeah

The words **Maareh Gibeah** could be a description rather than a name. Alternate translation: [from the fields around Gibeah] (See: **How to Translate Names (p.739)**)

Judges 20:34

chosen from all of Israel

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 Israelites had chosen as the best of all their soldiers] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

and the battle {was} heavy

The author is speaking of the battle as if it were a **heavy** physical thing that was weighing down the soldiers or that was hard for them to carry. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and the fighting was intense] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

But they did not know

The pronoun **they** refers to the Benjaminites. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [But the Benjaminites did not know] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

that harm {was} touching upon them

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the Benjaminite soldiers were just about to experience great **harm**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [that they were about to be destroyed] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 20:35

25, 100 men

The author 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. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [They killed 25,100 men] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

25, 100 men

See how you translated the similar instances in 16:5 and 17:2 of large numbers with 100 added. Alternate translation: [no less than 25,000 men] (See: **Numbers (p.784)**)

Judges 20:36

they were defeated

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 other Israelites had defeated them] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 667)**)

For the men of Israel had given place to Benjamin because they were confident in the ambush that they had set against Gibeah

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [Because they were confident in the ambush that they had set against Gibeah, the men of Israel had given place to Benjamin] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

For the men of Israel had given place to Benjamin

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that the Israelites deliberately retreated in order to draw the Benjaminites away from Gibeah. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [For the men of Israel had deliberately retreated before Benjamin] (See: **Idiom (p. 747)**)

Judges 20:37

hurried and spread out

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with **and**. The word **hurried** tells in what way they **spread out**. Alternate translation: [hurriedly spread out] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

and struck all of the city to the mouth of the sword

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the phrase **struck ... to the mouth of the sword**. Alternate translation: [and killed all the people who lived in the city] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 20:38

Now a sign was to the men of Israel with the ambush

The author is introducing background information that will help readers understand in more detail what happens in this battle. In your translation, introduce this information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Now a sign was to the men of Israel with the ambush, “Make great” for them sending up a signal of smoke from the city

The author is presenting as a direct quotation what the main body of the army told the ambush to do as a **sign**. It may be more natural in your language to have an indirect quotation here. Alternate translation: [Now the men of Israel and the ambush had agreed on a sign: the ambush would send up a great column of smoke from the city] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.711)**)

Make great” for them sending up a signal of smoke from the city

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two expressions. The words **Make great** tell in what way they should be **sending up** the **signal of smoke**. If you combine these expressions, you could present all of this as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: [“Send up a great column of smoke from the city”] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

for them sending up a signal of smoke from the city

The author means that the men of Israel had agreed with the ambush that they should do this once they had captured the city. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [for them sending up a signal of smoke from the city once they had captured it] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 20:39

when the men of Israel retreated from the battle

If you retained the direct quotation in the previous verse, you could continue it here. Alternate translation: [once we have drawn the Benjaminite soldiers away from the city and you have entered it and captured it."] (See: **Direct and Indirect Quotations (p.711)**)

when the men of Israel retreated from the battle

If you changed the quotation in the previous verse to an indirect quotation, you can supply some further words here from the context if that would be clearer in your language. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [The ambush was to do that once they had captured the city after the men of Israel had retreated from the battle and drawn the Benjaminite soldiers away] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

they said

The pronoun **they** refers to the Benjaminites. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the Benjaminites said] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

being beaten, he {is} being beaten

The Benjaminites are repeating the verb **beaten** in order to intensify their expression of the idea that it conveys. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the intensification. Alternate translation: [they are being completely beaten] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

being beaten, he {is} being beaten

The pronoun **he** refers to **the men of Israel**. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the men of Israel are being completely beaten] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

being beaten, he {is} being beaten

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: [we are completely beating the men of Israel] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

as {in} the first battle

If your language does not use this type of number, you could use a different type of number here or an equivalent expression. Alternate translation: [as in battle one] or [as in the earlier battle] (See: **Ordinal Numbers (p.793)**)

Judges 20:40

the whole of the city

The author is using the term **city** by association to mean the smoke from the burning city. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [smoke from the whole of the city] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

the whole of the city

The author is making an overstatement for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [smoke from many parts of the city] (See: **Hyperbole (p.743)**)

Judges 20:41

And a man of Israel turned

The author is not referring to a specific **man**. He means the Israelite men in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. [And the Israelite soldiers turned around] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

And a man of Israel turned

By **turned**, the author is implying that the soldiers turned around to attack the Benjaminites. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And the Israelite soldiers turned around to attack the Benjaminites] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

and a man of Benjamin was alarmed

The author is not referring to a specific **man**. He means the Benjamite men in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. [and the men of Benjamin were alarmed] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

and a man of Benjamin was alarmed, for he saw that harm had touched upon him

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: [and because he saw that harm had touched upon him, a man of Benjamin was alarmed] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

and a man of Benjamin was alarmed

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean that each of the Benjaminite soldiers was alarmed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and each the Benjaminite soldiers was alarmed] or [and all of the Benjaminite soldiers were alarmed] (See: **Idiom (p. 747)**)

and a man of Benjamin was alarmed

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 this alarmed each of the Benjaminite soldiers] or [and this alarmed all of the Benjaminite soldiers] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

he saw that harm had touched upon him

See how you translated this expression in 20:34. Alternate translation: [each one realized that he was about to be destroyed] or [they realized that they were about to be destroyed] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 20:42

overtook him

The pronoun **him** refers to the army of Benjamin. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [overtook the Benjaminite army] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

and {those} who {were} from the cities

The author is using the plural form **cities** in a context where the singular term “city” would suffice. This suggests that he may be using the plural form for emphasis. Your language may use plural forms in the same way. If not, you could express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [and those who were coming out of the city, where the Benjaminites could no longer find refuge] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.848)**)

were} destroying him in the midst of him

The pronoun **him** refers in the first instance to the Benjaminite army, and it refers in the second instance to the Israelite army. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers and to express the meaning more naturally. Alternate translation: [were destroying the Benjaminites, who were now in the midst of the Israelite army] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

Judges 20:43

They surrounded Benjamin

The pronoun **They** refers to the Israelite soldiers. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [The Israelite soldiers surrounded the Benjaminites] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

they caused to pursue

The author seems to mean implicitly that the Israelite soldiers encouraged one another to **pursue** the Benjaminites who were trying to escape. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [they encouraged one another to pursue the fleeing Benjaminites] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

from the rising of the sun

The author is using the term **rising of the sun** by association to mean the east, since that is where the sun rises. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [east of the city] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 20:44

And they fell from Benjamin, 18,000 men

The author is using the term **fell** to mean that these men were killed in the battle, by association with the way they fell to the ground when they died. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [And 18,000 Benjaminite men were killed in the battle] (See: **Metonymy (p. 780)**)

Judges 20:45

And they turned and fled & And they gleaned

The first **they** refers to the remaining Benjaminite soldiers, while the second **they** refers to the Israelite soldiers. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And the remaining Benjaminite soldiers turned and fled ... And the Israelite soldiers gleaned] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

And they gleaned along the pathways 5,000 men

The author is speaking as if these **men** were leftover crops that the Israelite soldiers **gleaned**. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also use plain language. Alternate translation: [And they picked off another 5,000 men along the pathways] or [And they killed another 5,000 men along the pathways as they were trying to flee] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

And they pursued closely after him unto Gidom, and they struck from him 2,000 men

The pronoun **they** refers in both instances to the Israelite soldiers, and the pronoun **him** refers in both instances to the remaining Benjaminite soldiers. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And the Israelite soldiers pursued closely after the remaining Benjaminites unto Gidom, and the Israelites killed 2,000 more of the Benjaminites] (See: **Pronouns — When to Use Them (p.815)**)

and they struck

Here, the word **struck** means “killed” as expressed in the UST. See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of this word. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 20:46

all of the fallen ones from Benjamin

The author is using the term **fallen ones** by association to mean those who were killed in battle. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [all of the Benjaminites who were killed] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 20:47

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 20:48

returned to the sons of Benjamin

The author means implicitly that the Israelite soldiers turned from pursuing the Benjaminite soldiers to attacking all the other people of the tribe of Benjamin. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [attacked all the other people of the tribe of Benjamin] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

from a city of entirety to cattle to everything found

The author is using the possessive form **a city of entirety** to mean “an entire city.” It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [destroying entire cities, including the animals and everything else in them] (See: **Possession (p.809)**)

from a city of entirety to cattle to everything found

The phrase translated as **from a city of entirety** could also be translated as “from the city of man.” If that is the translation, then the author would be using the masculine term “man” in a generic sense that would include both men and women. Alternate translation: [destroying all of the people and animals and everything else in the city] (See: **When Masculine Words Include Women (p.852)**)

everything found. & all of the cities 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: [everything that they found … all of the cities that they found] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

to everything found. & all of the cities found

The author is using the term **found** in a way characteristic of his language and culture to mean that these things and cities could be found, that is, that they were there. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and everything else that was there … all of the cities that were there] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

they sent into fire

The author is speaking as if the Israelites had actually **sent** these cities **into fire**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they set on fire] or [they burned down] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 21

Judges 21 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

In this chapter, the author concludes the story he began in Chapter 19 by showing the benefits of Israel having a godly king. He tells how the Israelites realized that they had gone too far in destroying the Benjaminites and how they resorted to further violence and deceit in order to provide wives for the surviving Benjaminites so that they could continue their family lines. The implied information in 21:5 is that the Israelites thought that if they killed all the people of that city except its young women, they could give them as wives to the surviving men from the tribe of Benjamin.

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Sin and immorality

At the end of Judges, there is much sin and immorality. The people are doing wrong and are trying to fix their wrongs by doing more evil things. The period of the Judges is typified by this final account and summarized by the author's closing statement, "A man did the right in his eyes" (ULT), which means that "everyone did what they thought they should do" (UST). The book of Judges ends this way in order to lead into the following part of the biblical narrative, which describes how God chose David to be a godly king of the Israelite people. (See: [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/sin]] and [[rc:*///tw/dict/bible/kt/evil]] and **righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness (p.859)**)

Judges 21:1

Now a man of Israel had sworn at Mizpah, saying, “A man from us shall not give his daughter to Benjamin for a wife

The author provides this background information about to help readers understand what happens next. The UST shows that this verse is background information by putting parenthesis around this verse. Use the natural form in your language for expressing background information. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

Now a man of Israel

The author is not referring to a specific **man**. He means the Israelite men in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. Alternate translation: [Now the Israelite men] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

to Benjamin

The author is using the term **Benjamin** by association to mean the men of that tribe. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [to any man from the tribe of Benjamin] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 21:2

And they lifted their voice

The author is speaking as if a **voice** were something that could be physically **lifted**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And they cried out loudly] (See: **Metaphor (p. 774)**)

to the face of God

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the meaning of the phrase **to the face of**. Alternate translation: [before God] or [before God's sacred tent] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

And they lifted their voice and wept

This phrase expresses a single idea by using two words connected with "and." The phrase **lifted their voice** tells in what way they **wept**. Alternate translation: [And they wept loudly] (See: **Hendiadys (p.736)**)

and wept a great weeping

For emphasis, the author 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 another way of showing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [and wept very greatly] (See: **Poetry (p. 802)**)

Judges 21:3

Why, Yahweh, God of Israel, should this be in Israel, to be missing today one tribe from Israel

The Israelites are using the question form for emphasis. If a speaker of your language would not use the question form for that purpose, you could translate this as a statement or as an exclamation. Alternate translation: [Yahweh, God of Israel, this should not be in Israel, to be missing today one tribe from Israel!] (See: **Rhetorical Question (p. 830)**)

to be missing

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 we should have lost] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 21:4

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 21:5

the sons of Israel

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the phrase **sons of**. Alternate translation: [the descendants of Israel] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Dying, he shall be caused to die

The oath repeats forms of the verb **die** in order to intensify the expression of that idea. If your language can repeat words for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If not, your language may have another way of expressing the intensification. Alternate translation: [He shall certainly be caused to die] (See: **Reduplication (p.828)**)

Dying, he shall be caused to die

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: [We shall certainly put him to death] (See: **Active or Passive (p. 667)**)

Judges 21:6

Benjamin, his brother

The author is speaking of the tribe of **Benjamin** as if it were the actual **brother** of the **sons of Israel**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the men of the tribe of Benjamin, their fellow Israelites] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

has been hewn

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: [we have hewn] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

has been hewn

The Israelites are speaking as if their people group were a forest and the tribe of Benjamin were a tree that had been **hewn** or cut down and removed from it. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is missing] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 21:7

for the remaining ones

The author 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: [for the remaining men of the tribe of Benjamin] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

Judges 21:8

And behold

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the word **behold**. (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

a man had not come to the camp

Alternate translation: [no man had come to the camp]

Judges 21:9

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 21:10

to the mouth of the sword

See the introduction to Judges for a discussion of the phrase **mouth of the sword**. (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 21:11

and every woman having known the lying of a male

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean a woman who had had sexual relations with a man. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and every woman who has had sexual relations with a man] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

you shall devote

See how you translated the similar expression in 1:17. Alternate translation: [you shall destroy completely] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 21:12

a virgin

The author 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: [each of whom was a virgin] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

who had not known a man by the lying of a male

The author is using a common expression of his culture to mean women who had never had sexual relations with men. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [who had never had sexual relations with a man] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

to the camp {at} Shiloh, which was in the land of Canaan

The author is using the term **land of Canaan** by association to mean the west side of the Jordan River. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [across the Jordan River to the camp at Shiloh] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

Judges 21:13

and they called out peace to them

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: [and they called out to them that they wanted to have peaceful relations with them] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

Judges 21:14

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 21:15

And the people repented itself for Benjamin, for Yahweh had made a breach in the tribes of Israel

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: [And because Yahweh had made a breach in the tribes of Israel, the people repented itself for Benjamin] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

for Yahweh had made a breach in the tribes of Israel

The author is speaking as if the tribes of Israel were a wall and Yahweh had made a **breach** or hole in it by removing the tribe of Benjamin. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [for Yahweh had removed one of the tribes from Israel] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 21:16

a woman has been destroyed from Benjamin

The author is not referring to a specific **woman**. He means women in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. Alternate translation: [the women have been destroyed from Benjamin] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

since a woman has been destroyed from Benjamin

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: [since we have destroyed all the women of the tribe of Benjamin] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 21:17

A possession of the escapee of Benjamin, so a tribe will not be wiped out from Israel

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: [So a tribe will not be wiped out from Israel, a possession for the escapee of Benjamin] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

A possession of the escapee of Benjamin

The elders are 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: [We must provide a possession for the escapee of Benjamin] (See: **Ellipsis (p.715)**)

A possession of the escapee of Benjamin

The elders are not referring to a specific **escapee**. They mean all of the men from the tribe of Benjamin who have escaped slaughter. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form or an equivalent phrase. Alternate translation: [We must provide a possession for the escapees of Benjamin] or [We must provide a possession for the men of the tribe of Benjamin who have escaped] (See: **Generic Noun Phrases (p.732)**)

A possession of the escapee of Benjamin

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **possession**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [We must provide wives for the remaining Benjaminites to possess] (See: **Abstract Nouns (p.665)**)

so a tribe will not be wiped out from Israel

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 we will not have wiped out a tribe from Israel] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

so a tribe will not be wiped out from Israel

The elders are speaking as if the tribe were something that could be **wiped out** or erased. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [so that one of the Israelite tribes does not cease to exist] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

Judges 21:18

Cursed {is} the one giving

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 specify an agent, the context suggests that this would be Yahweh.
Alternate translation: [May Yahweh curse the one giving] (See: **Active or Passive (p.667)**)

Judges 21:19

from days to days

In Hebrew, the plural of **days** can mean a year. That is the meaning in this context. Alternate translation: [from year to year] or [each year] (See: **Unusual Uses of the Plural (p.848)**)

That {is} from the north to Bethel, from the rising of the sun to the road going up from Bethel {to} Shechem and from the south to Lebonah

In order to his readers understand the background, the author is informing his readers of the location of **Shiloh**. In your translation, present this background information in a way that would be natural in your own language and culture. (See: **Background Information (p.676)**)

is} from the north to Bethel

The author is speaking of the location of one place relative to another in the way that is characteristic of his culture. In your translation, indicate this relative location in the way that is characteristic of your culture. Alternate translation: [is to the north of Bethel] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

from the rising of the sun to the road

The author is using the phrase **the rising of the sun** by association to mean the east, since the sun rises in the east. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [to the east of the road] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

and from the south to Lebonah

The author is speaking of the location of one place relative to another in the way that is characteristic of his culture. In your translation, indicate this relative location in the way that is characteristic of your culture. Alternate translation: [and to the south of Lebonah] (See: **Idiom (p.747)**)

Judges 21:20

(There are no notes for this verse.)

