

unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

v92

Zephaniah

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

Zephaniah

Zephaniah Introduction

Introduction to Zephaniah

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Zephaniah

Title of the book; introduces Zephaniah (1:1)

1. Yahweh will punish Judah and Jerusalem (1:2–18)

"For in the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed."

1. Yahweh will punish the nations
    - Warning to Judah (2:1–3)
    - Yahweh will punish the Philistines (2:4–7)
    - Yahweh will punish Moab and Ammon (2:8–11)
    - Yahweh will punish Ethiopia (2:12)
    - Yahweh will punish Assyria (2:13–16)
    - Yahweh will punish Jerusalem (3:1–7)
    - General review (3:8)

"For in the fire of my jealousy the whole earth will be consumed."

1. Yahweh will restore Judah and Jerusalem (3:9–20)

Who wrote the book of Zephaniah?

This book records messages that Yahweh spoke through a man named Zephaniah. The title to the book lists Zephaniah's ancestors back to his great-grandfather, a man named Hezekiah. Since no other prophet's ancestry is traced back four generations, this Hezekiah must have been a significant person, and interpreters generally agree that he was King Hezekiah, who ruled over Judah from about 715 B.C. to about 686 B.C. So Zephaniah was likely a member of the royal family. In his prophecies, he shows a first-hand knowledge of the city of Jerusalem, so it is also probable that he was part of the royal court in Jerusalem. The title of the book says

that he prophesied during the reign of King Josiah, who began to rule Judah around 640 B.C. So Zephaniah would have prophesied at about the same time that Jeremiah began to prophesy.

What is the book of Zephaniah about?

Through Zephaniah's prophecies, Yahweh warned Judah and other nations that he was about to destroy them because of their wickedness and idolatry. This message seems to have led at least the Judeans to repent, if only for a generation. Hezekiah had been a godly ruler, but his son Manasseh and his grandson Amon were wicked and idolatrous kings. Amon was so unpopular that he was assassinated, and his son Josiah became king when Josiah was only a boy. But when Josiah became a young adult and could assert himself, he introduced a series of reforms that led the people of Judah to worship and obey Yahweh once more. The prophecies of Zephaniah seem to have influenced Josiah strongly to do this. Zephaniah also prophesied about how Yahweh would restore Judah, and those prophecies had at least a partial fulfillment in his own time due to the reforms of Josiah.

What title should translators use for this book?

Translators may choose to use the traditional title, "The Book of Zephaniah," or simply "Zephaniah." They may use a different title such as "The Prophecies of Zephaniah."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

The "day of Yahweh"

Zephaniah speaks many times of "the day of Yahweh," meaning the time when Yahweh will judge and punish the nations, including Judah, for disobeying him and worshiping idols. However, in the final oracle in the book, the phrase "that day" instead means the time when Yahweh will restore Judah and Jerusalem. Notes suggest ways that you can translate these expressions in their various occurrences.

The time reference of Zephaniah's prophecies

Some of Zephaniah's prophecies focus on specific places and times. They warn Judah and other nations that Yahweh will soon destroy them, and they suggest implicitly that this will happen when an enemy empire invades and conquers them. But other prophecies speak of the entire world, and their time reference is uncertain. For example, in the first prophecy in the book, Yahweh says that he is going to destroy every living creature on earth—people, animals, birds, and fish. This could be a prophecy about the more distant future, about the end of the world. But it could also be a generalization for emphasis, and if so, it could apply to the time of Josiah. It is not necessary to determine the exact time reference of all of the prophecies in the book in order to translate the book.

The identity of the invading empire

Zephaniah often suggests that a foreign empire will invade and conquer Judah and other nations. He probably means the empire of Babylon. However, he does not name it specifically, and so it would not be appropriate to use any particular name for the invading army that Zephaniah describes in this book.

Zephaniah 1

Zephaniah 1 Introduction

Zephaniah 1 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter is the first of the three major parts of the book of Zephaniah. (See the outline in the introduction to the book.) This part describes how Yahweh will punish Judah and Jerusalem for their sinfulness and complacency.

The ULT sets the lines of verses 2–18 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are poetry.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Litany

Verses 2 and 3 state in general terms that Yahweh's judgment will be comprehensive. Then, in four places later in the chapter, prophecies emphasize a general point by making a series of specific statements that illustrate that point. These typically move from more obvious or central examples to more peripheral ones. In that way, they demonstrate how comprehensive Yahweh's judgment will be: It will reach to the most distant and obscure places.

Series of statements such as these are known as litanies. If your readers would recognize the litany form, you could translate and format these litanies the way the ULT does, as lines of poetry. If the litany form would not be familiar to your readers, you could format these litanies in a way that would illustrate how they work. You could format the general statement in a way that would set it off from the other poetry in the book. For example, if you have chosen to indent that poetry, you could present the general statement without any indentation. You could then put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. The format might look something like this:

Verses 4–6:

> and I will cut off from this place
>
> the remnant of Baal,
>
> the name of the idol-priests with the priests,
>
> and the ones bowing down on the housetops to the army of the skies,
>
> and the ones bowing down, swearing to Yahweh but swearing by their king,
>
> and the ones turning back from after Yahweh,
>
> and who do not search for Yahweh and do not seek him.

Verses 8–9:

And it will happen on the day of the sacrifice of Yahweh that I will visit

upon the princes

and upon the sons of the king

and upon all the ones wearing foreign clothing,

and on that day I will visit

upon all the ones leaping over the threshold,

the ones filling the house of their lords {with} violence and fraud.

Verse 10:

the sound of

a cry from the Fish Gate

and a wailing from the Second {District}

and a great ruin from the hills.

Verses 15–16:

That day {will be}

a day of wrath,

a day of distress and anguish,

a day of destruction and desolation,

a day of darkness and gloom,

a day of cloud and overcast,

a day of horn and battle-cry against the fortified cities and against the high towers.

Zephaniah 1:1

ULT	UST
The word of Yahweh that was to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.	*These are the messages that Yahweh spoke through Zephaniah during the time when Josiah, the son of Amon, was the king of Judah. Zephaniah was the son of Cushi. Cushi was the son of Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of Amariah. And Amariah was the son of King Hezekiah.*

ULT **The word of Yahweh that was to Zephaniah**
UST These are the messages that Yahweh spoke through Zephaniah … Zephaniah

In this title for the book, the term **word** refers to the message that Yahweh sent to the Judeans through Zephaniah by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The message that Yahweh sent through Zephaniah]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah**
UST was the son of Cushi. Cushi was the son of Gedaliah. Gedaliah was the son of Amariah. And Amariah was the son of King Hezekiah

The author is describing the ancestors of **Zephaniah** in order to introduce him to readers as a key participant in the book, the person through whom Yahweh spoke the messages that the book records. Your culture may have its own way of introducing people by describing their ancestors, and if so, you can use it here in your translation.
Support Reference: Introduction of New and Old Participants

ULT **Zephaniah … Cushi … Gedaliah … Amariah … Hezekiah … Josiah … Amon**
UST Zephaniah … Josiah … Amon … Zephaniah … Cushi. Cushi … Gedaliah. Gedaliah … Amariah. And Amariah … King Hezekiah

The words **Zephaniah**, **Cushi**, **Gedaliah**, **Amariah**, **Hezekiah**, **Josiah**, and **Amon** are the names of men.
Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah**
UST during the time when Josiah, the son of Amon, was the king of Judah

In this title, the term **days** means a specific time, the reign of **Josiah** as **king of Judah**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [during the reign of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
word of Yahweh	These are the messages that Yahweh spoke
Zephaniah	Zephaniah
Hezekiah	Hezekiah
days	during the time when … was
Josiah	Josiah
king	king
Judah	Judah

Zephaniah 1:2

ULT	UST
“Removing, I will exterminate everything from upon the face of the ground”—the declaration of Yahweh.	*Yahweh says, “I will completely destroy creatures all over the earth.”*

ULT **Removing, I will exterminate everything from upon the face of the ground”—the declaration of Yahweh**

UST Yahweh says, “I will completely destroy creatures all over the earth

Zephaniah is using the phrase **the declaration of Yahweh** to indicate that he is quoting the message that Yahweh has given him for the people of Judah. Consider natural ways of identifying direct quotations in your language. It may be more natural for you to put this attribution of the saying to Yahweh before the saying itself, as the UST does. Alternate translation: [This is what Yahweh declares: “Removing, I will exterminate everything from upon the face of the ground.”]

Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT **Removing, I will exterminate everything from upon the face of the ground**

UST I will completely destroy creatures all over the earth

When Yahweh says that he is going to destroy **everything** on the surface of the earth, he is probably making an overstatement for emphasis. He wants to express how angry he is at the sinful disobedience of people. If it would be clearer in your language, you could show the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [I will cause very great destruction on the earth]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **Removing, I will exterminate everything**

UST I will completely destroy creatures all

Yahweh is using one verb and a different verb of similar meaning together in order to intensify the idea that these verbs express. Ordinarily in this construction, the same verb would be used twice. But here two verbs of similar sound and meaning are used for poetic effect and emphasis. If your language can repeat verbs for intensification, it would be appropriate to do that here in your translation. If it has two verbs of similar sound and meaning that you can use, that would reflect the poetic effect here. Your language may also have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [I will totally exterminate everything]

Support Reference: Reduplication

ULT **the face of the ground**

UST over the earth

Yahweh is speaking as if the surface of the earth or ground were literally its **face**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the surface of the earth]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
I will exterminate	destroy
Yahweh	Yahweh

Zephaniah 1:3

ULT	UST
“I will take away man and beast; I will take away the birds of the skies and the fish of the sea and the stumbling blocks with the wicked, and I will cut off man from upon the face of the ground” —the declaration of Yahweh.	*Yahweh says, “I am going to destroy the people and animals that live on the earth. I am going to destroy the birds that fly in the sky and the fish that swim in the sea. I am going to destroy the idols that represent false gods, and I am going to destroy the people who worship those idols. I will do this so that there will not be wicked people on the earth.*

ULT **the declaration of Yahweh**

UST Yahweh says

See how you translated the phrase **the declaration of Yahweh** in the previous verse. If you used it to introduce the quotation there, you may wish to do the same thing here.

Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT **I will take away man and beast; I will take away the birds of the skies and the fish of the sea**

UST I am going to destroy the people and animals that live on the earth. I am going to destroy the birds that fly in the sky and the fish that swim in the sea

Yahweh is using creatures from the three components of creation—land creatures, sky creatures, and **sea** creatures—to mean all creatures throughout creation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [I will take away all the creatures that live everywhere in creation]

Support Reference: Merism

ULT **man and beast … man**

UST the people and animals that live on the earth … wicked people

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 clearly includes both men and women. Alternate translation: [humans and beasts … humans]

Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **man and beast**

UST the people and animals that live on the earth

Yahweh is using two types of creatures that live on the earth, **man** and **beast**, to mean all creatures that live on the earth. If you would like to retain in your translation the references in this verse to the three different parts of creation, you could explain the meaning of this reference. Alternate translation: [all the creatures that live on the earth]

Support Reference: Merism

ULT **and the stumbling blocks with the wicked**
UST I am going to destroy the idols that represent false gods, and I am going to destroy the people who worship those idols

Yahweh is using the adjective **wicked** 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: [and the stumbling blocks with wicked people]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

ULT **and the stumbling blocks**
UST I am going to destroy the idols that represent false gods

Yahweh is speaking of idols as if they were literally **stumbling blocks**, that is, objects that people would trip over. He is using stumbling to mean doing what is morally and spiritually wrong. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and the idols]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **with the wicked**
UST and I am going to destroy the people who worship those idols

The implication is that the **wicked** people Yahweh is talking about are doing things that are morally and spiritually wrong because their actions are being guided by the values implicit in idolatry rather than by Yahweh's law. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [with the people who are wicked because they worship idols]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **and I will cut off man from upon the face of the ground**
UST I will do this so that there will not be wicked people on the earth

When Yahweh says that he will kill all the people who live on earth, as in verse 2, he 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 the wicked people who are disobeying me, I will punish by killing them]
Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **and I will cut off man**
UST I will do this so that there will not be wicked people

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: [and I will cut off all people]
Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **and I will cut off man**
UST I will do this so that there will not be wicked people

Yahweh is speaking as if he were going to **cut off** the people who live on the earth the way one would cut a branch off from a tree. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and I will destroy all people] or [and I will eliminate all people]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the face of the ground**
UST on the earth

See how you translated this expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [the surface of the earth]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
beast	and animals that live on the earth
skies	sky
stumbling	I am going to destroy the idols that represent false gods
wicked	I am going to destroy the people who worship those idols
Yahweh	Yahweh

Zephaniah 1:4

ULT	UST
"And I will stretch out my hand against Judah and against all of the ones living in Jerusalem, and I will cut off from this place the remnant of Baal, the name of the idol-priests with the priests,	*I am going to punish the people who live in the city of Jerusalem and in other places in the kingdom of Judah. I am going to destroy everything in Jerusalem that is related to the worship of the false god Baal. No one will even remember that there used to be priests of Baal in Jerusalem. And no one will remember the priests descended from Aaron who helped people worship Baal.*

ULT **And I will stretch out my hand**
UST I am going to punish

Here, **hand** represents the power that a person has to do something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And I will use my power]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **and I will cut off from this place**
UST I am going to destroy … in Jerusalem

See how you translated the expression **cut off** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [and I will remove from this place] or [and I will eliminate from this place]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and I will cut off from this place**
UST I am going to destroy … in Jerusalem

As the introduction to this chapter discusses, this phrase is the beginning of a litany. You may use that discussion to help you consider how to format the material in verses 4–6.
Support Reference: Litany

ULT **the remnant of Baal**
UST everything … that is related to the worship of the false god Baal

Yahweh is using the name **Baal** by association to mean the worship of Baal, a false god. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the remnant of Baal-worship]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **the remnant of Baal**
UST everything … that is related to the worship of the false god Baal

The worship of **Baal** had not been reduced to a **remnant** at this time. As the introduction to Zephaniah explains, the prophet spoke these oracles to warn the people of Judah that they needed to stop worshiping Baal. So Yahweh is using this expression to mean that he will destroy Baal worship so completely that nothing is left—there will be no remnant. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [every last trace of Baal worship]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **the name of the idol-priests with the priests**
> UST No one will even remember that there used to be priests of Baal in Jerusalem. And no one will remember the priests descended from Aaron who helped people worship Baal

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: [yes, I will cut off the name of the idol-priests with the priests] or [yes, I will destroy the name of the idol-priests with the priests]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

> ULT **the name of**
> UST No one will even remember that there used to be … in Jerusalem

Here, **name** represents the reputation of an individual, which extends beyond the place and time in which that individual is known personally. When someone's **name** in this sense is destroyed, no one remembers that person any longer. Alternate translation: [the memory of]
Support Reference: Metonymy

> ULT **with the priests**
> UST And no one will remember the priests descended from Aaron who helped people worship Baal

The term **priests** probably refers to the priests descended from Aaron who were supposed to lead the Israelites in the worship of Yahweh. Unfortunately, at this time they were not serving Yahweh faithfully, as Zephaniah says in 3:4. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [along with the degenerate priests from the line of Aaron]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Judah	kingdom of Judah
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
remnant	everything … that is related to the worship of
Baal	Baal
the idol-priests	priests of Baal
priests	priests

Zephaniah 1:5

ULT	UST
and the ones bowing down on the housetops to the army of the skies, and the ones bowing down, swearing to Yahweh but swearing by their king,	*I am going to punish the people who have been going up onto the flat roofs of their houses in order to worship the sun, moon, and stars. I am also going to punish the people who claim to worship me but who swear oaths in the name of the false god Milcom.*

ULT **and the ones bowing down on the housetops to the army of the skies, and the ones bowing down, swearing to Yahweh but swearing by their king**

UST I am going to punish the people who have been going up onto the flat roofs of their houses in order to worship the sun, moon, and stars. I am also going to punish the people who claim to worship me but who swear oaths in the name of the false god Milcom

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 I will cut off the ones bowing down on the housetops to the army of the skies, and I will cut off the ones bowing down, swearing to Yahweh but swearing by their king] or [and I will destroy the ones bowing down on the housetops to the army of the skies, and I will destroy the ones bowing down, swearing to Yahweh but swearing by their king]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **and the ones bowing down on the housetops to the army of**

UST I am going to punish the people who have been going up onto the flat roofs of their houses in order to worship

Yahweh is using one aspect of worship, **bowing down**, to mean worship generally. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and I will destroy the ones who worship the army of]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT **to the army of the skies**

UST in order to worship the sun, moon, and stars

Yahweh is speaking of the sun, moon, and stars as if they were an **army** in the **skies**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to the heavenly bodies]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and the ones bowing down, swearing to Yahweh**

UST I am also going to punish the people who claim to worship me

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: [and the ones bowing down, swearing to me]

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **and the ones bowing down, swearing to Yahweh**
UST I am also going to punish the people who claim to worship me

The terms **bowing down** and **swearing to** mean similar things. They both indicate worship; **bowing down**, one aspect of worship, represents worship generally, while the expression **swearing to** describes pledging oneself to worship Yahweh as God. Yahweh is using the two terms together for emphasis since, as the rest of the verse shows, this worship was not wholehearted. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [the ones appearing to worship me devotedly]
Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **swearing to Yahweh but swearing by their king**
UST the people who claim … me but who swear oaths in the name of the false god Milcom

The word translated **their king** could be the name of a false god, Milcom, also called Molech, Molek, or Moloch. If you choose to use the name in your translation, spell it the way it sounds in your language. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to use the spelling that it uses. Alternate translation: [swearing to me but swearing by Milcom]
Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **swearing to Yahweh but swearing by their king**
UST the people who claim … me but who swear oaths in the name of the false god Milcom

Yahweh is drawing a contrast between **swearing to** and **swearing by**. The Judeans who swore **to** Yahweh pledged themselves to worship him as their God. But they then swore **by** Milcom, invoking the name of that false god to guarantee a vow or promise that they had made. Yahweh is saying how inconsistent and inappropriate it was for them to do that. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [pledging themselves to worship me but then guaranteeing their oaths by invoking the false god Milcom]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
bowing down	I am going to punish the people who have been going up
skies	the sun, moon, and stars
bowing down	I am also going to punish … to worship
swearing	the people who claim
Yahweh	me
swearing	swear
king	in the name of the false god Milcom

Zephaniah 1:6

ULT	UST
and the ones turning back from after Yahweh, and who do not search for Yahweh and do not seek him."	*Finally, I am also going to punish the people who used to worship me but no longer do. I am going to punish the people who no longer ask for my help or ask me to tell them what they should do."*

> ULT **and the ones turning back from after Yahweh, and who do not search for Yahweh and do not seek him**
> UST Finally, I am also going to punish the people who used to worship me but no longer do. I am going to punish the people who no longer ask for my help or ask me to tell them what they should do

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: [and the ones turning back from after me, and who do not search for me and do not seek me]

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

> ULT **and the ones turning back from after Yahweh, and who do not search for Yahweh and do not seek him**
> UST Finally, I am also going to punish the people who used to worship me but no longer do. I am going to punish the people who no longer ask for my help or ask me to tell them what they should do

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. This could be describing: (1) two groups, people who are no longer actively worshiping Yahweh and people who still worship Yahweh formally but who do not relate to him actively as their God. Alternate translation: [and I will destroy those who have stopped worshiping me actively, and I will destroy those who still worship me formally but do not relate to me actively as their God]; or (2) one group, people who show that they are no longer worshiping Yahweh by the way they no longer relate to him actively as their God. Alternate translation: [and I will destroy those who show they have stopped worshiping me by the way they no longer relate to me actively as their God]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

> ULT **and the ones turning back from after Yahweh**
> UST Finally, I am also going to punish the people who used to worship me but no longer do

Yahweh is speaking as if the Judeans who are ceasing to worship him were literally walking on a path and **turning back** from the direction in which they had been heading. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and I will destroy the ones who have stopped worshiping me]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **and who do not search for Yahweh and do not seek him**
> UST I am going to punish the people who no longer ask for my help or ask me to tell them what they should do

Yahweh could be using the expressions **search for** and **seek** to mean: (1) two similar things. He could be speaking as if the Judeans should literally have been looking for him, meaning that they should have been praying to him. In this case Yahweh would be using two similar terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [and I will destroy the ones who no longer pray to me at all]; or (2) two different things. The expression **search for** could mean to ask for help, and the expression **seek** could mean to ask for guidance. Alternate translation: [and I will destroy those who no longer ask for my help or guidance]

Support Reference: Doublet

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Yahweh	me
search	ask for
Yahweh	my help
seek	ask me to tell them what they should do

Zephaniah 1:7

ULT	UST
Hush from the face of Lord Yahweh, for the day of Yahweh is near. For Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice, he has sanctified his invited ones.	*Yahweh is the God whom you should worship. Soon he will judge and punish people, so show your respect for him by keeping quiet. Be respectful, because Yahweh is getting ready to destroy the people of Judah. He has decided to allow the enemies of Judah to come and destroy them.*

ULT **Hush from the face of Lord Yahweh**
UST Yahweh is the God whom you should worship … show your respect for him by keeping quiet

Here the word **face** represents the presence of a person by association with the way people can see the face of someone who is present. Alternate translation: [Hush in the presence of Lord Yahweh]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **Hush from the face of Lord Yahweh**
UST Yahweh is the God whom you should worship … show your respect for him by keeping quiet

The word **Hush** is an exclamation that urges listeners to be silent. In your translation, you may choose to use an exclamation that is natural in your language for communicating this. You could also translate the word as an imperative. Alternate translation: [Shh! in the presence of Lord Yahweh]
Support Reference: Exclamations

ULT **the day of Yahweh {is} near**
UST Soon he will judge and punish people

The expression **the day of Yahweh** refers to a specific time when God will punish people for their sins. Alternate translation: [the time is coming soon when Yahweh will punish people for their sins]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **Yahweh has prepared a sacrifice, he has sanctified his invited ones**
UST Yahweh is getting ready to destroy the people of Judah. He has decided to allow the enemies of Judah to come and destroy them

Zephaniah is speaking as if Yahweh had literally **prepared a sacrifice** and ceremonially cleansed (**sanctified**) those he had **invited** to share a meal from the meat of the sacrificed animal. He is speaking of the people of Judah as if they were this sacrifice, and of an enemy army, most likely that of the Babylonians, as if it would feast on the Judeans, meaning that this foreign power would conquer them and plunder them, as verses 13–16 indicate. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Yahweh is going to allow a foreign army to conquer and plunder the land of Judah]
Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **his invited ones**
> UST the enemies of Judah

If your language 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 he has invited]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Lord Yahweh	Yahweh is the God whom you should worship
day of Yahweh	Soon he will judge and punish people
Yahweh	Yahweh
prepared	is getting ready to destroy
sacrifice	the people of Judah
sanctified	He has decided to allow … to come and destroy them
his invited ones	the enemies of Judah

Zephaniah 1:8

ULT	UST
“And it will happen on the day of the sacrifice of Yahweh that I will visit upon the princes and upon the sons of the king and upon all the ones wearing foreign clothing,	*Yahweh says, “At the time when I destroy the people of Judah, I will punish their officials and the king’s sons and all those who worship foreign gods.*

ULT **And it will happen on the day of the sacrifice of Yahweh**
UST Yahweh says, “At the time when I destroy the people of Judah

As the introduction to this chapter discusses, this phrase is the beginning of a litany. You may use that discussion to help you consider how to format the material in verses 8–9.
Support Reference: Litany

ULT **on the day of the sacrifice of Yahweh**
UST At the time when I destroy the people of Judah

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: [on the day of my sacrifice]
Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **on the day of the sacrifice of Yahweh**
UST At the time when I destroy the people of Judah

As Zephaniah did in the previous verse, Yahweh is speaking as if he is literally going to offer a sacrifice. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [on the day when I punish you Judeans for your sins]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **on the day of the sacrifice of Yahweh**
UST At the time when I destroy the people of Judah

See how you translated the expression “the day of Yahweh” in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [at the time when I punish you Judeans for your sins]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **that I will visit upon the princes and upon the sons of the king and upon all the ones wearing foreign clothing**
UST I will punish their officials and the king’s sons and all those who worship foreign gods

The expression **visit upon** means to punish. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [that I will punish the princes and the sons of the king and all the ones wearing foreign clothing]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the princes**
UST their officials

In some languages the term **princes** describes male direct descendants of a monarch, but here it means court officials who may or may not have been members of the royal family. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the court officials]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **the sons of the king**
UST and the king's sons

This could mean: (1) the actual members of the royal family. In that case, the word **sons** would have a generic sense, applying to both men and women, and it would mean not just the literal children of the present king but also the grandchildren and even later descendants of previous kings. Alternate translation: [the royal family]; or (2) the literal sons of the present king, Josiah, who would have been just boys at this time. The implication is that Yahweh is going to punish the Judeans so thoroughly that not even children will be spared. Alternate translation: [even the king's young boys]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **all the ones wearing foreign clothing**
UST all those who worship foreign gods

Yahweh is using one thing that the Judeans were doing to curry favor with foreign powers, wearing the same **clothing** that they did, to mean everything that they did to curry favor, especially including worshiping their gods. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [all those who have adopted foreign ways]
Support Reference: Synecdoche

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
day	At the time when
sacrifice	destroy the people of Judah
Yahweh	I
that I will visit	punish
princes	officials
king	king's
foreign	foreign

Zephaniah 1:9

ULT	UST
and on that day I will visit upon all the ones leaping over the threshold, the ones filling the house of their lords with violence and fraud.	*At that time, I will punish all the officials who force their way into people's homes and take away what they own in order to make themselves rich."*