Judges 21:21

if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances

The elders are speaking as if this were a hypothetical possibility, but they know that this is going to happen. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, then you could translate this as a confident statement. Alternate translation: [when the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in the dances] (See: **Connect — Factual Conditions (p.696)**)

the daughters of Shiloh

The elders are speaking of these young women as if they were the **daughters** of the city itself. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the young women who live in Shiloh] (See: **Metaphor (p.774)**)

to dance in the dances

It might seem that the expression **to dance in the dances** contains extra information that would be unnatural to express in your language. If so, you can shorten it as in the UST. (See: **Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (p.770)**)

Judges 21:22

that we will say to them, ‘Grant us them, for we did not take, a man his wife, in the battle. For you have not given to them at {this} time, {that} you should be guilty

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 we will ask them to grant them to us since we did not take, a man his wife, in the battle. We will tell them that they will not be guilty, since they have not given to them at this time] (See: **Quotes within Quotes (p.825)**)

Grant us them, for we did not take, a man his wife, in the battle

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [Since we did not take, a man his wife, in the battle, grant us them] (See: **Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship (p.700)**)

we did not take, a man his wife, in the battle

The elders assume that the men of Shiloh will understand that they mean that when they fought against the tribe of Benjamin, they did not take any Benjaminite women as captives (with a view towards them eventually becoming their wives). The implication is that as a result, there are no women left from that tribe to become wives of the surviving Benjaminites. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [when we fought against the tribe of Benjamin, we did not take any women from that tribe as captives whom we might now give to the Benjaminites, so there will not be enough wives for the surviving Benjaminites without your daughters and sisters] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

Judges 21:23

to their inheritance

See how you translated the term **inheritance** in 18:1. Alternate translation: [to their territory] (See: **Metaphor (p. 774)**)

Judges 21:24

Then the sons of Israel disbursed themselves from there at that time, a man to his tribe and to his clan, and they went away from there, a man to his inheritance

Here the author is saying what happened at the end of the story of the civil war between Benjamin and the other Israelite tribes. Your language may have its own way of presenting information to bring a story to a close. (See: **End of Story (p.718)**)

Then the sons of Israel disbursed themselves from there at that time, a man to his tribe and to his clan, and they went away from there, a man to his inheritance

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. If it would be clearer in your language, you could combine them. Alternate translation: [Then all the Israelites left and went back to their tribal territories] (See: **Parallelism (p. 797)**)

from there

The author assumes that readers will understand that **there** means the place where they had gathered to discuss what to do about wives for Benjamin. You could indicate this explicitly in your translation if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [from the place where they had gathered] (See: **Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information (p.672)**)

to his tribe and to his clan

The author is using the terms **tribe** and **clan** by association to mean the territory where each tribe and clan lived. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [to the territory of his tribe and of his clan] (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

to his tribe and to his clan

The terms **tribe** and **clan** mean similar things. The author 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: [to his tribal territory] (See: **Doublet (p.713)**)

to his inheritance

See how you translated the term **inheritance** in 18:1. Alternate translation: [to his territory] (See: **Metaphor (p. 774)**)

Judges 21:25

A man did the right in his eyes

See how you translated this sentence in 17:6. (See: **Metonymy (p.780)**)

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Version 86

Abstract Nouns

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 1:15; Judges 1:24; Judges 2:11; Judges 3:7; Judges 3:19; Judges 4:3; Judges 4:5; Judges 4:9; Judges 5:21; Judges 6:12; Judges 6:17; Judges 6:23; Judges 6:24; Judges 6:37; Judges 6:39; Judges 6:40; Judges 8:1; Judges 8:9; Judges 8:11; Judges 8:35; Judges 9:9; Judges 9:11; Judges 9:15; Judges 9:16; Judges 9:31; Judges 9:56; Judges 9:57; Judges 11:1; Judges 11:13; Judges 11:27; Judges 11:31; Judges 12:2; Judges 12:3; Judges 13:1; Judges 15:3; Judges 15:18; Judges 16:23; Judges 18:6; Judges 18:7; Judges 18:15; Judges 21:13; Judges 21:17

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: Judges 1:7; Judges 2:10; Judges 3:24; Judges 3:30; Judges 5:8; Judges 5:15; Judges 5:24; Judges 5:27; Judges 6:6; Judges 6:28; Judges 7:3; Judges 7:11; Judges 7:23; Judges 7:24; Judges 8:11; Judges 8:28; Judges 8:32; Judges 9:5; Judges 9:25; Judges 9:47; Judges 10:2; Judges 10:5; Judges 10:17; Judges 11:33; Judges 11:37; Judges 12:1; Judges 12:7; Judges 12:10; Judges 12:12; Judges 12:15; Judges 13:8; Judges 16:7; Judges 16:8; Judges 16:9; Judges 16:11; Judges 16:17; Judges 16:26; Judges 16:29; Judges 17:2; Judges 18:11; Judges 18:16; Judges 18:17; Judges 18:29; Judges 19:30; Judges 20:1; Judges 20:11; Judges 20:31; Judges 20:32; Judges 20:34; Judges 20:36; Judges 20:39; Judges 20:41; Judges 20:48; Judges 21:3; Judges 21:5; Judges 21:6; Judges 21:16; Judges 21:17; Judges 21:18

Apostrophe

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 5:3; Judges 5:14; Judges 5:16; Judges 9:29

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: Introduction to Judges; Judges 1:3; Judges 1:12; Judges 1:14; Judges 1:16; Judges 1:17; Judges 1:19; Judges 1:35; Judges 2:1; Judges 2:2; Judges 2:3; Judges 2:5; Judges 2:17; Judges 3:4; Judges 3:19; Judges 3:20; Judges 3:25; Judges 3:27; Judges 4:2; Judges 4:3; Judges 4:13; Judges 4:18; Judges 5:2; Judges 5:4; Judges 5:6; Judges 5:10; Judges 5:12; Judges 5:16; Judges 5:19; Judges 5:21; Judges 5:26; Judges 6:10; Judges 6:23; Judges 6:26; Judges 6:30; Judges 6:31; Judges 6:33; Judges 6:38; Judges 6:39; Judges 7:7; Judges 7:8; Judges 7:14; Judges 7:15; Judges 7:24; Judges 7:25; Judges 8:14; Judges 8:17; Judges 8:18; Judges 8:22; Judges 8:23; Judges 8:31; Judges 9:3; Judges 9:6; Judges 9:7; Judges 9:9; Judges 9:11; Judges 9:13; Judges 9:14; Judges 9:16; Judges 9:18; Judges 9:21; Judges 9:23; Judges 9:25; Judges 9:27; Judges 9:28; Judges 9:29; Judges 9:32; Judges 9:34; Judges 9:35; Judges 9:36; Judges 9:40; Judges 9:43; Judges 9:44; Judges 9:50; Judges 9:55; Judges 10:4; Judges 10:8; Judges 11:10; Judges 11:12; Judges 11:15; Judges 11:17; Judges 11:18; Judges 11:25; Judges 11:28; Judges 11:29; Judges 11:35; Judges 12:1; Judges 12:3; Judges 12:6; Judges 13:2; Judges 14:2; Judges 14:3; Judges 14:5; Judges 14:11; Judges 14:14; Judges 14:15; Judges

14:19; Judges 15:4; Judges 15:6; Judges 15:7; Judges 15:13; Judges 15:19; Judges 16:5; Judges 16:20; Judges 18:3; Judges 18:7; Judges 18:14; Judges 18:20; Judges 18:21; Judges 19:2; Judges 19:8; Judges 19:18; Judges 19:23; Judges 19:28; Judges 20:3; Judges 20:5; Judges 20:10; Judges 20:12; Judges 20:15; Judges 20:26; Judges 20:38; Judges 20:41; Judges 20:43; Judges 20:48; Judges 21:11; Judges 21:22; Judges 21:24

Background Information

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 1:10; Judges 1:11; Judges 1:14; Judges 1:16; Judges 1:19; Judges 1:23; Judges 1:36; Judges 2:4; Judges 2:6; Judges 2:7; Judges 2:8; Judges 2:9; Judges 3:1; Judges 3:17; Judges 3:20; Judges 3:28; Judges 4:11; Judges 4:17; Judges 4:21; Judges 6:3; Judges 8:18; Judges 8:24; Judges 8:30; Judges 9:17; Judges 10:8; Judges 11:1; Judges 11:30; Judges 11:32; Judges 14:4; Judges 16:27; Judges 18:1; Judges 18:28; Judges 19:10; Judges 20:23; Judges 20:38; Judges 21:1; Judges 21:19

Biblical Distance

Description

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 following terms are the most common measures for distance or length that were originally used in the Bible. Most of these are based on the sizes of the hand and forearm.

- The **handbreadth** was the width of the palm of a man's hand.
- The **span** or handspan was the width of a man's hand with the fingers spread out.
- The **cubit** was the length of a man's forearm, from the elbow to the tip of the longest finger.
- The **"long" cubit** is used only in Ezekiel 40-48. It is the length of a normal cubit plus a span.
- The **stadium** (plural, **stadia**) referred to a certain footrace that was about 185 meters in length. Some older English versions translated this word as "furlong," which referred to the average length of a plowed field.

The metric values in the table below are close but not exactly equal to the biblical measures. The biblical measures probably differed in exact length from time to time and place to place. The equivalents below are an attempt to give an average measurement.

Original Measure	Metric Measure
handbreadth	8 centimeters
span	23 centimeters
cubit	46 centimeters
"long" cubit	54 centimeters
stadia	185 meters

Translation Principles

The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
Whatever measure you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kind of measure in the text or a footnote.
If you do not use the Biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one cubit as ".46 meters" or even as "46 centimeters," readers might think that the measurement is exact. It would be better to say "half a meter," "45 centimeters," or "50 centimeters."
Sometimes it can be helpful to use the word "about" to show that a measurement is not exact. For example, Luke 24:13 says that Emmaus was 60 stadia from Jerusalem. This can be translated as "about ten kilometers" from Jerusalem.
When God tells people how long something should be, and when people make things according to those lengths, do not use "about" in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how long something should be.

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: Judges 3:16

Biblical Volume

Description

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]]

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.

Type	Original Measure	Liters
Dry	omer	2 liters
Dry	ephah	22 liters
Dry	homer	220 liters
Dry	cor	220 liters
Dry	seah	7.7 liters
Dry	lethek	114.8 liters
Liquid	metrete	40 liters
Liquid	bath	22 liters
Liquid	hin	3.7 liters
Liquid	kab	1.23 liters
Liquid	log	0.31 liters

Translation Principles

- The people in the Bible did not use modern measures such as meters, liters, and kilograms. Using the original measures can help readers know that the Bible really was written long ago in a time when people used those measures.
- Using modern measures can help readers understand the text more easily.
- Whatever measures you use, it would be good, if possible, to tell about the other kinds of measures in the text or a footnote.
- If you do not use the biblical measures, try not to give the readers the idea that the measurements are exact. For example, if you translate one hin as “3.7 liters,” readers might think that the measurement is exactly 3.7 liters, not 3.6 or 3.8. It would be better to use a more approximate measure such as “three and a half liters” or “four liters.”
- When God tells people how much of something to use, and when people use those amounts in obedience to him, do not say “about” in the translation. Otherwise it will give the impression that God did not care exactly how much they used.

When the unit of measure is stated

Translation Strategies

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
(2) Use the metric measurements given in the UST. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.
(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.
(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note.
(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note.

Translation Strategies Applied

The strategies are all applied to Isaiah 5:10 below.

> For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one bath, and one homer of seed will yield only an ephah. (Isaiah 5:10 ULT)

(1) Use the measurements from the ULT. These are the same kinds of measurements that the original writers used. Spell them in a way that is similar to the way they sound or are spelled in the ULT. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

> > "For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only one **bat**, and one **homer** of seed will yield only an **efa**."

(2) Use the measurements given in the UST. Usually they are metric measurements. The translators of the UST have already figured how to represent the amounts in the metric system.

> > "For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22 liters** and **220 liters** of seed will yield only **22 liters**."
>
> > "For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **22**, and **ten baskets** of seed will yield only **one basket**."

(3) Use measurements that are already used in your language. In order to do this you would need to know how your measurements relate to the metric system and figure out each measurement.

> > "For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **six gallons**, and **six and a half bushels** of seed will yield only **20 quarts**."

(4) Use the measurements from the ULT and include measurements that your people know in the text or a note. The following shows both measurements in the text.

> > "For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only **one bath (six gallons)**, and **one homer (six and a half bushels)** of seed will yield only **an ephah (20 quarts)**."

(5) Use measurements that your people know, and include the measurements from the ULT in the text or in a note. The following shows the ULT measurements in footnotes.

> > "For a ten-yoke vineyard will yield only 22 liters[1], and 220 liters[2] of seed will yield only 22 liters[3]."

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: Judges 6:19

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 talents 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: Judges 8:26; Judges 9:4

Blessings

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 17:2

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: Judges 2:4; Judges 2:7; Judges 2:10; Judges 5:11; Judges 5:18; Judges 5:22; Judges 7 Chapter Introduction; Judges 7:2; Judges 7:6; Judges 7:8; Judges 7:23; Judges 7:25; Judges 8:6; Judges 8:28; Judges 9:3; Judges 9:38; Judges 9:42; Judges 9:57; Judges 11:16; Judges 11:19; Judges 12:1; Judges 12:5; Judges 18:23; Judges 18:25

Connect — Contrast Relationship

Logical Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate a contrast relationship?*

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Contrast Relationship

Description

A contrast relationship is a logical relationship in which one event or item is in contrast or opposition to another.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, many events did not happen as the people involved intended or expected them to happen. Sometimes people acted in ways that were not expected, whether good or bad. Often it was God at work, changing the events. These events were often pivotal. It is important that translators understand and communicate these contrasts. In English, contrast relationships are often indicated by the words “but,” “although,” “even though,” “though,” “yet,” or “however.”

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, **but** God used the evil for good! (Story 8 Frame 12 OBS)

Joseph’s brothers’ evil plan to sell Joseph is contrasted with God’s good plan to save many people. The word “but” marks the contrast.

> For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)

Jesus contrasts the proud way that human leaders behave with the humble way that he behaves. The contrast is marked by the word “yet.”

> The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)

It was unexpected that the Israelites, who had been slaves in Egypt, would be able to conquer and lay claim to the promised land.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses contrast relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.
(2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.
(3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.

> For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)
>
> > For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Unlike that person**, I am among you as one who serves.

(2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.

> The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)
>
> > The hill country will also be yours. It is a forest, **but** you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders. They have chariots of iron, and they are strong, **but** you will drive out the Canaanites.

(3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

> {David} found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **However**, Solomon built the house for him. **But** the Most High does not live in houses made with hands. (Acts 7:46-48a ULT)
>
> > [David] found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **But** it was, Solomon, **not David**, who built the house for God. **Even though Solomon built him a house**, the Most High does not live in houses made with hands.

"

Referenced in: Judges 9:18

Connect — Exception Clauses

Exceptional Relationship

This page answers the question: *How can I translate exception clauses?*

Description

Exceptional relationship connectors exclude one or more items or people from a group.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

English indicates exceptional relationships by first describing a group (Part 1) and then stating what is not in that group by using words like “except,” “but not,” “other than,” “besides,” “unless,” “however … not,” and “only” (Part 2). Some languages do not indicate in this way that one or more items or people are excluded from a group. Instead, they have other ways of doing this. In some languages this type of construction does not make sense because the exception in Part 2 seems to contradict the statement in Part 1. Translators need to understand who (or what) is in the group and who (or what) is excluded in order to be able to accurately communicate this in their language.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)
>
> But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4b ULT)
>
> David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not** a man escaped **except for** 400 young men, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)
>
> The man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob said, “I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me.” (Genesis 32:26 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If the way that Exceptional Clauses are marked in the source language is also clear in your language, then translate the Exceptional Clauses in the same way.

(1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”
(2) Reverse the order of the clauses so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

Examples of Translation Strategy Applied

(1) Very often, the exception in Part 2 contradicts something that was negated in Part 1. In this case, the translator can phrase the same idea without the contradiction by deleting the negative and using a word like “**only**.”

> David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Not a man escaped except for 400 young men**, who rode on camels and fled. (1 Samuel 30:17 ULT)

- Part 1: (**Not** a man escaped)
- Part 2: (**except for** 400 young men)

> > David attacked them from the twilight to the evening of the next day. **Only** 400 young men escaped; they rode on camels and fled.
>
> But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for there is **no one** to redeem it **besides** you, and I am after you. (Ruth 4:4 ULT)
>
> > But if you will not redeem it, then tell me so that I may know, for **you are first in line to redeem it {only you can redeem it}**, and I am after you.
>
> The man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob said, “I will **not** let you go **unless** you bless me.” (Genesis 32:26 ULT)
>
> > The man said, “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” Jacob said, “I will let you go **only if** you bless me.”

(2) Reverse the order of the clauses, so that the exception is stated first, and then the larger group is named second.

> God told Adam that he could eat from **any** tree in the garden **except** from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (OBS Story 1 Frame 11)
>
> > God told Adam that he could **not** eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but he could eat from **any other** tree in the garden.

"

Referenced in: Judges 7:14

Connect — Factual Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate factual conditions?*

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words, “if … then.” Often, however, the word “then” is not stated.

Factual Conditions

Description

A Factual Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true in the speaker’s mind. In English, a sentence containing a Factual Condition can use the words “even though,” “since,” or “this being the case” to indicate that it is a factual condition and not a hypothetical condition.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not state something as a condition if it is certain or true. Translators from these languages may misunderstand the original languages and think that the condition is uncertain. This would lead to mistakes in their translations. Even if the translators understand that the condition is certain or true, the readers may misunderstand it. In this case, it would be best to translate it as a statement of fact rather than as a conditional statement.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> “**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!” (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)
>
> Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you keep changing your mind? **If Yahweh is God**, follow him. But if Baal is God, then follow him.” Yet the people did not answer him a word. (1 Kings 18:21 ULT)

This sentence has the same construction as a hypothetical condition. The condition is “if Yahweh is God.” If that is true, then the Israelites should worship Yahweh. But the prophet Elijah does not question whether or not Yahweh is God. In fact, he is so certain that Yahweh is God that later in the passage he pours water all over his sacrifice. He is confident that God is real and that he will burn even an offering that is completely wet. Over and over again, the prophets taught that Yahweh is God, so the people should worship him. The people did not worship Yahweh, however, even though He is God. By putting the statement or instruction into the form of a Factual Condition, Elijah is trying to get the Israelites to understand more clearly what they should do.

> “A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?” says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

Yahweh has said that he is a father and a master to Israel, so even though this sounds like a hypothetical condition because it begins with “if,” it is not hypothetical. This verse begins with the proverb that a son honors his father. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh. The other proverb in the verse says that a servant honors his master. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh, so it seems that he is not their master. But Yahweh is the master. Yahweh uses the form of a hypothetical condition to demonstrate that the Israelites are wrong. The second part of the condition that should occur naturally is not happening, even though the conditional statement is true.

Translation Strategies

If using the form of a hypothetical condition is confusing or would make the reader think that the speaker doubts what he is saying in the first part of the sentence, then use a statement instead. Words such as “since” or “you know that ...” or “it is true that ...” can be helpful to make the meaning clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> “**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!” (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)
>
> > “**It is true that** Yahweh is God, so worship him!”
>
> “A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?” says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)
>
> > “A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **Since** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **Since** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?”

"

Referenced in: Judges 13:16; Judges 15:7; Judges 21:21

Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

Conditional Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate hypothetical conditions?*

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words "if ... then." Often, however, the word "then" is not stated.

Hypothetical Condition

Description

A Hypothetical Condition is a condition in which the second event (the "then" clause) will only take place if the first event (the "if" clause) takes place or is fulfilled in some way. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

It is important that translators understand whether or not something is a Hypothetical Condition so that they translate it in the correct way. For example, some of God's promises to Israel were conditional, based on whether or not Israel obeyed God. However, many of God's promises to Israel were not conditional; God would keep these promises whether or not the Israelites obeyed. It is important that you (the translator) know the difference between these two types of promises and communicate each one accurately in your own language. Also, sometimes conditions are stated in an order different than the order in which they would happen. If the target language would state the clauses in a different order, then you will need to make that adjustment.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

There are two hypothetical conditions in this frame. In both of these conditions, the first event (the "if clause") is stated after the "then" clause. If this is unnatural or confusing, the clauses can be restated in the more natural order. The first hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites obeyed God, then God would bless and protect them. The second hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites did not obey God, then God would punish them.

> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? (Genesis 4:7a ULT)

If Cain does what is right, then he will be accepted. The only way for Cain to be accepted is by doing what is right.

> ... **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. (Acts 5:38b-39aULT)

There are two hypothetical conditions here: (1) If it is true that this plan is of men, then it will be overthrown; (2) If it is true that this plan is of God, then it cannot be overthrown.

Translation Strategies

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like "then."

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

> God promised to bless the people and protect them **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)
>
> > If the people obeyed these laws, God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, God said that he would punish them.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

> God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)
>
> > If the people obeyed these laws, **then** God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, **then** God said that he would punish them.
>
> ... **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; (Acts 5:38b-39a ULT)
>
> > ... **if** this plan or this work is of men, **then** it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, **then** you will not be able to overthrow them;

"

Referenced in: Judges 4:8; Judges 9:16; Judges 9:17; Judges 9:18; Judges 9:19; Judges 9:20; Judges 11:8; Judges 11:9

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the reason-result relationship?*

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

A reason-and-result relationship is a logical relationship in which one event is the **reason** or cause for another event. The second event, then, is the **result** of the first event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

A reason-and-result relationship can look forward — "I did Y because I wanted X to happen." But usually it is looking backward — "X happened, and so I did Y." Also, it is possible to state the reason either before or after the result. Many languages have a preferred order for the reason and the result, and it will be confusing for the reader if they are in the opposite order. Common words used to indicate a reason-and-result relationship in English are "because," "so," "therefore," and "for." Some of these words can also be used to indicate a goal relationship, so translators need to be aware of the difference between a goal relationship and a reason-and-result relationship. It is necessary for translators to understand how the two events are connected, and then communicate them clearly in their language.

If the reason and result are stated in different verses, it is still possible to put them in a different order. If you change the order of the verses, then put the verse numbers together at the beginning of the group of verses that were rearranged like this: 1-2. This is called a Verse Bridge.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> The Jews were amazed, **because** Saul had tried to kill believers, and now he believed in Jesus! (Story 46 Frame 6 OBS)

The **reason** is the change in Saul — that he had tried to kill people who believed in Jesus, and now he himself believed in Jesus. The **result** is that the Jews were amazed. "Because" connects the two ideas and indicates that what follows it is a reason.

> Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

The **reason** is the great storm, and the **result** is that the boat was covered with the waves. The two events are connected by "so that." Notice that the term "so that" often indicates a goal relationship, but here the relationship is reason-and-result. This is because the sea cannot think and therefore does not have a goal.

> God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

The **result** is that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The **reason** is because he rested on the seventh day from his work.

> "Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God." (Luke 6:20b ULT)

The **result** is that the poor are blessed. The **reason** is that the kingdom of God is theirs.

> But he raised up in their place their sons that Joshua circumcised, being uncircumcised, **because** they had not been circumcised on the way. (Joshua 5:7 ULT)

The **result** is that Joshua circumcised the boys and men who had been born in the wilderness. The **reason** was that they had not been circumcised while they were journeying.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses reason-and-result relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the order of the clauses is confusing for the reader, then change the order.

(2) If the relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a more clear connecting word.

(3) If it is more clear to put a connecting word in the clause that does not have one, then do so.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

(1) God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done in his creation. **That is why** he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

> Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 ULT)

(1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.

(2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.

(3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

> Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

(1) Behold, the boat was covered with the waves **because** a great storm arose on the sea.

(2) Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **with the result that** the boat was covered with the waves.

(3) Behold, **because** a great storm arose on the sea, the boat was covered with the waves.

> **Since** he was not able to find out anything for certain because of the noise, he ordered that he be brought into the fortress. (Acts 21:34b ULT)

(1) The captain ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress, **because** he could not tell anything because of all the noise.

(2) **Because** the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

(3) The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, **so** he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

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Referenced in: Judges 1:34; Judges 2:18; Judges 3:1; Judges 3:12; Judges 3:22; Judges 4:19; Judges 4:21; Judges 5:23; Judges 6:5; Judges 6:22; Judges 6:30; Judges 7:15; Judges 8:24; Judges 8:30; Judges 9:3; Judges 9:5; Judges 9:24;

Judges 11:7; Judges 11:8; Judges 12:4; Judges 14:4; Judges 14:10; Judges 14:17; Judges 16:24; Judges 17:13; Judges 18:1; Judges 18:26; Judges 18:28; Judges 20:27; Judges 20:36; Judges 20:41; Judges 21:15; Judges 21:17; Judges 21:22

Connect — Sequential Time Relationship

Time Relationships

This page answers the question: *How do I translate clauses with a sequential time relationship?*

Some connectors establish time relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Sequential Clause

Description

A sequential clause is a time relation that connects two events in which one happens and then the other happens.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages indicate sequences of events in different ways; some use ordering, some use connecting words, some even use relative tense (Relative tense is a tense that refers to a time in relation to a reference point in the context.) Connecting words that may indicate sequence are words such as “then,” “later,” “after,” “afterward,” “before,” “first,” and “when.” Translators need to be certain that they communicate the order of the events in a way that is natural in their language. This may require ordering clauses differently than in the original languages.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> **When** Joseph came to his brothers, they kidnapped him and sold him to some slave traders. (OBS Story 8 Frame 2)

First Joseph came to his brothers, and then they kidnapped and sold him. We know this because of the connecting word “**when**.” The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> It was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but **after** I ate it, my stomach became bitter. (Revelation 10:10b ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs first, and the event of the last clause occurs later. We know this because of the connecting word “**after**.” The translator needs to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)

The event of the first clause occurs after the event of the second clause. First the land they dread will be desolate, and then the child will know to refuse evil and choose good. We know this because of the connecting word “**before**.” However, stating the clauses in this order may communicate the wrong order of events in your language. The translator may have to change the order so that the clauses come in the order that they happen. Or it may be possible to keep the order of the original language text and mark the ordering of sequence so that it is clear to the readers. You (the translator) need to decide the best way to communicate this sequence clearly and correctly.

> Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)

Here the general connector “**and**” connects four events. These are sequential events—each happens after the one before it. We know this because that is the only way that these events would happen. So in English, the general connector “and” is enough to make the sequence clear for events such as these. You will need to decide if this also communicates this sequence clearly and correctly in your language.

Translation Strategies

If the sequence of events is clear in your language, then translate the sequence as it is.

(1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.
(2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the connecting word is not clear, use a connecting word that communicates the sequence more clearly.

> Then Mary arose in those days **and** quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah, **and** she entered into the house of Zechariah **and** greeted Elizabeth. (Luke 1:39-40 ULT)
>
> > Then Mary arose in those days. **Then** she quickly went into the hill country, to a city of Judah. **Then** she entered into the house of Zechariah, **and then** she greeted Elizabeth.
>
> For **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate (Isaiah 7:16 ULT)
>
> > For the time will come when the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good, **but even before that time**, the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate.

(2) If the clauses are in an order that makes the sequence unclear, put the clauses in an order that is more clear.

> For the land whose two kings you dread will be desolate **before** the child knows to refuse the evil and choose the good.

For more about sequences of events, see Sequence of Events.

"

Referenced in: Judges 11:2

Connecting Words and Phrases

Description

This page answers the question: *How do connecting words work to join parts of the text in different ways?*

As humans, we write our thoughts in phrases and sentences. We usually want to communicate a series of thoughts that are connected to each other in different ways. **Connecting words and phrases** show how these thoughts are related to each other. For example, we can show how the following thoughts are related by using the Connecting Words in bold type:

- It was raining, **so** I opened my umbrella.
- It was raining, **but** I did not have an umbrella. **So** I got very wet.

Connecting words or phrases can connect phrases or clauses within a sentence. They can connect sentences to each other. They can also connect entire chunks to one another in order to show how the chunk before relates to the chunk after the connecting word. Very often, the connecting words that connect entire chunks to one another are either conjunctions or adverbs.

> It was raining, but I did not have an umbrella, so I got very wet.
>
> **Now** I must change my clothes. Then I will drink a cup of hot tea and warm myself by the fire.

In the above example, the word **now** connects the two short chunks of text, showing the relationship between them. The speaker must change his clothes, drink hot tea, and warm himself because of something that happened earlier (that is, he got wet in the rain).

Sometimes people might not use a connecting word because they expect the context to help the readers understand the relationship between the thoughts. Some languages do not use connecting words as much as other languages do. They might say:

- It was raining. I did not have an umbrella. I got very wet.

You (the translator) will need to use the method that is most natural and clear in the target language. But in general, using connecting words whenever possible helps the reader to understand the ideas in the Bible most clearly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You need to understand the relationship between paragraphs, between sentences, and between parts of sentences in the Bible, and how connecting words and phrases can help you to understand the relationship between the thoughts that they are connecting.
- Each language has its own ways of showing how thoughts are related.
- You need to know how to help readers understand the relationship between the thoughts in a way that is natural in your language.

Translation Principles

- You need to translate in a way that readers can understand the same relationship between thoughts that the original readers would have understood.
- Whether or not a connecting word is used is not as important as readers being able to understand the relationship between the ideas.

The Different Types of Connections

Listed below are different types of connections between ideas or events. These different types of connections can be indicated by using different connecting words. When we write or translate something, it is important to use the right connecting word so that these connections are clear for the reader. If you would like additional information, simply click the colored, hyperlinked word to be directed to a page containing definitions and examples for each type of connection.

- Sequential Clause — a time relationship between two events in which one happens and then the other happens.
- Simultaneous Clause — a time relationship between two or more events that occur at the same time.
- Background Clause — a time relationship in which the first clause describes a long event that is happening at the time when the beginning of the second event happens, which is described in the second clause.
- Exceptional Relationship — one clause describes a group of people or items, and the other clause excludes one or more items or people from the group.
- Hypothetical Condition — the second event will only take place if the first one takes place. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.
- Factual Condition — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true, so that the condition is guaranteed to happen.
- Contrary-to-Fact Condition — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain that it is not true. See also: Hypothetical Statements.
- Goal Relationship — a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first.
- Reason and Result Relationship — a logical relationship in which one event is the reason for the other event, the result.
- Contrast Relationship — one item is being described as different or in opposition to another.

Examples from the Bible

> I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT)

The word “instead” introduces something that contrasts with what was said before. The contrast here is between what Paul did not do and what he did do. The word “then” introduces a sequence of events. It introduces something that Paul did after he returned to Damascus.

> **Therefore,** whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

The word “therefore” links this section with the section before it, signaling that the section that came before gave the reason for this section. “Therefore” usually links sections larger than one sentence. The word “and” links only two actions within the same sentence, that of breaking commandments and teaching others. In this verse the word “but” contrasts what one group of people will be called in God’s kingdom with what another group of people will be called.

> We place nothing as a stumbling block in front of anyone, **so that** our ministry might not be discredited. **Instead**, we commend ourselves in everything as God’s servants. (2 Corinthians 6:3-4 ULT)

Here the words “so that” connect what follows as the reason for what came before; the reason that Paul does not place stumbling blocks is that he does not want his ministry brought into disrepute. “Instead” contrasts what Paul does (prove by his actions that he is God’s servant) with what he said he does not do (place stumbling blocks).

General Translation Strategies

See each type of Connecting Word above for specific strategies

If the way the relationship between thoughts is shown in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

(1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).
(2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be strange to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.
(3) Use a different connecting word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).

> Jesus said to them, “Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” Then immediately they left the nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18 ULT)

They followed Jesus because he told them to. Some translators may want to mark this clause with the connecting word “so.”

> > Jesus said to them, “Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” **So**, immediately they left the nets and followed him.

(2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one, and if people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.

> Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Some languages would prefer not to use connecting words here because the meaning is clear without them and using them would be unnatural. They might translate like this:

> > Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments, teaching others to do so as well, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.
>
> I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT) (Galatians 1:16-18 ULT)

Some languages might not need the words “instead” or “then” here. They might translate like this:

> > I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days.

(3) Use a different connecting word.

> Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Instead of a word like “therefore,” a language might need a phrase to indicate that there was a section before it that gave the reason for the section that follows. Also, the word “but” is used here because of the contrast between the two groups of people. But in some languages, the word “but” would show that what comes after it is surprising because of what came before it. So “and” might be clearer for those languages. They might translate like this:

> > **Because of that**, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **And** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

"

Referenced in: Judges 9:16; Judges 9:32; Judges 9:44; Judges 11:23; Judges 13:16; Judges 14:2

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

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)

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.)

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 — צְפַנְיָה
>
> > "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: Judges 1:36; Judges 4:2; Judges 9:37; Judges 10:4; Judges 15:17; Judges 15:19

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

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)

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "**I** do not know at what time **I** will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that **he** did not know at what time **he** would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

> And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." (Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest ...**"

> And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming,**
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look. here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

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: Judges 9:3; Judges 18:5; Judges 20:38; Judges 20:39

Doublet

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 2:19; Judges 6:29; Judges 9:16; Judges 9:19; Judges 10:8; Judges 13:2; Judges 13:3; Judges 13:10; Judges 16:16; Judges 18:2; Judges 18:19; Judges 20:6; Judges 20:10; Judges 20:11; Judges 21:24

Ellipsis

Description

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)

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:

> > He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.
>
> Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

> > Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**walk** not as unwise but **walk** as wise,

Absolute Ellipsis

> Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

It seems that the man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite and not directly ask Jesus for healing. He knew that Jesus would understand that the only way he could receive his sight would be for Jesus to heal him. The complete sentence would be:

> > “Lord, **I want you to heal me so** that I might receive my sight.”
>
> To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:4 ULT)

The writer assumes that the reader will recognize this common form of a blessing or wish, so he does not need to include the full sentence, which would be:

> > To Titus, a true son in our common faith. **May you receive** grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Translation Strategies

If ellipsis would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

> So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinners in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)
>
> > So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinners will not stand in the assembly** of the righteous.
>
> Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)
>
> > Then when the man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, **I want you to heal me** that I might receive my sight.”
>
> He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox**. (Psalm 29:6 ULT)

> He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

"

Referenced in: Judges 1:7; Judges 1:14; Judges 2:3; Judges 2:10; Judges 4:15; Judges 5:14; Judges 5:18; Judges 6:16; Judges 6:31; Judges 7:5; Judges 7:18; Judges 8:4; Judges 8:14; Judges 8:16; Judges 9:15; Judges 9:20; Judges 10:8; Judges 11:13; Judges 11:17; Judges 16:2; Judges 16:5; Judges 16:13; Judges 16:31; Judges 17:2; Judges 17:4; Judges 17:10; Judges 18:8; Judges 19:21; Judges 19:26; Judges 20:8; Judges 20:9; Judges 20:14; Judges 20:18; Judges 20:23; Judges 20:31; Judges 20:35; Judges 20:39; Judges 21:7; Judges 21:12; Judges 21:17

End of Story

Description

This page answers the question: *What kinds of information are given at the end of a story?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Writing Styles (UTA PDF)

Background Information (UTA PDF)

There are different types of information that may be given at the end of a story. Often this is background information. This background information is different from the actions that make up the main part of the story. A book of the Bible is often made up of many smaller stories that are part of the larger story of the book itself. For example, the story of Jesus' birth is a smaller story in the larger story of the book of Luke. Each of these stories, whether large or small, can have background information at the end of it.

The following are purposes for end of story information:

- to summarize the story
- to give a conclusion about what the story means or what is important about it
- to connect a smaller story to the larger story it is a part of
- to tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends
- to tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends
- to tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of presenting these kinds of information. If you (the translator) do not use your language's ways of doing this, readers may not know:

- that this information is ending the story
- what the purpose of the information is
- how the information is related to the story

Translation Strategies

- Translate the particular kind of information at the end of a story the way your language expresses that kind of information.
- Translate it so that people will understand how it relates to the story it is part of.
- If possible, translate the end of the story in a way that people will know where that story ends and the next begins.

Examples From the Bible

- To summarize the story

> Then the rest of the men should follow, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship. **In this way it happened that all of us were brought safely to the land.** (Acts 27:44 ULT)

- To give a conclusion about what the story means or what is important about it

> Many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of everyone. Then they counted the value of them, and found it was 50,000 pieces of silver. **So the word of the Lord was spreading and prevailing with power.** (Acts 19:19-20 ULT)

• To tell the reader what happens to a specific character after the main part of the story ends

> And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoiced in God my savior.” **And Mary stayed with her about three months and then returned to her house.** (Luke 1:46-47, 56 ULT)

• To tell on-going action that continues after the main part of the story ends

> All who those who heard it were amazed concerning the things that were spoken to them by the shepherds. **But Mary kept all the things, pondering them in her heart.** (Luke 2:18-19 ULT)

• To tell what happens after the story as a result of the events that happened in the story itself

> “Woe to you, experts in the Jewish law, because you have taken away the key of knowledge; you do not enter in yourselves, and you hinder those who are entering.” **After he went from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to fiercely oppose him and argued against him about many things, lying in wait to trap him in something from his mouth.** (Luke 11:52-54 ULT)

"

Referenced in: Judges 4:23; Judges 8:28; Judges 9:56; Judges 13:25; Judges 21:24

Euphemism

Description

This page answers the question: *What is a euphemism?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

> ... they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons "were dead." It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

> ... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

> But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?" (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

(1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

> ... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:
>
> > "... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**"
> > "... where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**"
>
> But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?" (Luke 1:34 ULT)

> > But Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man**?”

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

> They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)
>
> > “They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa.”

"

Referenced in: Judges 2:10; Judges 3:24; Judges 11:39; Judges 15:1; Judges 16:1; Judges 19:24; Judges 20:5

Exclamations

Description

This page answers the question: *What are ways of translating exclamations?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Sentence Types (UTA PDF)

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

> Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)
>
> When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, “This has never been seen before in Israel!” (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have “Oh” and “Ah.” The word “oh” here shows the speaker’s amazement.

> **Oh**, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word “Alas” below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> Some exclamations start with a question word such as “how” or “why,” even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God’s judgments are.
>
> **How** unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”
(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.
(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is “is” or “are.”

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)
>
> > “You **are** such a worthless person!”
>
> Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)
>
> > “Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!”

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word “wow” shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression “Oh no” shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

> They were extremely astonished, saying, “He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.” (Mark 7:37 ULT)
>
> > “They were extremely astonished, saying, ‘**Wow**! He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.’”
>
> Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)
>
> > “**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

> “**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> > “Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me**? For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” “**Help**, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

> How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)
>
> > “His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!”