ULT **and on that day I will visit upon**
UST At that time, I will punish all

See how you translated the expressions "on the day" and "I will visit upon" in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [and at the time when I punish you Judeans, I will punish]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **all the ones leaping over the threshold**
UST all the officials who force their way into people's homes and take away what they own

The expression **leaping over the threshold** seems to refer to people entering other people's houses forcibly, as if in a rush, in order to seize their possessions by **violence** or **fraud**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [all those who enter other people's houses violently in order to seize their possessions]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the ones filling the house of their lords {with} violence and fraud**
UST in order to make themselves rich

Yahweh is using the plural form **lords** in a context where the singular term "lord" would suffice. This suggests that he may be using the plural form as a superlative to indicate the supreme example of its own class, in which case this would be a reference to the king, the lord or master of the Judeans. Your language may use plural forms in the same way. If not, you could express the meaning in another way. Alternate translation: [who have filled the house of their king with violence and fraud] or [who have filled the royal palace with violence and fraud]
Support Reference: Unusual Uses of the Plural

ULT **with violence and fraud**
UST in order to make themselves rich

Yahweh is using the terms **violence** and **fraud** by association to mean possessions unlawfully obtained from others by violence or on fraudulent grounds. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [with possessions that they have gotten violently or fraudulently]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
day	At … time
and … I will visit	punish
threshold	the officials who force their way into people's homes and take away what they own
house	in order to make themselves rich
lords	in order to make themselves rich

Zephaniah 1:10

ULT	UST
And it will happen on that day" —the declaration of Yahweh— "the sound of a cry from the Fish Gate and a wailing from the Second District and a great ruin from the hills.	*Yahweh also says, "At the time when I destroy the kingdom of Judah, people will cry out in distress at the Fish Gate of Jerusalem. People will wail with sorrow in the Second Quarter of the city. People will hear a loud crash of buildings collapsing in the towns on the hills that surround the city.*

ULT **And it will happen on that day" —the declaration of Yahweh— "the sound of**
UST Yahweh also says, "At the time when I destroy the kingdom of Judah, people will cry out

See how you translated the phrase **the declaration of Yahweh** in verses 2 and 3. Alternate translation: [This is what Yahweh declares: "And it will happen on that day, the sound of]
Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT **on that day**
UST At the time when I destroy the kingdom of Judah

See how you translated the expressions "on that day" in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [at the time when I punish you Judeans for your sins]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the sound of**
UST people will cry out

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: [that people will hear the sound of]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **from the Fish Gate**
UST at the Fish Gate of Jerusalem

The expression **the Fish Gate** is the name of one of the gates in the wall of the ancient city of Jerusalem. It may have had that name because there was a fish market just outside this gate. If your language has a term for "fish," you could use that term to translate this name. If not, you could translate the name the way it sounds in your language.
Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **the Second District**
UST the Second Quarter of the city

The word **Second** is the name of one of the districts in the ancient city of Jerusalem. The ULT adds the word **District** to show that. This district may have had that name because it had been added to the original city. Some translations use a name for it that indicates that. Alternate translation: [the New Quarter]
Support Reference: How to Translate Names

> ULT **from the hills**
> UST in the towns on the hills that surround the city

Yahweh is using the term **hills** by association to mean the settlements on the hills around Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [from the settlements on the hills around Jerusalem]

Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
day	At the time
Yahweh	Yahweh
cry	in distress
Gate	Gate
ruin	People will hear a … crash of buildings collapsing

Zephaniah 1:11

ULT	UST
Wail, inhabitants of the Maktesh, for all of the people of Canaan will be destroyed, all of the ones weighing silver will be cut off.	*Your enemies are going to slaughter all those who buy and sell goods for money, so all you people who live in the market area of Jerusalem should wail.*

ULT **the Maktesh**
UST the market area of Jerusalem

The word **Maktesh** is the name of one of the districts in the ancient city of Jerusalem. It seems to have been a place where many goods were bought and sold, and so some translations refer to it with a descriptive phrase rather than with this name. Alternate translation: [the market district]
Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **all of the people of Canaan will be destroyed, all of the ones weighing silver will be cut off**
UST Your enemies are going to slaughter all those who buy and sell goods for money

These two phrases mean similar things. Yahweh is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: [all of the merchants and traders who make your district such a prosperous place will be completely destroyed]
Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **all of the people of Canaan will be destroyed, all of the ones weighing silver will be cut off**
UST Your enemies are going to slaughter all those who buy and sell goods for money

If your language does not use these passive forms, you could express the ideas in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I am going to destroy all of the people of Canaan; yes, I am going to cut off all of the ones weighing silver]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **the people of Canaan**
UST those who buy and sell goods

In this context, the expression **people of Canaan** refers to traders, not to those from the Canaanite people group. Many traders were Phoenicians, that is, Canaanites, and that is how the profession got this name, but the reference is to the profession and not to the people group. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the traders]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the ones weighing silver**
UST those who buy and sell goods for money

Yahweh is using the expression **the ones weighing silver** by association to mean merchants. In this culture, people used silver as money, determining its value by its weight. So merchants would weigh silver in order to determine how much of it to pay for goods or to accept in payment for them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the merchants]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **will be cut off**
UST Your enemies are going to slaughter

See how you translated the expression “cut off” in verse 3. Alternate translation: [will be destroyed]

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Canaan	those who buy and sell goods
destroyed	Your enemies are going to slaughter
silver	for money

Zephaniah 1:12

ULT	UST
And it will happen at that time, I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will visit upon the men thickening on their sediment, the ones saying in their heart, 'Yahweh will not do good, and he will not do bad,'	*At that time, it will be as if I light lanterns and search even in the darkest places in Jerusalem to find wicked people and punish them. I am going to punish the people who do not even care that they are doing wicked things. They wrongly think that I, Yahweh, do not make people experience the consequences of their actions.*

ULT **with lamps**
UST I light lanterns

Yahweh is speaking as if he is literally going to use **lamps** in order to **search** for evildoers so that he can find them and punish them. He means that he is going to search thoroughly, as if using a lamp in order to see into all dark corners where someone or something might escape notice. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [thoroughly]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and I will visit upon**
UST I am going to punish

See how you translated the expression "I will visit upon" in verse 8. Alternate translation: [and I will punish]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the men thickening on their sediment**
UST the people who do not even care that they are doing wicked things

Here the masculine term **men** 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: [the people who are thickening on their sediment]

Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **the men thickening on their sediment**
UST the people who do not even care that they are doing wicked things

Yahweh is speaking as if the sinful, complacent people of Jerusalem were literally wine that is **thickening** because it has been left on its **sediment**. The term "sediment" describes the small pieces of stem, leaves, and seeds from grape plants that are unintentionally mixed with the juice during the winemaking process. Ordinarily, these are allowed to settle to the bottom of the wine, which is then poured off to separate it from them. Yahweh means that just as wine left on its sediment becomes thick, so these Judeans have become difficult to motivate to repentance. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. You may wish to represent the image as a comparison and explain its meaning. Alternate translation: [the people who have become so complacent] or [the people who have become so complacent that they are like wine that has thickened because no one has poured it off its sediment]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the ones saying in their heart, ‘Yahweh will not do good, and he will not do bad**
UST They wrongly think that I, Yahweh, do not make people experience the consequences of their actions

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 ones saying in their heart that Yahweh will not do good and that he will not do bad]
Support Reference: Quotes within Quotes

ULT **the ones saying in their heart, ‘Yahweh will not do good, and he will not do bad**
UST They wrongly think that I, Yahweh, do not make people experience the consequences of their actions

If you decide to turn this quotation within a quotation into an indirect quotation, then Yahweh would be speaking about himself in the third person. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this in the first person. Alternate translation: [the ones saying in their heart that I will not do good and that I will not do bad]
Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **in their heart**
UST They wrongly think that

Here the **heart** represents the thoughts. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [in their thoughts] or [to themselves]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in their heart**
UST They wrongly think that

Since Job is speaking of many people, if you retain the image of **heart** in your translation, it may be more natural in your language to use the plural form of the word. Alternate translation: [in their hearts]
Support Reference: Collective Nouns

ULT **Yahweh will not do good, and he will not do bad**
UST I, Yahweh, do not make people experience the consequences of their actions

By **do good**, these people are implicitly referring to Yahweh rewarding them, and by **do bad**, they are referring to Yahweh punishing them. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. You could also bring out the further implication in what the people are saying: that Yahweh is not a God who enforces justice in the world, so they may act as they wish. Alternate translation: [Yahweh is not going to reward us, and he is not going to punish us] or [Yahweh is not the kind of God who rewards good people and punishes wicked people, so it does not matter how we live]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
search	search
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
lamps	I light lanterns
and I will visit	punish
Yahweh	Yahweh
good	do … make people experience the consequences of their actions

Zephaniah 1:13

ULT	UST
and their wealth will become plunder and their houses a ruin, and they will build houses, but they will not inhabit them, and they will plant vineyards, but they will not drink their wine.	*So an enemy army is going to come and destroy their houses completely. Then that army will carry away their valuable possessions. This will fulfill what I told the Israelites would happen if they disobeyed me: 'The people will build houses, but they will not live in them. They will plant vineyards, but they will not be able to make wine from the grapes and drink it.'*

ULT **and their wealth will become plunder and their houses a ruin**
UST So an enemy army is going to come and destroy their houses completely. Then that army will carry away their valuable possessions

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 their wealth will become plunder and their houses will become a ruin]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **and their wealth will become plunder and their houses a ruin**
UST So an enemy army is going to come and destroy their houses completely. Then that army will carry away their valuable possessions

Yahweh does not mean that these things will happen on their own. He means implicitly that the enemy army he describes in verse 16 will plunder the wealth of these complacent Judeans and ruin their houses. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [An enemy army will plunder their wealth and ruin their houses]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **and they will build houses, but they will not inhabit {them}, and they will plant vineyards, but they will not drink their wine**
UST This will fulfill what I told the Israelites would happen if they disobeyed me: 'The people will build houses, but they will not live in them. They will plant vineyards, but they will not be able to make wine from the grapes and drink it

These words are similar to what Yahweh said in (Deuteronomy 28:30). You may want to put this information in a footnote.

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
their wealth	their valuable possessions
plunder	Then that army will carry away
houses	houses
ruin	So an enemy army is going to come and destroy … completely
houses	houses
plant	plant
vineyards	vineyards
wine	wine

Zephaniah 1:14

ULT	UST
The great day of Yahweh is near, near and hastening quickly! The sound of the day of Yahweh is bitter; the warrior cries out then!	*It will soon be the terrible time when I, Yahweh, destroy the people who have sinned against me. Yes, I am going to do that very soon. The people of Judah will cry out in sorrow at that time. Then even the strong soldiers who are trying to defend them will wail in despair.*

ULT **The great day of Yahweh … the day of Yahweh**
UST the terrible time when I, Yahweh, destroy the people who have sinned against me … at that time

See how you translated the expression "the day of Yahweh" in verse 7. Alternate translation: [the awful time when Yahweh will punish people for their sins … the time when Yahweh will punish people]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **The great day of Yahweh … the day of Yahweh**
UST the terrible time when I, Yahweh, destroy the people who have sinned against me … at that time

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: [the awful time when I will punish people for their sins … the time when I will punish people]
Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **is near, near and hastening quickly**
UST It will soon be … Yes, I am going to do that very soon

Yahweh is repeating the word **near** 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: [very near and hastening quickly]
Support Reference: Reduplication

ULT **is near, near and hastening quickly**
UST It will soon be … Yes, I am going to do that very soon

Yahweh is speaking as if the **day** or time when he will punish people were a living thing that was **hastening** to arrive. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [near; yes, it will happen very soon]
Support Reference: Personification

ULT **The sound of the day of Yahweh {is} bitter**
UST The people of Judah will cry out in sorrow at that time

Yahweh is speaking of the **sound of the day** by association to mean the sounds that people will make on that **day**, that is, at that time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [People will weep bitterly on the day of Yahweh]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **the warrior cries out**
UST even the strong soldiers who are trying to defend them will wail in despair

Yahweh is not referring to a specific **warrior**. He means a certain group of warriors in general. This could mean: (1) that the warriors who are trying to defend Judah will cry out in despair as they are defeated. Alternate translation: [the defenders of Judah will cry out in despair]; or (2) that the warriors of the enemy army that attacks Judah will shout a battle cry, as verse 16 describes. Alternate translation: [the invading warriors will shout a terrifying battle cry]

Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
day of Yahweh	the … time when I, Yahweh, destroy the people who have sinned against me
day of Yahweh	at that time
warrior	soldiers
cries out	will wail in despair

Zephaniah 1:15

ULT	UST
That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and overcast,	*That will be a time when I, Yahweh, show that I am very angry. It will be a time when people experience much trouble. At that time, an enemy army will destroy many things. It will be a very sad time. People will feel the way they do when black clouds cover the sky.*

ULT **That day**
UST That

If you have been translating the phrase “the day of Yahweh” with an expression that uses the word “time,” you may wish to say “time” rather than **day** in each of the instances in this verse.
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **a day of distress and anguish, a day of destruction and desolation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and overcast**
UST It will be a time when people experience much trouble. At that time, an enemy army will destroy many things. It will be a very sad time. People will feel the way they do when black clouds cover the sky

In these four cases, Yahweh is using two words with similar meaning together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase.
Alternate translation: [a day of great distress, a day of severe destruction, a day of deep darkness, a day of thick cloud]
Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and overcast**
UST It will be a very sad time. People will feel the way they do when black clouds cover the sky

Yahweh is speaking as if the sky will literally be dark and cloudy at the time when he punishes people for their sins. He means that it will be a time when people experience much trouble and feel great sorrow. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly.
Alternate translation: [a day of terrible trouble, a day of deep sorrow]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
day	That
day	will be a time when
wrath	I, Yahweh, show that I am very angry
day	It will be a time when
distress	trouble
anguish	people experience much trouble
day	At that time
destruction	destroy
desolation	an enemy army will destroy many things
day	It will be a … time
day	People will feel the way they do when black clouds cover the sky

Zephaniah 1:16

ULT	UST
a day of horn and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the high corners.	*It will be a time when soldiers blow ram's horns and shout to call other soldiers to come and fight. Your enemies will tear down the walls around your cities and the high towers at the corners of those walls.*

ULT **a day of**
UST It will be a time when

If you have been translating the phrase "the day of Yahweh" with an expression that uses the word "time," you may wish to say "time" rather than **day** here. Alternate translation: [a time of]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **horn and battle cry**
UST soldiers blow ram's horns and shout to call other soldiers to come and fight

Yahweh is referring to a ram's **horn**, a shofar, that soldiers would use to signal an attack. Yahweh is using the term by association to mean the sound that this horn would make. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. It may be more natural in your language to use plural forms here. Alternate translation: [horn blasts and battle-cries]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **against the fortified cities and against the high corners**
UST Your enemies will tear down the walls around your cities and the high towers at the corners of those walls

Yahweh is using the term **corners** by association to mean the towers that were built at the corners of the walls around cities in the kingdom of Judah. Those walls were not straight; they had angles and corners so that defenders could attack besieging armies from more than one direction. High towers were built at the corners so that the defenders could attack from a height. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [against the fortified cities and against the high towers at the corners of their walls]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **against the fortified cities and against the high corners**
UST Your enemies will tear down the walls around your cities and the high towers at the corners of those walls

The phrases **fortified cities** and **high corners** mean similar things. The high towers at the corners of city walls were one part of their fortifications. Yahweh is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [the walled cities and all of their fortifications]
Support Reference: Doublet

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
day	It will be a time when
horn	soldiers blow ram’s horns
cry	and shout to call other soldiers to come and fight

Zephaniah 1:17

ULT	UST
For I will bring distress to man, and they will walk like the blind, for they have sinned against Yahweh. And their blood will be poured out like dust, and their innards like dung.	*Because you have sinned against me, Yahweh, I am going to cause you people of Judah to suffer greatly. As I told the Israelites would happen if they sinned against me, 'You will wander around, not knowing where to go, as if you were blind.' Your enemies will stab you with their weapons so that your blood and your insides pour out in great quantities.*

ULT **to man**
UST you people of Judah

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. The reference is most likely to the sinful, complacent Judeans. Alternate translation: [to the people of Judah]
Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **and they will walk like the blind, for**
UST Because … As I told the Israelites would happen if they sinned against me, 'You will wander around, not knowing where to go, as if you were blind

These words are similar to what Yahweh said in Deuteronomy 28:29. You may want to put this information in a footnote.

ULT **and they will walk like the blind**
UST As I told the Israelites would happen if they sinned against me, 'You will wander around, not knowing where to go, as if you were blind

The point of this comparison is that just as a person who is **blind** does not know in what direction he should **walk** in order to arrive somewhere safely, so the Judeans will not be able to find any safe place to escape from the enemy army. Yahweh is not saying that blindness is a punishment for sin. Alternate translation: [and they will not be able to find any place where it is safe]
Support Reference: Simile

ULT **like the blind**
UST as if you were blind

Yahweh is using the adjective **blind** 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: [as blind people do]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

> ULT **And their blood will be poured out like dust, and their innards like dung**
> UST Your enemies will stab you with their weapons so that your blood and your insides pour out in great quantities

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 their blood will be poured out like dust, and their innards will be poured out like dung]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

> ULT **And their blood will be poured out like dust, and their innards like dung**
> UST Your enemies will stab you with their weapons so that your blood and your insides pour out in great quantities

If your language 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 their enemies will wound them so that their blood flows out like dust and their innards flow out like dung]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **And their blood will be poured out like dust, and their innards like dung**
> UST Your enemies will stab you with their weapons so that your blood and your insides pour out in great quantities

The point of these comparisons is that just as people consider **dust** and **dung** to have no value, the **blood** and **innards** of the Judeans, vital to their lives, will be **poured out** as if those substances and the lives they sustain had no value. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [And their enemies will wound them so that their blood and their innards flow out profusely, as if they were worthless]
Support Reference: Simile

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
distress	I am going to cause … to suffer greatly
sinned	sinned
Yahweh	Yahweh
dung	in great quantities

Zephaniah 1:18

ULT	UST
Even their silver, even their gold, will not be able to deliver them on the day of the wrath of Yahweh.” For in the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed. For he will make all of the inhabitants of the earth a consummation, indeed, a hastened one.	*At the time when I, Yahweh, show how angry I am with you, you will not be able to save yourselves by giving silver or gold to your enemies.” Because Yahweh is very angry that people have worshiped false gods, he is going to destroy wicked people all over the world. Indeed, he is soon going to destroy wicked people no matter where they live in the world.*

ULT **Even their silver, even their gold, will not be able to deliver them**
UST you will not be able to save yourselves by giving silver or gold to your enemies

Yahweh is speaking as if the **silver** and the **gold** that the Judeans own were living things that could **deliver them** from their enemies. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [They will not even be able to pay their enemies silver or gold in order to be spared]
Support Reference: Personification

ULT **For in the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed**
UST Because Yahweh is very angry that people have worshiped false gods, he is going to destroy wicked people all over the world

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [For the fire of his jealousy will consume the whole earth]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **For in the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed**
UST Because Yahweh is very angry that people have worshiped false gods, he is going to destroy wicked people all over the world

Yahweh is speaking as if his **jealousy** were a **fire** that is literally going to burn up the entire **earth**. As the next sentence indicates, he is using the term “earth” to mean the people who live on the earth, and he is referring to the way that he will punish those people for worshiping false gods and living sinfully. He is speaking of that punishment as if it were a fire. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [For he will destroy all of the people who live on the earth when he punishes them in his jealousy]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **For in the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed**
UST Because Yahweh is very angry that people have worshiped false gods, he is going to destroy wicked people all over the world

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **jealousy**, you could express the same idea in another way. Zephaniah is saying that Yahweh is jealous because the people who live on the earth have been worshiping false gods even though they owe him their exclusive worship because he is the only true God. Alternate translation: [For he will destroy all of the people who live on the earth when he punishes them because he is jealous that they have been worshiping false gods instead of him, the only true God]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **he will make all of the inhabitants of the earth a consummation, indeed, a hastened one**

UST he is soon going to destroy wicked people no matter where they live in the world

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **consummation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [he will end the lives of all the inhabitants of the earth, and he will do that quickly]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **all of the inhabitants of the earth**

UST wicked people no matter where they live in the world

Since Yahweh does not kill righteous people along with wicked people, the word **all** may be a generalization for emphasis, or the expression **the inhabitants of the earth** may refer specifically to wicked people. Alternate translation: [many of the people who live on the earth] or [the wicked people who disobey him]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **a hastened one**

UST soon

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. The word translated **hastened** could mean: (1) that Yahweh will quickly do what he is describing. Alternate translation: [he will do this soon]; or (2) that when Yahweh does this, it will terrify people. Alternate translation: [a terrifying one]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
silver	silver
gold	gold
deliver	to save yourselves by giving … to your enemies
day	At the time when
wrath	show how angry I am with you
Yahweh	Yahweh
jealousy	people have worshiped false gods
earth	the world
will be consumed	he is going to destroy
earth	in the world

Zephaniah 2

Zephaniah 2 Introduction

Zephaniah 2 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter is the second of the three major parts of the book of Zephaniah. (See the outline in the introduction to the book.) This part begins with a warning to the people of Judah and Jerusalem (verses 1–3), and it then describes how Yahweh will punish the Philistines (verses 4–7), Moab and Ammon (verses 8–11), Ethiopia (verse 12), and Assyria (verses 13–16).

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are poetry.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Litany

In verses 1 and 2, Zephaniah uses the litany form, as he did four times in chapter 1. See the discussion of the litany form in the introduction to chapter 1, and see how you formatted the litanies in that chapter. You may wish to present the general statement in verse 1 without any indentation and then put each sentence of verse 2 on a separate line. The format might look something like this:

> Gather yourselves together! Yes, gather, O nation not desired,
>
> before the bringing forth of the decree,
>
> before the day passes like chaff,
>
> before the burning of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you,
>
> before the day of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you.

Zephaniah 2:1

ULT	UST
Gather yourselves together! Yes, gather, O nation not desired,	*You people of Judah ought to be ashamed of your sins! You should certainly gather together and ask Yahweh to be merciful to you.*

ULT **Gather yourselves together! Yes, gather**
UST You should certainly gather together and ask Yahweh to be merciful to you

Zephaniah is repeating the verb **Gather** in order to emphasize the idea that it expresses. If a speaker of your language would not do that, you may be able to express the emphasis in another way in your translation. Alternate translation: [It is urgent that you gather together]
Support Reference: Reduplication

ULT **Gather yourselves together! Yes, gather**
UST You should certainly gather together and ask Yahweh to be merciful to you

The word **yourselves** is plural because Zephaniah is addressing the Judeans as a group. The implied "you" in each of these imperative forms is also plural. So use plural forms in your translation if your language marks that distinction. (The word "you" and the implied "you" in imperatives continue to be plural in verses 2 and 3.)
Support Reference: Forms of 'You' — Singular

ULT **Gather yourselves together**
UST You should certainly gather together and ask Yahweh to be merciful to you

Zephaniah is implicitly telling the Judeans to **Gather … together** in order to repent. That is, he is telling them that they urgently need to hold a solemn assembly in which they confess and forsake their sins and ask Yahweh to be merciful to them. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Gather yourselves together in repentance]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **O nation not desired**
UST You people of Judah ought to be ashamed of your sins

Zephaniah is expressing a positive meaning by using a negative word together with a word that is the opposite of the intended meaning. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. The phrase translated **not desired** could mean: (1) that Yahweh does not want to be close to this nation because he is so angry with its people over their sinfulness and idolatry. Alternate translation: [O nation with whom Yahweh is so angry]; or (2) that the people of this nation are not ashamed of the wrong things that they have been doing. Alternate translation: [O shameless nation]
Support Reference: Litotes

ULT **O nation not desired**
UST You people of Judah ought to be ashamed of your sins

Zephaniah is implicitly addressing the **nation** of Judah. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [you Judeans with whom Yahweh is so angry] or [you shameless Judeans]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Gather	gather
gather	gather
nation	You people of Judah

Zephaniah 2:2

ULT	UST
before the bringing forth of the decree, before the day passes like chaff, before the burning of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you, before the day of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you.	*Gather together and pray for mercy before Yahweh punishes you as he has said he will. Otherwise he will destroy you completely, just as the wind blows chaff away entirely. Yahweh is very angry with you, and if you do not repent, he will punish you.*

ULT **before the bringing forth of the decree**
UST Gather together and pray for mercy before Yahweh punishes you as he has said he will

Zephaniah is using this possessive form not to describe something **bringing forth** the **decree** but to speak of the **decree** as if it would be **bringing forth** something, that is, as if it would literally be giving birth to something. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers, and it may be helpful to use plain language. Alternate translation: [before the decree takes effect]
Support Reference: Possession

ULT **before the bringing forth of the decree**
UST Gather together and pray for mercy before Yahweh punishes you as he has said he will

Zephaniah is referring implicitly to the **decree** of Yahweh that he announced in the previous chapter. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [before Yahweh carries out his decree to destroy sinful people]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **the day**
UST Otherwise he will destroy you completely

By **the day**, Zephaniah means the "day of Yahweh." See how you translated that expression in chapter 1. Alternate translation: [the time when Yahweh punishes people for their sins]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **before … passes like chaff**
UST Otherwise he will destroy you completely, just as the wind blows chaff away entirely

The point of this comparison is that just as the wind blows away **chaff** so that it is gone and will not return, so the **day** of Yahweh will come and go, and afterwards there will be no further opportunity for people to repent. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. Alternate translation: [before … has come and gone and there is no further opportunity to repent]
Support Reference: Simile

ULT **before the burning of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you, before the day of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you**

UST Yahweh is very angry with you, and if you do not repent, he will punish you

These two phrases mean similar things. Zephaniah is using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. However, rather than combine the phrases and show the emphasis in another way, it may be good to include both phrases in your translation, since they are part of a litany. See the discussion in the introduction to this chapter of the litany form and how you might format verses 1–2 to show that Zephaniah is using this form.