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, “**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!” (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> > Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh. **He was terrified** and said, “**Alas**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!”

"

Referenced in: Judges 6:22

Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

Description

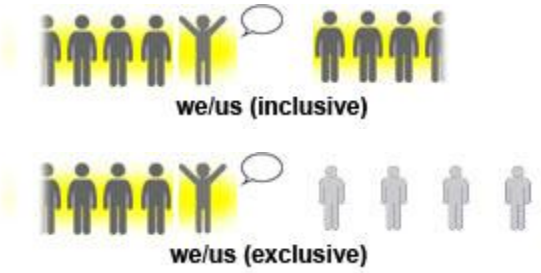
This page answers the question: *What are the exclusive and inclusive forms of "we"?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Pronouns (UTA PDF)

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.

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: Judges 1:1; Judges 6:13; Judges 9:28; Judges 9:38; Judges 11:2

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as "I" and the person he is speaking to as "you." Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than "I" or "you."

This page answers the question: *What are first, second, and third person, and how do I translate when a third person form does not refer to the third person?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit (UTA PDF)

Pronouns (UTA PDF)

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns "I" and "we." (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun "you." (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns "he," "she," "it," and "they." (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like "the man" or "the woman" are also third person.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant "I" or "you."

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of "I" or "me" to refer to themselves.

> But David said to Saul, "**Your servant** used to keep **his** father's sheep." (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as "your servant" and used "his." He was calling himself Saul's servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

> Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,
> "... Do you have an arm like **God's**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?" (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words "God's" and "his." He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of "you" or "your" to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

> Abraham answered and said, "Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!" (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as "My Lord" rather than as "you." He did this to show his humility before God.

> So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying "each of you," Jesus used the third person "his" instead of "your."

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean "I" or "you" would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

(1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun "I" or "you."
(2) Simply use the first person ("I") or second person ("you") instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun "I" or "you."

> But David said to Saul, "**Your servant** used to keep **his** father's sheep." (1 Samuel 17:34)
>
> > But David said to Saul, "**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father's sheep."

(2) Simply use the first person ("I") or second person ("you") instead of the third person.

> Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, "... Do you have an arm like **God's**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?" (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)
>
> > Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, "... Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?"
>
> So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)
>
> > So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of You (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Judges 2:22; Judges 5:31; Judges 6:12; Judges 9:15; Judges 10:10; Judges 15:3; Judges 15:18; Judges 17:2; Judges 19:19

Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 16:21

Forms of 'You' — Singular

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 3:28; Judges 5:2; Judges 5:9; Judges 5:16; Judges 7:7; Judges 7:15; Judges 9:7; Judges 9:33; Judges 11:23; Judges 11:26; Judges 19:9; Judges 19:20

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

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)

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.

> 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: Judges 1 Chapter Introduction; Judges 1:1; Judges 1:3; Judges 3:3; Judges 3:5; Judges 3:31; Judges 5:4; Judges 5:24; Judges 7:7; Judges 8:24; Judges 8:25; Judges 12:15; Judges 13:2; Judges 18:1; Judges 18:30; Judges 19:11; Judges 19:12; Judges 20:41; Judges 21:1; Judges 21:16; Judges 21:17

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: Judges 1:3; Judges 4:5; Judges 4:8; Judges 4:22; Judges 6:21; Judges 6:35; Judges 7:5; Judges 7:24; Judges 8:15; Judges 14:18

Hendiadys

Description

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)

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

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: Judges 2:4; Judges 2:15; Judges 5:30; Judges 7:3; Judges 7:14; Judges 9:4; Judges 11:30; Judges 13:10; Judges 13:19; Judges 16:24; Judges 17 Chapter Introduction; Judges 17:3; Judges 17:4; Judges 18:7; Judges 18:14; Judges 18:17; Judges 18:18; Judges 18:27; Judges 19:25; Judges 20:4; Judges 20:7; Judges 20:37; Judges 20:38; Judges 21:2

How to Translate Names

Description

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)

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

> For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

> His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see Borrow Words.
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

> Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that “Jordan” is the name of a river, “Jericho” is the name of a city, and “Amorites” is the name of a group of people.

> She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beer Lahai Roi” means “Well of the Living One who sees me.”

> And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words “pull out.”

> **Saul** was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)
>
> But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
(5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

> Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** ... fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)
>
> > You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites.**
>
> At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)
>
> > At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

> And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)
>
> > She called his name **Moses (which sounds like ‘drawn out’),** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.”

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

> She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)
>
> > She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?”
> > Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called “Saul” before Acts 13 and “Paul” after Acts 13. You could translate his name as “Paul” all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

> ... a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)
>
> > ... a young man named **Paul** 1

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] Most versions say “Saul” here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called “Paul.”

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

> But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)
>
> > But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write “Saul” where the source text has “Saul” and “Paul” where the source text has “Paul.”

> a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)
>
> > a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

> But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)
>
> > But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

> It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)
>
> > It came about in Iconium that **Paul**[1] and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

"

Next we recommend you learn about:

Copy or Borrow Words (UTA PDF)

Referenced in: Judges 1:4; Judges 1:5; Judges 1:9; Judges 1:10; Judges 1:11; Judges 1:16; Judges 1:17; Judges 1:20; Judges 1:21; Judges 1:27; Judges 1:35; Judges 1:36; Judges 2:1; Judges 2:8; Judges 2:9; Judges 2:11; Judges 2:13; Judges 3:3; Judges 3:7; Judges 3:8; Judges 3:13; Judges 3:15; Judges 3:31; Judges 4:2; Judges 4:4; Judges 4:6; Judges 4:11; Judges 4:17; Judges 5:14; Judges 5:19; Judges 5:23; Judges 6:11; Judges 6:32; Judges 7:1; Judges 7:3; Judges 7:10; Judges 7:24; Judges 7:25; Judges 8:13; Judges 8:29; Judges 8:33; Judges 9:6; Judges 9:26; Judges 9:28; Judges 9:41; Judges 9:46; Judges 10:1; Judges 10:3; Judges 10:4; Judges 10:6; Judges 10:12; Judges 11:1; Judges 11:3; Judges 11:24; Judges 12:13; Judges 15:6; Judges 15:8; Judges 15:9; Judges 16:31; Judges 18:12; Judges 20:33

Hyperbole

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 6:5; Judges 7:12; Judges 9:51; Judges 12:4; Judges 16:16; Judges 18:10; Judges 18:24; Judges 20:1; Judges 20:11; Judges 20:16; Judges 20:40

Idiom

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)

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.")

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 Judges; Judges 1:5; Judges 1:8; Judges 1:21; Judges 1:26; Judges 1:35; Judges 2:3; Judges 2:7; Judges 2:8; Judges 2:11; Judges 2:14; Judges 2:18; Judges 2:20; Judges 3:7; Judges 3:8; Judges 3:10; Judges 3:12; Judges 4:9; Judges 4:14; Judges 4:15; Judges 4:22; Judges 5:7; Judges 5:12; Judges 5:15; Judges 5:23; Judges 5:24; Judges 5:29; Judges 6:3; Judges 6:6; Judges 6:16; Judges 6:17; Judges 6:19; Judges 6:22; Judges 6:25; Judges 6:29; Judges 6:31; Judges 6:33; Judges 6:39; Judges 7:9; Judges 7:12; Judges 7:15; Judges 8:10; Judges 8:11; Judges 8:20; Judges 8:21; Judges 8:32; Judges 9:7; Judges 9:17; Judges 9:18; Judges 9:24; Judges 9:29; Judges 9:32; Judges 9:33; Judges 9:34; Judges 9:35; Judges 9:48; Judges 10:1; Judges 10:6; Judges 10:7; Judges 10:18; Judges 11:3; Judges 11:9; Judges 11:12; Judges 11:18; Judges 11:25; Judges 11:33; Judges 11:40; Judges 12:3; Judges 12:4; Judges 12:9; Judges 13:4; Judges 13:5; Judges 13:10; Judges 13:12; Judges 13:13; Judges 13:15; Judges 14:1; Judges 14:3; Judges 14:6; Judges 14:7; Judges 14:16; Judges 14:19; Judges 15:1; Judges 15:8; Judges 15:14; Judges 16:5; Judges 16:7; Judges 16:9; Judges 16:17; Judges 16:20; Judges 16:25; Judges 16:28; Judges 17:5; Judges 17:6; Judges 17:8; Judges 17:12; Judges 18:1; Judges 18:2; Judges 18:3; Judges 18:4; Judges 18:7; Judges 18:9; Judges 18:20; Judges 18:23; Judges 18:24; Judges 18:25; Judges 18:27; Judges 18:28; Judges 18:30; Judges 19:3; Judges 19:6; Judges 19:8;

Judges 19:9; Judges 19:14; Judges 19:17; Judges 19:20; Judges 19:22; Judges 19:26; Judges 19:28; Judges 19:30; Judges 20:13; Judges 20:21; Judges 20:25; Judges 20:28; Judges 20:30; Judges 20:31; Judges 20:34; Judges 20:36; Judges 20:37; Judges 20:41; Judges 20:48; Judges 21:10; Judges 21:11; Judges 21:12; Judges 21:19

Imperatives — Other Uses

Description

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)

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. In the Bible, sometimes imperative sentences have other uses.

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: Judges 1:15; Judges 4:18; Judges 9:8

Information Structure

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 3:26; Judges 4:1; Judges 10:7; Judges 14:6; Judges 16:23; Judges 20:1; Judges 20:10

Introduction of a New Event

Description

This page answers the question: *How do we introduce a new event in a story?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Writing Styles (UTA PDF)
Order of Events (UTA PDF)

When people tell a story, they tell about an event or a series of events. Often they put certain information at the beginning of the story, such as who the story is about, when it happened, and where it happened. This information that the writer gives before the events of the story begin is called the setting of the story. Some new events in a story also have a setting because they might involve new people, new times, and new places. In some languages, people also tell if they saw the event or heard about it from someone else.

When your people tell about events, what information do they give at the beginning? Is there a certain order that they put it in? In your translation, you will need to follow the way your language introduces new information at the beginning of a story or a new event rather than the way the source language did that. In this way your translation will sound natural and communicate clearly in your language.

Examples From the Bible

> **In the days of Herod**, king of Judea, **there was a certain priest named Zechariah**, from the division of Abijah. And **his wife was** from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. (Luke 1:5 ULT)

The verses above introduce a story about Zechariah. The first bolded phrase tells when it happened, and the next two bolded phrases introduce the main people. The next two verses go on to explain that Zechariah and Elizabeth were old and did not have any children. All of this is the setting. Then the phrase “And it happened that” in Luke 1:8 helps to introduce the first event in this story:

> **And it happened that** in his performing as priest before God, in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, he came up by lot to enter into the temple of the Lord to burn incense. (Luke 1:8-9 ULT)

> **The birth of Jesus Christ happened in the following way.** His mother, Mary, was engaged to marry Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18 ULT)

The bolded sentence above makes it explicit that a story about Jesus is being introduced. The story will tell about how the birth of Jesus happened.

> **Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king**, behold, learned men from the east arrived in Jerusalem. (Matthew 2:1 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that the events concerning the learned men happened **after** Jesus was born.

> **Now in those days** John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea. (Matthew 3:1-22 ULT)

The bolded phrase above shows that John the Baptist came preaching around the time of the previous events. It is probably very general and refers to when Jesus lived in Nazareth.

> **Then** Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to John, to be baptized by him. (Matthew 3:13 ULT)

The word “then” shows that Jesus came to the Jordan River some time after the events in the previous verses.

> Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)

The author first introduced the new person and then told about what he did and when he did it. In some languages, it might be more natural to tell about the time first.

> 6 Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. 7 Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)

Verse 6 is a statement of the events that happen in the rest of chapter 7. Chapter 6 already told about how God told Noah that there would be a flood, and how Noah prepared for it. Chapter 7 verse 6 introduces the part of the story that tells about Noah and his family and the animals going into the ship, the rain starting, and the rain flooding the earth. Some languages might need to make it clear that this verse simply introduces the event, or move this verse after verse 7. Verse 6 is not one of the events of the story. The people went into the ship before the flood came.

Translation Strategies

If the information given at the beginning of a new event is clear and natural to your readers, consider translating it as it is in the ULT or UST. If not, consider one of these strategies:

(1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.
(2) If readers would expect certain information but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase to fill in that information, such as: "another time" or "someone."
(3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language's way of showing that it is a summary.
(4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, indicate that the event would actually happen later in the story.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Put the information that introduces the event in the order that your people put it.

> Now there was **a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. This man came to Jesus at night. (John 3:1-2a ULT)
>
> > There was a **man whose name was Nicodemus. He was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**. One night he came to Jesus.
> >
> > One night **a man named Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Council**, came to Jesus.
>
> As he passed by, **he saw Levi the son of Alpheus, sitting** at the tax collector's tent, and he said to him ... (Mark 2:14a ULT)
>
> > As he passed by, **Levi the son of Alpheus was sitting** at the tax collector's tent. Jesus saw him and and said to him ...
> >
> > As he passed by, **there was a man sitting** at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...
> >
> > As he passed by, **there was a tax collector** sitting at the tax collector's tent. His name was Levi, and he was the son of Alpheus. Jesus saw him and said to him ...

(2) If readers would expect certain information, but it is not in the Bible, consider using an indefinite word or phrase such as “another time,” or “someone.”

> Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT) — If people expect to be told something about when the new event happened, the phrase “after that” can help them see that it happened after the events already mentioned.
>
> > **After that**, when Noah was 600 years old, the flood came upon the earth.
>
> **Again he began** to teach beside the sea. (Mark 4:1a ULT) — In chapter 3 Jesus was teaching at someone’s house. Readers may need to be told that this new event happened at another time, or that Jesus actually went to the sea.
>
> > **Another time** Jesus began to teach people again beside the sea.
> >
> > Jesus went to the sea and **began to teach people again** there.

(3) If the introduction is a summary of the whole event, use your language’s way of showing that it is a summary.

> Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. (Genesis 7:6 ULT)
>
> > **Now this is what happened when** Noah was 600 years old and the flood came upon the earth.
> >
> > **This part tells about what happened when** the flood came upon the earth. It happened when Noah was 600 years old.

(4) If it would be strange in the target language to give a summary of the event at the beginning, show that the event will actually happen later in the story.

> Noah was 600 years old when the flood came upon the earth. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives went into the ark together because of the waters of the flood. (Genesis 7:6-7 ULT)
>
> > **Now this is what happened when** Noah was 600 years old. Noah, his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives went into the ark together because **God had said that the waters of the flood would come**.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Background Information (UTA PDF)
Introduction of New and Old Participants (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Judges 1:1; Judges 3:8; Judges 3:18; Judges 6:7; Judges 6:11; Judges 6:25; Judges 6:33; Judges 7:8; Judges 8:4; Judges 8:10; Judges 8:33; Judges 9:1; Judges 9:23; Judges 10:7; Judges 10:17; Judges 11:4; Judges 11:5; Judges 13:19; Judges 13:20; Judges 14:11; Judges 14:15; Judges 14:17; Judges 15:1; Judges 16:4; Judges 16:25; Judges 19:1

Introduction of New and Old Participants

Description

This page answers the question: *Why cannot the readers of my translation understand who the author was writing about?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Parts of Speech (UTA PDF)

Writing Styles (UTA PDF)

The first time that people or things are mentioned in a story, they are **new participants**. After that, whenever they are mentioned, they are **old participants**.

> Now **there was a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus** ... **This man** came to Jesus at night ... Jesus replied and said to **him** ... (John 3:1, 2a, 3a)

The first bolded phrase introduces Nicodemus as a new participant. After being introduced, he is then referred to as “This man” and “him” when he has become an old participant.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In order to make your translation clear and natural, it is necessary to refer to the participants in such a way that people will know if they are new participants or participants that they have already read about. Different languages have different ways of doing this. You must follow the way that your language does this, not the way that the source language does this.

Examples From the Bible

New Participants

Often the most important new participant is introduced with a phrase that says that he existed, such as “There was a man,” as in the example below. The phrase “There was” tells us that this man existed. The word “a” in “a man” tells us that the author is speaking about him for the first time. The rest of the sentence tells where this man was from, who is family was, and what his name was.

> **Now there was a man** from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. (Judges 13:2a ULT)

A new participant who is not the most important participant is often introduced in relation to the more important person who was already introduced. In the example below, Manoah’s wife is simply referred to as “his wife.” This phrase shows her relationship to him.

> Now there was one man from Zorah, of the families of the Danites, and his name was Manoah. **His wife** was barren and she had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Sometimes a new participant is introduced simply by name because the author assumes that the readers know who the person is. In the first verse of 1 Kings, the author assumes that his readers know who King David is, so there is no need to explain who he is.

> Now King David was old, he had advanced in the days, and they covered him with the garments, but it was not warm enough for him. (1 Kings 1:1 ULT)

Old Participants

A person who has already been brought into the story can be referred to with a pronoun after that. In the example below, Manoah is referred to with the pronoun “his,” and his wife is referred to with the pronoun “she.”

> **His wife** was barren and **she** had never given birth. (Judges 13:2 ULT)

Old participants can also be referred to in other ways, depending on what is happening in the story. In the example below, the story is about bearing a son, and Manoah's wife is referred to by the noun phrase "the wife."

> The angel of Yahweh appeared to **the wife** and he said to her ... (Judges 13:3a ULT)

If the old participant has not been mentioned for a while, or if there could be confusion between participants, the author may use the participant's name again. In the example below, Manoah is referred to by his name, which the author has not used since verse 2.

> Then **Manoah** prayed to Yahweh. (Judges 13:8a ULT)

Some languages place an affix on the verb that tells something about the subject. In some of those languages, people do not always use noun phrases or pronouns for old participants when they are the subject of the sentence. The marker on the verb gives enough information for the listener to understand who the subject is. (See Verbs.)

Translation Strategies

(1) If the participant is new, use one of your language's ways of introducing new participants.
(2) If it is not clear to whom a pronoun refers, use a noun phrase or name.
(3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the participant is new, use one of your language's ways of introducing new participants.

> Then Joseph, who was called Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated as Son of Encouragement), a Levite from Cyprus by birth ... (Acts 4:36-37 ULT) — Starting the sentence with Joseph's name when he has not been introduced yet might be confusing in some languages.
>
> > There was a man from Cyprus who was a Levite. His name was Joseph, and he was given the name Barnabas by the apostles (that is, being interpreted, Son of Encouragement). There was a Levite from Cyprus whose name was Joseph. The apostles gave him the name Barnabas, which means Son of encouragement.

(2) If it is not clear who a pronoun refers to, use a noun phrase or name.

> And it happened that when he was praying in a certain place, when he stopped, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." (Luke 11:1 ULT) — Since this is the first verse in a chapter, readers might wonder who "he" refers to.
>
> > It happened when **Jesus** finished praying in a certain place, that one of his disciples said, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples."

(3) If an old participant is referred to by name or a noun phrase, and people wonder if this is another new participant, try using a pronoun instead. If a pronoun is not needed because people would understand it clearly from the context, then leave out the pronoun.

> Joseph's master took Joseph and put him in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and Joseph stayed there. (Genesis 39:20) — Since Joseph is the main person in the story, some languages might prefer the pronoun.

> Joseph's master took **him** and put **him** in prison, in the place where all the king's prisoners were put, and **he** stayed there in the prison.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Pronouns — When to Use Them (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Judges 4:4; Judges 6:8; Judges 6:11; Judges 6:20; Judges 8:31; Judges 9:28; Judges 9:46; Judges 9:53; Judges 10:18; Judges 11:1; Judges 13:2; Judges 16:4; Judges 17:1; Judges 17:5; Judges 17:7; Judges 19:1; Judges 20:4

Irony

Description

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)

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.

> 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: Judges 9:15; Judges 10:14

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,

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Referenced in: Judges 1:15; Judges 2:1; Judges 5:3; Judges 5:17; Judges 9:32; Judges 9:33; Judges 9:42; Judges 11:6

Kinship

Description

This page answers the question: *What are kinship terms and how can I translate them?*

Kinship terms refer to those words used to describe people related to one another in familial relationships. These terms vary widely in their specificity from language to language. They range from the (Western) nuclear or immediate family (father-son, husband-wife) out to broad clan relationships in other cultures.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Depending on the language translators may need to use specific terms to designate the accurate kinship relationship. In some languages a different term may be used based on siblings' birth order. In others, the side of the family (father's or mother's), age, marital status, etc. may determine the term used. Different terms may be used based on the gender of the speaker and/or addressee. Translators may need to make sure they know the exact relationship between two related people in the Bible to find the correct term. Sometimes these terms are difficult even for native speakers to remember and translators may need to seek community help in finding the correct term. Another complicating issue is that the Bible may not give enough information about the relationship for translators to determine the correct term in the language being translated into. In this case, translators will have to use a more general term or simply pick a satisfactory term based on the limited information available.

Sometimes terms that seem like kinship terms are used for people who are not necessarily related. For instance, an older person may refer to a younger man or woman as "my son" or "my daughter."

Examples from the Bible

> Then Yahweh said to Cain, "Where is Abel **your brother**?" He said, "I do not know. Am I **my brother's** keeper?" (Genesis 4:9 ULT)

Abel was Cain's younger brother.

> Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flock and said to them, "I see **your father's** attitude toward me has changed, but the God of my father has been with me." (Genesis 31:4-5 ULT)

Jacob is referring here to his father-in-law. In some languages there may be a specific term for a man's father-in-law, however, in this case it is better to retain the form **your father** as Jacob may be using it to distance himself from Laban.

> And Moses was shepherding the flock of Jethro **his father-in-law**, the priest of Midian. (Exodus3:1a ULT)

Unlike the previous instance, if your language has a term for a man's father-in-law this is a good place to use it.

> And **his sister** stationed herself at a distance to know what would be done to him. (Exodus 2:4 ULT)

From context we know that this was Miriam, Moses's older sister. In some languages this may require a specific term. In others, the term for older sister may be only used when the younger sibling is addressing and/or referring to his or her sister.

> Then she and **her daughters-in-law** arose to return from the fields of Moab (Ruth 1:6a ULT)

Ruth & Orpah are Naomi's daughters-in-law.

> Then she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has turned back to her people and to her gods.” (Ruth 1:15 ULT)

Orpah had been the wife of Ruth’s husband’s brother. This may be a different term in your language than if she had been Ruth’s husband’s sister.

> Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Will you not listen to me, **my daughter**?” (Ruth 2:8a ULT)

Boaz is not Ruth’s father; he is simply using the term to address a younger woman.

> And behold, **your relative** Elizabeth—she also has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren. (Luke 1:36 ULT)

While the KJV translated this as **cousin**, the term simply means a related woman.

Translation Strategies

(1) Find out the exact relationship specified and translate using the term your language uses.

(2) If the text does not specify the relationship as clearly as your language would, either:

(a) settle on a more general term.

(b) use a specific term if required by your language, choosing the one that is most likely to be correct.

Translation Strategies Applied

This is not an issue in English, so the following illustrations draw on other languages.

In Korean, there are several terms for brother and sister, the use of them depends on the speaker’s (or referent’s) sex and birth order. Examples are from the Korean Living Bible, found on biblegateway.com

> Genesis 30:1 Rachel is jealous of her “eonni,” which is the term a woman uses for her older sister.
>
> Genesis 34:31 Simeon and Levi refer to Dinah as “nui,” a general term for sister.
>
> Genesis 37:16 Joseph refers to his brothers as “hyeong,” which is the term a man uses for his older brother(s).
>
> Genesis 45:12 Joseph refers to Benjamin as “dongsaeng,” which roughly means sibling, usually younger.

In Russian, in-law terms are complex. For instance, “nevéstka” is the term for a brother’s (or brother-in-law’s) wife; a woman uses the same term for her daughter-in-law but her husband would call the same daughter-in-law “snoxá.” Examples from the Russian Synodal Version.

> Genesis 38:25 Tamar sends a message to her father-in-law, Judah. The term used is “svekor.” This is used for a woman’s husband’s father.
>
> Exodus 3:1 Moses is watching his father-in-law’s herd. The term used is “test’.” This is used for a man’s wife’s father.

"

Referenced in: Judges 1:16; Judges 4:11; Judges 8:19; Judges 8:22; Judges 8:30; Judges 9:1; Judges 9:5; Judges 9:21; Judges 9:24; Judges 11:3; Judges 12:14; Judges 13:11; Judges 14:3; Judges 14:11; Judges 14:15; Judges 14:20; Judges 15:1; Judges 15:6; Judges 19:4; Judges 19:5

Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit

Description

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)

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.

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)

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Referenced in: Judges 1:6; Judges 1:15; Judges 1:17; Judges 2:5; Judges 4:15; Judges 4:17; Judges 4:20; Judges 5:13; Judges 7:5; Judges 7:6; Judges 7:13; Judges 9:49; Judges 9:52; Judges 10:14; Judges 11:14; Judges 11:30; Judges 11:34; Judges 11:37; Judges 11:39; Judges 12:1; Judges 13:14; Judges 13:21; Judges 13:24; Judges 14:15; Judges 15:6; Judges 15:14; Judges 15:15; Judges 15:19; Judges 16:23; Judges 16:28; Judges 18:1; Judges 18:29; Judges 20:22; Judges 21:21

Merism

Definition

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)

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

> "I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)
>
> I am **the alpha and the omega**, **the first and the last**, **the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

Alpha and omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. This is a merism that includes everything from the beginning to the end. It means eternal.

> ... I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth** ..., (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

Heaven and earth is a merism that includes everything that exists.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use merism. The readers of those languages may think that the phrase only applies to the items mentioned. They may not realize that it refers to those two things and everything in between.

Examples From the Bible

> **From the rising of the sun to its setting**, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)

This bolded phrase is a merism because it speaks of the east and the west and everywhere in between. It means "everywhere."

> He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13)

The bolded phrase is merism because it speaks of old people and young people and everyone in between. It means "everyone."

Translation Strategies

If the merism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

(1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.
(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Identify what the merism refers to without mentioning the parts.

> I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)

> > I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything**.
>
> **From the rising of the sun to its setting**, Yahweh's name should be praised. (Psalm 113:3 ULT)
>
> > **In all places**, people should praise Yahweh's name.

(2) Identify what the merism refers to and include the parts.

> I praise you, Father, Lord of **heaven and earth**. (Matthew 11:25b ULT)
>
> > I praise you, Father, Lord of **everything, including both what is in heaven and what is on earth**.
>
> He will bless those who honor him, both **young and old**. (Psalm 115:13 ULT)
>
> > He will bless **all those** who honor him, regardless of whether they are **young or old**.

"

Referenced in: Judges 5:6; Judges 5:10; Judges 9:2

Metaphor

Description

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)

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.

The Parts of a Metaphor

The example above shows us that a metaphor has three parts. In this metaphor, the speaker is talking about “the girl I love.” This is the **Topic**. The speaker wants the hearer to think about what is similar between her and “a red rose.” The red rose is the **Image** to which he compares the girl. Most probably, he wants the hearer to consider that they are both beautiful. This is the **Idea** that the girl and the rose both share, and so we may also call it the **Point of Comparison**.

Every metaphor has three parts:

- The **Topic**, the item being immediately discussed by the writer/speaker.
- The **Image**, the physical item (object, event, action, etc.) which the speaker uses to describe the topic.
- The **Idea**, the abstract concept or quality that the physical **Image** brings to the mind of the hearer when he thinks of how the **Image** and the **Topic** are similar. Often, the **Idea** of a metaphor is not explicitly stated in the Bible, but it is only implied from the context. The hearer or reader usually needs to think of the **Idea** himself.

Using these terms, we can say that a metaphor is a figure of speech that uses a physical **Image** to apply an abstract **Idea** to the speaker’s **Topic**.

Usually, a writer or speaker uses a metaphor in order to express something about a **Topic**, with at least one **Point of Comparison** (**Idea**) between the **Topic** and the **Image**. Often in metaphors, the **Topic** and the **Image** are explicitly stated, but the **Idea** is only implied. The writer/speaker often uses a metaphor in order to invite the readers/listeners to think about the similarity between the **Topic** and the **Image** and to figure out for themselves the **Idea** that is being communicated.

Speakers often use metaphors in order to strengthen their message, to make their language more vivid, to express their feelings better, to say something that is hard to say in any other way, or to help people remember their message.

Sometimes speakers use metaphors that are very common in their language. However, sometimes speakers use metaphors that are uncommon, and even some metaphors that are unique. When a metaphor has become very common in a language, often it becomes a “passive” metaphor, in contrast to uncommon metaphors, which we describe as being “active.” Passive metaphors and active metaphors each present a different kind of translation problem, which we will discuss below.

Passive Metaphors

A passive metaphor is a metaphor that has been used so much in the language that its speakers no longer regard it as one concept standing for another. Linguists often call these “dead metaphors.” Passive metaphors are extremely common. Examples in English include the terms “table **leg**,” “family **tree**,” “book **leaf**” (meaning a page in

a book), or the word “crane” (meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads). English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples of passive metaphors in Biblical Hebrew include using the word “hand” to represent “power,” using the word “face” to represent “presence,” and speaking of emotions or moral qualities as if they were “clothing.”

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

Many ways of metaphorical speaking depend on pairs of concepts, where one underlying concept frequently stands for a different underlying concept. For example, in English, the direction “up” (the Image) often represents the concepts of “more” or “better” (the Idea). Because of this pair of underlying concepts, we can make sentences such as “The price of gasoline is going **up**,” “A **highly** intelligent man,” and also the opposite kind of idea: “The temperature is going **down**,” and “I am feeling very **low**.”

Patterned pairs of concepts are constantly used for metaphorical purposes in the world’s languages because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, people like to speak of abstract qualities (such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities) as if they were body parts, or as if they were objects that could be seen or held, or as if they were events that could be watched as they happened.

When these metaphors are used in normal ways, it is rare that the speaker and audience regard them as figurative speech. Examples of metaphors in English that go unrecognized are:

- “Turn the heat **up**.” More is spoken of as up.
- “Let us **go ahead** with our debate.” Doing what was planned is spoken of as walking or advancing.
- “You **defend** your theory well.” Argument is spoken of as war.
- “A **flow** of words.” Words are spoken of as liquids.

English speakers do not view these as metaphorical expressions or figures of speech, so it would be wrong to translate them into other languages in a way that would lead people to pay special attention to them as figurative speech. For a description of important patterns of this kind of metaphor in biblical languages, please see Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns and the pages it will direct you to.

When translating something that is a passive metaphor into another language, do not treat it as a metaphor. Instead, just use the best expression for that thing or concept in the target language.

Active Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept, or one thing for another thing. Metaphors make people think about how the one thing is like the other thing, because in most ways the two things are very different. People also easily recognize these metaphors as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. For example,

> But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.
> (Malachi 4:2a ULT)

Here, God speaks about his salvation as if it were the sun rising in order to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. He also speaks of the sun’s rays as if they were wings. Also, he speaks of these wings as if they were bringing medicine that would heal his people. Here is another example:

> And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox ...” (Luke 13:32a ULT)

Here, “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was intending for them to apply certain characteristics of a fox to Herod. They probably understood that Jesus intended to communicate that Herod was evil, either in a cunning way or as someone who was destructive, murderous, or who took things that did not belong to him, or all of these.

Active metaphors require the translator’s special care to make a correct translation. To do so, you need to understand the parts of a metaphor and how they work together to produce meaning.

> Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 6:35 ULT)

In this metaphor, Jesus called himself the bread of life. The **Topic** is “I” (meaning Jesus himself) and the **Image** is “bread.” Bread was the primary food that people ate in that place and time. The similarity between bread and Jesus is that people need both to live. Just as people need to eat food in order to have physical life, people need to trust in Jesus in order to have eternal life. The **Idea** of the metaphor is “life.” In this case, Jesus stated the central Idea of the metaphor, but often the Idea is only implied.

Purposes of Metaphor

- One purpose of metaphor is to teach people about something that they do not know (the **Topic**) by showing that it is like something that they already do know (the **Image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something (the **Topic**) has a particular quality (the **Idea**) or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about the **Topic** as they would feel about the **Image**.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not recognize that something is a metaphor. In other words, they may mistake a metaphor for a literal statement, and thus, misunderstand it.
- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image, and so, not be able to understand the metaphor.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know the points of comparison that the speaker wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.
- People may think that they understand the metaphor, but they do not. This can happen when they apply points of comparison from their own culture, rather than from the biblical culture.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of a metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning of a metaphor more clear to the target audience than you think it was to the original audience.

Examples From the Bible

> Listen to this word, **you cows of Bashan**, (Amos 4:1q ULT)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria (“you,” the Topic) as if they were cows (the Image). Amos does not say what similarity(s) he intends between these women and cows. He wants the reader to think of them, and he fully expects that readers from his culture will easily do so. From the context, we can see that he means that the women are like cows in that they are fat and interested only in feeding themselves. If we were to apply similarities from a different culture, such as that cows are sacred and should be worshiped, we would get the wrong meaning from this verse.

NOTE: Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows. He speaks to them as human beings.

> Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; **we are the clay**. **You are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

The example above has two related metaphors. The Topic(s) are “we” and “you,” and the Image(s) are “clay” and “potter.” The similarity between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish out of their material.

The potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people. The Idea being expressed by the comparison between the potter's clay and "us" is that **neither the clay nor God's people have a right to complain about what they are becoming**.

> Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of **the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees**."
> The disciples reasoned among themselves and said, "It is because we did not take bread."
> (Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Jesus used a metaphor here, but his disciples did not realize it. When he said "yeast," they thought he was talking about bread, but "yeast" was the Image in his metaphor, and the Topic was the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples (the original audience) did not understand what Jesus meant, it would not be good to state clearly here what Jesus meant.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the metaphor in the same way that the original readers would have understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it in the right way.

If people do not or would not understand it, here are some other strategies.

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, it is a passive metaphor), then express the **Idea** in the simplest way preferred by your language.
(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.
(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as "like" or "as." See Simile.
(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see Translate Unknowns for ideas on how to translate that image.
(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the Topic was.)
(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity (the **Idea**) between the topic and the image, then state it clearly.
(8) If none of these strategies is satisfactory, then simply state the **Idea** plainly without using a metaphor.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, a passive metaphor), then express the Idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.

> Then, see, one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **fell at his feet**. (Mark 5:22 ULT)
>
> > Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **immediately bowed down in front of him**.

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

> But Jesus said to them, "He wrote this commandment to you because of your **hardness of heart.**" (Mark 10:5 ULT)

> > It was because of your **hard hearts** that he wrote you this law.

We made no change to this one, but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.

(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as "like" or "as."

> Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we **are the clay.** You **are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)
>
> > And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are **like** clay. You are **like** a potter; and we all are the work of your hand.

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see Translate Unknowns for ideas on how to translate that image.

> Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14b ULT)
>
> > Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to **kick against a pointed stick**.

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.

> Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **clay**. You are our **potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)
>
> > "And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **wood**. You are our **carver**; and we all are the work of your hand." "And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **string**. You are the **weaver**; and we all are the work of your hand."

(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)

> Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh lives; **He is my rock**. May he be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity between the Topic and the Image, then state it clearly.

> Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh lives; may he be praised because he is the rock **under which I can hide from my enemies**. May the God of my salvation be exalted.
>
> Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14 ULT)
>
> > Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? You **fight against me and hurt yourself like an ox that kicks against its owner's pointed stick**.

(8) If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

> I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)
>
> > I will make you to become **people who gather men**. Now you gather fish.
> > I will make you **gather people**.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns.