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **before the burning of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you**

UST Yahweh is very angry with you, and if you do not repent, he will punish you

Zephaniah is using a negative expression to describe an outcome that he is urging the people of Judah to avoid. He is effectively telling them to pursue the purpose of avoiding that outcome. Use a natural way in your language for introducing a purpose clause. The clause itself may be negative or positive, depending on the conventions of your language. Alternate translation: [so that the burning of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you] or [lest the burning of the nose of Yahweh come upon you]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

ULT **before the burning of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you**

UST Yahweh is very angry with you, and if you do not repent, he will punish you

Zephaniah is using the term **nose** to mean anger. He is doing this 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, in your translation you could use an expression involving that part of the body. You could also use plain language. Zephaniah is also speaking as if Yahweh's **nose** or anger were literally **burning**. He means that Yahweh's anger is very intense. Alternate translation: [so that Yahweh's fierce anger does not come upon you] or [lest Yahweh's fierce anger come upon you]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **before the burning of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you**

UST Yahweh is very angry with you, and if you do not repent, he will punish you

Zephaniah is speaking as if Yahweh's **nose**, that is, his anger, were a living thing that could **come upon** the Judeans, that is, attack and overpower them. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [so that Yahweh does not destroy you in his fierce anger] or [lest Yahweh destroy you in his fierce anger]

Support Reference: Personification

ULT **before the day of the nose of Yahweh does not come upon you**

UST Yahweh is very angry with you, and if you do not repent, he will punish you

See how you translated the similar expression just before this one, and see how you translated the term **day** earlier in the verse. Alternate translation: [so that Yahweh does not destroy you in his anger at the time when he punishes people for their sins]

Support Reference: Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the decree	as he has said he will
day	Otherwise he will destroy you completely
chaff	chaff
Yahweh	Yahweh
day	very
Yahweh	Yahweh

Zephaniah 2:3

ULT	UST
Seek Yahweh, all the humble of the earth who do his justice. Seek righteousness. Seek humility. Perhaps you will be hidden on the day of the nose of Yahweh.	*All of you people in Judah who are willing to humble yourselves, worship Yahweh and obey what he has commanded. Try to do what is right and make sure that you stay humble. If you do that, perhaps Yahweh will protect you when he punishes other people for their sins.*

ULT **Seek Yahweh**
UST worship Yahweh

Zephaniah is speaking as if he literally wanted the Judeans to **Seek** or look for Yahweh. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. See how you translated the similar expression in 1:6. Alternate translation: [Pray to Yahweh for mercy]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **all the humble of the earth**
UST All of you people in Judah who are willing to humble yourselves

Zephaniah is using the adjective **humble** 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. While Zephaniah is speaking of these people in the third person, he is addressing them directly. Alternate translation: [all you humble people of the earth]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

ULT **all the humble of the earth**
UST All of you people in Judah who are willing to humble yourselves

Here the term **earth** could mean: (1) the land of Judah, since Zephaniah is addressing a specific "nation," the nation of Judah, in verses 1–3. Alternate translation: [all you humble people of the land] or [all you Judeans who are willing to humble yourselves]; or (2) the entire world, since that is what the term means in 1:18. Alternate translation: [all you humble people in the world]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **who do his justice**
UST and obey what he has commanded

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: [who do what he has said is just]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **Seek righteousness. Seek humility**
UST Try to do what is right and make sure that you stay humble

Zephaniah is speaking as if he literally wanted the Judeans to **Seek** or look for **righteousness** and **humility**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. The meaning of this image is slightly different from its meaning in 1:6 and in the first part of the verse. Alternate translation: [Practice righteousness. Cultivate humility]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **Seek righteousness. Seek humility**
UST Try to do what is right and make sure that you stay humble

If your language does not use abstract nouns for the ideas of **righteousness** and **humility**, you could express the same ideas in other ways. Alternate translation: [Do what is right. Be humble]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **you will be hidden**
UST Yahweh will protect 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: [you will be able to hide]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **you will be hidden**
UST Yahweh will protect you

Zephaniah is speaking as if the Judeans could literally **be hidden** somewhere where Yahweh could not find them. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [you will be spared]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **on the day of the nose of Yahweh**
UST when he punishes other people for their sins

See how you translated the similar expression at the end of the previous verse. Alternate translation: [at the time when Yahweh angrily punishes people]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Seek	worship
Yahweh	Yahweh
humble	humble
earth	in Judah
justice	what he has commanded
Seek	Try to do
righteousness	what is right
Seek	and make sure that you stay
humility	humble
day	when
Yahweh	he

Zephaniah 2:4

ULT	UST
For Gaza will become abandoned, and Ashkelon a ruin. Ashdod, they will expel her at noon, and Ekron will be uprooted.	*When Yahweh punishes the Philistines, the cities of Gaza and Ashkelon will lose all of their inhabitants. An army will attack the city of Ashdod in broad daylight and drive away all of its people. An army will also drive away the people of the city of Ekron.*

ULT **Gaza will become abandoned … and Ekron will be uprooted**
UST the cities of Gaza … will lose all of their inhabitants … An army will also drive away the people of the city of Ekron

For poetic effect and emphasis, at the beginning and end of this verse Zephaniah uses verbs that echo the sound of the names of the cities he is describing. It may be possible for you to reproduce this effect in your translation.
Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **Gaza will become abandoned**
UST the cities of Gaza … will lose all of their inhabitants

If your language 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 people who used to live in Gaza will abandon that city] or [no one will live in Gaza anymore]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **and Ashkelon a ruin**
UST and Ashkelon will lose all of their inhabitants

Zephaniah 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 Ashkelon will become a ruin]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **Ashdod, they will expel her**
UST An army will attack the city of Ashdod … and drive away all of its people

Zephaniah is speaking of the city of **Ashdod** as if it were a woman who could be **expelled** from the home in which she was living. He is using the city to represent the people who live in the city. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they will expel the inhabitants of Ashdod]
Support Reference: Personification

ULT **Ashdod, they will expel her**
UST An army will attack the city of Ashdod … and drive away all of its people

Here, **they** is an indefinite pronoun that does not have a specific referent in the immediate context. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate this with a different expression that does not use an indefinite pronoun. Alternate translation: [the inhabitants of Ashdod will be expelled] or [an army will expel the inhabitants of Ashdod]
Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **at noon**
UST in broad daylight

Zephaniah is speaking as if an army would literally expel the inhabitants of Ashdod at a specific time, **at noon**. He is likely using noon, the time when the sun is brightest in the sky, to mean “in broad daylight,” that is, as the result of an open attack by an overwhelming force. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [in an open attack]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and Ekron will be uprooted**
UST An army will also drive away the people of the city of Ekron

Zephaniah is speaking as if the city of **Ekron** were literally a plant that could be **uprooted**, that is, pulled completely out of the ground, including its roots. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and Ekron will be completely destroyed]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and Ekron will be uprooted**
UST An army will also drive away the people of the city of Ekron

If your language 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 it will be as if Ekron were a plant that someone had pulled out by the roots] or [and an army will destroy Ekron]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Gaza	Gaza
abandoned	will lose all of their inhabitants
Ashkelon	Ashkelon
ruin	will lose all of their inhabitants
Ashdod	Ashdod
Ekron	Ekron

Zephaniah 2:5

ULT	UST
Woe to the inhabitants of the region of the sea, the nation of the Kerethites! The word of Yahweh is against you, Canaan, land of the Philistines: "And I will destroy you until there is no inhabitant."	*Terrible things will happen to you Philistine people! You live near the sea. Yahweh has said that he will punish you Philistines who live in that part of the land of Canaan. He will punish you until everyone who used to live there is dead.*

ULT **the region of the sea**
UST near the sea

Zephaniah is using this possessive form to describe a **region** that is along the coast of the **sea**. He means specifically the area along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea where the Philistines lived. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the seacoast]
Support Reference: Possession

ULT **the Kerethites**
UST Philistine

The word **Kerethites** is another name for all or part of the people group also known as the **Philistines**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could use the name Philistines here in order to show that Zephaniah is addressing one people group, not two. Alternate translation: [the Philistines]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **The word of Yahweh {is} against you**
UST Yahweh has said that he will punish you

Zephaniah is using the term **word** to mean what Yahweh has said by using words. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Yahweh has spoken a message against you]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **is against you, Canaan, land of the Philistines**
UST he will punish you Philistines who live in that part of the land of Canaan

Zephaniah is speaking to something that he knows cannot hear him, the land of **Canaan**, in order to show in a strong way how he feels about the people who live there. If a speaker in your language would not do that, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [is against you Philistines who live in the land of Canaan]
Support Reference: Apostrophe

ULT **is against you**
UST he will punish you

The word **you** is plural here because Zephaniah is implicitly speaking to the Philistines who live in the land of **Canaan**. However, since he is addressing that land directly, if you retain the direct-address form in your translation, it may be more natural in your language to use a singular form of "you." (That would match the singular form of **you** in the quotation from Yahweh, "And I will destroy you," which addresses Canaan as if that land were a person.)
Support Reference: Forms of 'You' — Singular

> ULT **And I will destroy you until there is no inhabitant**
> UST He will punish you until everyone who used to live there is dead

It may be more natural in your language to make this an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: [He has said that he will destroy you until there is no inhabitant]

Support Reference: Direct and Indirect Quotations

> ULT **And I will destroy you until there is no inhabitant**
> UST He will punish you until everyone who used to live there is dead

As Zephaniah did, Yahweh is speaking to something that he knows cannot hear him, the land of **Canaan**, in order to show in a strong way how he feels about the people who live there. If a speaker in your language would not do that, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And I will destroy you Philistines until none of you live in the land of Canaan any more]

Support Reference: Apostrophe

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Woe	Terrible things will happen to
the Kerethites	Philistine
nation	you … people
word of Yahweh	Yahweh has said that
Canaan	Canaan
Philistines	Philistines
destroy	He will punish you

Zephaniah 2:6

ULT	UST
And the region of the sea will become pastures of meadows of shepherds and pens of flocks.	*There will no longer be any cities in the seaside land of Philistia. There will only be grass. Shepherds will keep their sheep there so that they can eat the grass.*

ULT **the region of the sea**
UST the seaside land of Philistia

See how you translated this expression in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [the seacoast] or [the seacoast where the Philistines formerly lived]
Support Reference: Possession

ULT **pastures of meadows of shepherds and pens of flocks**
UST grass. Shepherds will keep their sheep there so that they can eat the grass

Zephaniah is using these possessive forms to describe what will be in the **pastures**, who will use the **meadows**, and what the **pens** will contain. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [pastures in which there are meadows where shepherds graze their sheep and pens that hold their flocks]
Support Reference: Possession

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the sea	the seaside land of Philistia
shepherds	Shepherds
flocks	their sheep

Zephaniah 2:7

ULT	UST
And the region will be to the remnant of the house of Judah. They will shepherd upon them; in the houses of Ashkelon they will lie down in the evening, for Yahweh their God will visit them, and he will restore their fortune.	*The Judean people who survive will go and live in that land. They will graze their sheep in those pastures. They will move into the houses that the Philistines have abandoned in the city of Ashkelon. This will happen because those Judeans will worship Yahweh once again as their God. Yahweh will take care of them and make them prosperous again.*

ULT **the house of Judah**
UST The Judean people

Zephaniah is using the word **house** to mean the people who live in the kingdom of Judah. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the people of Judah]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in the houses of Ashkelon they will lie down in the evening**
UST They will move into the houses that the Philistines have abandoned in the city of Ashkelon

Zephaniah is using one aspect of living in a house, lying down there in the evening (that is, sleeping there at night) to mean living there in general. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they will come and live in the abandoned houses in the city of Ashkelon]
Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT **will visit them**
UST will take care of them

Zephaniah is using the term **visit** in a specific sense to mean taking action in regard to someone. In 1:8, 1:9, and 1:12, the term describes taking action to punish people. But here it describes taking action to help people. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [will help them]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
remnant	who survive
house	The … people
Judah	Judean
shepherd	They will graze their sheep
houses	houses
Ashkelon	Ashkelon
Yahweh	Yahweh
God	God
restore	and make … again
their fortune	prosperous

Zephaniah 2:8

ULT	UST
"I have heard the reproach of Moab and the insults of the sons of Ammon, that they have reproached my people and made themselves great against their border.	

ULT I have heard the reproach of
UST I have heard … insult … I have seen

This is the beginning of a direct quotation from Yahweh, as the phrase "the declaration of Yahweh of armies, the God of Israel" in the next verse indicates. See how you translated the phrase "the declaration of Yahweh" in 1:2. If you used it to introduce the quotation there, you may wish to use the comparable phrase from 2:9 to introduce the quotation here. The UST models a way to do that.
Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT Moab
UST the people of Moab

Yahweh is speaking of the country of **Moab** as if it were a living thing that could have expressed **reproach** against the people of Judah. He is referring to the people of that country. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the people of Moab] or [the Moabites]
Support Reference: Personification

ULT the sons of Ammon
UST and Ammon

Here the word **sons** means "descendants." Yahweh is describing the members of the Ammonite people group by reference to their common descent from a single ancestor, Benammi, here called **Ammon**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the people of Ammon] or [the Ammonites]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT and made themselves great against their border
UST them stealing territory from my people

This could mean: (1) that the Moabites and Ammonites have expanded their territories by taking territory away from the kingdom of Judah. Alternate translation: [and have stolen bordering territories from them]; or (2) that the Moabites and Ammonites have threatened to attack the kingdom of Judah and take some or all of its territory. Alternate translation: [and have boasted that they will take their territory]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
reproach	insult
Moab	Moab
insults	insult
Ammon	Ammon
reproached	insult

Zephaniah 2:9

ULT	UST
Therefore, as I am alive”— the declaration of Yahweh of Armies, the God of Israel— “that Moab will become like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah, a possession of the nettle and the pit of salt and a ruin forever. The remnant of my people will plunder them, and the remainder of my nation will occupy them.”	

ULT **Therefore, {as} I {am} alive … that**
UST So now I swear that

Yahweh is using this language to swear a solemn oath. He is indicating that the things he says will happen to Moab and Ammon are just as certain as some other very certain thing, the fact that he is **alive**. Translate this in a way that will show your readers that it is an oath. For example, it may be helpful to add the words **I swear**, as the UST does. If oaths are unfamiliar in your culture, you could also add a short explanation of what an oath is.
Support Reference: Oath Formulas

ULT **the declaration of Yahweh of Armies, the God of Israel**
UST Yahweh is the commander of the heavenly armies and the God of the Israelites. He says this

This phrase indicates that the rest of the material in verses 2:8–9 is a direct quotation from Yahweh. See how you decided to introduce this direct quotation in the previous verse.
Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT **Yahweh of Armies**
UST Yahweh is the commander of the heavenly armies

The phrase **Yahweh of Armies** is a title for God that indicates his great power. It describes him as the commander of heavenly armies. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, it may have a particular way of translating this phrase, and you may wish to use that in your translation. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, express the meaning of this phrase in a way that will be clear to your readers. Alternate translation: [Yahweh the Almighty]
Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **Moab will become like Sodom, and the sons of Ammon like Gomorrah**
UST I am going to destroy Moab and Ammon as completely as I destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah

The point of this comparison is that just as **Sodom** and **Gomorrah** were completely destroyed (see Genesis 19:1–29), so the countries of **Moab** and **Ammon** will be completely destroyed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could make this point explicitly. See how you translated the word “Moab” and the expression “the sons of Ammon” in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [the country of Moab will be completely destroyed, as the city of Sodom was, and the people of Ammon will be completely destroyed, as the people of the city of Gomorrah were]
Support Reference: Simile

> ULT **a possession of the nettle and the pit of salt and a ruin forever**
> UST Crops will no longer grow on their land, only weeds. The only way people will be able to make a living from that land will be to dig in the ground to get salt from the salt deposits there. No one will ever rebuild the buildings that were there

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. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [They will become a possession of the nettle and the pit of salt and a ruin forever]
Support Reference: Ellipsis

> ULT **a possession of the nettle and the pit of salt and a ruin forever**
> UST Crops will no longer grow on their land, only weeds. The only way people will be able to make a living from that land will be to dig in the ground to get salt from the salt deposits there. No one will ever rebuild the buildings that were there

Yahweh is not referring to a specific **nettle** or **pit of salt**. He means nettles and salt pits in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using plural forms. Alternate translation: [a possession of nettles and salt pits and a ruin forever]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

> ULT **a possession of the nettle and the pit of salt and a ruin forever**
> UST Crops will no longer grow on their land, only weeds. The only way people will be able to make a living from that land will be to dig in the ground to get salt from the salt deposits there. No one will ever rebuild the buildings that were there

Yahweh is speaking as if nettles and salt pits would literally own or possess the territory where the Moabites and Ammonites formerly lived. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [a place where only weeds grow and where people dig for salt and where no one will ever build any buildings again]
Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **The remnant of my people will plunder them, and the remainder of my nation will occupy them**
> UST My people who survive will take away all the valuable possessions that once belonged to the Moabites and Ammonites. Those … will be the ones who own that land

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. 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: [The remnant of my people will plunder them; indeed, the remainder of my nation will occupy them]
Support Reference: Parallelism

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Yahweh	Yahweh
God	God
Israel	Israelites
Moab	Moab
Sodom	Sodom
Ammon	Ammon
Gomorrah	Gomorrah
possession	on their land
pit	The only way people will be able to make a living from that land will be to dig in the ground
ruin	No one will … rebuild the buildings that were there
forever	ever
remnant	who survive
plunder	will take away all the valuable possessions that once belonged to the Moabites and Ammonites
nation	גוי

Zephaniah 2:10

ULT	UST
This will be to them instead of their pride, for they reproached and made themselves great against the people of Yahweh of Armies.	*The people of Moab and Ammon will get what they deserve for having been so proud. They should not have insulted the people who belong to Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies. They should not have tried to take away their land.*

ULT **This will be to them instead of their pride, for they reproached and made themselves great against the people of Yahweh of Armies**

UST The people of Moab and Ammon will get what they deserve for having been so proud. They should not have insulted the people who belong to Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies. They should not have tried to take away their land

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 reproached and made themselves great against the people of Yahweh of Armies, this will be to them instead of their pride]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **This will be to them instead of their pride**

UST The people of Moab and Ammon will get what they deserve for having been so proud

Yahweh is speaking as if the **pride** of the Moabites and Ammonites were literally an object that belonged to them. He is also speaking as if the destruction they are going to experience were also an object and as if he were going to take away their pride and give them destruction in its place. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [This will happen to them because they were so proud]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and made themselves great against**

UST tried to take away their land

See how you translated the expression “made themselves great” in 2:8. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and stole bordering territories from] or [and boasted that they would take territory from]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **Yahweh of Armies**

UST Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies

See how you translated the title “Yahweh of Armies” in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [Yahweh the Almighty]

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
pride	proud
reproached	insulted
Yahweh	Yahweh

Zephaniah 2:11

ULT	UST
Yahweh will be fearsome against them, for he will starve all of the gods of the earth. And all of the islands of the nations will bow down to him, a man from his place.	*The people of Moab and Ammon will be greatly afraid when Yahweh punishes them. He will do that so powerfully that people will stop worshiping all other gods. People in every nation will worship Yahweh instead. Each person will do that in his own country.*

ULT **he will starve all of the gods of the earth**
UST people will stop worshiping all other gods

Zephaniah is speaking as if Yahweh is literally going to **starve** the false **gods** that other nations worship, that is, deny them food so that they become thin. This is likely a reference to the fat of animals that people sacrificed to gods. The implication is that people will no longer sacrifice to those gods because they will no longer worship them once Yahweh has shown that he is the only true and powerful God. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [he will show by his powerful actions that he is the only true God]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **And all of the islands of the nations will bow down to him**
UST People in every nation will worship Yahweh instead

Zephaniah is using this possessive form not to describe **islands** that belong to **nations** but to describe island-nations among the nations. The term **islands** can describe not just land that is completely surrounded by water but also land along a seacoast. In Zephaniah's culture, people used the term to refer to distant lands. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [And even the most distant nations will bow down to him]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **And all of the islands of the nations will bow down to him**
UST People in every nation will worship Yahweh instead

Zephaniah is speaking of the **nations** of the world as if they were living things that could **bow down** to Yahweh. He means that the people of the nations will do this. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And the people of even the most distant nations will bow down to him]

Support Reference: Personification

ULT **a man from his place**
UST Each person will do that in his own country

The phrase **a man** refers to an individual. In this context it could mean an individual nation or an individual person. If you retain Zephaniah's depiction of the nations as living things, in your translation you could say "each in its own territory." If you choose to show that he is using the nations to represent their people, you could say "all of them in their own territories."

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Yahweh	Yahweh
will be fearsome	afraid
gods	gods
earth	other
nations	nation
bow down	will worship … instead

Zephaniah 2:12

ULT	UST
“Also you, Cushites, they will be pierced by my sword.”	*Yahweh has also said that he will slaughter the people of Ethiopia.*

ULT **Also you, Cushites**
UST Yahweh has also said that … the people of Ethiopia

This verse is a direct quotation from Yahweh. You may wish to indicate that in your translation by using a natural way of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: [Yahweh also declares, “You, Cushites]
Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT **they {will be} pierced by my sword**
UST he will slaughter

Yahweh is speaking about the Cushites in the third person, but since he is addressing them directly, it may be more natural in your language to translate this in the second person. Alternate translation: [you will be pierced by my sword]
Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **they {will be} pierced by my sword**
UST he will slaughter

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [my sword will pierce you]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **they {will be} pierced by my sword**
UST he will slaughter

Yahweh is speaking as if he were literally going to pierce or kill the Cushites with a **sword**. He means that he is going to cause an enemy army to kill many of them. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [an enemy army will kill many of you]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
sword	he will slaughter

Zephaniah 2:13

ULT	UST
And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and he will destroy Assyria. And he will make Nineveh a ruin, a dry place like the desert.	*Yahweh will also punish and destroy the people of Assyria. They live in a land that is northeast of us. He will cause an enemy army to destroy their capital city of Nineveh. It will become a place where no plants grow, like the desert.*

ULT **And he will stretch out his hand against the north, and he will destroy Assyria**
UST Yahweh will also punish and destroy the people of Assyria. They live in a land that is northeast of us

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. You may wish 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: [And he will stretch out his hand against the north; yes, he will destroy Assyria]
Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **And he will stretch out his hand**
UST Yahweh will also punish

See how you translated the expression “I will stretch out my hand” in 1:4. Alternate translation: [And he will use his power]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **the north**
UST They live in a land that is northeast of us

Zephaniah is using the term **north** by association to mean the empire that was located to the north of Judah, **Assyria**, as he indicates later in a parallel phrase. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the empire that is north of here]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
destroy	destroy
Assyria	Assyria
Nineveh	Nineveh
ruin	to destroy
dry	It will become a place where no plants grow
desert	desert

Zephaniah 2:14

ULT	UST
And herds will lie down in its midst, every animal of the nation. Both the desert owl and the screech owl will lodge on its columns. A call will hoot in the window; devastation will be in the threshold, for the cedar-work will be bare.	*Groups of many different kinds of wild animals will live where Nineveh used to be. Various kinds of owls will make their nests on top of the columns of its destroyed buildings. Those owls will sometimes perch on the sills of empty windows and hoot. Rubble will block the doorways. Rain and sunlight will ruin the valuable cedar wood that the Assyrians used to build their buildings.*

ULT **in its midst**

UST where Nineveh used to be

The possessive pronoun **its** refers to the city of Nineveh. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [in the midst of Nineveh]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **every animal of the nation**

UST many different kinds of wild animals

Zephaniah is not referring to a specific **nation**. He means nations in general. He is also saying **every** as a generalization for emphasis. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. It may also be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [They will be various kinds of herds, composed of the sorts of animals found in many different nations]

Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **Both the desert owl and the screech owl**

UST Various kinds of owls

Zephaniah is not referring to a specific **desert owl** or **screech owl**. He means many individual birds of these types. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using plural forms. Zephaniah may also be using these two types of desert bird to mean desert birds in general. Alternate translation: [Both desert owls and screech owls] or [Various desert birds]

Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **will lodge on its columns**

UST will make their nests on top of the columns of its destroyed buildings

The word translated **columns** refers specifically to the tops of columns, which often had ornate decorations. The implication is that an army will have destroyed the elaborate buildings of Nineveh so that only columns remain standing, and they are not supporting a roof, so their tops are exposed and provide a roosting place for birds. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [will roost on top of the exposed columns of its destroyed buildings]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **A call will hoot in the window; devastation {will be} in the threshold, for the cedar-work will be bare**
> UST Those owls will sometimes perch on the sills of empty windows and hoot. Rubble will block the doorways. Rain and sunlight will ruin the valuable cedar wood that the Assyrians used to build their buildings

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. Zephaniah is describing how badly Nineveh will be destroyed by referring to the fact that the costly and elaborate **cedar-work** of its ornate buildings will be exposed to the elements. Alternate translation: [Because the city will be destroyed so thoroughly that the cedar-work will be bare, a call will hoot in the window; devastation will be in the threshold]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

> ULT **A call will hoot in the window**
> UST Those owls will sometimes perch on the sills of empty windows and hoot

Zephaniah is speaking of a bird's **call** as if it were a living thing that could **hoot** on its own. He is using the call of birds to represent the birds themselves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Birds will hoot their calls in the windows]

Support Reference: Personification

> ULT **devastation {will be} in the threshold**
> UST Rubble will block the doorways

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **devastation**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [debris will block doorways]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
herds	Groups of
nation	many different kinds of
desert	Various kinds of owls
columns	columns
devastation	Rubble
threshold	doorways
the cedar-work	cedar

Zephaniah 2:15

ULT	UST
This is the exultant city, the one dwelling in security, the one saying in its heart, "I am, and besides me there is not another." How it has become a ruin, a lair for the beast! Every one passing by will hiss at it; he will shake his fist.	*The people of Nineveh used to be proud. They thought that no other country could conquer them. They said to each other, "Our city is the greatest city! No other city is as great as ours!" But an enemy army will completely destroy Nineveh. It will become a place where wild animals make their dens. People who go by that area will often make hissing sounds and shake their fists to show how much they hated that city.*

ULT **This {is} the exultant city, the one dwelling in security, the one saying in its heart, "I {am}, and besides me {there is} not another**

UST The people of Nineveh used to be proud. They thought that no other country could conquer them. They said to each other, "Our city is the greatest city! No other city is as great as ours

Zephaniah is speaking of the **city** of Nineveh as if it were a living thing that could exult, dwell in **security**, and speak. He means that the people of Nineveh have done these things. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [This is the city whose people exulted, who thought they dwelled in security, who said in their hearts, "We are, and besides us there are no others]

Support Reference: Personification

ULT **the one saying in its heart, "I {am}, and besides me {there is} not another**

UST They said to each other, "Our city is the greatest city! No other city is as great as ours

Here the **heart** represents the thoughts. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the one saying in its thoughts, "I am, and besides me there is not another] or [the one saying to itself, "I am, and besides me there it not another]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the one saying in its heart, "I {am}, and besides me {there is} not another**

UST They said to each other, "Our city is the greatest city! No other city is as great as ours

In this context, the quoted statement means, "I am the only city that really matters; it is as if all other cities did not even exist." You could say that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers.