"

Referenced in: Introduction to Judges; Judges 1:1; Judges 1:2; Judges 1:3; Judges 1:7; Judges 1:8; Judges 1:16; Judges 1:19; Judges 1:20; Judges 1:21; Judges 1:22; Judges 1:23; Judges 1:27; Judges 1:34; Judges 1:35; Judges 2 Chapter Introduction; Judges 2:1; Judges 2:3; Judges 2:4; Judges 2:6; Judges 2:12; Judges 2:14; Judges 2:15; Judges 2:16; Judges 2:17; Judges 2:18; Judges 2:19; Judges 2:22; Judges 3:2; Judges 3:8; Judges 3:9; Judges 3:10; Judges 3:13; Judges 3:15; Judges 3:24; Judges 4:1; Judges 4:2; Judges 4:9; Judges 4:22; Judges 5:4; Judges 5:5; Judges 5:6; Judges 5:7; Judges 5:9; Judges 5:12; Judges 5:14; Judges 5:15; Judges 5:16; Judges 5:18; Judges 5:27; Judges 6:1; Judges 6:8; Judges 6:13; Judges 6:15; Judges 6:34; Judges 7:4; Judges 7:13; Judges 8:2; Judges 8:3; Judges 8:27; Judges 8:28; Judges 8:33; Judges 8:34; Judges 8:35; Judges 9:3; Judges 9:4; Judges 9:15; Judges 9:16; Judges 9:18; Judges 9:20; Judges 9:26; Judges 9:27; Judges 9:28; Judges 9:30; Judges 9:31; Judges 9:41; Judges 9:45; Judges 9:46; Judges 9:56; Judges 9:57; Judges 10:6; Judges 10:8; Judges 10:9; Judges 10:16; Judges 10:18; Judges 11:2; Judges 11:7; Judges 11:8; Judges 11:9; Judges 11:10; Judges 11:11; Judges 11:26; Judges 11:29; Judges 11:35; Judges 12:1; Judges 13:1; Judges 13:3; Judges 14:5; Judges 14:16; Judges 14:18; Judges 15:14; Judges 15:19; Judges 16:10; Judges 16:15; Judges 16:16; Judges 16:17; Judges 16:20; Judges 16:26; Judges 17:2; Judges 17:5; Judges 17:10; Judges 18:8; Judges 18:9; Judges 18:14; Judges 18:19; Judges 18:25; Judges 18:29; Judges 18:31; Judges 19:1; Judges 19:9; Judges 19:12; Judges 19:18; Judges 19:23; Judges 20:1; Judges 20:2; Judges 20:6; Judges 20:7; Judges 20:13; Judges 20:16; Judges 20:23; Judges 20:33; Judges 20:34; Judges 20:45; Judges 20:48; Judges 21:2; Judges 21:5; Judges 21:6; Judges 21:8; Judges 21:15; Judges 21:17; Judges 21:21; Judges 21:23; Judges 21:24

Metonymy

Description

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)

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A metonym is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something that it is associated with.

> … and **the blood** of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7b ULT)

The blood represents Christ's death.

> And he took **the cup** in the same way after supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

- as a shorter way of referring to something
- to make an abstract idea more meaningful by referring to it with the name of a physical object associated with it

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not familiar with metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples From the Bible

> The Lord God will give to him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

A throne represents the authority of a king. "Throne" is a metonym for "kingly authority," "kingship," or "reign." This means that God would make him become a king who would follow King David.

> Then immediately his **mouth** was opened (Luke 1:64a ULT)

The mouth here represents the power to speak. This means that he was able to talk again.

> Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

The word "wrath" or "anger" is a metonym for "punishment." God was extremely angry with the people and, as a result, he would punish them.

Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here are some options.

(1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

(2) Use only the name of the thing the metonym represents.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

> And he took the cup in the same way after the supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)
>
> > He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "**The wine in this cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

This verse also contains a second metonym: The cup, (representing the wine it contains) also represents the new covenant made with the blood Christ shed for us.

(2) Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

> The Lord God will give him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)
>
> > "The Lord God will give him **the kingly authority** of his father, David." or:
> > "The Lord God will **make him king** like his ancestor, King David."
>
> Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)
>
> > "Who warned you to flee from God's coming **punishment**?"

To learn about some common metonymies, see Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies.

"

Referenced in: Introduction to Judges; Judges 1:2; Judges 1:4; Judges 1:8; Judges 1:15; Judges 1:25; Judges 2:2; Judges 2:7; Judges 2:14; Judges 2:18; Judges 2:20; Judges 3:10; Judges 3:13; Judges 3:27; Judges 3:28; Judges 4:1; Judges 4:10; Judges 4:11; Judges 4:14; Judges 4:16; Judges 4:17; Judges 4:23; Judges 4:24; Judges 5:1; Judges 5:8; Judges 5:11; Judges 5:14; Judges 5:17; Judges 5:19; Judges 5:27; Judges 5:28; Judges 5:30; Judges 6:1; Judges 6:2; Judges 6:8; Judges 6:10; Judges 6:11; Judges 6:13; Judges 6:14; Judges 6:21; Judges 6:22; Judges 6:24; Judges 6:26; Judges 6:27; Judges 6:34; Judges 7:2; Judges 7:9; Judges 7:14; Judges 7:20; Judges 7:21; Judges 7:22; Judges 7:24; Judges 8:2; Judges 8:3; Judges 8:5; Judges 8:6; Judges 8:10; Judges 8:11; Judges 8:12; Judges 8:26; Judges 8:28; Judges 9:2; Judges 9:3; Judges 9:4; Judges 9:16; Judges 9:21; Judges 9:27; Judges 9:28; Judges 9:30; Judges 9:31; Judges 9:38; Judges 9:39; Judges 9:40; Judges 9:52; Judges 10:9; Judges 10:12; Judges 10:15; Judges 10:16; Judges 11:4; Judges 11:7; Judges 11:10; Judges 11:11; Judges 11:20; Judges 11:21; Judges 11:22; Judges 11:28; Judges 11:35; Judges 11:36; Judges 12:2; Judges 12:4; Judges 12:5; Judges 12:6; Judges 13:1; Judges 13:5; Judges 13:9; Judges 13:12; Judges 13:15; Judges 13:17; Judges 14:3; Judges 14:10; Judges 14:19; Judges 15:1; Judges 15:12; Judges 15:18; Judges 15:20; Judges 16:13; Judges 16:16; Judges 16:17; Judges 16:23; Judges 17:2; Judges 17:6; Judges 17:7; Judges 18:1; Judges 18:2; Judges 18:6; Judges 18:10; Judges 18:11; Judges 18:19; Judges 18:25; Judges 18:30; Judges 19:2; Judges 19:8; Judges 19:9; Judges 19:11; Judges 19:24; Judges 19:25; Judges 19:29; Judges 19:30; Judges 20:7; Judges 20:13; Judges 20:15; Judges 20:18; Judges 20:23; Judges 20:27; Judges 20:28; Judges 20:40; Judges 20:43; Judges 20:44; Judges 20:45; Judges 20:46; Judges 21:1; Judges 21:2; Judges 21:12; Judges 21:19; Judges 21:24; Judges 21:25

Nominal Adjectives

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 5:22; Judges 5:29; Judges 6:15; Judges 9:40; Judges 16:24; Judges 17:6; Judges 18:19; Judges 18:29; Judges 20:32

Numbers

Description

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)

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

> Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

> That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

> When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

> Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands.** (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

(1) Write numbers using numerals.
(2) Write numbers using your language’s words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.
(4) Combine words for large numbers.
(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

> Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

> > I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

> > I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

> > I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

> > I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

> I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents)**, **ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

> When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years.

> He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Ordinal Numbers (UTA PDF)
Fractions (UTA PDF)

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Referenced in: Judges 1:4; Judges 1:7; Judges 4:6; Judges 4:10; Judges 5:8; Judges 6:15; Judges 16:5; Judges 17:2; Judges 20:35

Oath Formulas

An oath is a solemn promise that someone makes to another person to do something or to solemnly testify that something is true. The oath includes the idea that a bad thing will happen if the person making the oath does not do the thing promised or if what the person says is not true.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate oath formulas into my language?*

Description

There are two types of oath in the Bible. We can call the first type a "Promise" oath, and the second type a "Truth" oath.

Promise Oath

In this type of oath, the person saying it is promising to do something. As a guarantee that the person taking the oath will do what he promises, the person calls on God to witness the oath and to punish him severely if he does not do the thing promised. A complete Promise oath has four parts, but some of them are often left unspoken and only implied: 1. Calling on God to witness the oath and judge the person making it 2. Making the promise (may be implied as the opposite of the violation) 3. Telling what would be a violation of the oath (may be implied as the opposite of the promise) 4. Saying what punishment God would do if the person violates the oath (often implied)

Truth Oath

In this type of oath, the person saying it is affirming that what he is saying is true, and he guarantees that it is true by naming the life of God. Sometimes the person will not name God directly but will instead name something holy that is associated with God, such as the temple. In some situations, a person might name a revered person, such as a king. The implication is that if the person's statement proves to be false, that person will lose any relationship to God or to the revered person. These oaths have three parts, but the third part is implied and not stated: 1. Naming something holy, usually the life of God or of someone who is revered. 2. Making the statement. 3. Implied: The speaker and hearers of the oath understand that the speaker forfeits his relationship to God or to the revered person if his statement is false.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

People in some cultures may not be familiar with the practice of taking oaths, and so they may not understand what the people in the Bible are doing. In many languages, people would not take an oath the way that people did in the Bible, and so they might not recognize that the person is taking an oath. In the Old Testament, people often did not speak one or more parts of the oath, leaving those parts implied. The part that was most often left unspoken was the part that would tell what would happen if they break the oath. People believed that spoken words have power, and that speaking the part about punishment might cause the punishment to happen, so they often left that part to be understood silently. Because of these things, people might think that the person in the Bible is not making a real oath or they may not understand what the verse is talking about at all.

Examples From the Bible

Promise Oath

> “I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

In the verse above, Abram describes a symbolic action (raising his hand to Yahweh) to signal that he is taking an oath and calling on Yahweh as witness and judge. He says what would violate his oath (thus promising to do the opposite). Then he leaves out the part that would describe how Yahweh would punish him if he fails to do what he is promising.

> May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

Ruth calls on Yahweh and includes the part about Yahweh punishing her, says what the violation would be (thus promising to do the opposite), but does not say what the punishment would be.

> And Saul said, “Thus may God do and thus may he add, for dying you will die, Jonathan.” (1 Samuel 14:44 ULT)

Saul takes an oath that Jonathan will die, but does not specifically say whom God would punish, what the punishment would be, or what the person would do that would violate the oath and bring about God's punishment.

Truth Oath

> But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step!” (1 Samuel 20:3)

Here David uses a truth oath to convince Jonathan that Saul does indeed want to kill David. David says this because Jonathan had been trying to assure David that he had nothing to fear from Saul. But Jonathan knows that David holds both Yahweh’s and Jonathan’s life as sacred, and so this oath convinces Jonathan that David truly believes what he is saying.

> The life of your soul, my lord, I {am} the woman having stationed herself with you in this {place} to pray to Yahweh. (1 Samuel 1:26 ULT)

Hannah is speaking to the priest Eli. She demonstrates that she holds the priest's life as sacred by swearing by it that what she is saying is true.

And Elijah said, “The life of Yahweh of armies, before whom I stand, that I will appear before him today.” (1 Kings 18:15 ULT)

Elijah uses this oath to convince Obadiah to announce his arrival to Ahab. Obadiah knows that Elijah would never break his relationship to Yahweh.

Combination oath

> The life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here. (Genesis 42:15)

Joseph is speaking to his brothers as an Egyptian official, and so he swears by the life of Pharaoh rather than by the life of the God of the Hebrews. Joseph combines the two types of oaths here by using a conditional "if" statement (part 3 of the "Promise" oath). He leaves unstated the "then" part of the oath which would be either a punishment from Pharoah (as with a Promise oath) or a breaking of relationship with Pharaoh (as with a "Truth" oath) if this conditional statement proves true.

Translation Strategies

If people who speak your language would recognize the oath as it is in the ULT, consider translating it in its current form. If not, consider using the following strategies.

(1) Add in the missing parts so that people recognize it as an oath.
(2) If oaths are unfamiliar, add a short explanation of what an oath is.
(3) Put the oath into a form that would be natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add in the missing parts so that people recognize it as an oath.

> "I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.' (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

"I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, **and ask him to punish me severely** if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.'

> And Saul said, "Thus may God do and thus may he add, for dying you will die, Jonathan." (1 Samuel 14:44 ULT)

And Saul said, "May God **punish me severely** and may he add **even more punishment if I do not kill you**, for dying you will die, Jonathan."

> But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

But indeed, **I swear by** Yahweh's life and **by** the life of yourself that **it is true that** between me and death is like a step!

> The life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here. (Genesis 42:15)

I swear by the life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here, **may Pharaoh punish me severely**.

(2) If oaths are unfamiliar, add a short explanation of what an oath is.

> May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

Then Ruth called on Yahweh to enforce her promise: "May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you."

> But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

Then David made a statement to Jonathan to convince him that he truly believed that he was in danger: "But indeed, **I forfeit my relationship to** Yahweh and **to you** yourself **if it is not true** that between me and death is like a step!"

(3) Put the oath into a form that would be natural in your language.

> "I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.' (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

"**I solemnly swear before** Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, **that I will not take** from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or from anything that {belongs} to you, **so help me God**, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.'

> May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

May Yahweh **strike me dead right where I stand** if death separates between me and between you.

> But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

But indeed, **before** Yahweh and **before you** yourself, **I swear** that between me and death is like a step!

"

Referenced in: Judges 8:19; Judges 11:10

Order of Events

Description

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)

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.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers might think that the events happened in the order that they are told. It is important to help them understand the correct order of events.

Examples From the Bible

> He even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

This could sound like John baptized Jesus after John was locked up in prison, but John baptized Jesus before John was locked up in prison.

> Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed after them. But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)

This could sound like Joshua gave the order not to shout after the army had already started their march, but he had given that order before they started marching.

> Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)

This sounds like a person must first open the scroll and then break its seals, but the seals that lock the scroll must be broken before the scroll can be unrolled.

Translation Strategies

(1) If your language uses phrases or time words to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using one of them.
(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that. (See the section on "Aspect" of Verbs.)
(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occurred, consider reordering the events so they they are in that order. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6). (See Verse Bridges.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses phrases, time words or tenses to show that an event happened before the one just mentioned, consider using one of them.

> 20 he even added this to them all: he locked John up in prison. Now it came about, when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. (Luke 3:20-21 ULT)

> > 20 But then Herod ... had John locked up in prison. 21 **Before John was put in prison,** while all the people were being baptized by John, Jesus also was baptized.
>
> Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)
>
> > Who is worthy to open the scroll **after** breaking its seals?

(2) If your language uses verb tense or aspect to show that an event happened before one that was already mentioned, consider using that.

> Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)
>
> > 8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets 10 But Joshua **had commanded** the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout."

(3) If your language prefers to tell events in the order that they occur, consider reordering the events. This may require putting two or more verses together (like 5-6).

> 8 Just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carrying seven trumpets of rams' horns before Yahweh went forward and blew the trumpets, But Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout nor let your voice be heard, nor let any word leave your mouth until the day I tell you to shout. Then you must shout." (Joshua 6:8,10 ULT)
>
> > 8,10 Joshua commanded the people, saying, "Do not shout. No sound must leave your mouths until the day I tell you to shout. Only then must you shout." Then just as Joshua had said to the people, the seven priests carried the seven trumpets of rams horns before Yahweh, as they advanced, they gave a blast on the trumpets...
>
> Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals? (Revelation 5:2b ULT)
>
> > Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_events.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Background Information (UTA PDF)
Connecting Words and Phrases (UTA PDF)
Introduction of a New Event (UTA PDF)
Verse Bridges (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Judges 7:7; Judges 8:11; Judges 8:12; Judges 8:34; Judges 10:8; Judges 11:2; Judges 11:11; Judges 14:12; Judges 16:20; Judges 16:25; Judges 19:8; Judges 19:17

Ordinal Numbers

Description

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)

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 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: Judges 6:25; Judges 19:5; Judges 19:8; Judges 20:22; Judges 20:24; Judges 20:25; Judges 20:30; Judges 20:39

Parables

A parable is a short story that teaches something(s) that is true, and delivers the lesson in a way that is easy to understand and hard to forget.

This page answers the question: *What is a parable?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

Description

A parable is a short story that is told to teach something that is true. The events in a parable are usually things that could or often do happen, but they are not specific events that actually did happen. They are told only to teach the lesson that the listener is meant to learn. Parables rarely contain the names of specific people. (This may help you to identify what is a parable and what is an account of a real event.) Parables often use figures of speech such as simile and metaphor. Sometimes the person telling the parable explains the lesson afterward, but often the person does not.

> Then he also told them a parable. “A blind man is not able to guide a blind man, is he? Would not both fall into a pit?” (Luke 6:39 ULT)

This parable teaches that if a person does not have spiritual understanding, he cannot help someone else to understand spiritual things.

Examples From the Bible

> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but, rather, on the lampstand, and it shines for everyone in the house. Let your light shine before people in such a way that they see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:15-16 ULT)

This parable teaches us not to hide the way we live for God from other people.

> Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all other seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

This parable teaches that the kingdom of God may seem small at first, but it will grow and spread throughout the world.

Translation Strategies

(1) If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown objects in it, you can replace the unknown objects with objects that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the lesson the same.
(2) If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as “Jesus told this story about being generous.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown objects in it, you can replace the unknown objects with objects that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the lesson the same.

> Jesus also said to them, “The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the **lampstand**?” (Mark 4:21 ULT)

If people do not know what a lampstand is, you could substitute something else that people put a light on so it can give light to the house.

> > Jesus also said to them, “The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on **a high shelf?**”
>
> Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and **sowed** in his field. It is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)

To sow seeds means to toss them so that they scatter on the ground. If people are not familiar with sowing, you can substitute planting.

> > Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and **planted** in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

(2) If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as “Jesus told this story about being generous.”

> **Jesus also said to them**, “The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the lampstand?” (Mark 4:21 ULT)
>
> > **Jesus told them a parable about why they should witness openly.** Jesus also said to them, “The lamp is not brought in order to put it under a basket, or under the bed, is it? Is it not so that it might be put on the lampstand?” (Mark 4:21 ULT)
>
> **Then Jesus presented another parable to them.** He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” (Matthew 13:31-32 ULT)
>
> > **Then Jesus presented another parable to them about how the kingdom of God grows**. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all the seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants. It becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”

"

Referenced in: Judges 9:8

Parallelism

Description

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 a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "doublet" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

> Your word is a lamp to my feet
>
> and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

> You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
>
> you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

> Yahweh sees everything a person does
>
> and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The first phrase and the second phrase mean the same thing. There are three ideas that are the same between these two phrases. “Sees” corresponds to “watches,” “everything…does” corresponds to “all the paths…takes,” and “a person” corresponds to “he.”

> Praise Yahweh, all you nations;
>
> exalt him, all you peoples! (Psalm 117:1 ULT)

Both parts of this verse tell people everywhere to praise Yahweh. The words ‘Praise’ and ‘exalt’ mean the same thing. The words ‘Yahweh’ and ‘him’ refer to the same person. The terms ‘all you nations’ and ‘all you peoples’ refer to the same people.

> For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people,
>
> and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2b ULT)

The two parts of this verse say that Yahweh has a serious disagreement with his people, Israel. These are not two different disagreements or two different groups of people.

Translation Strategies

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

(1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”
(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely,” or “all.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.

> Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.

> > Until now you have deceived me with your lies.
>
> Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The phrase “all the paths he takes” is a metaphor for “all he does.”

> > Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.
>
> For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULT)

This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:

> > For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.

(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”

> Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.
>
> You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)
>
> > You have certainly made him to rule over everything that you have created.

(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

> Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)
>
> > All you have done is lie to me.
>
> Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Personification (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Judges 4:8; Judges 4:16; Judges 5 Chapter Introduction; Judges 5:2; Judges 5:23; Judges 5:24; Judges 5:26; Judges 5:27; Judges 5:28; Judges 6:8; Judges 9:28; Judges 10:6; Judges 11:22; Judges 20:8; Judges 21:24

Personification

Description

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)

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.

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)

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Referenced in: Judges 1:1; Judges 1:3; Judges 1:17; Judges 3:11; Judges 3:16; Judges 3:30; Judges 4:16; Judges 5:20; Judges 5:26; Judges 5:31; Judges 6:35; Judges 7:22; Judges 8:28; Judges 9:15; Judges 11:19; Judges 16:3; Judges 16:17; Judges 18:5; Judges 20:23; Judges 20:28

Poetry

Description

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)

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.

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)

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Referenced in: Judges 3:4; Judges 4:6; Judges 4:7; Judges 5:2; Judges 5:12; Judges 15:16; Judges 21:2

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.

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Referenced in: Judges 6:13; Judges 6:15; Judges 8:24; Judges 13:15; Judges 19:5; Judges 19:19

Possession

Description

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)

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word "**of**," by using **an apostrophe and the letter "s"**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my grandfather **'s** house
- **his** house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership — Someone owns something.
- The clothes of me - my clothes — The clothes that I own
- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.
- The mother of John — John's mother - the woman who gave birth to John, or the woman who cared for John
- A teacher of Israel - Israel's teacher — a person who teaches Israel
- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.
- The sickness of David - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing
- the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord
- Contents — Something has something in it.
- a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes
- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.
- my head — the head that is part of my body
- the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession.** This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language. In languages that mark the difference, the expression of inalienable possession and alienable possession will be different.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.
- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

Ownership — In the example below, the son owned the money.

> The younger son ... wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

Social Relationship — In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

> 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**.

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Referenced in: Judges 5:12; Judges 5:13; Judges 5:25; Judges 9:24; Judges 10:6; Judges 10:8; Judges 14:5; Judges 16:27; Judges 20:48

Predictive Past

Description

This page answers the question: *What is the predictive past?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)
Verbs (UTA PDF)

The predictive past is a figure of speech that uses the past tense to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is sometimes done in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is also called the prophetic perfect.

> Therefore my people have gone into captivity for lack of understanding; their honored leaders go hungry, and their common people have nothing to drink. (Isaiah 5:13 ULT)

In the example above, the people of Israel had not yet gone into captivity, but God spoke of their going into captivity as if it had already happened because he had decided that they certainly would go into captivity.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue:

Readers who are not aware of the past tense being used in prophecy to refer to future events may find it confusing.

Examples From the Bible

> Now Jericho was tightly closed because of the sons of Israel. No one went out and no one came in. Yahweh said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand.” (Joshua 6:1-2 ULT)
>
> For to us a child has been born, to us a son has been given; and the rule will be on his shoulder. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)

In the examples above, God spoke of things that would happen in the future as if they had already happened.

> But even Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them, saying, “Look! The Lord came with thousands and thousands of his holy ones.” (Jude 1:14 ULT)

Enoch was speaking of something that would happen in the future, but he used the past tense when he said “the Lord came.”

Translation Strategies

If the past tense would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

(1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.
(2) If it refers to something in the immediate future, use a form that would show that.
(3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the future tense to refer to future events.

> For to us a child **has been born**, to us a son **has been given**. (Isaiah 9:6a ULT)
>
> > For to us a child **will be born**, to us a son **will be given**.

(2) If it refers to something that would happen very soon, use a form that shows that.

> Yahweh said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand.” (Joshua 6:2 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh said to Joshua, “See, I **am about to deliver** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers.”

(3) Some languages may use the present tense to show that something will happen very soon.

> Yahweh said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho, and its king, and its powerful soldiers into your hand.” (Joshua 6:2 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh said to Joshua, “See, I **am delivering** over to you Jericho, its king, and its powerful soldiers.”

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Referenced in: Judges 4:14; Judges 7:9; Judges 18:10

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

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)

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.

> 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: Judges 1:11; Judges 1:16; Judges 1:20; Judges 1:34; Judges 1:35; Judges 2:9; Judges 2:18; Judges 2:22; Judges 3:2; Judges 3:6; Judges 3:18; Judges 3:19; Judges 3:21; Judges 3:24; Judges 3:31; Judges 4:3; Judges 4:12;

Judges 5:3; Judges 5:7; Judges 5:8; Judges 5:13; Judges 5:15; Judges 5:21; Judges 5:22; Judges 5:25; Judges 5:26; Judges 6:3; Judges 6:35; Judges 7:4; Judges 7:8; Judges 7:14; Judges 7:19; Judges 8:27; Judges 9:7; Judges 9:9; Judges 9:10; Judges 9:12; Judges 9:14; Judges 9:27; Judges 9:28; Judges 9:33; Judges 9:42; Judges 9:44; Judges 10:4; Judges 10:8; Judges 11:13; Judges 11:15; Judges 12:4; Judges 13:19; Judges 14:3; Judges 15:3; Judges 15:5; Judges 15:6; Judges 15:14; Judges 16:7; Judges 17:3; Judges 17:4; Judges 18:2; Judges 18:18; Judges 18:23; Judges 19:4; Judges 19:29; Judges 19:30; Judges 20:28; Judges 20:32; Judges 20:34; Judges 20:39; Judges 20:42; Judges 20:43; Judges 20:45

Proverbs

Description

This page answers the question: *What are proverbs, and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Metaphor (UTA PDF)
Parallelism (UTA PDF)
Writing Styles (UTA PDF)

Proverbs are short sayings that give wise advice or teach something that is generally true about life. People enjoy proverbs because they give a lot of wisdom in few words. Proverbs in the Bible often use metaphor and parallelism. Proverbs should not be understood as absolute and unchangeable laws. Rather, proverbs offer general advice to a person about how to live his life.

> Hatred stirs up conflicts, but love covers over all offenses. (Proverbs 10:12 ULT)

Here is another example from the book of Proverbs.

> Look at the ant, you lazy person, consider her ways, and be wise. It has no commander, officer, or ruler, yet it prepares its food in the summer, and during the harvest it stores up what it will eat. (Proverbs 6:6-8 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Each language has its own ways of saying proverbs. There are many proverbs in the Bible. They need to be translated in the way that people say proverbs in your language so that people recognize them as proverbs and understand what they teach.

Examples From the Bible

> A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
> and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

This means that it is better to be a good person and to have a good reputation than it is to have a lot of money.

> Like vinegar on the teeth and smoke in the eyes,
> so is the sluggard to those who send him. (Proverbs 10:26 ULT)

This means that a lazy person is very annoying to those who send him to do something.

> The way of Yahweh protects those who have integrity,
> but it is destruction for the wicked. (Proverbs 10:29 ULT)

This means that Yahweh protects people who do what is right, but he destroys those who are wicked.

Translation Strategies

If translating a proverb literally would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing that. If not, here are some options:

(1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.
(2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.
(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.
(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Find out how people say proverbs in your language, and use one of those ways.

> A good name is to be chosen over great riches,
> and favor is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1 ULT)

Here are some ideas for ways that people might say a proverb in their language.

> > It is better to have a good name than to have great riches,
> > and to be favored by people than to have silver and gold.
> >
> > Wise people choose a good name over great riches,
> > and favor over silver and gold.
> >
> > Try to have a good reputation rather than great riches.
> >
> > Will riches really help you?
> > I would rather have a good reputation.

(2) If certain objects in the proverb are not known to many people in your language group, consider replacing them with objects that people know and that function in the same way in your language.

> Like **snow in summer** or rain in harvest,
> so a fool does not deserve honor. (Proverbs 26:1 ULT)
>
> > It is not natural for **a cold wind to blow in the hot season** or for it to rain
> > in the harvest season;
> > And it is not natural to honor a foolish person.

(3) Substitute a proverb in your language that has the same teaching as the proverb in the Bible.

> Do not boast about tomorrow,
> for you do not know what a day may bring. (Proverbs 27:1a ULT)
>
> > Do not count your chickens before they hatch.

(4) Give the same teaching but not in a form of a proverb.

> There is a generation that curses their father
> and does not bless their mother.
> There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes,
> and yet they are not washed of their filth. (Proverbs 30:11-12 ULT)
>
> > People who do not respect their parents think that they are righteous,
> > and they do not turn away from their sin.

"

Referenced in: Judges 8:21

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: Judges 5:1; Judges 13:6; Judges 14:2

Quote Markings

Description

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)

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: , ‘ ’ „ “ ” ‹ › « » ⁊ — .

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

> 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: Judges 5:2; Judges 5:31; Judges 6:32; Judges 8:21

Quotes within Quotes

Description

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)

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.

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: Judges 2:1; Judges 2:2; Judges 2:3; Judges 4:6; Judges 4:7; Judges 4:20; Judges 5:23; Judges 5:28; Judges 5:30; Judges 6:8; Judges 6:10; Judges 6:13; Judges 7:3; Judges 7:4; Judges 7:18; Judges 8:15; Judges 9:2; Judges 9:8; Judges 9:9; Judges 9:10; Judges 9:11; Judges 9:12; Judges 9:13; Judges 9:14; Judges 9:15; Judges 9:38; Judges 9:54; Judges 11:15; Judges 11:17; Judges 11:19; Judges 13:7; Judges 16:15; Judges 18:5; Judges 18:24; Judges 21:22

Reduplication

Description

This page answers the question: *What is reduplication?*

Writers and speakers in the Bible sometimes repeat the same word or forms of the same word. This is to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of the action that the word describes, or to otherwise increase the emotional impact of the word.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages may not repeat words to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of an action, or they may not repeat words to increase the level of emotion that they communicate. In these cases, repeated words may appear to be a mistake or may indicate that the speaker is unable to speak correctly.

Examples From the Bible

To the woman he said, “To multiply I will multiply your pain and your childbearing…” (Genesis 3:16 ULT)

The speaker is repeating forms of the verb “multiply” in order to intensify the idea of multiplying.

To be circumcised he must be circumcised (Genesis 17:13)

The speaker is repeating forms of the verb “circumcise” in order to increase the certainty that this must happen.

Begin, possess, to possess his land (Deuteronomy 2:31 ULT)

Moses repeats the word “possess” to emphasize the completeness of the action of possessing the land.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Psalm 22:1 ULT)

The writer repeats “my God” to increase the level of emotion that he wants to communicate; he is crying out desperately to God.

“Fallen, fallen has Babylon the Great…” (Revelation 14:8 ULT)

The angel repeats the word “fallen” in order to show deep emotion in this lament for the ruined city of Babylon.

Translation Strategies

If repeating words would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then do the same in your translation. If not, here are some other options:

(1) If your language would not repeat words to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of an action, then use a different word or phrase to add that meaning.
(2) If your language would not repeat words to increase emotional intensity, then use an emotional word to do that.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language would not repeat words to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of an action, then use a different word or phrase to add that meaning.

> To the woman he said, “To multiply I will multiply your pain and your childbearing…” (Genesis 3:16 ULT)

> > To the woman he said, “I will greatly multiply your pain and your childbearing…”
>
> To be circumcised he must be circumcised (Genesis 17:13 ULT)
>
> > He certainly must be circumcised
> > Or
> > By all means, he must be circumcised
>
> Begin, possess, to possess his land (Deuteronomy 2:31 ULT)
>
> > Begin to completely possess his land
> > Or
> > Enter his land until you completely possess it

(2) If your language would not repeat words to increase emotional intensity, then use an emotional word to do that.

> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Psalm 22:1 ULT)
>
> > You are my God! Why, then, have you forsaken me?
> > Or
> > My God, oh, why have you forsaken me?
>
> “Fallen, fallen has Babylon the Great…” (Revelation 14:8 ULT)
>
> > “Alas, Babylon the Great has fallen!

"

Referenced in: Judges 4:9; Judges 4:24; Judges 5:7; Judges 5:12; Judges 5:22; Judges 5:23; Judges 7:19; Judges 8:25; Judges 9:8; Judges 11:25; Judges 11:30; Judges 11:35; Judges 13:22; Judges 14:9; Judges 14:12; Judges 15:2; Judges 15:13; Judges 16:11; Judges 17:3; Judges 20:39; Judges 21:5

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question that a speaker asks when he is more interested in expressing his attitude about something than in getting information about it. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express surprise, to rebuke or scold the hearer, or to teach. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other purposes as well.

This page answers the question: *What are rhetorical questions and how can I translate them?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Figures of Speech (UTA PDF)

Sentence Types (UTA PDF)

Description

A rhetorical question is a question that strongly expresses the speaker's attitude toward something. Often the speaker is not looking for information at all. Or, if he is asking for information, it is not usually the information that the question appears to ask for. The speaker is more interested in expressing his attitude than in getting information.

> But those who stood by said, "**Are you insulting the high priest of God?**"(Acts 23:4 ULT)

The people who asked Paul this question were not asking if he was insulting God's high priest. Rather, they used this question to accuse Paul of insulting the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. These rhetorical questions might be used for the purposes: of expressing attitudes or feelings, rebuking people, teaching something by reminding people of something they know and encouraging them to apply it to something new, or introducing something they want to talk about.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use rhetorical questions; for them a question is always a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions, but for purposes that are different or more limited than in the Bible.
- Because of these differences between languages, some readers might misunderstand the purpose of a rhetorical question in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

> Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

Jezebel used the question above **to remind** King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. The rhetorical question made her point more strongly than if she had merely stated it, because it forced Ahab to admit the point himself. She did this in order **to rebuke** him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that, since he was the king of Israel, he had the power to take the man's property.

> **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

God used the question above **to remind** his people of something they already knew: a young woman would never forget her jewelry or a bride forget her veils. He then **rebuked** his people for forgetting him who is so much greater than those things.

> But you, why do you judge your brother? And you also, why do you despise your brother? (Romans 14:10 ULT)

Paul used these rhetorical questions **to rebuke** the Romans for doing what they should not do.

> Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

Job used the question above **to show deep emotion**. This rhetorical question expresses how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

> And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

Elizabeth used the question above **to show how surprised and happy she was** that the mother of her Lord came to her.

> Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Jesus used the question above **to remind** the people of something they already knew: a good father would never give his son something bad to eat. By introducing this point, Jesus could go on **to teach them** about God with his next rhetorical question:

> Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11 ULT)

Jesus used this question **to teach** the people in an emphatic way that God gives good things to those who ask him.

> **What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to?** It is like a mustard seed that a man took and threw into his garden ... (Luke 13:18b-19a ULT)

Jesus used the question above **to introduce what he was going to talk about**. He was about to compare the kingdom of God to something. In this case, he compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed.

Translation Strategies

In order to translate a rhetorical question accurately, first be sure that the question you are translating truly is a rhetorical question and is not an information question. Ask yourself, “Does the person asking the question already know the answer to the question?” If so, it is a rhetorical question. Or, if no one answers the question, did the person who asked it expect to receive an answer? If not, it is a rhetorical question.

When you are sure that the question is rhetorical, then be sure that you understand the purpose for the rhetorical question. Is it to encourage or rebuke or shame the hearer? Is it to bring up a new topic? Is it to express surprise or other emotion? Is it to do something else?

When you know the purpose of the rhetorical question, then think of the most natural way to express that purpose in the target language. It might be as a question, or a statement, or an exclamation.

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

(1) Add the answer after the question.
(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the answer after the question.

> **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)
>
> > Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? **Of course not!** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!
>
> Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)
>
> > Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? **None of you would do that!**

(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

> **What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to?** It is like a mustard seed. (Luke 13:18-19a ULT)
>
> > **This is what the kingdom of God is like.** It is like a mustard seed ...
>
> **Are you insulting the high priest of God?** (Acts 23:4b ULT) (Acts 23:4 ULT)
>
> > **You should not insult God's high priest!**
>
> **Why did I not die when I came out from the womb?** (Job 3:11a ULT)
>
> > **I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!**
>
> **And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?** (Luke 1:43 ULT)
>
> > **How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!**

(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

> **Do you not still rule** the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)
>
> > You still rule the kingdom of Israel, **do you not?**

(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the orignal speaker communicated in his.

> Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)
>
> > If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone**?
>
> **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils**? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)
>
> > **What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils**? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!
>
> But you, **why do you judge your brother**? And you also, **why do you despise your brother**? (Romans 14:10 ULT)
>
> > > Do you think it is good to judge your brother? Do you think it is good to despise your brother?

"

Referenced in: Judges 2:2; Judges 4:6; Judges 4:7; Judges 4:14; Judges 5:8; Judges 5:16; Judges 5:17; Judges 5:30; Judges 6:13; Judges 6:14; Judges 6:15; Judges 6:31; Judges 8:1; Judges 8:2; Judges 8:3; Judges 8:6; Judges 8:15; Judges 8:18; Judges 9:2; Judges 9:9; Judges 9:11; Judges 9:13; Judges 9:28; Judges 9:38; Judges 11:7; Judges 11:12; Judges 11:23; Judges 11:24; Judges 11:25; Judges 11:26; Judges 12:3; Judges 13:18; Judges 14:3; Judges 14:15; Judges 14:16; Judges 14:18; Judges 15:2; Judges 15:11; Judges 15:18; Judges 16:15; Judges 18:9; Judges 18:14; Judges 18:18; Judges 18:19; Judges 18:24; Judges 20:12; Judges 21:3

Simile

Description

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)

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.”

> 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: Judges 5:31; Judges 7:12; Judges 15:14; Judges 16:9; Judges 16:12; Judges 17:11; Judges 20:1; Judges 20:8; Judges 20:11

Singular Pronouns that refer to Groups

Description

This page answers the question: *How do I translate singular pronouns that refer to groups of people?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Forms of You (UTA PDF)

Forms of 'You' — Singular (UTA PDF)

Pronouns (UTA PDF)

The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. These 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. However, sometimes speakers in the Bible used the singular form of "you" even though they were speaking to a group of people. This is not obvious when you read the Bible in English because English does not have different forms that indicate where "you" is singular and where "you" is plural. But you may see this if you read a Bible in a language that does have distinct forms.

Also, speakers and writers of the Old Testament often referred to groups of people with the singular pronoun "he," rather than with the plural pronoun "they."

Finally, Old Testament speakers and writers sometimes referred to actions that they performed as part of a group by saying 'I' did it when, really, the whole group was involved.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- For many languages, a translator who reads a Bible with a general form of "you" will need to know whether the speaker was speaking to one person or to more than one.
- In some languages, it might be confusing if a speaker uses a singular pronoun when speaking to or about more than one person.