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the one saying in its heart, "I {am}, and besides me {there is} not another**

UST They said to each other, "Our city is the greatest city! No other city is as great as ours

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 one saying to itself that it is the only city that really matters, as if all other cities did not even exist] or [The one whose people said to themselves that their city was the only one that really mattered, as if all other cities did not even exist]

Support Reference: Quotes within Quotes

ULT **How it has become a ruin**
UST But an enemy army will completely destroy Nineveh

Zephaniah is using the past tense in order to describe something that will happen in the future. He is doing this to show that the event will certainly happen. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use the future tense. Alternate translation: [How it will become a ruin]
Support Reference: Predictive Past

ULT **a lair for the beast**
UST It will become a place where wild animals make their dens

Zephaniah is not referring to a specific **beast**. He means beasts in general. It may be more natural in your language to express this meaning by using a plural form. Alternate translation: [a lair for beasts]
Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

ULT **Every one passing by will hiss at it; he will shake his fist**
UST People who go by that area will often make hissing sounds and shake their fists to show how much they hated that city

Hissing and shaking a **fist** at Nineveh would be symbolic actions that expressed contempt for the city. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the significance of these actions. Alternate translation: [Every one passing by will hiss at it in contempt; he will shake his fist in scorn]
Support Reference: Symbolic Action

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
exultant	proud
ruin	an enemy army will completely destroy Nineveh
beast	wild animals

Zephaniah 3

Zephaniah 3 Introduction

Zephaniah 3 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

This chapter is the third of the three major parts of the book of Zephaniah. (See the outline in the introduction to the book.) This part begins with a warning to the city of Jerusalem (verses 1–8), and it then describes how Yahweh will restore Jerusalem and bring people from many nations there to worship him (verses 9–20).

The ULT sets the lines of this chapter farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are poetry.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Personification

In verses 1–5, Zephaniah speaks of the city of Jerusalem as if it were a person who was acting in certain ways. Zephaniah is actually addressing the people of Jerusalem. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that in your translation. For example, for the statement "Woe to the one rebelling" in verse 1, you might say "Woe to the people of Jerusalem, who are rebelling."

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Gender of the pronoun for a city

In verses 1–5, Zephaniah uses the pronouns "she" and "her" to mean Jerusalem, since it was conventional in his language to use feminine pronouns when speaking about a city. In verses 11–12 and 18–19, Yahweh addresses the city as if it were a person, and he uses the feminine singular form of "you." Zephaniah does the same in verses 14–15, as do the people who speak to Jerusalem in verses 16–17. If you decide to show in your translation that all of these speakers are addressing Jerusalem as if the city were a person, you may decide to use the gender of pronoun that is conventional in your own language.

Number of pronouns

The pronoun "you" is singular throughout the chapter except for in v. 20, where it is plural. Use the corresponding forms in your translation if your language marks a distinction between singular and plural "you" and if you decide to retain the references to the city of Jerusalem as if it were a person.

Zephaniah 3:1

ULT	UST
Woe to the one rebelling and being defiled, the oppressing city!	*The people who live in the city of Jerusalem have rebelled against Yahweh. They have committed terrible sins, and this has made them unacceptable to Yahweh. They have treated others violently. As a result, terrible things are going to happen to them!*

ULT **Woe to the one rebelling and being defiled, the oppressing city**
UST The people who live in the city of Jerusalem have rebelled against Yahweh. They have committed terrible sins, and this has made them unacceptable to Yahweh. They have treated others violently. As a result, terrible things are going to happen to them

Zephaniah is implicitly referring to the **city** of Jerusalem. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Woe to Jerusalem, the one rebelling and being defiled, the oppressing city]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **the one rebelling and being defiled, the oppressing city**
UST The people who live in the city of Jerusalem have rebelled against Yahweh. They have committed terrible sins, and this has made them unacceptable to Yahweh. They have treated others violently

As the introduction to this chapter discusses, here and through verse 5, Zephaniah is speaking of the **city** of Jerusalem as if it were a person who could be **rebelling** and who could have become **defiled** and who could be **oppressing** vulnerable people. Zephaniah is actually addressing the people of Jerusalem who have been doing these things. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate this in your translation, here and in verses 2–5. Alternate translation: [you people of Jerusalem who are rebelling against Yahweh and who have become defiled and who are oppressing others]
Support Reference: Personification

ULT **the one rebelling and being defiled, the oppressing city**
UST The people who live in the city of Jerusalem have rebelled against Yahweh. They have committed terrible sins, and this has made them unacceptable to Yahweh. They have treated others violently

If your language does not use a passive form such as **being defiled**, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [the city that has rebelled and defiled herself and that has oppressed people] or [you people of Jerusalem who are rebelling against Yahweh and who have defiled yourselves and who are oppressing others]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **the one rebelling and being defiled**
> UST have rebelled against Yahweh. They have committed terrible sins, and this has made them unacceptable to Yahweh

In verses 1–7, as the ULT shows, Zephaniah uses feminine singular pronouns to refer to the city of Jerusalem. That was conventional in his language. Your language may use a different gender of pronouns to refer to cities. If you translate verses 1–7 as though Zephaniah is speaking directly to the city as a person, use the gender of pronoun that is most natural in your language. Alternate translation: [the city that has rebelled and defiled itself]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Woe	As a result, terrible things are going to happen to them
rebelling	rebelled
defiled	They have committed terrible sins, and this has made them unacceptable to Yahweh

Zephaniah 3:2

ULT	UST
She does not hear the voice; she does not take correction. In Yahweh she does not trust; to her God she does not draw near.	*The people of Jerusalem have not paid attention to the prophets whom Yahweh has sent to correct them. The people in Jerusalem do not believe in Yahweh, their God, and they do not worship him.*

ULT **She does not hear the voice**
UST The people of Jerusalem have not paid attention to the prophets whom Yahweh has sent

Zephaniah is using the term **heard** in a specific sense to mean "obeyed." If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [She does not obey the voice]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **She does not hear the voice**
UST The people of Jerusalem have not paid attention to the prophets whom Yahweh has sent

The term **voice** could mean: (1) the voice of Yahweh, that is, the message Yahweh has been sending to the people of Jerusalem through his prophets telling the people to repent. Alternate translation: [She has not obeyed Yahweh's command to repent]; or (2) the voice of anyone who has been warning the people of the city that their wicked behavior will have destructive consequences. Alternate translation: [She does not listen to anyone who tries to warn her]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **to her God she does not draw near**
UST their God, and they do not worship him

Zephaniah is speaking as if the city of Jerusalem, meaning its people, could literally have **drawn near** to **God**, that is, moved closer to a place where God was. He means that they could have and should have worshiped God sincerely. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [she does not worship her God sincerely]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Yahweh	Yahweh
trust	The people in Jerusalem do … believe
God	God

Zephaniah 3:3

ULT	UST
Her princes are roaring lions in her midst. Her judges are wolves of the evening; they do not gnaw in the morning.	*The leaders of the city treat its people violently, like lions that roar as they attack their prey. Their judges are greedy. They are like wolves that have not eaten all day and so devour an entire animal that they kill.*

ULT **Her princes**
UST The leaders

See how you translated the term “princes” in 1:8. Alternate translation: [her officials]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **are roaring lions in her midst**
UST of the city treat its people violently, like lions that roar as they attack their prey

Zephaniah is speaking as if the **princes** of Jerusalem were literally **roaring lions**. He means that they exploit and harm vulnerable people rather than protecting them. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. You may find it helpful to translate this image as a comparison. Alternate translation: [exploit and harm the vulnerable people of the city, as if they were roaring lions attacking their prey]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **are wolves of the evening**
UST are greedy. They are like wolves that have not eaten all day

Zephaniah is speaking as if the **judges** of Jerusalem were literally **wolves**. As in the case of his comparison of the city’s princes to lions, he means that they exploit and harm vulnerable people rather than protecting them. By **wolves of the evening**, Zephaniah means wolves that have not eaten all day and so are especially aggressive from hunger. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Once again you may find it helpful to translate this image as a comparison. Alternate translation: [also exploit and harm the vulnerable people of the city, like hungry wolves attacking their prey]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **they do not gnaw in the morning**
UST and so devour an entire animal that they kill

Zephaniah is continuing to speak of the city’s **judges** as if they were **wolves**. The last thing a wolf would do in eating an animal it had killed, after consuming its flesh, would be to **gnaw** on its bones to get at the marrow inside. Zephaniah is saying that these judges are like wolves that eat an entire animal at once when they kill it in the evening or at night, leaving not even this final task for the morning. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they take everything away from vulnerable people]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
princes	The leaders
lions	lions
judges	judges

Zephaniah 3:4

ULT	UST
Her prophets are light, men of treacheries. Her priests profane the holy; they violate the law.	*The prophets in Jerusalem say what they think people want to hear. They do not honestly give the people messages from Yahweh. The priests in Jerusalem do things that the law of Moses forbids. As a result, they have made the temple there unholy.*

ULT **are light**
UST say what they think people want to hear

Zephaniah is speaking as if the **prophets** in Jerusalem were literally **light**, that is, as if they did not weigh very much. He could mean: (1) that they are frivolous in character and so what they say is not profound or significant. Alternate translation: [are frivolous]; or (2) that nothing restrains them from doing wrong things, as if they were a light object with nothing weighing it down that would float away or be blown away. Alternate translation: [are unprincipled] or [are reckless]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **men of treacheries**
UST They do not honestly give the people messages from Yahweh

The phrase **men of treacheries** gives further information about the **prophets** whom Zephaniah is describing. It does not refer to a different group of people. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [They are men of treacheries]
Support Reference: Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

ULT **men of treacheries**
UST They do not honestly give the people messages from Yahweh

Zephaniah is using this possessive form not to describe men who belong to treacheries but to describe **men** who habitually commit **treacheries**. This could mean: (1) that these prophets deceive and betray other people in order to take advantage of them. Alternate translation: [They treat others treacherously]; or (2) that they are not faithful to Yahweh, that is, they do not speak only messages that Yahweh has given them. Rather, they speak messages that they claim are from Yahweh but which Yahweh has not given them. Alternate translation: [They do not speak faithfully only what Yahweh has told them]
Support Reference: Possession

ULT **profane the holy**
UST As a result, they have made the temple there unholy

Zephaniah is using the adjective **holy** as a noun to mean a certain thing or kind of thing. Your language may use adjectives in the same way. If not, you can translate this adjective with an equivalent phrase. The word **holy** could be referring to: (1) the temple, as a holy place set apart for the worship of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [treat the temple as if it were just an ordinary place]; or (2) in addition to the temple, all of the clothing, equipment, and food that was set apart for the use of the priests in leading the people in the worship of Yahweh. Alternate translation: [treat the special things that they are supposed to use in worship as if they were ordinary things]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
prophets	prophets
priests	priests
profane	As a result, they have made … unholy
holy	the temple there
law	law of Moses

Zephaniah 3:5

ULT	UST
Yahweh is righteous in her midst. He does not commit unrighteousness. In the morning, in the morning he gives his justice; at light he is not left out. Yet the unrighteous does not know shame.	*But Yahweh is still in the city, and he always does what is right. He treats people justly, day after day, without fail. Still, wicked people are not ashamed when they do what is wrong.*

ULT **He does not commit unrighteousness**
UST and he always does what is right

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative word **unrighteousness**. Alternate translation: [He always does what is right]
Support Reference: Double Negatives

ULT **In the morning, in the morning he gives his justice; at light he is not left out**
UST He treats people justly, day after day, without fail

The word **light** could mean: (1) the light of dawn. In that case, Zephaniah would be saying the same thing twice in slightly different ways for emphasis. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition. To reflect this, you may wish to include both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. If you do that, it may be helpful to add a connecting word in order to show that the second clause is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [In the morning, in the morning he gives his justice; indeed, at dawn he is not left out]; or (2) visibility, representing how Yahweh makes **justice** evident. In that case, the phrase **at light** would apply to the first clause rather than to the second one. Alternate translation: [In the morning, in the morning he brings his justice to light; he is not left out] or [In the morning, in the morning he makes his justice evident; indeed, he does not fail to do that]
Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **In the morning, in the morning**
UST day after day

Zephaniah is repeating the phrase **In the morning** in order to intensify the idea that it expresses. If your language can repeat phrases for intensification, you may find it appropriate to do that here in your translation. Your language may also have another way of expressing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [Morning by morning] or [Every morning]
Support Reference: Reduplication

ULT **In the morning, in the morning**
UST day after day

Zephaniah is using the term **morning** to mean a day, by association with the way that each day begins with a morning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Day by day] or [Every day]
Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **he gives his justice**
UST He treats people justly

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **justice**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [he tells people how to act justly] or [he declares what would be the just thing to do]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **he is not left out**
UST without fail

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [he is not missing] or [he does not fail to appear]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **he is not left out**
UST without fail

If it would be clearer in your language, you could use a positive expression to translate this double negative that consists of the negative particle **not** and the negative verb **left out**. The double negative expresses emphasis, and you may choose to express that emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [he diligently appears]
Support Reference: Double Negatives

ULT **Yet the unrighteous does not know shame**
UST Still, wicked people are not ashamed when they do what is wrong

Zephaniah is using the adjective **unrighteous** 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: [Yet people who are unrighteous do not know shame]
Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

ULT **Yet the unrighteous does not know shame**
UST Still, wicked people are not ashamed when they do what is wrong

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **shame**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [Yet people who are unrighteous are not ashamed of what they do, even though they should be]
Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Yahweh	Yahweh
righteous	what is right
commit	and he always does
unrighteousness	what is right
justice	justly
unrighteous	Still, wicked people
know	are … ashamed when they do what is wrong
shame	ashamed

Zephaniah 3:6

ULT	UST
“I have cut off nations, their corners have been demolished; I have destroyed their streets, without one passing over them. Their cities are ruined, without a man, with no one dwelling.	*So Yahweh says this: “I have destroyed many nations. I have destroyed their strong city walls and towers. I have destroyed the streets in those cities. No one walks on them anymore. Those cities are in ruins. All the people who used to live in them are now dead.*

ULT **I have cut off nations, their corners have been demolished; I have destroyed their streets**

UST So Yahweh says this: “I have destroyed many nations. I have destroyed their strong city walls and towers. I have destroyed the streets in those cities

This is the beginning of a direct quotation from Yahweh that continues through verse 13. You may wish to indicate that in your translation by using a natural way of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: [Yahweh has said, “I have cut off nations, their corners have been demolished; I have destroyed their streets]

Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT **I have cut off nations, their corners have been demolished; I have destroyed their streets**

UST So Yahweh says this: “I have destroyed many nations. I have destroyed their strong city walls and towers. I have destroyed the streets in those cities

Yahweh is speaking as if he has done these things personally, but he means that the enemy army he has been describing throughout the book has done them. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [I have caused an enemy army to cut off nations, their corners have been demolished; that army has destroyed their streets]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

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ULT **I have cut off**

UST So Yahweh says this: “I have destroyed

See how you translated the expression “cut off” in 1:3. Alternate translation: [I have destroyed] or [I have caused an enemy army to destroy]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **their corners have been demolished**

UST I have destroyed their strong city walls and towers

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I have demolished their corners] or [it has demolished their corners]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **their corners**
UST their strong city walls and towers

See how you translated the word **corners** in 1:16. Alternate translation: [the high towers at the corners of their walls]
Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **Their cities are ruined**
UST Those cities are in ruins

If your language 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: [Their cities are in ruins]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **without a man, with no one dwelling**
UST All the people who used to live in them are now dead

These two phrases mean similar things. Yahweh is using them together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [without a single person living there]
Support Reference: Doublet

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
nations	nations
destroyed	destroyed
ruined	ruins

Zephaniah 3:7

ULT	UST
I said, 'Surely you will fear me; you will take correction. Then her dwelling will not be cut off by all that I have visited upon her.' Nevertheless, they rose early, they corrupted all of their deeds.	*I said to myself, 'The people of Jerusalem will certainly honor me and allow me to correct them. If they do that, I will not destroy their city. I will not do all the things that I said I would do to them.' But even though the people of Jerusalem knew that I had punished other nations, they eagerly did even more wrong things."*

> ULT **I said, 'Surely you will fear me; you will take correction. Then her dwelling will not be cut off {by} all that I have visited upon her**
> UST I said to myself, 'The people of Jerusalem will certainly honor me and allow me to correct them. If they do that, I will not destroy their city. I will not do all the things that I said I would do to them

In this quotation, Yahweh first speaks directly to the city of Jerusalem in the second person, and then he speaks about that city in the third person. If it would help your readers appreciate what Yahweh is saying, you could translate the entire quotation in the third person. Alternate translation: [I said, 'Surely she will fear me; she will take correction. Then her dwelling will not be cut off by all that I have visited upon her]

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

> ULT **I said, 'Surely you will fear me; you will take correction. Then her dwelling will not be cut off {by} all that I have visited upon her**
> UST I said to myself, 'The people of Jerusalem will certainly honor me and allow me to correct them. If they do that, I will not destroy their city. I will not do all the things that I said I would do to them

If it would be clearer in your language, you could translate this so that there is not a quotation within a quotation. Alternate translation: [I said that she would surely fear me; she would take correction. Then her dwelling would not be cut off by all that I had visited upon her]

Support Reference: Quotes within Quotes

> ULT **I said, 'Surely you will fear me; you will take correction. Then her dwelling will not be cut off {by} all that I have visited upon her**
> UST I said to myself, 'The people of Jerusalem will certainly honor me and allow me to correct them. If they do that, I will not destroy their city. I will not do all the things that I said I would do to them

Yahweh is speaking to and about the city of Jerusalem as if it were a person who could **fear** him and **take correction**. He is actually speaking to and about the people who live in Jerusalem. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. See what you did in 3:1–5. Alternate translation: [I said that the people of Jerusalem would surely fear me; they would take correction. Then their dwelling would not be cut off by all that I had visited upon them]

Support Reference: Personification

ULT **by all that I have visited upon her**
UST I will not do all the things that I said I would do to them

See how you translated the expression “visit upon” in 1:8. Alternate translation: [by all that I have done to punish her]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **they rose early, they corrupted all of their deeds**
UST they eagerly did even more wrong things

Yahweh is using the expression **rose early** to mean that the people were eager to do corrupt things. The expression comes from the way that people get up early in the morning to do something if they are eager to do it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [they eagerly corrupted all of their deeds]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **they rose early, they corrupted all of their deeds**
UST they eagerly did even more wrong things

Yahweh says that as a generalization for emphasis. If it would be clearer in your language, you could express the emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: [they eagerly corrupted their deeds even more]
Support Reference: Hyperbole

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
fear	will … honor
corrupted	wrong things

Zephaniah 3:8

ULT	UST
Therefore, wait for me”—the declaration of Yahweh— “for the day of my arising to the prey. For my judgment is to gather nations, for me to assemble kingdoms, to pour out my indignation on them, all of the burning of my nose. For in the fire of my jealousy all of the earth will be consumed.	*So this is what Yahweh declares: “You can confidently expect that an enemy army is going to conquer you and take away your possessions. I have decided to judge all of the people groups on the earth at the same time. I am going to punish them severely because I am very angry with them for being so wicked. Because I am very angry that people have worshiped false gods, I am going to destroy wicked people all over the world.*

ULT **Therefore, wait for me”—the declaration of Yahweh— “for the day of my arising to the prey**

UST So this is what Yahweh declares: “You can confidently expect that an enemy army is going to conquer you and take away your possessions

See how you translated the phrase “the declaration of Yahweh” in 1:2, 1:3, 1:10, and 2:9. If you used it to introduce the quotations in those places, you may wish to do the same thing here. Alternate translation: [This is what Yahweh declares: “Therefore wait for me, for the day of my arising to the prey]

Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT **Therefore, wait for me”—the declaration of Yahweh— “for the day of my arising to the prey**

UST So this is what Yahweh declares: “You can confidently expect that an enemy army is going to conquer you and take away your possessions

The imperative **wait** is plural, so Yahweh is addressing some group of people. That group could be: (1) the wicked Judeans who are still disobeying Yahweh despite his warnings. In that case, Yahweh would be using the term **wait** to indicate that he is certainly going to do what he describes. Your language may use the term “wait” in this same sense. If not, you could use plain language. Alternate translation: [Therefore, you sinful Judeans, just wait!”—the declaration of Yahweh—“One day soon I will arise to the prey] or [Therefore, you can be certain, you sinful Judeans”—the declaration of Yahweh—“that one day soon I will arise to the prey]; or (2) the “humble of the earth” whom Zephaniah mentions in 2:3. In that case, Yahweh would be using the term **wait** to tell them to be patient until he punishes sin and enforces justice. Alternate translation: [Therefore, be patient, you godly people”—the declaration of Yahweh—“until the day when I arise to the prey]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **for the day of my arising**

UST You can confidently expect that an enemy army is going to conquer you

While Yahweh is going to punish sinful nations on a specific **day**, he is using that term here to refer to a specific time. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [until the time when I arise]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **to the prey**
> UST and take away your possessions

Yahweh is speaking as if he were a predatory animal and the wicked **nations** and **kingdoms** that he is going to punish were **prey** that he was going to pounce on. (This could be an allusion to the description of Jerusalem's "princes" as "lions" and its "judges" as "wolves" in 3:3, indicating that those who preyed on others will themselves become prey.) If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to punish wicked people]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **to the prey**
> UST and take away your possessions

The phrase translated **to the prey** could also be translated **as a witness**. If that is the meaning, then Yahweh would be speaking as if he were literally going to stand up and give evidence that these kingdoms and nations had sinned wickedly against him. 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: [as if I were going testify against you]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **to pour out my indignation on them**
> UST I am going to punish them severely

Yahweh is speaking as if his **indignation** were a liquid that he was going to **pour out** onto wicked nations and kingdoms. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [to punish them in my indignation]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **all of the burning of my nose**
> UST because I am very angry with them for being so wicked

The phrase **all of the burning of my nose** is a further description of Yahweh's **indignation**. See how you translated the similar expression in 2:2. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [My anger against them is very intense]

Support Reference: Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

> ULT **in the fire of my jealousy all of the earth will be consumed**
> UST I am very angry that people have worshiped false gods, I am going to destroy wicked people all over the world

See how you translated the similar expression in 1:18. As the introduction to Zephaniah indicates, these parallel statements mark the boundaries between the major sections of the book. It may be helpful to your readers to translate them in the same way. Alternate translation: [I will destroy all of the people who live on the earth when I punish them in my jealousy]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Yahweh	Yahweh
day	You can confidently expect that
prey	and take away your possessions
judgment	I have decided
nations	at the same time
assemble	to judge
kingdoms	all of the people groups on the earth
jealousy	that people have worshiped false gods
earth	the world
consumed	I am going to destroy

Zephaniah 3:9

ULT	UST
Then I will surely give to the peoples a pure lip, for all of them to call upon the name of Yahweh, to serve him with one shoulder.	*But after that, I will make the people groups do what is right and say what is right. That way all of them will worship me, Yahweh. I will be the only God whom any of them worship.*

ULT **I will surely give to the peoples a pure lip, for all of them to call upon the name of Yahweh**

UST But … I will make the people groups do what is right and say what is right. That way all of them will worship me, Yahweh

Yahweh is using the term **lip** by association to mean the capacity to speak. He could mean: (1) the peoples were saying wicked things because their character was wicked, but he will purify their character so that they will say pure things. Alternate translation: [I will surely give the peoples righteous character so that they will say pure things; then they will pray to me acceptably]; or (2) that by invoking the names of other gods (as described in 1:5), they had made themselves unworthy to pray to Yahweh, but he will cleanse their capacity to speak so that they can pray to him. Alternate translation: [I will surely cleanse the speech of the peoples from the defilement of the names of other gods so that they can pray to me acceptably]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **I will surely give to the peoples a pure lip**

UST But … I will make the people groups do what is right and say what is right

Since Yahweh is speaking of many **peoples**, it may be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **lip**. Alternate translation: [I will surely give the peoples pure lips]

Support Reference: Collective Nouns

ULT **for all of them to call upon the name of Yahweh**

UST That way all of them will worship me, Yahweh

Here, **name** represents a person by association with the way that each person has a name. However, in this instance there is also the idea that the peoples will call upon Yahweh (that is, pray to him) by name, acknowledging him as God. Alternate translation: [for all of them to pray to Yahweh by name]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **upon the name of Yahweh, to serve him**

UST me, Yahweh … whom … worship

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: [upon my name, to serve me]

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **with one shoulder**

UST I will be the only God … any of them

Yahweh is using this expression to mean that the peoples will serve him unitedly, as if they were all putting their shoulders together to lift or push something heavy. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. You could also use plain language. Alternate translation: [shoulder to shoulder] or [together]

Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
pure	do what is right and say what is right
call	That way … will worship
Yahweh	Yahweh
serve	whom … worship

Zephaniah 3:10

ULT	UST
From across the rivers of Cush, my worshipers, the daughter of my scattered one, will bring my offering.	*Enemy armies will take some of the people who worship me away to other countries. They will take them as far away as the place where the Nile River begins. But even from that far away, my people will come back to Jerusalem, bringing offerings to me.*

ULT **From across the rivers of Cush**

UST They will take them as far away as the place where the Nile River begins. But even from that far away

Yahweh is using one distant place, the area around the **rivers of Cush** (the upper Nile region), to mean distant places in general. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [From even as far away as across the rivers of Cush] or [From even the most distant places]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT **the daughter of my scattered one**

UST Enemy armies will take some of … away to other countries

Here the expression **daughter of** describes the people who make up a certain group. The group in view here is the Jewish nation that will have been **scattered** into many different places through exile. Alternate translation: [the people of my scattered nation]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **the daughter of my scattered one**

UST Enemy armies will take some of … away to other countries

If your language 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 Jewish people, whom conquering empires will have scattered into many lands]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **will bring my offering**

UST my people will come back to Jerusalem, bringing offerings to me

Since Yahweh is speaking of what many people will **bring**, it may be more natural in your language to use the plural form of **offering**. Alternate translation: [will bring my offerings] or [will bring offerings to me]

Support Reference: Collective Nouns

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Cush	the place where the Nile River begins
scattered	Enemy armies will take … away to other countries
my offering	offerings to me

Zephaniah 3:11

ULT	UST
On that day you will not feel shame from all of your deeds by which you transgressed against me, for then I will remove from your midst the exultant ones of your pride, and you will not continue still to be haughty on my holy mountain.	*When I restore you, you will no longer feel shame for disobeying me and doing many wrong things. Many of you boasted about how great you thought you were. But I will punish those people, and then you will always come humbly to worship me in my temple.*

ULT **you will not feel shame … your deeds**
UST you will no longer feel shame … and doing … wrong things

The words **you** and **your** are singular throughout this verse because Yahweh is speaking to the city of Jerusalem as if it were a person, as he did in 3:7. Since Yahweh is actually speaking to the people who live in Jerusalem, you could use the plural forms of "you" and "your" in your translation if your language marks that distinction.

Support Reference: Forms of 'You' — Singular

ULT **the exultant {ones} of your pride**
UST boasted about how great you thought you were

Yahweh is using this possessive form to describe **exultant** or boastful people in the city of Jerusalem who are characterized by pride. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [the people who have been boasting so proudly]

Support Reference: Possession

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
day	When
shame	shame
transgressed	disobeying
exultant	boasted about
pride	how great you thought you were
haughty	you will … come humbly
holy	to worship me in my temple

Zephaniah 3:12

ULT	UST
And I will leave in your midst a humble and lowly people, and they will trust in the name of Yahweh.	*Then the people who live in Jerusalem will be poor, but they will be humble. They will depend on me, Yahweh, to help them.*

ULT **in your midst**
UST Then … who live in Jerusalem

See whether you decided to use the singular or plural form of "you" and "your" in the previous verse. It would be helpful to use the same form here.
Support Reference: Forms of 'You' — Singular

ULT **a humble and lowly people**
UST the people … will be poor, but they will be humble

The terms **humble** and **lowly** mean similar things. Yahweh 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 genuinely humble people]
Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **and they will trust in the name of Yahweh**
UST They will depend on me, Yahweh, to help them

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: [and they will trust in my name]
Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **and they will trust in the name of Yahweh**
UST They will depend on me, Yahweh, to help them

Here, **name** represents a person by association with the way that each person has a name. Alternate translation: [and they will trust in me personally]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
humble	will be poor
lowly	but they will be humble
trust	They will depend on … to help them
Yahweh	Yahweh

Zephaniah 3:13

ULT	UST
The remnant of Israel will not commit unrighteousness and they will not speak a lie, and a tongue of deceit will not be found in their mouth. But they will graze and lie down, and there will be none frightening them."	*Then the people of Israel who survive will not do wicked things. They will not tell lies or say things to deceive others. They will not be afraid that an enemy army will conquer them, so they will be able to eat and sleep peacefully."*

ULT **and they will not speak a lie, and a tongue of deceit will not be found in their mouth**
UST They will not tell lies or say things to deceive others

and they will not speak a lie, and a tongue of deceit will not be found in their mouth Since Yahweh is speaking of many people, it may be more natural in your language to use plural forms here. Alternate translation: [and they will not speak lies, and tongues of deceit will not be found in their mouths]
Support Reference: Collective Nouns

ULT **and they will not speak a lie, and a tongue of deceit will not be found in their mouth**
UST They will not tell lies or say things to deceive others

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. You may wish to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation but connecting them with a word other than **and**. Alternate translation: [and they will not speak lies; no, tongues of deceit will not be found in their mouths]
Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **and a tongue of deceit will not be found in their mouth**
UST or say things to deceive others

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [and no one will find deceitful tongues in their mouths]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **and a tongue of deceit will not be found in their mouth**
UST or say things to deceive others

Here the word **found** indicates that something will not be able to be found because it will not be there. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and there will be not be any deceitful tongues in their mouths]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **and a tongue of deceit will not be found in their mouth**
UST or say things to deceive others

Yahweh is using the terms **tongue** and **mouth** by association to mean speaking. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and they will not say any deceitful things]
Support Reference: Metonymy

> ULT **But they will graze and lie down, and there will be none frightening them**
> UST They will not be afraid that an enemy army will conquer them, so they will be able to eat and sleep peacefully

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 no one will frighten them, they will be able to graze and lie down]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

> ULT **But they will graze and lie down, and there will be none frightening them**
> UST They will not be afraid that an enemy army will conquer them, so they will be able to eat and sleep peacefully

Yahweh is speaking as if the people in the remnant of Israel will be animals that will **graze** and **lie down** in pastures. He means that they will be able to live peacefully, like animals grazing undisturbed out in a field. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [But they will be able to live without anyone disturbing them]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
remnant	who survive
Israel	Israel
commit	will … do
unrighteousness	wicked things
lie	lies
tongue	or say things
frightening	afraid

Zephaniah 3:14

ULT	UST
Sing, daughter of Zion! Shout, Israel! Rejoice and exult with all of your heart, daughter of Jerusalem!	*You Israelites who live in Judah should sing and shout loudly! You people who live in Jerusalem should celebrate because you are feeling very happy!*

ULT **Sing … Shout … Rejoice and exult**
UST should sing and shout loudly … should celebrate because you are feeling very happy

The implied "you" in the imperatives **Sing**, **Rejoice**, and **exult** is singular because Zephaniah is addressing a group as if it were a single individual. The implied "you" in the imperative **Shout** is plural because Zephaniah is addressing a group as a number of individuals. Use the same singular and plural forms in your translation if your language marks a distinction between singular and plural "you" and you decide to retain the singular and plural forms of address. However, see the notes to the rest of this verse, which suggest the possibility of using a plural address throughout the verse.
Support Reference: Forms of 'You' — Singular

ULT **daughter of Zion**
UST who live in Judah

See how you translated the expression **daughter of** in 3:10. Here as well it describes the people who make up a certain group. Alternate translation: [you people of Zion]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **daughter of Zion**
UST who live in Judah

The word **Zion** is the name of the mountain on which the city of Jerusalem was located. Zephaniah is using the name by association to represent the entire kingdom of Judah, whose capital was Jerusalem. Alternate translation: [you people of Judah]
Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **Israel**
UST You Israelites

Zephaniah is addressing many people by the name of their nation, **Israel**. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [you people of Israel]
Support Reference: Collective Nouns

ULT **Rejoice and exult**
UST should celebrate because you are feeling very happy

The terms **Rejoice** and **exult** mean similar things. Zephaniah 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: [Rejoice greatly]
Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **with all of {your} heart**
UST because you are feeling very happy

Here the **heart** represents the feelings. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [with deep emotion]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **daughter of Jerusalem**
UST You people who live in Jerusalem

See how you translated the expression **daughter of** earlier in this verse. Alternate translation: [you people of Jerusalem]
Support Reference: Idiom

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Zion	Judah
Israel	Israelites
Rejoice	should celebrate
exult	because you are feeling very happy
Jerusalem	Jerusalem

Zephaniah 3:15

ULT	UST
Yahweh has taken away your judgments; he has turned back your enemy. The king of Israel, Yahweh, is in your midst. You will not fear harm again!	*You should celebrate because Yahweh is not going to punish you any more. He is going to keep enemy armies far away from you! Yahweh himself, who is the true king of you Israelites, is going to live among you. You will never be afraid again that others will harm you.*

ULT **your judgments … You will not fear**
UST to punish you … You will never be afraid

As the introduction to this chapter discusses, the words "you" and "your" are singular in these instances and generally in verses 16–19 because they are addressing Jerusalem as an individual. If you decide to retain the singular address, use the singular form in your translation if your language marks that distinction, but use plural forms if you decide to have a plural address.
Support Reference: Forms of 'You' — Singular

ULT **your judgments**
UST to punish you

Zephaniah is using this possessive form not to describe **judgments** that the people of Jerusalem have made but to describe judgments that **Yahweh** has made against them. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [his judgments against you]
Support Reference: Possession

ULT **The king of Israel**
UST who is the true king of you Israelites

It is true in one sense that **Yahweh** is the **king** of the people of **Israel**. As their God, he is the ruler whom they must obey. But in another sense, he is not literally the king who rules from the palace in Jerusalem. It may be helpful to clarify this for your readers. Alternate translation: [The ruler of Israel] or [The God whom the Israelites worship and obey]
Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Yahweh	Yahweh
judgments	to punish you
enemy	enemy
king	king
Israel	Israelites
Yahweh	Yahweh
fear	afraid
harm	that others will harm you

Zephaniah 3:16

ULT	UST
In that day it will be said to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, Zion! Do not slacken your hands!	*At that time, prophets will say to the people who live in Jerusalem, "You people who live on Mount Zion should not be afraid! No, you should not become discouraged.*

ULT **In that day**
UST At that time

Zephaniah is using the term **day** 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]
Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **it will be said**
UST prophets will say

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Some languages might use an indefinite pronoun. Alternate translation: [they will say]
Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **to Jerusalem, "Do not fear, Zion! Do not slacken your hands**
UST to the people who live in Jerusalem, "You people who live on Mount Zion should not be afraid! No, you should not become discouraged

The word **your** and the implied "you" in the imperative **Do not fear** are singular here because they are addressing **Zion** as an individual. However, the implied "you" in the imperative **Do not slacken** is plural because it envisions Zion as a group consisting of a number of individuals. You may have decided to use plural forms in verses 16–19. Alternate translation, using plural forms: [to the people of Jerusalem, "Do not fear, you people of Zion! None of you slacken your hands]
Support Reference: Forms of 'You' — Singular

ULT **Do not fear, Zion! Do not slacken your hands**
UST You people who live on Mount Zion should not be afraid! No, you should not become discouraged

These two phrases mean similar things. The people who are speaking to Zion are using repetition to emphasize the idea that the phrases express. (They are referring to the way that a person's hands **slacken** or become limp when that person is afraid.) If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine these phrases. Alternate translation: [There is no reason for you to become weak with fear, Zion]
Support Reference: Parallelism

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
day	At … time
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
fear	afraid
Zion	Mount Zion

Zephaniah 3:17

ULT	UST
Yahweh your God is in your midst; a Mighty One, he will save you. He will rejoice over you with gladness; he will be silent in his love; he will exult over you with rejoicing."	*Yahweh your God lives among you! He is mighty, and he will protect you. He will be very happy about you. He will not say anything harsh to you, and you will know how much he loves you. He will sing loudly to rejoice about you."*

ULT **he will be silent in his love**

UST He will not say anything harsh to you, and you will know how much he loves you

Since the people who are speaking to Jerusalem say that Yahweh will **rejoice** and **exult**, they do not mean that he will literally **be silent**. Rather, they mean that Yahweh will no longer speak words of condemnation and judgment against Jerusalem. You could indicate that in your translation if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [in his love, he will no longer speak to condemn you]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Yahweh	Yahweh
God	God
Mighty	mighty
save	and he will protect you
rejoice	He will be … happy
with gladness	very
love	loves
exult	to rejoice
rejoicing	He will sing loudly

Zephaniah 3:18

ULT	UST
“I will gather the ones grieving for the solemn assembly, they are from you; the reproach was a burden upon her.	*Yahweh says, “Enemy armies took some of you Judeans away from your homeland. Those people became very sad because they could no longer gather with others to worship me. They felt shame because of what had happened to them. But I am going to bring them back to Judah.*

ULT **I will gather the ones grieving for the solemn assembly, they are from you; the reproach {was} a burden upon her**

UST Yahweh says, “Enemy armies took some of you Judeans away from your homeland. Those people became very sad because they could no longer gather with others to worship me. They felt shame because of what had happened to them. But I am going to bring them back to Judah

This verse is very difficult to understand. Modern versions translate it in many different ways. The ULT offers one reasonable interpretation of it. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, you may wish to follow the interpretation that it expresses. If a translation of the Bible does not exist in your region, you may wish to follow the interpretation of ULT.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **I will gather the ones grieving for the solemn assembly, they are from you**

UST Yahweh says, “Enemy armies took some of you Judeans away from your homeland. Those people became very sad because they could no longer gather with others to worship me … But I am going to bring them back to Judah

Yahweh may be using one kind of worship, a **solemn assembly**, to mean worship in general. He is addressing the city of Jerusalem as if it were an individual, so the phrase **they are from you** may be clarifying that the people who are **grieving** are Judeans who have been taken into exile and who are sad because they can no longer participate in the worship of Yahweh. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I will bring back the Judeans who have been taken into exile, who are sad because they cannot take part in public worship of me]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT **I will gather**

UST But I am going to bring them back to Judah

This is the beginning of a direct quotation from Yahweh that continues through verse 20. You may wish to indicate that in your translation, using a natural way of introducing direct quotations in your language. Alternate translation: [Yahweh says, “I will gather]

Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

ULT **the reproach {was} a burden upon her**

UST They felt shame because of what had happened to them

Yahweh is speaking as if the **reproach** of being conquered were literally a **burden** or heavy weight that Jerusalem was carrying with difficulty. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [it was painful for the people of Jerusalem to feel the disgrace of being conquered]

Support Reference: Metaphor

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
gather	But I am going to bring them back to Judah
assembly	gather
reproach	shame

Zephaniah 3:19

ULT	UST
Behold, I will be dealing with all of your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the cast-out one. And I will turn them into praise, and their shame into a name in all of the earth.	*You can be certain that I will severely punish all those who oppressed you. When I do that, I will rescue those who had to make a long journey to go and live in other countries. They felt shame when they had to do that. But now I will make the people of those countries praise and honor them.*

ULT **And I will save the lame and gather the cast-out one**

UST I will rescue those who had to make a long journey to go and live in other countries

The expressions **lame** and **cast-out one** are both feminine singular, suggesting that Yahweh is using both expressions to refer to Jerusalem as if that city were a female individual. In that case, Yahweh would be using repetition to emphasize the idea that these phrases express. The reference would actually be to the people of Judah and Jerusalem, who would be **lame** or limping from the difficulty of walking from their homeland to a place of exile and who could be described as **cast-out** since they had been taken from their homeland. It may be helpful to indicate in your translation that these two phrases are expressing the same idea. Alternate translation: [And I will rescue the people of Judah who are limping from walking so far away from home; yes, I will bring them back from exile]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **the lame**

UST those who had to make a long journey

Yahweh is using the adjective **lame** 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: [the lame people] or [the people of Judah who are limping from walking so far away from home]

Support Reference: Nominal Adjectives

ULT **the cast-out one**

UST to go and live in other countries

If your language 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 exile] or [the people of Judah whose enemies have taken them into exile]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **And I will turn them into praise, and their shame into a name in all of the earth**

UST They felt shame when they had to do that. But now I will make the people of those countries praise and honor them

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 I will turn them into praise, and I will turn their shame into a name in all of the earth.]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **And I will turn them into praise**
UST But now I will make … praise

Yahweh is speaking as if he were literally going to **turn** the people of Judah into **praise**. If it would be clearer in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [And I will cause people to praise them]
Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and their shame into a name in all of the earth**
UST They felt shame when they had to do that … the people of those countries … and honor them

Here, **name** represents the reputation of a group. Alternate translation: [and I will give them a good reputation throughout the earth instead of the shame that they now experience]
Support Reference: Metonymy

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
time	When
save	rescue
gather	I will rescue
praise	praise
shame	shame
earth	the people of those countries

Zephaniah 3:20

ULT	UST
At that time I will bring you in, yes, at the time of my gathering you. Then I will give you for a name and for praise among all of the peoples of the earth, in my restoring your fortunes before your eyes." Yahweh has spoken.	*When I act to help you, I will gather you together and bring you back home to Israel. Then I will cause all the people groups in the world to praise and honor you greatly. You will be able to see that I am making you rich again." This is what Yahweh has promised!*

ULT **I will bring you in**

UST and bring you back home to Israel

As the introduction to this chapter indicates, the words **you** and **your** are plural in this verse. Yahweh is now addressing the people of Judah as a group of individuals. If you have been using singular and plural forms in your translation to show the different kinds of address in this chapter, you may wish to indicate explicitly that the address changes to plural here. Alternate translation: [I will bring in you people of Judah]

Support Reference: Forms of 'You' — Singular

ULT **I will give you for a name and for praise among all of the peoples of the earth**

UST I will cause all the people groups in the world to praise and honor you greatly

See how you translated term **name** in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [I will give you a good reputation among all of the peoples of the earth, and they will praise you]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **in my restoring your fortunes before your eyes**

UST You will be able to see that I am making you rich again

Yahweh is using the term **eyes** by association to mean sight. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. It may be helpful to begin a new sentence here. Alternate translation: [You will personally witness me restoring your fortunes]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **Yahweh has spoken**

UST This is what Yahweh has promised

Zephaniah is using this phrase to indicate that verses 18–20 have been a quotation of a message that Yahweh gave him for the people of Judah. (This phrase means the same thing as "the declaration of Yahweh," which occurs several times in the book.) Consider natural ways of identifying direct quotations in your language. It may be more natural for you to put this attribution of the saying to Yahweh at the beginning of the message, that is, at the start of verse 18, as the UST does.

Support Reference: Quotations and Quote Margins

TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
time	When
time	When
gathering	gather
praise	praise
earth	the world
restoring	that I am making
your fortunes	you rich again
Yahweh	Yahweh

Appendix: Translation Academy

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as "I" and the person he is speaking to as "you." Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than "I" or "you."

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns "I" and "we." (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun "you." (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns "he," "she," "it," and "they." (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like "the man" or "the woman" are also third person.

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:6 Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 1:14 Zephaniah 2:12 Zephaniah 3:7 Zephaniah 3:9 Zephaniah 3:12

Abstract Nouns

Description

Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, or situations. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, unity, friendship, health, and reason. This is a translation issue because some languages may express a certain idea with an abstract noun, while others would need a different way to express it.

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**.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:14 Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:5

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.

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:7 Zephaniah 1:11 Zephaniah 1:17 Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:4 Zephaniah 2:4 Zephaniah 2:12 Zephaniah 3:1 Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:6 Zephaniah 3:6 Zephaniah 3:10 Zephaniah 3:13 Zephaniah 3:16 Zephaniah 3:19

Apostrophe

Description

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

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**.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:5 Zephaniah 2:5

Distinguishing Versus Informing or Reminding

Description

In some languages, phrases that modify a noun can be used with the noun for two different purposes. They can either (1) distinguish the noun from other similar items, or (2) they can give more information about the noun. That information could be new to the reader, or a reminder about something the reader might already know. Other languages use modifying phrases with a noun only for distinguishing the noun from other similar things. When people who speak these languages hear a modifying phrase along with a noun, they assume that its function is to distinguish one item from another similar item.

When the phrase that modifies a noun is a relative clause (a phrase that starts with a word such as "who" or"which"), some languages use a comma to mark the difference between (1) making a distinction between similar items and (2) giving more information about an item. Without the comma, the sentence below communicates that the added phrase is making a distinction:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister who was very thankful**.
  - If her sister was usually thankful, the phrase "who was thankful" could distinguish this sister of Mary's from another sister who was not usually thankful.

With the comma, the phrase is giving more information:

- Mary gave some of the food to **her sister, who was very thankful**.
  - This same phrase can be used to give us more information about Mary's sister. It tells us about how Mary's sister responded when Mary gave her the food. In this case it does not distinguish one sister from another sister.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Many source languages of the Bible use phrases that modify a noun both for distinguishing the noun from another similar item and also for giving more information about the noun. You (the translator) must be careful to understand which meaning the author intended in each case.
- Some languages use phrases that modify a noun only for distinguishing the noun from another similar item. When translating a phrase that is used for giving more information, translators who speak these languages will need to separate the phrase from the noun. Otherwise, people who read it or hear it will think that the phrase is meant to distinguish the noun from other similar items.

Examples From the Bible

Examples of words and phrases that are used to distinguish one item from other possible items:

(These usually do not cause any problem in translation.)

> The curtain is to separate **the holy place** from **the most holy place**. (Exodus 26:33b ULT)

The words "holy" and "most holy" distinguish two different places from each other and from any other place.

> A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to **the woman who bore him**. (Proverbs 17:25 ULT)

The phrase "who bore him" distinguishes which woman the son is bitterness to. He is not bitterness to all women, but to his mother.

Examples of words and phrases that are used to give added information or a reminder about an item:

(These are a translation issue for languages that do not use these.)

> … for **your righteous judgments** are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)

The word "righteous" simply reminds us that God's judgments are righteous. It does not distinguish his righteous judgments from his unrighteous judgments, because all of his judgments are righteous.

> You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)

The phrases "to your needy and to your poor" give further information about "your brother." They do not refer to a separate group of people.

> How can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)

The phrase "who is 90 years old" is a reminder of Sarah's age. It tells why Abraham was asking the question. He did not expect that a woman who was that old could bear a child. He was not distinguishing one woman named Sarah from another woman named Sarah who was a different age.

> I will wipe away mankind **whom I have created** from the surface of the earth. (Genesis 6:7 ULT)

The phrase "whom I have created" is a reminder of the relationship between God and mankind. It is the reason God had the right to wipe away mankind. There is not another mankind that God did not create.

> I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)

By saying "worthless idols," David was commenting about all idols and giving his reason for hating those who serve them. He was not distinguishing worthless idols from valuable idols.

Translation Strategies

If readers would understand the purpose of a phrase with a noun, then consider keeping the phrase and the noun together. For languages that use words or phrases with a noun only to distinguish one item from another, here are

some strategies for translating phrases that are used to inform or remind.

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.
(2) Use one of your language's ways for expressing that this is just added information. It may be by adding a small word, or by changing the way the voice sounds. Sometimes changes in the voice can be shown with punctuation marks, such as parentheses or commas.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Put the information in another part of the sentence and add words that show its purpose.

> I hate those who serve **worthless** idols (Psalm 31:6 ULT)
>
> > **Because idols are worthless**, I hate those who serve them.
>
> … for your **righteous** judgments are good. (Psalm 119:39b ULT)
>
> > … for your judgments are good **because they are righteous**.
>
> Can Sarah, **who is 90 years old**, bear a son? (Genesis 17:17b ULT)
>
> > Can Sarah bear a son **even when she is 90 years old**?
>
> > You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)
>
> > You must surely open your hand to any of **your needy and poor brothers** in your land.

(2) Use one of your language's ways for expressing that this is just added information.

> You are my Son, **whom I love**. I am pleased with you. (Luke 3:22 ULT)
>
> > You are my Son. **I love you** and I am pleased with you.
>
> > **Receiving my love**, you are my Son. I am pleased with you.
>
> You must surely open your hand to your brother, **to your needy and to your poor** in your land. (Deuteronomy 15:11 ULT)
>
> > You must surely open your hand to your brother **who is needy and poor** in your land.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:4 Zephaniah 3:8

Double Negatives

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each express the meaning of "not." Double negatives mean very different things in different languages. To translate sentences that have double negatives accurately and clearly, you need to know what a double negative means in the Bible and how to express this idea in your language.

Description

Negative words are words that have in them the meaning "not." Examples in English are "no," "not," "none," "no one," "nothing," "nowhere," "never," "nor," "neither," and "without." Also, some words have prefixes or suffixes that mean "not," such as the bolded parts of these words: "**un**happy," "**im**possible," and "use**less**." Some other kinds of words also have a negative meaning, such as "lack" or "reject," or even "fight" or "evil."