Examples From the Bible

> 1 Now take heed that **you** do not do **your** acts of righteousness before people to be seen by them, otherwise **you** will not have a reward with **your** Father who is in heaven. 2 So when **you** give alms, do not sound a trumpet before **yourself** as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may have the praise of people. Truly I say to **you**, they have received their reward. (Matthew 6:1-2 ULT)

Jesus said this to a crowd. He used "you" plural in verse 1, and "you" singular in the first sentence of verse 2. Then, in the last sentence, he used the plural again.

> God spoke all these words: "I am Yahweh, **your** God, who brought **you** out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. **You** must have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:1-3 ULT)

God said this to all the people of Israel. He had taken them all out of Egypt and he wanted them all to obey him, but he used the singular form of you here when speaking to them.

> This is what Yahweh says, "For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn away punishment, because **he** pursued **his** brother with the sword and cast off all pity. **His** anger raged continually, and **his** wrath lasted forever." (Amos 1:11 ULT)

Yahweh said these things about the nation of Edom, not about only one person.

> And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. And I was going up by the wadi at night, and I was looking intently at the wall. And I turned back, and I entered by the gate of the valley, and I returned. (Nehemiah 2:12a,15 ULT)

Nehemiah makes clear that he brought other people with him on his inspection tour of the wall of Jerusalem. But as he describes the tour, he just says "I" did this and that.

Translation Strategies

If the singular form of the pronoun would be natural when referring to a group of people, consider using it.

(1) If using the singular form of the pronoun when referring to a group of people would not be natural in your language, use the plural form of the pronoun.

- Whether you can use use the singular form of the pronoun may depend on who the speaker is and who the people are that he is talking about or talking to.
- It may also depend on what the speaker is saying.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If using the singular form of the pronoun when referring to a group of people would not be natural in your language, use the plural form of the pronoun.

> This is what Yahweh says, "For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn away punishment, because **he** pursued **his** brother with the sword and cast off all pity. **His** anger raged continually, and **his** wrath lasted forever." (Amos 1:11 ULT)
>
> > This is what Yahweh says, "For three sins of Edom, even for four, I will not turn away punishment, because **they** pursued **their brothers** with the sword and cast off all pity. **Their** anger raged continually, and **their** wrath lasted forever."
>
> And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. And **I** was going up by the wadi at night, and **I** was looking intently at the wall. And **I** turned back, and **I** entered by the gate of the valley, and **I** returned. (Nehemiah 2:12a,15 ULT)
>
> > And I arose in the night, myself and a few men with me. ... And **we** were going up by the wadi at night and **we** were looking intently at the wall. And **we** turned back and **we** entered by the gate of the valley, and **we** returned.

Next we recommend you learn about:

Forms of 'You' — Dual/Plural (UTA PDF)

"

Referenced in: Judges 11:12

Symbolic Action

Description

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)

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.

Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In other cultures it means “yes.”

In the Bible, people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible, we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture today.

You (the translator) need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in your own culture, then you need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

Examples From the Bible

> And behold, a man came whose name was Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And **falling at the feet of Jesus**, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

> Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and will eat with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.
(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.
(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Tell what the person did and why he did it.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)
>
> > Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.
>
> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.

(2) Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT)
>
> > Jairus showed Jesus great respect.
>
> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT)
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.

(3) Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.

> And **falling at the feet of Jesus** (Luke 8:41 ULT) — Since Jairus actually did this, you should not substitute an action from your own culture.
>
> Look, I am **standing at the door and am knocking**. (Revelation 3:20 ULT) — Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.
>
> > Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

"

Referenced in: Judges 2 Chapter Introduction; Judges 2:12; Judges 3:20; Judges 4:5; Judges 5:2; Judges 5:14; Judges 5:25; Judges 6:26; Judges 8:20; Judges 9:5; Judges 9:6; Judges 9:7; Judges 9:45; Judges 10:4; Judges 11:35; Judges 12:14; Judges 13:5; Judges 13:20; Judges 15:1; Judges 16:13; Judges 19:15; Judges 19:29

Synecdoche

Description

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)

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

> **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said "my soul," which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

> So **the Pharisees** said to him, "Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?" (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

> Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

"My hands" is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person's accomplishments. The hands are chosen to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

If the synecdoche would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

> "**My soul** magnifies the Lord." (Luke 1:46b ULT)
>
> > "**I** magnify the Lord."
>
> So **the Pharisees** said to him ... (Mark 2:24a ULT)
>
> > **A representative of the Pharisees** said to him ...
>
> Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)
>
> > I looked on all the deeds that **I** had accomplished

Metonymy (UTA PDF)
Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies (UTA PDF)

Next we recommend you learn about:

Metonymy (UTA PDF)
Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies (UTA PDF)

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Referenced in: Introduction to Judges; Judges 1:4; Judges 1:5; Judges 1:8; Judges 1:9; Judges 1:10; Judges 1:18; Judges 2:23; Judges 3:4; Judges 3:10; Judges 3:12; Judges 3:15; Judges 4:11; Judges 4:16; Judges 4:23; Judges 5:8; Judges 5:11; Judges 5:14; Judges 5:15; Judges 5:19; Judges 5:21; Judges 5:30; Judges 6:3; Judges 6:36; Judges 7:3; Judges 7:11; Judges 7:15; Judges 8:5; Judges 8:10; Judges 9:22; Judges 9:39; Judges 9:40; Judges 10:16; Judges 11:31; Judges 13:16; Judges 14:17; Judges 16:16; Judges 16:19; Judges 16:30; Judges 17:3; Judges 19:5; Judges 19:21; Judges 20 Chapter Introduction; Judges 20:2; Judges 20:6

Textual Variants

Description

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)

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.

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. 15There 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: Judges 8:16; Judges 16:2

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: Judges 1:7; Judges 3:19; Judges 3:20; Judges 3:22; Judges 3:23; Judges 3:24; Judges 3:25; Judges 3:26; Judges 3:27; Judges 3:31; Judges 4:18; Judges 4:19; Judges 4:21; Judges 5:10; Judges 5:15; Judges 6:11; Judges 6:37; Judges 8:21; Judges 8:26; Judges 9:27; Judges 9:53; Judges 11:34; Judges 15:4; Judges 16:13; Judges 17:5

Unusual Uses of the Plural

The biblical languages sometimes use plural forms to refer to single objects, ideas, or people.

This page answers the question: *What are some unusual uses of the plural and how can I translate them?*

Description

Using a plural form to refer to something singular is done to show an intensified feeling about the object, idea, or person, or to show that an object or idea is extraordinary in some way. Also, sometimes a person refers to himself or herself with a plural pronoun. If the person is a king or a leader in a high position, this is to show that the person is very important and represents many people. If the person is writing a letter, such as Paul in the New Testament, this is to do the opposite. It is to avoid referring directly to himself, to avoid any sense that he is boasting or drawing attention to himself.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use plural forms to refer to single objects, ideas, or people. In these languages, doing so would be both wrong and confusing. Instead, they need to use a singular form and express any intended intensification in another way.

Examples From the Bible

> The tents of robbers prosper, and securities {are} to the provokers of God (Job 12:6 ULT)

Job is using the plural form **securities** to indicate that these provokers of God experience security to a supreme extent.

> Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the seas (Jonah 2:3 ULT)

Jonah refers to the sea using the plural **seas** to intensify the idea of either the sea's vastness or activity.

> The letter that you sent to **us** has been carefully read aloud before me. (Ezra 4:18 ULT)

Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, refers to himself as **us** in response to a letter sent to him.

> ...through whom [Jesus] **we** received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (Romans 1:5 ULT)

Since this letter is from Paul alone, it is likely that he is using the plural **we** to refer to himself.

Translation Strategies

If a plural form would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, consider these strategies.

(1) Use a singular form instead of the plural.
(2) If the plural is used to intensify the meaning, use a singular form with another word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”
(3) If the plural is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a singular form instead of the plural.

> The letter that you sent to **us** has been carefully read aloud before me. (Ezra 4:18 ULT)

The letter that you sent to **me** has been carefully read aloud before me.

> ...through whom [Jesus] **we** received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (Romans 1:5 ULT)

...through whom [Jesus] **I** received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the Gentiles

(2) If the plural is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use a singular form with another word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”

> The tents of robbers prosper, and **securities {are}** to the provokers of God (Job 12:6 ULT)

The tents of robbers prosper, and **great security {is}** to the provokers of God

> Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **seas** (Jonah 2:3 ULT)

Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **great sea**

(3) If the plural is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

> The tents of robbers prosper, and **securities {are}** to the provokers of God (Job 12:6 ULT)

The tents of robbers prosper, and the provokers of God **enjoy complete security**

> Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **seas** (Jonah 2:3 ULT)

Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **raging sea**

"

Referenced in: Judges 9:9; Judges 9:13; Judges 9:28; Judges 9:37; Judges 11:34; Judges 11:36; Judges 16:23; Judges 17:10; Judges 20:42; Judges 21:19

Verse Bridges

Description

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)

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.

> 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: Judges 3:27; Judges 10:11

When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

This page answers the question: *How do I translate “brother” or “he” when it could refer to anyone, male or female?*

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

Pronouns (UTA PDF)

Generic Noun Phrases (UTA PDF)

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says “brothers” when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can be used in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronoun is “his,” but it is not limited to males.

> A wise son makes **his** father rejoice but a foolish son brings grief to **his** mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- In some cultures words like “man,” “brother,” and “son” can only be used to refer to men. If those words are used in a translation in a more general way, people will think that what is being said does not apply to women.
- In some cultures, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can only refer to men. If a masculine pronoun is used, people will think that what is said does not apply to women.

Translation Principles

When a statement applies to both men and women, translate it in such a way that people will be able to understand that it applies to both.

Examples From the Bible

> Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

> Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

Jesus was not speaking only of men, but of **men and women**.

Caution: Sometimes masculine words are used specifically to refer to men. Do not use words that would lead people to think that they include women. The words below are specifically about men.

> Moses said, ‘If **someone** dies, not having children, **his brother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **his brother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like “man,” “brother,” and “he” can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

(1) Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.
(2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
(3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

> The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)
>
> > “The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies.” “Wise **people** die just like fools die.”

(2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

> For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.
>
> > “For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia.”

(3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

> “If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, “he,” “himself,” and “his” to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, “they,” “themselves,” and “their” in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

> > “If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me.”

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Referenced in: Judges 6:27; Judges 9:57; Judges 17:6; Judges 20:48

unfoldingWord® Translation Words

Version 86

curse, cursed, cursing

Definition:

The term “curse” means to cause negative things to happen to the person or thing that is being cursed.

- A curse can be a statement that harm will happen to someone or something.
- To curse someone can also be an expression of desire that bad things will happen to them.
- It can also refer to the punishment or other negative things that someone causes to happen to someone.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “cause bad things to happen to” or “declare that something bad will happen to” or “swear to cause evil things to happen to.”
- In the context of God sending curses on his disobedient people, it could be translated as “punish by allowing bad things to happen.”
- The term “cursed” when used to describe people could be translated as “(this person) will experience much trouble.”
- The phrase “cursed be” could be translated as “May (this person) experience great difficulties.”
- The phrase, “Cursed is the ground” could be translated as “The soil will not be very fertile.”
- However, if the target language has the phrase “cursed be” and it has the same meaning, then it is good to keep the same phrase.

(See also: bless)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 14:24-26
- 2 Peter 2:12-14
- Galatians 3:10
- Galatians 3:14
- Genesis 3:14
- Genesis 3:17
- James 3:10
- Numbers 22:6
- Psalms 109:28

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:9** God said to the snake, “You are **cursed**!”
- **2:11** “Now the ground is **cursed**, and you will need to work hard to grow food.”
- **4:4** “I will bless those who bless you and **curse** those who **curse** you.”
- **39:7** Then Peter vowed, saying, “May God **curse** me if I know this man!”
- **50:16** Because Adam and Eve disobeyed God and brought sin into this world, God **cursed** it and decided to destroy it.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0422, H0423, H0779, H1288, H2763, H2764, H3994, H5344, H6895, H7043, H7045, H7621, H8381, G03310, G03320, G06850, G19440, G25510, G26520, G26530, G26710, G26720, G60350

"

Referenced in: Judges 9 Chapter Introduction

god, false god, goddess, idol, idolater, idolatrous, idolatry

Definition:

A false god is something that people worship instead of the one true God. The term “goddess” refers specifically to a female false god.

- These false gods or goddesses do not exist. Yahweh is the only God.
- People sometimes make objects into idols to worship as symbols of their false gods.
- In the Bible, God’s people frequently turned away from obeying him in order to worship false gods.
- Demons often deceive people into believing that the false gods and idols they worship have power.
- Baal, Dagon, and Molech were three of the many false gods that were worshiped by people in Bible times.
- Asherah and Artemis (Diana) were two of the goddesses that ancient peoples worshiped.

An idol is an object that people make so they can worship it. Something is described as “idolatrous” if it involves giving honor to something other than the one true God.

- People make idols to represent the false gods that they worship.
- These false gods do not exist; there is no God besides Yahweh.
- Sometimes demons work through an idol to make it seem like it has power, even though it does not.
- Idols are often made of valuable materials like gold, silver, bronze, or expensive wood.
- An “idolatrous kingdom” means a “kingdom of people who worship idols” or a “kingdom of people who worship earthly things.”
- The term “idolatrous figure” is another word for a “carved image” or an “idol.”

Translation Suggestions:

- There may already be a word for “god” or “false god” in the language or in a nearby language.
- The term “idol” could be used to refer to false gods.
- In English, a lower case “g” is used to refer to false gods, and upper case “G” is used to refer to the one true God. Other languages also do that.
- Another option would be to use a completely different word to refer to the false gods.
- Some languages may add a word to specify whether the false god is described as male or female.

(See also: God, Asherah, Baal, Molech, demon, image, kingdom, worship)

Bible References:

- Genesis 35:2
- Exodus 32:1
- Psalms 31:6
- Psalms 81:8-10
- Isaiah 44:20
- Acts 7:41
- Acts 7:43
- Acts 15:20
- Acts 19:27
- Romans 2:22
- Galatians 4:8-9
- Galatians 5:19-21
- Colossians 3:5
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **10:2** Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's **gods**.
- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, "I am Yahweh, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other **gods**."
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false **gods** and did many evil things.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite **gods** instead of Yahweh, the true God.
- **18:13** But most of Judah's kings were evil, corrupt, and they worshiped idols. Some of the kings even sacrificed their children to false **gods**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0367, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0457, H1322, H1544, H1892, H2553, H3649, H4656, H4906, H5236, H5566, H6089, H6090, H6091, H6456, H6459, H6673, H6736, H6754, H7723, H8163, H8251, H8267, H8441, H8655, G14930, G14940, G14950, G14960, G14970, G22990, G27120

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Referenced in: Judges 17 Chapter Introduction

righteous, righteousness, unrighteous, unrighteousness, upright, uprightness

Definition:

The term “righteousness” refers to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. Having these qualities makes God “righteous.” Because God is righteous, he must condemn sin.

- These terms are also often used to describe a person who obeys God and is morally good. However, because all people have sinned, no one except God is completely righteous.
- Examples of people the Bible who were called “righteous” include Noah, Job, Abraham, Zachariah, and Elisabeth.
- When people trust in Jesus to save them, God cleanses them from their sins and declares them to be righteous because of Jesus’ righteousness.

The term “unrighteous” means to be sinful and morally corrupt. “Unrighteousness” refers to sin or the condition of being sinful.

- These terms especially refer to living in a way that disobeys God’s teachings and commands.
- Unrighteous people are immoral in their thoughts and actions.
- Sometimes “the unrighteous” refers specifically to people who do not believe in Jesus.

The terms “upright” and “uprightness” refer to acting in a way that follows God’s laws.

- The meaning of these words includes the idea of standing up straight and looking directly ahead.
- A person who is “upright” is someone who obeys God’s rules and does not do things that are against his will.
- Terms such as “integrity” and “righteous” have similar meanings and are sometimes used in parallelism constructions, such as “integrity and uprightness.” (See: parallelism)

Translation Suggestions:

- When it describes God, the term “righteous” could be translated as “perfectly good and just” or “always acting rightly.”
- God’s “righteousness” could also be translated as “perfect faithfulness and goodness.”
- When it describes people who are obedient to God, the term “righteous” could also be translated as “morally good” or “just” or “living a God-pleasing life.”
- The phrase “the righteous” could also be translated as “righteous people” or “God-fearing people.”
- Depending on the context, “righteousness” could also be translated with a word or phrase that means “goodness” or “being perfect before God” or “acting in a right way by obeying God” or “doing perfectly good.”
- The term “unrighteous” could simply be translated as “not righteous.”
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could include “wicked” or “immoral” or “people who rebel against God” or “sinful.”
- The phrase “the unrighteous” could be translated as “unrighteous people.”
- The term “unrighteousness” could be translated as “sin” or “evil thoughts and actions” or “wickedness.”
- If possible, it is best to translate this in a way that shows its relationship to “righteous, righteousness.”
- Ways to translate “upright” could include “acting rightly” or “one who acts rightly” or “following God’s laws” or “obedient to God” or “behaving in a way that is right.”
- The term “uprightness” could be translated as “moral purity” or “good moral conduct” or “rightness.”
- The phrase “the upright” could be translated as “people who are upright” or “upright people.”

(See also: evil, faithful, good, holy, integrity, just, law, law, obey, pure, righteous, sin, unlawful)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 19:16
- Job 1:8
- Psalms 37:30
- Psalms 49:14
- Psalms 107:42
- Ecclesiastes 12:10-11
- Isaiah 48:1-2
- Ezekiel 33:13
- Malachi 2:6
- Matthew 6:1
- Acts 3:13-14
- Romans 1:29-31
- 1 Corinthians 6:9
- Galatians 3:7
- Colossians 3:25
- 2 Thessalonians 2:10
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- 1 Peter 3:18-20
- 1 John 1:9
- 1 John 5:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- **4:8** God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God's promise.
- **17:2** David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **23:1** Joseph, the man Mary was engaged to, was a **righteous** man.
- **50:10** Then the **righteous** ones will shine like the sun in the kingdom of God their Father.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H1368, H2555, H3072, H3474, H3476, H3477, H3483, H4334, H4339, H4749, H5228, H5229, H5324, H5765, H5766, H5767, H5977, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6665, H6666, H6968, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G00930, G00940, G04580, G13410, G13420, G13430, G13440, G13450, G13460, G21180, G37160, G37170

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Referenced in: Judges 21 Chapter Introduction

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