A double negative occurs when a clause has two words that each have a negative meaning.

> We did this **not** because we have **no** authority … (2 Thessalonians 3:9a ULT)
>
> And this was **not** done **without** an oath! (Hebrews 7:20a ULT)
>
> Be sure of this—the wicked person will **not** go **un**punished. (Proverbs 11:21a ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Double negatives mean very different things in different languages.

- In some languages, such as English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one, creating a positive sentence. So, "He is not unintelligent" means "He is intelligent."
- In some languages, such as French and Spanish, two negative words in a clause do not cancel each other to become a positive. The Spanish sentence, "No vi a nadie," literally says "I did not see no one." It has both the word 'no' next to the verb and 'nadie,' which means "no one." The two negatives are seen as in agreement with each other, and the sentence means, "I did not see anyone."
- In some languages, a double negative creates a stronger negative statement.
- In some languages, a double negative creates a positive sentence, but it is a weak statement. So, "He is not unintelligent" means, "He is somewhat intelligent."
- In some languages, including the languages of the Bible, a double negative can produce a stronger positive meaning than a simple positive statement. So, "He is not unintelligent" can mean "He is very intelligent." In this case, the double negative is actually the figure of speech called litotes.

Biblical Greek can do all of the above. So to translate sentences with double negatives accurately and clearly in your language, you need to know what each double negative means in the Bible and how to express the same idea in your language.

Examples From the Bible

The Greek of John 15:5 says:

> χωρὶς ἐμοῦ **οὐ** δύνασθε ποιεῖν **οὐδέν**
>
> Without me **not** you can do **nothing**

We cannot reproduce this double negative in the English ULT because in English, a second negative in a clause cancels the first one. In English, and perhaps in your language, we need to choose only one of the negatives and say either:

Without me, you can do **nothing**.
or:
Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

> … in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)

This means "in order to be fruitful."

> A prophet is **not without** honor (Mark 6:4 ULT)

This means "a prophet is honored."

> I do **not** want you to be **ignorant**. (1 Corinthians 12:1)

This means "I want you to be knowledgeable."

Translation Strategies

If the way that the double negative is used in the Bible is natural and has the same meaning as in your language, consider using it in the same way. Otherwise, you could consider these strategies:

(1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.
(2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.
(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a positive statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove the two negatives so that it is positive.

> For we do **not** have a high priest who **cannot** feel sympathy for our weaknesses. (Hebrews 4:15a ULT)
>
> > "For we have a high priest who can feel sympathy for our weaknesses."

> … in order **not** to be **unfruitful**. (Titus 3:14b ULT)
>
> > "… so that they may be fruitful."

(2) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives.

> χωρὶς ἐμοῦ **οὐ** δύνασθε ποιεῖν **οὐδέν**
>
> Without me **not** you can do **nothing** (John 15:5)
>
> > Without me, you can do **nothing**.
> >
> > or:
> > Without me, you **cannot** do anything.

(3) If the purpose of a double negative in the Bible is to make a stronger negative statement, and if it would not do that in your language, remove one of the two negatives and add a strengthening word.

> ...ἰῶτα ἓν ἢ μία κεραία **οὐ μὴ** παρέλθῃ ἀπὸ τοῦ νόμου (Matthew 5:18)
>
> ...iota one or one serif **not not** may pass away from the law
>
> > ...**not even** one iota or one serif may pass away from the law
> >
> > or:
> > ...**certainly no** iota or serif may pass away from the law

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:5

Doublet

Description

We are using the word "doublet" to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word "and." Unlike Hendiadys, in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

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!"

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:6 Zephaniah 1:15 Zephaniah 1:16 Zephaniah 3:6 Zephaniah 3:12 Zephaniah 3:14

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis[^1] occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

> So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous**. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because "nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous" is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

> > So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will** sinners **stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

[^1]: English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (…) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

Two Types of Ellipsis

1. 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.

2. 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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:6 Zephaniah 1:10 Zephaniah 1:13 Zephaniah 1:17 Zephaniah 2:4 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 3:19

Exclamations

Description

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

> 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!"

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:7

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.

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 1:13 Zephaniah 2:1 Zephaniah 2:1 Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:5 Zephaniah 2:14 Zephaniah 3:1 Zephaniah 3:2 Zephaniah 3:3 Zephaniah 3:6 Zephaniah 3:6 Zephaniah 3:17 Zephaniah 3:18

When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says “brothers” when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can be used in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronoun is “his,” but it is not limited to males.

> A wise son makes **his** father rejoice but a foolish son brings grief to **his** mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULT)

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."

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 1:17

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

> 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."

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:14 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 2:14 Zephaniah 2:14 Zephaniah 2:15

Hyperbole

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

1. The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.
2. The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.
3. 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

1. Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.
2. 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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:2 Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 3:7

Idiom

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, "You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.")
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, "Do not take a matter to its extreme.")
- This house is under water. (This means, "The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.")
- We are painting the town red. (This means, "We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.")

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**

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1 Zephaniah 1:7 Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 1:9 Zephaniah 1:9 Zephaniah 1:10 Zephaniah 1:11 Zephaniah 1:11 Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 1:14 Zephaniah 1:15 Zephaniah 1:16 Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:7 Zephaniah 2:8 Zephaniah 2:10 Zephaniah 2:11 Zephaniah 2:15 Zephaniah 3:2 Zephaniah 3:6 Zephaniah 3:7 Zephaniah 3:7 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:9 Zephaniah 3:10 Zephaniah 3:13 Zephaniah 3:14 Zephaniah 3:14 Zephaniah 3:16

Litany

Description

A litany is a figure of speech in which the various components of a thing are listed in a series of very similar statements. The speaker does this to indicate that what he is saying should be understood as comprehensive and without exceptions. In a sense, the speaker is describing an overwhelming situation by overwhelming his audience with an excessive series of statements.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use litanies, and readers could be confused by them. They may wonder why the speaker seems to be saying the same thing over and over again.

Examples From the Bible

> Though they dig into Sheol, there my hand will take them. Though they climb up to heaven, there I will bring them down. Though they hide on the top of Carmel, there I will search and take them. Though they are hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea, there will I give orders to the serpent, and it will bite them. Though they go into captivity, driven by their enemies before them, there will I give orders to the sword, and it will kill them. (Amos 9:2-4 ULT)

In this passage Yahweh is telling the people of Israel that when he punishes them, none of them will escape.

> But you should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune. And you should not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing. And you should not have made your mouth great in a day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yes, you! You should not have looked on his evil in the day of his calamity. And you women should not have looted his wealth in the day of his calamity. And you should not have stood at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives. And you should not have delivered up his survivors in a day of distress. (Obadiah 1:12–14)

In this passage Yahweh is telling the people of Edom that they should have helped the people of Judah when they were conquered by the Babylonians.

Translation Strategies

If the litany is understood as it is in the ULT, then translate the litany as it is. If it is not understood, then try one or more of the following strategies.

(1) Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany.
(2) You can put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. Also, if each sentence in the litany has two parts, you can format the litany so that the equivalent parts of each sentence line up. Use this or any other type of formatting that will show that each sentence is reinforcing the same meaning.
(3) You can eliminate words like “and,” “but,” and “or” at the beginning of sentences so that it will be clearer that the component parts of the litany are all being listed in a row.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) combined with (3):
Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany

that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany;
You can eliminate words like “and,” “but,” and “or” at the beginning of sentences so that it will be clearer that the component parts of the litany are all being listed in a row.

> You did nothing to help the Israelites when strangers carried away their wealth. They conquered all the cities of Judah, and they even plundered Jerusalem. And you were just as bad as those foreigners, because you did nothing to help:
>
> You should not have looked on the day of your brother, on the day of his misfortune. You should not have rejoiced over the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing. You should not have made your mouth great in a day of distress. You should not have entered the gate of my people in the day of their calamity. Yes, you! You should not have looked on his evil in the day of his calamity. You women should not have looted his wealth in the day of his calamity. You should not have stood at the crossroads to cut down his fugitives. You should not have delivered up his survivors in a day of distress. (Obadiah 1:11-14)

In the above example, verse 11 provides the summary and meaning for the litany that follows in verses 12-14.

(1) combined with (2):
Often in the Bible there will be a general statement at the beginning or end of a litany that sums up its overall meaning. You can format that statement in a way that will show that it is a summary statement that gives the meaning of the litany;
You can put each sentence of the litany on a separate line. Also, if each sentence in the litany has two parts, you can format the litany so that the equivalent parts of each sentence line up. Use this or any other type of formatting that will show that each sentence is reinforcing the same meaning.

> Not one of them will get away, not one of them will escape:
>
> Though they dig into Sheol,
> there my hand will take them.
>
> Though they climb up to heaven,
> there I will bring them down.
> Though they hide on the top of Carmel,
> there I will search and take them.
> Though they are hidden from my sight in the bottom of the sea, there will I give orders to the
>
> serpent, and it will bite them.
> Though they go into captivity, driven by their enemies before them, there will I give orders to the
>
> sword, and it will kill them. (Amos 9:1b–4 ULT)

In the above example, the sentence before the litany explains its overall meaning. That sentence can be placed as an introduction. The second half of each sentence can be formatted in a descending staircase pattern as above, or lined up evenly like the first half of each sentence, or in another way. Use whatever format best shows that these sentences are all communicating the same truth, that it is not possible to escape from God.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 1:8

Litotes

Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by negating a word or phrase that means the opposite of the meaning that he intends. For example, someone could intend to communicate that something is extremely good by describing it as "not bad." The difference between a litotes and a double negative is that a litotes heightens the positive meaning beyond what a plain positive statement would do, and a double negative does not. In the example above, the literal meaning of "not bad," taken as a plain double negative, would be "acceptable" or even "good." But if the speaker intended it as a litotes, then the meaning is "very good" or "extremely good."

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not use litotes. People who speak those languages might not understand that a statement using litotes actually strengthens the positive meaning. Instead, they might think that it weakens or even cancels the positive meaning.

Examples From the Bible

> For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was **very** useful.

> Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a **lot** of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very agitated.)

> But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
> are **not the least** among the leaders of Judah,
> for from you will come a ruler
> who will shepherd my people Israel.
> (Matthew 2:6 ULT)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a **very important city**.

Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the **positive** meaning in a strong way.

> For you yourselves know, brothers, that our coming to you was **not useless**. (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULT)
>
> > "For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you **did much good**."

> Now when it became day, there was **no small disturbance** among the soldiers over what therefore had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULT)
>
> > "Now when it became day, there was **great excitement** among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter."
> >
> > or:
> > "Now when it became day, the soldiers were **very concerned** because of what had happened to Peter."

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:1

Merism

Definition

Merism is a figure of speech in which a person refers to something by speaking of two extreme parts of it. By referring to the extreme parts, the speaker intends to include also everything in between those parts.

> "I am **the alpha and the omega**," says the Lord God, "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8 ULT)
>
> I am **the alpha and the omega**, **the first and the last**, **the beginning and the end**. (Revelation 22:13, ULT)

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**.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:3

Metaphor

Description

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of one thing as if it were a different thing because he wants people to think about how those two things are alike.

For example, someone might say, “The girl I love is a red rose.”

A girl and a rose are very different things, but the speaker considers that they are alike in some way. The hearer’s task is to understand in what way they are alike.

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:2 Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:6 Zephaniah 1:7 Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 1:15 Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:4 Zephaniah 2:4 Zephaniah 2:7 Zephaniah 2:8 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 2:10 Zephaniah 2:11 Zephaniah 2:12 Zephaniah 2:15 Zephaniah 3:2 Zephaniah 3:3 Zephaniah 3:3 Zephaniah 3:3 Zephaniah 3:4 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:13 Zephaniah 3:14 Zephaniah 3:15 Zephaniah 3:18 Zephaniah 3:19

Metonymy

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A metonym is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something that it is associated with.

> … 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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1 Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 1:7 Zephaniah 1:9 Zephaniah 1:10 Zephaniah 1:11 Zephaniah 1:14 Zephaniah 1:16 Zephaniah 1:16 Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:5 Zephaniah 2:13 Zephaniah 2:13 Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:9 Zephaniah 3:9 Zephaniah 3:12 Zephaniah 3:13 Zephaniah 3:19 Zephaniah 3:20 Zephaniah 3:20

Nominal Adjectives

Description

In some languages an adjective can be used to refer to a class of things that the adjective describes. When it does, it acts like a noun. For example, the word "rich" is an adjective. Here are two sentences that show that "rich" is an adjective.

> **The rich man** had huge numbers of flocks and herds. (2 Samuel 12:2 ULT)

The adjective "rich" comes before the word "man" and describes "man."

> **He will not be rich**; his wealth will not last. (Job 15:29a ULT)

The adjective "rich" comes after the verb "be" and describes "He."

Here is a sentence that shows that "rich" can also function as a noun.

> **The rich** must not give more than the half shekel, and **the poor** must not give less. (Exodus 30:15b ULT)

In Exodus 30:15, the word "rich" acts as a noun in the phrase "the rich," and it refers to rich people. The word "poor" also acts as a noun and refers to poor people.

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**.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:17 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 3:4 Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:19

Parallelism

Description

Parallelism is a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "doublet" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

> Your word is a lamp to my feet
>
> and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

> You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
>
> you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

> Yahweh sees everything a person does
>
> and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:11 Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 2:13 Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:13 Zephaniah 3:16 Zephaniah 3:19

Predictive Past

Description

The predictive past is a figure of speech that uses the past tense to refer to things that will happen in the future. This is sometimes done in prophecy to show that the event will certainly happen. It is also called the prophetic perfect.

> Therefore my people have gone into captivity for lack of understanding;
> their honored leaders go hungry, and
> their common people have nothing to drink. (Isaiah 5:13 ULT)

In the example above, the people of Israel had not yet gone into captivity, but God spoke of their going into captivity as if it had already happened because he had decided that they certainly would go into captivity.

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."

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:15

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

> Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

> Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

> You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

> You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

> Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:14 Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:4 Zephaniah 2:8 Zephaniah 2:11 Zephaniah 2:14 Zephaniah 2:15 Zephaniah 3:1 Zephaniah 3:7

Possession

Description

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word "**of**," by using **an apostrophe and the letter "s"**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my **grandfather's** house
- **his** house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership — Someone owns something.

> The clothes of me - my clothes — The clothes that I own

- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.

> The mother of John — John's mother - the woman who gave birth to John, or the woman who cared for John

> A teacher of Israel - Israel's teacher — a person who teaches Israel

- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.

> The sickness of David - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing

> the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord

- Contents — Something has something in it.

> a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes

- Part and whole: One thing is part of another.

> my head — the head that is part of my body

> the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession.** This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language. In languages that mark the difference, the expression of inalienable possession and alienable possession will be different.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.
- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

Ownership — In the example below, the son owned the money.

> The younger son … wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

Social Relationship — In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

> 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**.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:5 Zephaniah 2:6 Zephaniah 2:6 Zephaniah 2:11 Zephaniah 3:4 Zephaniah 3:11 Zephaniah 3:15

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "**I** do not know at what time **I** will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that **he** did not know at what time **he** would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

> And he commanded him to tell no one, but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." (Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, "**Go, show yourself to the priest …**"

> And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming,**
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, 'Look. here it is!' or 'There it is!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**"
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, '**Look, here it is!**' or, '**There it is!**'

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:5

Quotes within Quotes

Description

A quotation may have a quote within it, and quotes that are inside of other quotes can also have quotes within them. When a quote has quotes within it, we say there are "layers" of quotation, and each of the quotes is a layer. When there are many layers of quotes inside of quotes, it can be hard for listeners and readers to know who is saying what. Some languages use a combination of direct quotes and indirect quotes to make it easier.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.’”

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 2:15 Zephaniah 3:7

Reduplication

Description

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!

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:2 Zephaniah 1:14 Zephaniah 2:1 Zephaniah 3:5

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

> 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!

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:17 Zephaniah 1:17 Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:9

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

> **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was 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

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 2:7 Zephaniah 3:10 Zephaniah 3:18

Forms of 'You' — Singular

Description

Some languages have a **singular** form of "you" for when the word "you" refers to just one person, and a **plural** form for when the word "you" refers to more than one person. Translators who speak one of these languages will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for "you" in their language. Other languages, such as English, have only one form, which people use regardless of how many people it refers to.

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:1 Zephaniah 2:5 Zephaniah 3:11 Zephaniah 3:12 Zephaniah 3:14 Zephaniah 3:15 Zephaniah 3:16 Zephaniah 3:20

Collective Nouns

Description

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:

1. 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.
2. 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.

3. 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.
4. 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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 3:9 Zephaniah 3:10 Zephaniah 3:13 Zephaniah 3:14

Connect — Goal (Purpose) Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Goal (or Purpose) Relationship

Description

A Goal Relationship is a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first event. In order for something to be a goal relationship, someone must do the first event with the intention that it will cause the second event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, the goal or purpose may be stated either first or second. But in some languages, the goal or purpose must always occur in the same position (either first or second) in order for that logical relationship to be understood. You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between the two parts and communicate those accurately in your language. This may require changing the order of the two events. It may also require specific words to indicate that one is the goal or purpose of the other. Words commonly used to indicate a goal relationship in English are "in order to," "in order that" or "so that." It is important that the translator recognize the words that signal a goal relationship and translate that relationship in a natural way.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> She became angry and falsely accused Joseph **so that he was arrested and sent to prison**. (Story 8 Frame 5 OBS)

The goal or purpose of the woman's false accusation was to get Joseph arrested and sent to prison.

> Meanwhile Gideon, his son, was threshing out wheat at the winepress **in order to hide from the presence of Midian**. (Judges 6:11b ULT)

Here the prepositional phrase begins with "in order to."

> Now if I have found favor in your eyes, show me your ways **so that I may know you and continue to find favor in your eyes**. Remember that this nation is your people. (Exodus 33:13 ULT)

Moses wants God to show him God's ways for the goal or purpose of Moses knowing God and continuing to find favor with God.

> Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her! (Ruth 2:16 ULT)

The goal or purpose of Boaz instructing the men to pull out the grain from their bundles and leave it was for Ruth to gather (glean) it.

> The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15 ULT)

The purpose of going to Bethlehem was to see the thing that had happened. Here the purpose is not marked and might be misunderstood.

> "… if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17b ULT)

The goal of keeping the commandments is to enter into life.

> Do not turn from it to the right or to the left **so that you may be wise** in everything in which you walk. (Joshua 1:7c ULT)

The purpose of not turning away from the instructions that Moses gave to the Israelites was so that they would be wise.

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

The purpose of the vine growers killing the heir was so they could take his inheritance. They state both events as a plan, joining them only with "and." Then the word "so" marks the reporting of the first event, but the second event (the goal or purpose) is not stated.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses Goal or Purpose relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the construction of the Goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.
(2) If the order of the statements makes the Goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the construction of the goal statement is unclear, change it to one that is more clear.

> "Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **for her to glean**, and do not rebuke her!" (Ruth 2:16 ULT)
>
> > "Even be sure to pull some out from the bundles for her and leave it **so that she can glean it**, and do not rebuke her!"

> The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem, **and let us see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15 ULT)
>
> > The shepherds said to each other, "Let us indeed go over as far as Bethlehem **so that we can see this thing that has happened**, which the Lord has made known to us."

(2) If the order of the statements makes the goal statement unclear or confusing for the reader, then change the order.

> "… if you want **to enter into life**, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:17bULT)
>
> > "… keep the commandments if you want **to enter into life**." or: "… keep the commandments **so that you can enter into life**."

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)

(1) and (2)

> But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **and take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. (Matt 21:38-39 ULT)
>
> > But when the vine growers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him **so that we can take over his inheritance**.' So they took him, threw him out of the vineyard and killed him **so that they could take over his inheritance**.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:2

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:10 Zephaniah 2:14 Zephaniah 3:13

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1 Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:10 Zephaniah 1:10 Zephaniah 1:11 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 2:10 Zephaniah 3:14

Unusual Uses of the Plural

The biblical languages sometimes use plural forms to refer to single objects, ideas, or people.

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**

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:9

Symbolic Action

Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their heads up and down to mean "yes" or turn their heads from side to side to mean "no." Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:15

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.

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!

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:9

Introduction of New and Old Participants

Description

The first time that people or things are mentioned in a story, they are **new participants**. After that, whenever they are mentioned, they are **old participants**.

> Now **there was a man from the Pharisees whose name was Nicodemus** … **This man** came to Jesus at night … Jesus replied and said to **him** … (John 3:1, 2a, 3a)

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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1

Poetry

Description

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

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

1. Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children’s games
2. Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors
3. Prayers, blessings, and curses
4. 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 fo
>
> Oh, give thanks to the God of gods,
>
> for his covenant faithfulness endures fo
>
> Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords,
>
> for his covenant faithfulness endures fo

(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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:4

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

When we talk or write, we use pronouns to refer to people or things without always having to repeat the noun or name. Usually, the first time we refer to someone in a story, we use a descriptive phrase or a name. The next time we might refer to that person with a simple noun or by name. After that we might refer to him simply with a pronoun as long as we think that our listeners will be able to understand easily to whom the pronoun refers.

> 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.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:4 Zephaniah 2:14 Zephaniah 3:1

Quotations and Quote Margins

Description

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**.

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:2 Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:10
Zephaniah 2:8 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 2:12
Zephaniah 3:6 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:18
Zephaniah 3:20

Appendix: Translation Words

call, called

Definition:

The term “call,” in this sense, means to summon a person or being.

- Often in the Bible, “call” has a meaning of “summon” or “command to come” or “request to come.”
- Depending on context the phrase “call upon” can be translated as “summon” or “request help from” or “request to come.”
- God calls people to come to him and be his people. This is their “calling.”
- When God “calls” people, it means that God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to be his servants and proclaimers of his message of salvation through Jesus.
- The expression, “I have called you by name” means that God has specifically chosen that person.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “call” could be translated by a word that means “summon,” which includes the idea of being intentional or purposeful in calling.
- When the Bible says that God has “called” us to be his servants, this could be translated as “specially chose us” or “appointed us” to be his servants.
- The expression “your calling” could be translated as “your purpose” or “God’s purpose for you” or “God’s special work for you.”
- When God says, “I have called you by name,” this could be translated as “I know you and have chosen you.”
- To “call on the name of the Lord” could be translated as “seek the Lord and depend on him” or “trust in the Lord and obey him.”
- To “call for” something could be translated by “demand” or “ask for” or “command.”

(See also: call to speak loudly, call name)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7121, G25640, G28210, G43410, G47790, G54550

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:7 Zephaniah 3:9

day of the Lord, day of Yahweh

Definition:

The Old Testament term “day of Yahweh” is used to refer to a future time when God will punish people for their sin.

- The Old Testament term “day of Yahweh” is an expression that many of the prophets use.
- The New Testament term “day of the Lord” usually refers to the day or time when the Lord Jesus will come back to judge people at the end of time.
- This final, future time of judgment and resurrection is also sometimes referred to as the “last day.” This time will begin when the Lord Jesus comes back to judge sinners and will permanently establish his rule.
- The word “day” in these phrases may sometimes refer to a literal day or it may refer to a “time” or “occasion” that is longer than a day.
- Sometimes the punishment is referred to as a “pouring out of God’s wrath” upon those who do not believe.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate “day of Yahweh” could include “time of Yahweh” or “time when Yahweh will punish his enemies” or “time of Yahweh’s wrath.”
- Other ways to translate “day of the Lord” could include “time of the Lord’s judgment” or “time when the Lord Jesus will return to judge people.”

(See also: day, judgment day, Lord, resurrection, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:5
- 1 Thessalonians 5:2
- 2 Peter 3:10
- 2 Thessalonians 2:2
- Acts 2:20-21
- Philippians 1:9-11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3068, H3117, G22500, G29620

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:7 Zephaniah 1:14 Zephaniah 1:14

eternity, everlasting, eternal, forever

Definition:

The terms “everlasting” and “eternal” have very similar meanings and refer to something that will always exist or that lasts forever.

- The term “eternity” refers to a state of being that has no beginning or end. It can also refer to life that never ends.
- After this present life on earth, humans will spend eternity either in heaven with God or in hell apart from God.
- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” are used in the New Testament to refer to living forever with God in heaven.

The term “forever” refers to never-ending time.

- The phrase “forever and ever” has the idea of time that never ends and expresses what eternity or eternal life is like. It emphasizes that something will always happen or exist. It refers to time that never ends.
- God said that David’s throne would last “forever.” This is referred to the fact that David’s descendant Jesus will reign as king forever.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “eternal” or “everlasting” could include “unending” or “never stopping” or “always continuing.”

- The terms “eternal life” and “everlasting life” could also be translated as “life that never ends” or “life that continues without stopping” or “the raising up of our bodies to live forever.”

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “eternity” could include “existing outside of time” or “unending life” or “life in heaven.”

- Also consider how this word is translated in a Bible translation in a local or national language. (See: How to Translate Unknowns)

- “Forever” could also be translated by “always” or “never ending.”

- The phrase “will last forever” could also be translated as “always exist” or “will never stop” or “will always continue.”

- The emphatic phrase “forever and ever” could also be translated as “for always and always” or “not ever ending” or “which never, ever ends.”

- David’s throne lasting forever could be translated as “David’s descendant will reign forever” or “a descendant of David will always be reigning.”

(See also: David, reign, life)

Bible References:

- Genesis 17:8
- Genesis 48:4
- Exodus 15:17
- 2 Samuel 3:28-30
- 1 Kings 2:32-33
- Job 4:20-21
- Psalms 21:4
- Isaiah 9:6-7
- Isaiah 40:27-28
- Daniel 7:18
- Luke 18:18
- Acts 13:46
- Romans 5:21
- Hebrews 6:19-20
- Hebrews 10:11-14
- 1 John 1:2
- 1 John 5:12
- Revelation 1:4-6
- Revelation 22:3-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:1** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit **eternal life**?”
- **28:1** One day, a rich young ruler came up to Jesus and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to have **eternal life**?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only One who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have **eternal life**, obey God’s laws.”

- **28:10** Jesus answered, “Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children, or property for my name’s sake, will receive 100 times more and will also receive **eternal life**.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H4481, H5331, H5703, H5705, H5769, H5865, H5957, H6924, G01260, G01650, G01660, G13360

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:9

evil, wicked, wickedness, unpleasant

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “evil” can refer either to the concept of moral wickedness or emotional unpleasantness. The context will usually make it clear which meaning is intended in the specific instance of the term.

- While “evil” may describe a person’s character, “wicked” may refer more to a person’s behavior. However, both terms are very similar in meaning.
- The term “wickedness” refers to the state of being that exists when people do wicked things.
- The results of evil are clearly shown in how people mistreat others by killing, stealing, slandering and being cruel and unkind.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the terms “evil” and “wicked” can be translated as “bad” or “sinful” or “immoral.”
- Other ways to translate these could include “not good” or “not righteous” or “not moral.”
- Make sure the words or phrases that are used to translate these terms fit the context that is natural in the target language.

(See also: disobey, sin, good, righteous, demon)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:11
- 1 Timothy 6:10
- 3 John 1:10
- Genesis 2:17
- Genesis 6:5-6
- Job 1:1
- Job 8:20
- Judges 9:57
- Luke 6:22-23
- Matthew 7:11-12
- Proverbs 3:7
- Psalms 22:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **2:4** "God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand good and **evil** like he does."
- **3:1** After a long time, many people were living in the world. They had become very **wicked** and violent.
- **3:2** But Noah found favor with God. He was a righteous man living among **wicked** people.
- **4:2** God saw that if they all kept working together to do **evil**, they could do many more sinful things.
- **8:12** "You tried to do **evil** when you sold me as a slave, but God used the **evil** for good!"
- **14:2** They (Canaanites) worshiped false gods and did many **evil** things.
- **17:1** But then he (Saul) became a **wicked** man who did not obey God, so God chose a different man who would one day be king in his place.
- **18:11** In the new kingdom of Israel, all the kings were **evil**.
- **29:8** The king was so angry that he threw the **wicked** servant into prison until he could pay back all of his debt.
- **45:2** They said, "We heard him (Stephen) speak **evil** things about Moses and God!"
- **50:17** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, **evil**, pain, or death.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H0605, H1100, H1681, H1942, H2154, H2162, H2254, H2617, H3399, H3415, H4209, H4849, H5753, H5766, H5767, H5999, H6001, H6090, H7451, H7455, H7489, H7561, H7562, H7563, H7564, G00920, G01130, G04590, G09320, G09870, G09880, G14260, G25490, G25510, G25540, G25550, G25560, G25570, G25590, G25600, G26350, G26360, G41510, G41890, G41900, G41910, G53370

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 3:15

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

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 2:11

fear, afraid, frighten

Definition:

The terms “fear” often refers to the unpleasant emotion a person feels when experiencing a potential threat to their safety or well-being. In the Bible, however, the term “fear” can also mean an attitude of worship, respect, awe, or obedience toward another person, usually someone powerful such as God or a king.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “fear” can be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: “be afraid;” “deeply respect,” or “deep respect;” “revere,” or “reverence;” or perhaps “be in awe of.”
- The sentence “The fear of God fell on all of them” might be translated in various ways. Some possibilities include: “Suddenly they all felt a deep awe and respect for God;” or “Immediately, they all felt very amazed and revered God deeply;” or “Right then, they all felt very afraid of God (because of his great power).”
- The phrase “fear Yahweh” could be translated as “reverence Yahweh” or “deeply respect Yahweh.”
- The phrase “fear not” could also be translated as “do not be afraid” or “stop being afraid.”

(See also: awe, Yahweh, Lord, marvel, power)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:18
- Acts 2:43
- Acts 19:15-17
- Genesis 50:21
- Isaiah 11:3-5
- Job 6:14
- Jonah 1:9
- Luke 12:5
- Matthew 10:28
- Proverbs 10:24-25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0367, H0926, H1204, H1481, H1672, H1674, H1763, H2119, H2296, H2727, H2729, H2730, H2731, H2844, H2849, H2865, H3016, H3025, H3068, H3372, H3373, H3374, H4032, H4034, H4035, H4116, H4172, H6206, H6342, H6343, H6345, H6427, H7264, H7267, H7297, H7374, H7461, H7493, H8175, G08700, G11670, G11680, G11690, G16300, G17190, G21240, G21250, G29620, G53980, G53990, G54000, G54010

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:11 Zephaniah 3:7 Zephaniah 3:13 Zephaniah 3:15 Zephaniah 3:16

God

Definition:

In the Bible, the term "God" refers to the eternal being who created the universe out of nothing. God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God's personal name is "Yahweh."

- God has always existed; he existed before anything else existed, and he will continue to exist forever.
- He is the only true God and has authority over everything in the universe.
- God is perfectly righteous, infinitely wise, holy, sinless, just, merciful, and loving.
- He is a covenant-keeping God, who always fulfills his promises.
- People were created to worship God and he is the only one they should worship.
- God revealed his name as "Yahweh," which means "he is" or "I am" or "the One who (always) exists."
- The Bible also teaches about false "gods," which are nonliving idols that people wrongly worship.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate "God" could include "Deity" or "Creator" or "Supreme Being" or "Supreme Creator" or "Infinite Sovereign Lord" or "Eternal Supreme Being."
- Consider how God is referred to in a local or national language. There may also already be a word for "God" in the language being translated. If so, it is important to make sure that this word fits the characteristics of the one true God as described above.
- Many languages capitalize the first letter of the word for the one true God, to distinguish it from the word for a false god. Another way to make this distinction would be to use different terms for "God" and "god." NOTE: In the biblical text, when a person who does not worship Yahweh speaks about Yahweh and uses the word "god," it is acceptable to render the term without a capital letter in reference to Yahweh (see Jonah 1:6, 3:9).
- The phrase "I will be their God and they will be my people" could also be translated as "I, God, will rule over these people and they will worship me."

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: create, false god, God the Father, Holy Spirit, false god, Son of God, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:7
- 1 Samuel 10:7-8
- 1 Timothy 4:10
- Colossians 1:16
- Deuteronomy 29:14-16
- Ezra 3:1-2
- Genesis 1:2
- Hosea 4:11-12
- Isaiah 36:6-7
- James 2:20
- Jeremiah 5:5
- John 1:3
- Joshua 3:9-11
- Lamentations 3:43
- Micah 4:5
- Philippians 2:6
- Proverbs 24:12
- Psalms 47:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:1** **God** created the universe and everything in it in six days.
- **1:15** **God** made man and woman in his own image.
- **5:3** "I am **God** Almighty. I will make a covenant with you."
- **9:14** **God** said, "I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, 'I AM has sent me to you.' Also tell them, 'I am Yahweh, the **God** of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name forever.'"
- **10:2** Through these plagues, **God** showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's gods.
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the true **God**.
- **22:7** "You, my son, will be called the prophet of the **Most High God** who will prepare the people to receive the Messiah!"

- **24:9** There is only one **God**. But John heard **God** the Father speak, and saw Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit when he baptized Jesus.
- **25:7** “Worship only the Lord your **God** and only serve him.”
- **28:1** “There is only one who is good, and that is **God**.”
- **49:9** But **God** loved everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with **God** forever.
- **50:16** But some day **God** will create a new heaven and a new earth that will be perfect.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0136, H0305, H0410, H0426, H0430, H0433, H2486, H2623, H3068, H3069, H3863, H4136, H6697, G01120, G05160, G09320, G09350, G10960, G11400, G20980, G21240, G21280, G21500, G21520, G21530, G22990, G23040, G23050, G23120, G23130, G23140, G23150, G23160, G23170, G23180, G23190, G23200, G33610, G37850, G41510, G52070, G53770, G54630, G55370, G55380

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:7 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 3:2 Zephaniah 3:17

good, right, pleasant, better, best, goodness

Definition:

The term “good” generally refers to a positive evaluation of the quality of something or someone, often in a moral or emotional sense. However, the term conveys various nuances throughout the Bible depending on the context.

- Something that is “good” could be emotionally pleasant, morally right, excellent, helpful, suitable, or profitable.
- In the Bible, the general meaning of “good” is often contrasted with “evil.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The general term for “good” in the target language should be used wherever this general meaning is accurate and natural, especially in contexts where it is contrasted to evil.
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “kind” or “excellent” or “pleasing to God” or “righteous” or “morally upright” or “profitable.”
- “Good land” could be translated as “fertile land” or “productive land”; a “good crop” could be translated as a “plentiful harvest” or “large amount of crops.”
- The phrase “do good to” means to do something that benefits others and could be translated as “be kind to” or “help” or “benefit” someone or “cause someone to prosper.”
- To “do good on the Sabbath” means to “do things that help others on the Sabbath.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate the term “goodness” could include “blessing” or “kindness” or “moral perfection” or “righteousness” or “purity.”

(See also: righteous, prosper, evil)

Bible References:

- Galatians 5:22-24
- Genesis 1:12
- Genesis 2:9
- Genesis 2:17
- James 3:13
- Romans 2:4

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:12

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:4** God saw that what he had created was **good**.
- **1:11** God planted the tree of the knowledge of **good** and evil.
- **1:12** Then God said, “It is not **good** for man to be alone.”
- **2:4** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand **good** and evil like he does.”
- **8:12** “You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, but God used the evil for **good**!”
- **14:15** Joshua was a **good** leader because he trusted and obeyed God.
- **18:13** Some of these kings were **good** men who ruled justly and worshiped God.
- **28:1** “**Good** teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me ‘**good**?’ There is only one who is **good**, and that is God.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0117, H0145, H0155, H0202, H0239, H0410, H1580, H1926, H1935, H2532, H2617, H2623, H2869, H2895, H2896, H2898, H3190, H3191, H3276, H3474, H3788, H3966, H4261, H4399, H5232, H5750, H6287, H6643, H6743, H7075, H7368, H7399, H7443, H7999, H8231, H8232, H8233, H8389, H8458, G00140, G00150, G00180, G00190, G05150, G07440, G08650, G09790, G13800, G20950, G20970, G21060, G21070, G21080, G21090, G21140, G21150, G21330, G21400, G21620, G21630, G21740, G22930, G25650, G25670, G25700, G25730, G28870, G29860, G31400, G36170, G37760, G41470, G46320, G46740, G48510, G52230, G52240, G53580, G55420, G55430, G55440

heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

Definition:

The term that is translated as “heaven” usually refers to where God lives. The same word can also mean “sky,” depending on the context.

- The term “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars. It also includes the heavenly bodies, such as far-off planets, that we cannot directly see from the earth.
- The term “sky” refers to the blue expanse above the earth that has clouds and the air we breathe. Often the sun and moon are also said to be “up in the sky.”
- In some contexts in the Bible, the word “heaven” could refer to either the sky or the place where God lives.

Translation Suggestions:

- For “kingdom of heaven” in the book of Matthew, it is best to keep the word “heaven” since this is distinctive to Matthew’s gospel.
- The terms “heavens” or “heavenly bodies” could also be translated as “sun, moon, and stars” or “all the stars in the universe.”
- The phrase, “stars of heaven” could be translated as “stars in the sky” or “stars in the galaxy” or “stars in the universe.”

(See also: kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:22-24
- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Thessalonians 4:17
- Deuteronomy 9:1
- Ephesians 6:9
- Genesis 1:1
- Genesis 7:11
- John 3:12
- John 3:27
- Matthew 5:18
- Matthew 5:46-48

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:2** They even began building a tall tower to reach **heaven**.
- **14:11** He (God) gave them bread from **heaven**, called “manna.”
- **23:7** Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “Glory to God in **heaven** and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- **29:9** Then Jesus said, “This is what my **heavenly** Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”
- **37:9** Then Jesus looked up to **heaven** and said, “Father, thank you for hearing me.”
- **42:11** Then Jesus went up to **heaven**, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1534, H6160, H6183, H7834, H8064, H8065, G09320, G20320, G33210, G37700, G37710, G37720

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:5

holy, holiness, unholy, sacred

Definition:

The terms “holy” and “holiness” refer to the character of God that is totally set apart and separated from everything that is sinful and imperfect.

- Only God is absolutely holy. He makes people and things holy.
- A person who is holy belongs to God and has been set apart for the purpose of serving God and bringing him glory.
- An object that God has declared to be holy is one that he has set apart for his glory and use, such as an altar that is for the purpose of offering sacrifices to him.
- People cannot approach him unless he allows them to, because he is holy and they are merely human beings, sinful and imperfect.
- In the Old Testament, God set apart the priests as holy for special service to him. They had to be ceremonially cleansed from sin in order to approach God.
- God also set apart as holy certain places and things that belonged to him or in which he revealed himself, such as his temple.

Literally, the term “unholy” means “not holy.” It describes someone or something that does not honor God.

- This word is used to describe someone who dishonors God by rebelling against him.
- A thing that is called “unholy” could be described as being common, profane or unclean. It does not belong to God.

The term “sacred” describes something that relates to worshiping God or to the pagan worship of false gods.

- In the Old Testament, the term “sacred” was often said to describe the stone pillars and other objects used in the worship of false gods. This could also be translated as “religious.”
- “Sacred songs” and “sacred music” refer to music that was sung or played for God’s glory. This could be translated as “music for worshiping Yahweh” or “songs that praise God.”
- The phrase “sacred duties” referred to the “religious duties” or “rituals” that a priest performed to lead people in worshiping God. It could also refer to the rituals performed by a pagan priest to worship a false god

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “holy” might include “set apart for God” or “belonging to God” or “completely pure” or “perfectly sinless” or “separated from sin.”

- To “make holy” is often translated as “sanctify” in English. It could also be translated as “set apart (someone) for God’s glory.”

- Ways to translate “unholy” could include “not holy” or “not belonging to God” or “not honoring to God” or “not godly.”

- In some contexts, “unholy” could be translated as “unclean.”

(See also: Holy Spirit, consecrate, sanctify, set apart)

Bible References:

- Genesis 28:22
- 2 Kings 3:2
- Lamentations 4:1
- Ezekiel 20:18-20
- Matthew 7:6
- Mark 8:38
- Acts 7:33
- Acts 11:8
- Romans 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 12:3-5
- Colossians 1:22
- 1 Thessalonians 3:13
- 1 Thessalonians 4:7
- 2 Timothy 3:15

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **1:16** He (God) blessed the seventh day and made it **holy**, because on this day he rested from his work.

- **9:12** “You are standing on **holy** ground.”
- **13:2** “If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a **holy** nation.”
- **13:5** “Always be sure to keep the Sabbath day **holy**.”
- **22:5** “So the baby will be **holy**, the Son of God.”
- **50:2** As we wait for Jesus to return, God wants us to live in a way that is **holy** and that honors him.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0430, H2455, H2623, H4676, H4720, H6918, H6922, H6942, H6944, H6948, G00370, G00380, G00400, G00400, G00410, G00420, G04620, G18590, G21500, G24120, G24130, G28390, G37410, G37420

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:4 Zephaniah 3:11

humble, humbled, humility

Definition:

The term “humble” describes a person who does not think of himself as better than others. He is not proud or arrogant. Humility is the quality of being humble.

- To be humble before God means to understand one’s weakness and imperfection in comparison with his greatness, wisdom and perfection.
- When a person humbles himself, he puts himself in a position of lower importance.
- Humility is caring about the needs of others more than one’s own needs.
- Humility also means serving with a modest attitude when using one’s gifts and abilities.
- The phrase “be humble” could be translated as “do not be prideful.”
- “Humble yourself before God” could be translated as “Submit your will to God, recognizing his greatness.”

(See also: proud)

Bible References:

- James 1:21
- James 3:13
- James 4:10
- Luke 14:11
- Luke 18:14
- Matthew 18:4
- Matthew 23:12

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:2** David was a **humble** and righteous man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **34:10** “God will **humble** everyone who is proud, and he will lift up whoever **humbles** himself.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1792, H3665, H6031, H6035, H6038, H6041, H6800, H6819, H7511, H7807, H7812, H8213, H8214, H8215, H8217, H8467, G08580, G42360, G42390, G42400, G50110, G50120, G50130, G53910

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 3:12

Israel, Israelites

Definition:

The term “Israel” is the name that God gave to Jacob. Often it refers to the nation that is descended from him.

- The name Israel probably means “He struggles with God.”
- The descendants of Jacob became known as the “sons of Israel” or the “people of Israel” or the “nation of Israel” or the “Israelites.”
- God formed his covenant with the people of Israel. They were his chosen people.
- The nation of Israel consisted of twelve tribes.
- Soon after King Solomon died, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the southern kingdom, called “Judah,” and the northern kingdom, called “Israel.”
- Often the term “Israel” can be translated as “the people of Israel” or “the nation of Israel,” depending on the context.

(See also: Jacob, kingdom of Israel, Judah, nation, twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 10:1
- 1 Kings 8:2
- Acts 2:36
- Acts 7:24
- Acts 13:23
- John 1:49-51
- Luke 24:21
- Mark 12:29
- Matthew 2:6
- Matthew 27:9
- Philippians 3:4-5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:15** The descendants of the twelve sons became the twelve tribes of **Israel**.
- **9:3** The Egyptians forced the **Israelites** to build many buildings and even whole cities.
- **9:5** A certain **Israelite** woman gave birth to a baby boy.
- **10:1** They said, “This is what the God of **Israel** says, ‘Let my people go!’”

- **14:12** But despite all this, the people of __Israel __ complained and grumbled against God and against Moses.
- **15:9** God fought for **Israel** that day. He caused the Amorites to be confused and he sent large hailstones that killed many of the Amorites.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of __Israel __ its own section of the Promised Land. Then God gave **Israel** peace along all its borders.
- **16:16** So God punished __Israel __ again for worshiping idols.
- **43:6** "Men of **Israel**, Jesus was a man who did many mighty signs and wonders by the power of God, as you have seen and already know."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3478, H3479, H3481, H3482, G09350, G24740, G24750

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 3:13 Zephaniah 3:14 Zephaniah 3:15

jealous, jealousy

Definition:

The terms "jealous" and "jealousy" in this sense refer to a strong desire to protect the purity of a relationship. They can also refer to a strong desire to keep possession of something or someone (See Numbers 11:29).

- The term "jealous" is used to describe the angry feeling that a person has toward their spouse when they suspect that their spouse has been unfaithful in their marriage (See Numbers 5:14).
- The terms "jealous" and "jealousy" are often used to describe God's strong desire that his covenant people love him, remain spiritually faithful to him, and keep him foremost in their affections.
- When used in the Bible, these terms often refer to God's strong desire for his people to remain pure and unstained by sin.
- God is "jealous" for his glory, desiring that he be treated with honor and reverence.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate "jealous" could include "strong protective desire" or "possessive desire."
- The term "jealousy" could be translated as "strong protective feeling" or "possessive feeling."
- When talking about God, make sure the translation of these terms does not give a negative meaning of being resentful or envious of someone else.

(See also: envy)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7065, H7067, H7068, H7072, G22050, G22060, G38630

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 3:8

judge, judgment

Definition:

The terms “judge” and “judgment” often refer to making a decision about whether or not something is good, wise, or right. However, these terms can also refer to actions performed by a person as the result of a decision, usually in the context of deciding that something is bad, wrong, or evil.

- The terms “judge” and “judgment” can also mean “to cause harm to” (usually because God has decided a person or nation’s actions are wicked).
- The “judgment of God” often refers to his decision to condemn something or someone as sinful.
- God’s judgment usually includes punishing people for their sin.
- The term “judge” can also mean “condemn.” God instructs his people not to judge each other in this way.
- Another meaning is “arbitrate between” or “judge between,” as in deciding which person is right in a dispute between them.
- In some contexts, God’s “judgments” are what he has decided is right and just. They are similar to his decrees, laws, or precepts.
- “Judgment” can refer to wise decision-making ability. A person who lacks “judgment” does not have the wisdom to make wise decisions.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate to “judge” could include to “decide” or to “condemn” or to “punish” or to “decree.”
- The term “judgment” could be translated as “punishment” or “decision” or “verdict” or “decree” or “condemnation.”
- In some contexts, the phrase “in the judgment” could also be translated as “on judgment day” or “during the time when God judges people.”

(See also: decree, judge, judgment day, just, law, law)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:17
- 1 Kings 3:9
- Acts 10:42-43
- Isaiah 3:14
- James 2:4
- Luke 6:37
- Micah 3:9-11
- Psalm 54:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:16** The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would **judge** them as guilty, and he would punish them.
- **21:8** A king is someone who rules over a kingdom and **judges** the people. The Messiah would come would be the perfect king who would sit on the throne of his ancestor David. He would reign over the whole world forever, and who would always **judge** honestly and make the right decisions.
- **39:4** The high priest tore his clothes in anger and shouted to the other religious leaders, “We do not need any more witnesses! You have heard him say that he is the Son of God. What is your **judgment**?”
- **50:14** But God will **judge** everyone who does not believe in Jesus. He will throw them into hell, where they will weep and grind their teeth in anguish forever.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0148, H0430, H1777, H1778, H1779, H1780, H1781, H1782, H2940, H4055, H4941, H6414, H6415, H6416, H6417, H6419, H6485, H8196, H8199, H8201, G01440, G03500, G09680, G11060, G12520, G13410, G13450, G13480, G13490, G29170, G29190, G29200, G29220, G29230, G42320

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:3 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:15

just, justice, unjust, injustice, justify, justification

Definition:

"Just" and "justice" refer to treating people fairly according to God's laws. Human laws that reflect God's standard of right behavior toward others are also just.

- To be "just" is to act in a fair and right way toward others. It also implies honesty and integrity to do what is morally right in God's eyes.
- To act "justly" means to treat people in a way that is right, good, and proper according to God's laws.
- To receive "justice" means to be treated fairly under the law, either being protected by the law or being punished for breaking the law.
- Sometimes the term "just" has the broader meaning of "righteous" or "following God's laws."

The terms "unjust" and "unjustly" refer to treating people in an unfair and often harmful manner.

- An "injustice" is something bad that is done to someone that the person did not deserve. It refers to treating people unfairly.
- Injustice also means that some people are treated badly while others are treated well.
- Someone who is acting in an unjust way is being "partial" or "prejudiced" because he is not treating people equally.

The terms "justify" and "justification" refer to causing a guilty person to be righteous. Only God can truly justify people.

- When God justifies people, he forgives their sins and makes it as though they have no sin. He justifies sinners who repent and trust in Jesus to save them from their sins.
- "Justification" refers to what God does when he forgives a person's sins and declares that person to be righteous in his sight.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate "just" could include "morally right" or "fair."
- The term "justice" could be translated as "fair treatment" or "deserved consequences."
- To "act justly" could be translated as "treat fairly" or "behave in a just way."
- In some contexts, "just" could be translated as "righteous" or "upright."
- Depending on the context, "unjust" could also be translated as "unfair" or "partial" or "unrighteous."
- The phrase "the unjust" could be translated as "the unjust ones" or "unjust people" or "people who treat others unfairly" or "unrighteous people" or "people who disobey God."
- The term "unjustly" could be translated as "in an unfair manner" or "wrongly" or "unfairly."
- Ways to translate "injustice" could include, "wrong treatment" or "unfair treatment" or "acting unfairly." (See: abstractnouns)
- Other ways to translate "justify" could include "declare (someone) to be righteous" or "cause (someone) to be righteous."
- The term "justification" could be translated as "being declared righteous" or "becoming righteous" or "causing people to be righteous."
- The phrase "resulting in justification" could be translated as "so that God justified many people" or "which resulted in God causing people to be righteous."
- The phrase "for our justification" could be translated as "in order that we could be made righteous by God."

(See also: forgive, guilt, judge, righteous, righteous)

Bible References:

- Genesis 44:16
- 1 Chronicles 18:14
- Isaiah 4:3-4
- Jeremiah 22:3
- Ezekiel 18:16-17
- Micah 3:8
- Matthew 5:43-45
- Matthew 11:19
- Matthew 23:23-24
- Luke 18:3
- Luke 18:8
- Luke 18:13-14
- Luke 21:20-22
- Luke 23:41
- Acts 13:38-39
- Acts 28:4
- Romans 4:1-3
- Galatians 3:6-9
- Galatians 3:11
- Galatians 5:3-4
- Titus 3:6-7
- Hebrews 6:10
- James 2:24
- Revelation 15:3-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:9** David ruled with **justice** and faithfulness for many years, and God blessed him.
- **18:13** Some of these kings (of Judah) were good men who ruled **justly** and worshiped God.
- **19:16** They (the prophets) all told the people to stop worshiping idols and to start showing **justice** and mercy to others.
- **50:17** Jesus will rule his kingdom with peace and **justice**, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0205, H2555, H3477, H4941, H5765, H5766, H5767, H6662, H6663, H6664, H6666, H8003, H8264, H8636, G00910, G00930, G00940, G13420, G13440, G13450, G13460, G13470, G17380

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 3:5

law, law of Moses, law of Yahweh, law of God

Definition:

Most simply, the term "law" refers to a rule or instruction that should be followed. In the Bible, the term "law" is often used generally to refer to anything and everything God wants his people to obey and do. The specific term "law of Moses" refers to the commandments and instructions that God gave Moses for the Israelites to obey.

- Depending on the context, the "law" can refer to:
  - the Ten Commandments that God wrote on stone tablets for the Israelites
  - all the laws given to Moses
  - the first five books of the Old Testament
  - the entire Old Testament (also referred to as "scriptures" in the New Testament).
  - all of God's instructions and will
- The phrase "the Law and the Prophets" is used in the New Testament to refer to the Hebrew scriptures (or "Old Testament")

Translation Suggestions:

- These terms could be translated using the plural, "laws," since they refer to many instructions.
- The term "law of Moses" could be translated as "the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites."
- Depending on the context, "the law of Moses" could also be translated as "the law that God told to Moses" or "God's laws that Moses wrote down" or "the laws that God told Moses to give to the Israelites."
- Ways to translate "the law" or "law of God" or "God's laws" could include "laws from God" or "God's commands" or "laws that God gave" or "everything that God commands" or "all of God's instructions."
- The phrase "law of Yahweh" could also be translated as "Yahweh's laws" or "laws that Yahweh said to obey" or "laws from Yahweh" or "things Yahweh commanded."

(See also: instruct, Moses, Ten Commandments, lawful, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Acts 15:6
- Daniel 9:13
- Exodus 28:42-43
- Ezra 7:25-26
- Galatians 2:15
- Luke 24:44
- Matthew 5:18
- Nehemiah 10:29
- Romans 3:20

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:7** God also gave many other **laws** and rules to follow. If the people obeyed these **laws**, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they disobeyed them, God would punish them.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed **God's law** could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God.
- **15:13** Then Joshua reminded the people of their obligation to obey the covenant that God had made with the Israelites at Sinai. The people promised to remain faithful to God and follow **his laws**.
- **16:1** After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites or obey **God's laws**.
- **21:5** In the New Covenant, God would write **his law** on the people's hearts, the people would know God personally, they would be his people, and God would forgive their sins.
- **27:1** Jesus answered, "What is written in **God's law**?"
- **28:1** Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me 'good?' There is only one who is good, and that is God. But if you want to have eternal life, obey **God's laws**."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0430, H1881, H1882, H2706, H2710, H3068, H4687, H4872, H4941, H8451, G23160, G35510, G35650

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:4

lord, Lord, master, sir

Definition:

In the Bible, the term "lord" generally refers to someone who has ownership or authority over other people. In the Bible, however, the term is used to address many different kinds of people, including God.

- This word is sometimes translated as "master" when addressing Jesus or when referring to someone who owns slaves.
- Some English versions translate this as "sir" in contexts where someone is politely addressing someone of higher status.

When "Lord" is capitalized, it is a title that refers to God. (Note, however, that when it is used as a form of addressing someone or it occurs at the beginning of a sentence it may be capitalized and have the meaning of "sir" or "master.")

- In the Old Testament, this term is also used in expressions such as "Lord God Almighty" or "Lord Yahweh" or "Yahweh our Lord."

- In the New Testament, the apostles used this term in expressions such as "Lord Jesus" and "Lord Jesus Christ," which communicate that Jesus is God.

- The term "Lord" in the New Testament is also used alone as a direct reference to God, especially in quotations from the Old Testament. For example, the Old Testament text has "Blessed is he who comes in the name of Yahweh" and the New Testament text has "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

- In the ULT and UST, the title "Lord" is only used to translate the actual Hebrew and Greek words that mean "Lord." It is never used as a translation of God's name (Yahweh), as is done in many translations.

- Some languages translate "Lord" as "Master" or "Ruler" or some other term that communicates ownership or supreme rule.

- In the appropriate contexts, many translations capitalize the first letter of this term to make it clear to the reader that this is a title referring to God.

- For places in the New Testament where there is a quote from the Old Testament, the term "Lord God" could be used to make it clear that this is a reference to God.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term can be translated with the equivalent of "master" when it refers to a person who owns slaves. It can also be used by a servant to address the person he works for.
- When it refers to Jesus, if the context shows that the speaker sees him as a religious teacher, it can be translated with a respectful address for a religious teacher, such as "master."
- If the person addressing Jesus does not know him, "lord" could be translated with a respectful form of address such as "sir." This translation would also be used for other contexts in which a polite form of address to a man is called for.
- When referring to God the Father or to Jesus, this term is considered a title, written as "Lord" (capitalized) in English.

(See also: God, Jesus, ruler, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Genesis 39:2
- Joshua 3:9-11
- Psalms 86:15-17
- Jeremiah 27:4
- Lamentations 2:2
- Ezekiel 18:29
- Daniel 9:9
- Daniel 9:17-19
- Malachi 3:1
- Matthew 7:21-23
- Luke 1:30-33
- Luke 16:13
- Romans 6:23
- Ephesians 6:9
- Philippians 2:9-11
- Colossians 3:23
- Hebrews 12:14
- James 2:1
- 1 Peter 1:3
- Jude 1:5
- Revelation 15:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **25:5** But Jesus replied to Satan by quoting from the Scriptures. He said, "In God's word, he commands his people, 'Do not test the **Lord** your God.'"
- **25:7** Jesus replied, "Get away from me, Satan! In God's word he commands his people, 'Worship only the **Lord** your God and only serve him.'"
- **26:3** This is the year of the **Lord's** favor.
- **27:2** The law expert replied that God's law says, "Love the **Lord** your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind."
- **31:5** Then Peter said to Jesus, "**Master**, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water"
- **43:9** "But know for certain that God has caused Jesus to become both **Lord** and Messiah!"
- **47:3** By means of this demon she predicted the future for people, she made a lot of money for her **masters** as a fortuneteller.
- **47:11** Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the **Master**, and you and your family will be saved."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0113, H0136, H1167, H1376, H4756, H7980, H8323, G02030, G06340, G09620, G12030, G29620

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:9

Lord Yahweh, Yahweh God

Definition:

In the Old Testament, “Lord Yahweh” is frequently used to refer to the one true God.

- The term “Lord” is a divine title and “Yahweh” is God’s personal name.
- “Yahweh” is also often combined with the term “God” to form “Yahweh God.”

Translation Suggestions:

- If some form of “Yahweh” is used for the translation of God’s personal name, the terms “Lord Yahweh” and “Yahweh God” can be translated literally. Also consider how the term “Lord” is translated in other contexts when referring to God.
- Some languages put titles after the name and would translate this as “Yahweh Lord.” Consider what is natural in the project language: should the title “Lord” come before or after “Yahweh”?
- “Yahweh God” could also be rendered as “God who is called Yahweh” or “God who is the Living One” or “I am, who is God.”
- If the translation follows the tradition of rendering “Yahweh” as “Lord” or “LORD,” the term “Lord Yahweh” could be translated as “Lord God” or “God who is the Lord.” Other possible translations could be, “Master LORD” or “God the LORD.”
- The term “Lord Yahweh” *should not* be rendered as “Lord LORD” because readers may not notice the difference in letter size that has traditionally been used to distinguish these two words and it would look very strange.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: God, lord, Lord, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 4:3-4
- 2 Samuel 7:21-23
- Deuteronomy 3:23-25
- Ezekiel 39:25-27
- Ezekiel 45:18
- Jeremiah 44:26
- Judges 6:22
- Micah 1:2-4

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0136, H0430, H3068, G23160, G29620

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:7

love, beloved

Definition:

To love another person is to care for that person and do things that will benefit him. There are different meanings for "love" some languages may express using different words:

1. The kind of love that comes from God is focused on the good of others even when it does not benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do. God himself is love and is the source of true love.
    - Jesus showed this kind of love by sacrificing his life in order to rescue us from sin and death. He also taught his followers to love others sacrificially.
    - When people love others with this kind of love, they act in ways that show they are thinking of what will cause the others to thrive. This kind of love especially includes forgiving others.
    - In the ULT, the word "love" refers to this kind of sacrificial love, unless a Translation Note indicates a different meaning.
2. Another word in the New Testament refers to brotherly love, or love for a friend or family member.
    - This term refers to natural human love between friends or relatives.
    - The term can also be used in such contexts as, "They love to sit in the most important seats at a banquet." This means that they "like very much" or "greatly desire" to do that.
3. The word "love" can also refer to romantic love between a man and a woman.

Translation Suggestions:

- Unless indicated otherwise in a Translation Note, the word "love" in the ULT refers to the kind of sacrificial love that comes from God.
- Some languages may have a special word for the kind of unselfish, sacrificial love that God has. Ways to translate this might include, "devoted, faithful caring" or "care for unselfishly" or "love from God." Make sure that the word used to translate God's love can include giving up one's own interests to benefit others and loving others no matter what they do.
- Sometimes the English word "love" describes the deep caring that people have for friends and family members. Some languages might translate this with a word or phrase that means "like very much" or "care for" or "have strong affection for."
- In contexts where the word "love" is used to express a strong preference for something, this could be translated by "strongly prefer" or "like very much" or "greatly desire."
- Some languages may also have a separate word that refers to romantic or sexual love between a husband and wife.
- Many languages must express "love" as an action. So for example, they might translate "love is patient, love is kind" as, "when a person loves someone, he is patient with him and kind to him."

(See also: covenant, death, sacrifice, save, sin)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 13:7
- 1 John 3:2
- 1 Thessalonians 4:10
- Galatians 5:23
- Genesis 29:18
- Isaiah 56:6
- Jeremiah 2:2
- John 3:16
- Matthew 10:37
- Nehemiah 9:32-34
- Philippians 1:9
- Song of Songs 1:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:2** The law expert replied that God's law says, "**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And **love** your neighbor as yourself."

- 33:8 “The thorny ground is a person who hears God’s word, but, as time passes, the cares, riches, and pleasures of life choke out his **love** for God.”
- 36:5 As Peter was talking, a bright cloud came down on top of them and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son whom I **love**.”
- 39:10 “Everyone who **loves** the truth listens to me.”
- 47:1 She (Lydia) **loved** and worshiped God.
- 48:1 When God created the world, everything was perfect. There was no sin. Adam and Eve **loved** each other, and they **loved** God.
- 49:3 He (Jesus) taught that you need to **love** other people the same way you love yourself.
- 49:4 He (Jesus) also taught that you need to **love** God more than you **love** anything else, including your wealth.
- 49:7 Jesus taught that God **loves** sinners very much.
- 49:9 But God **loved** everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with God forever.
- 49:13 God **loves** you and wants you to believe in Jesus so he can have a close relationship with you.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0157, H0158, H0159, H0160, H2245, H2617, H2836, H3039, H4261, H5689, H5690, H5691, H7355, H7356, H7453, H7474, G00250, G00260, G53600, G53610, G53620, G53630, G53650, G53670, G53680, G53690, G53770, G53810, G53820, G53830, G53880

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:17

priest, priesthood

Definition:

In the Bible, a priest was someone who was chosen to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of God’s people. The “priesthood” was the name for the office or condition of being a priest.

- In the Old Testament, God chose Aaron and his descendants to be his priests for the people of Israel.
- The “priesthood” was a right and a responsibility that was passed down from father to son in the Levite clan.
- The Israelite priests had the responsibility of offering the people’s sacrifices to God, along with other duties in the temple.
- Priests also offered regular prayers to God on behalf of his people and performed other religious rites.
- The priests pronounced formal blessings on people and taught them God’s laws.
- In Jesus’ time, there were different levels of priests, including the chief priests and the high priest.
- Jesus is our “great high priest” who intercedes for us in God’s presence. He offered himself as the ultimate sacrifice for sin. This means that the sacrifices made by human priests are no longer needed.
- In the New Testament, every believer in Jesus is called a “priest” who can come directly to God in prayer to intercede for himself and other people.
- In ancient times, there were also pagan priests who presented offerings to false gods such as Baal.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “priest” could be translated as “sacrifice person” or “God’s intermediary” or “sacrificial mediator” or “person God appoints to represent him.”
- The translation of “priest” should be different from the translation of “mediator.”

- Some translations may prefer to always say something like “Israelite priest” or “Jewish priest” or “Yahweh’s priest” or “priest of Baal” to make it clear that this does not refer to a modern-day type of priest.
- The term used to translate “priest” should be different from the terms for “chief priest” and “high priest” and “Levite” and “prophet.”

(See also: Aaron, high priest, mediator, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 6:41
- Genesis 14:17-18
- Genesis 47:22
- John 1:19-21
- Luke 10:31
- Mark 1:44
- Mark 2:25-26
- Matthew 8:4
- Matthew 12:4
- Micah 3:9-11
- Nehemiah 10:28-29
- Nehemiah 10:34-36
- Revelation 1:6

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:7** “Melchizedek, the **priest** of God Most High”
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed God’s law could bring an animal to the altar in front of the Tent of Meeting as a sacrifice to God. A **priest** would kill the animal and burn it on the altar. The blood of the animal that was sacrificed covered the person’s sin and made that person clean in God’s sight. God chose Moses’ brother, Aaron, and Aaron’s descendants to be his **priests**.
- **19:7** So the **priests** of Baal prepared a sacrifice but did not light the fire.
- **21:7** An Israelite **priest** was someone who made sacrifices to God on behalf of the people as a substitute for the punishment of their sins. **Priests** also prayed to God for the people.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3547, H3548, H3549, H3550, G07480, G07490, G24050, G24060, G24070, G24090, G24200

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 3:4

prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A "prophet" is a man who speaks God's messages to people. A woman who does this is called a "prophetess."

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A "prophecy" is the message that the prophet speaks. To "prophesy" means to speak God's messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as "the prophets."
- For example the phrase, "the law and the prophets" is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the "Old Testament."
- An older term for a prophet was "seer" or "someone who sees."
- Sometimes the term "seer" refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "prophet" could be translated as "God's spokesman" or "man who speaks for God" or "man who speaks God's messages."
- A "seer" could be translated as "person who sees visions" or "man who sees the future from God."
- The term "prophetess" could be translated as "spokeswoman for God" or "woman who speaks for God" or "woman who speaks God's messages."
- Ways to translate "prophecy" could include, "message from God" or "prophet message."
- The term "prophesy" could be translated as "speak words from God" or "tell God's message."
- The figurative expression, "law and the prophets" could also be translated as "the books of the law and of the prophets" or "everything written about God and his people, including God's laws and what his prophets preached." (See: synecdoche)
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as "false prophet (seer)" or "prophet (seer) of a false god" or "prophet of Baal," for example.

(See also: Baal, divination, false god, false prophet, fulfill, law, vision)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16
- Acts 3:25
- John 1:43-45
- Malachi 4:4-6
- Matthew 1:23
- Matthew 2:18
- Matthew 5:17
- Psalm 51:1

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they trusted in God and believed that Moses was a **prophet** of God.
- **17:13** God was very angry about what David had done, so he sent the **prophet** Nathan to tell David how evil his sin was.
- **19:1** Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God's messages.
- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 **prophets** of Baal, came to Mount Carmel.
- **19:17** Most of the time, the people did not obey God. They often mistreated the **prophets** and sometimes even killed them.
- **21:9** The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- **43:5** "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- **43:7** "This fulfills the **prophecy** which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.'"

- **48:12** Moses was a great **prophet** who proclaimed the word of God. But Jesus is the greatest **prophet** of all. He is the Word of God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G24950, G43940, G43950, G43960, G43970, G43980, G55780

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:4

pure, purify, purification

Definition:

To be "pure" means to have no flaw or to have nothing mixed in that is not supposed to be there. To purify something is to cleanse it and remove anything that contaminates or pollutes it.

- In regard to Old Testament laws, "purify" and "purification" refer mainly to the cleansing from things that make an object or a person ritually unclean, such as disease, body fluids, or childbirth.
- The Old Testament also had laws telling people how to be purified from sin, usually by the sacrifice of an animal. This was only temporary and the sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again.
- In the New Testament, to be purified often refers to being cleansed from sin.
- The only way that people can be completely and permanently purified from sin is through repenting and receiving God's forgiveness, through trusting in Jesus and his sacrifice.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "purify" could be translated as "make pure" or "cleanse" or "cleanse from all contamination" or "get rid of all sin."
- A phrase such as "when the time for their purification was over" could be translated as "when they had purified themselves by waiting the required number of days."
- The phrase "provided purification for sins" could be translated as "provided a way for people to be completely cleansed from their sin."
- Other ways to translate "purification" could include "cleansing" or "spiritual washing" or "becoming ritually clean."

(See also: atonement, clean, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 1:5
- Exodus 31:6-9
- Hebrews 9:13-15
- James 4:8

- Luke 2:22
- Revelation 14:4

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1249, H1252, H1253, H1305, H1865, H2134, H2135, H2141, H2212, H2398, H2403, H2561, H2889, H2890, H2891, H2892, H2893, H3795, H3800, H4795, H5343, H5462, H6337, H6884, H6942, H8562, G00480, G00490, G00530, G00540, G15060, G25110, G25120, G25130, G25140

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:9

remnant

Definition:

The term "remnant" literally refers to people or things that are "remaining" or "left over" from a larger amount or group.

- Often a "remnant" refers to people who survive a life-threatening situation or who remain faithful to God while undergoing persecution.
- Isaiah referred to a group of Jews as being a remnant who would survive attacks from outsiders and live to return to the Promised Land in Canaan.
- Paul talks about there being a "remnant" of people who were chosen by God to receive his grace.
- The term "remnant" also implies that there were other people who did not remain or were not left over.

Translation Suggestions:

- A phrase such as "the remnant of this people" could be translated as "the rest of these people" or "the people who are left."
- The "whole remnant of people" could be translated by "all the rest of the people" or "the remaining people."

Bible References:

- Acts 15:17
- Amos 9:12
- Ezekiel 6:8-10
- Genesis 45:7
- Isaiah 11:11
- Micah 4:6-8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3498, H3499, H5629, H6413, H7604, H7605, H7611, H8281, H8300, G26400, G30050, G30620

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 2:7 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 3:13

restore, restoration

Definition:

The terms “restore” and “restoration” refer to causing something to return to its original place or condition.

- When a diseased body part is restored, this means it has been “healed.”
- A broken relationship that is restored has been “reconciled.” God restores sinful people and brings them back to himself.
- If people have been restored to their home country, they have been “brought back” or “returned” to that country.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “restore” could include “renew” or “repay” or “return” or “heal” or “bring back.”
- Other expressions for this term could be “make new” or “make like new again.”
- When property is “restored,” it has been “repaired” or “replaced” or “given back” to its owner.
- Depending on the context, “restoration” could be translated as “renewal” or “healing” or “reconciliation.”

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 5:10
- Acts 3:21
- Acts 15:15-18
- Isaiah 49:5-6
- Jeremiah 15:19-21
- Lamentations 5:22
- Leviticus 6:5-7
- Luke 19:8
- Matthew 12:13
- Psalm 80:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7725, H7999, H8421, G06000, G26750

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:7 Zephaniah 3:20

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

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:13

sanctify, sanctification

Definition:

To sanctify is to set apart or to make holy. Sanctification is the process of being made holy.

- In the Old Testament, certain people and things were sanctified, or set apart, for service to God.
- The New Testament teaches that God sanctifies people who believe in Jesus. That is, he makes them holy and sets them apart to serve him.
- Believers in Jesus are also commanded to sanctify themselves to God, to be holy in everything they do.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term "sanctify" can be translated as "set apart" or "make holy" or "purify."
- When people sanctify themselves, they purify themselves and dedicate themselves to God's service. Often the word "consecrate" is used in the Bible with this meaning.
- When its meaning is "consecrate," this term could be translated as "dedicate someone (or something) to God's service."
- Depending on the context, the phrase "your sanctification" could be translated as "making you holy" or "setting you apart (for God)" or "what makes you holy."

(See also: consecrate, holy, set apart)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-6
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- Genesis 2:1-3
- Luke 11:2
- Matthew 6:8-10

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6942, G00370, G00380

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:7

save, saved, safe, salvation, rescue

Definition:

The term “save” refers to keeping someone from experiencing something bad or harmful. To “be safe” means to be protected from harm or danger.

- In a physical sense, people can be saved or rescued from harm, danger, or death.
- In a spiritual sense, if a person has been “saved,” then God, through Jesus’ death on the cross, has forgiven him and rescued him from being punished in hell for his sin.
- People can save or rescue people from danger, but only God can save people from being punished eternally for their sins.

The term “salvation” refers to being saved or rescued from evil and danger.

- In the Bible, “salvation” usually refers to the spiritual and eternal deliverance granted by God to those who repent of their sins and believe in Jesus.
- The Bible also talks about God saving or delivering his people from their physical enemies.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “save” could include “deliver” or “keep from harm” or “take out of harm’s way” or “keep from dying.”

- In the expression “whoever would save his life,” the term “save” could also be translated as “preserve” or “protect.”

- The term “safe” could be translated as “protected from danger” or “in a place where nothing can harm.”

- The term “salvation” could also be translated using words related to “save” or “rescue,” as in “God’s saving people (from being punished for their sins)” or “God’s rescuing his people (from their enemies).”

- "God is my salvation" could be translated as "God is the one who saves me."
- "You will draw water from the wells of salvation" could be translated as "You will be refreshed as with water because God is rescuing you."

(See also: cross, deliver, punish, sin, Savior)

Bible References:

- Genesis 49:18
- Genesis 47:25-26
- Psalms 80:3
- Jeremiah 16:19-21
- Micah 6:3-5
- Luke 2:30
- Luke 8:36-37
- Acts 4:12
- Acts 28:28
- Acts 2:21
- Romans 1:16
- Romans 10:10
- Ephesians 6:17
- Philippians 1:28
- 1 Timothy 1:15-17
- Revelation 19:1-2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:8** Moses tried to **save** his fellow Israelite.
- **11:2** God provided a way to **save** the firstborn son of anyone who believed in him.
- **12:5** Moses told the Israelites, "Stop being afraid! God will fight for you today and **save** you."
- **12:13** The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to praise God because he **saved** them from the Egyptian army.
- **16:17** This pattern repeated many times: the Israelites would sin, God would punish them, they would repent, and God would send a deliverer to **save** them.
- **44:8** "You crucified Jesus, but God raised him to life again! You rejected him, but there is no other way to be **saved** except through the power of Jesus!"
- **47:11** The jailer trembled as he came to Paul and Silas and asked, "What must I do to be **saved**?" Paul answered, "Believe in Jesus, the Master, and you and your family will be **saved**."
- **49:12** Good works cannot **save** you.
- **49:13** God will **save** everyone who believes in Jesus and receives him as their Master. But he will not **save** anyone who does not believe in him.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0983, H2421, H2502, H3444, H3467, H3468, H4190, H4422, H4931, H5338, H6308, H6403, H7682, H7951, H7965, H8104, H8199, H8668, G08030, G08040, G08060, G12950, G15080, G49820, G49910, G49920, G51980

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:17 Zephaniah 3:19

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term "sin" refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God's will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people do not know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God's will are called "sinful."
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a "sinful nature," a nature that that controls them and causes them to sin.
- A "sinner" is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word "sinners" was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who did not keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term "sinner" was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "sin" could be translated with a word or phrase that means "disobedience to God" or "going against God's will" or "evil behavior and thoughts" or "wrongdoing."
- To "sin" could also be translated as to "disobey God" or to "do wrong."
- Depending on the context "sinful" could be translated as "full of wrongdoing" or "wicked" or "immoral" or "evil" or "rebelling against God."
- Depending on the context the term "sinner" could be translated with a word or phrase that means "person who sins" or "person who does wrong things" or "person who disobeys God" or "person who disobeys the law."
- The term "sinners" could be translated by a word or phrase that means "very sinful people" or "people considered to be very sinful" or "immoral people."
- Ways to translate "tax collectors and sinners" could include "people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people" or "very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors."
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people do not see or know about.
- The term "sin" should be general, and different from the terms for "wickedness" and "evil."

(See also: disobey, evil, flesh, tax collector)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:1-3
- 1 John 1:10
- 1 John 2:2
- 2 Samuel 7:12-14
- Acts 3:19
- Daniel 9:24
- Genesis 4:7
- Hebrews 12:2
- Isaiah 53:11
- Jeremiah 18:23
- Leviticus 4:14
- Luke 15:18
- Matthew 12:31
- Romans 6:23
- Romans 8:4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:15** God said, "I promise I will never again curse the ground because of the evil things people do, or destroy the world by causing a flood, even though people are **sinful** from the time they are children."
- **13:12** God was very angry with them because of their **sin** and planned to destroy them.
- **20:1** The kingdoms of Israel and Judah both **sinned** against God. They broke the covenant that God made with them at Sinai.
- **21:13** The prophets also said that the Messiah would be perfect, having no **sin**. He would die to receive the punishment for other people's **sin**.

- **35:1** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinners** who had gathered to hear him.
- **38:5** Then Jesus took a cup and said, “Drink this. It is my blood of the New Covenant that is poured out for the forgiveness of **sins**.”
- **43:11** Peter answered them, “Every one of you should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that God will forgive your **sins**.”
- **48:8** We all deserve to die for our **sins**!
- **49:17** Even though you are a Christian, you will still be tempted to **sin**. But God is faithful and says that if you confess your **sins**, he will forgive you. He will give you strength to fight against **sin**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0817, H0819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G02640, G02650, G02660, G02680, G03610, G37810, G39000, G42580

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:17

transgress, transgression

Definition:

The term “transgress” means to cross a line or to violate a boundary. The term is often used figuratively, meaning to break a command, rule, or moral code.

- This term is very similar to the word “trespass,” but is generally used more often to describe violations against God than against other people.
- To “transgress” can also be described as to “cross a line,” that is, to go beyond a limit or boundary that has been set for the good of the person and others.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “transgress” could be translated as to “sin” or to “disobey” or to “rebel.”
- If a verse or passage uses two terms that mean “sin” or “transgress” or “trespass,” it is important, if possible, to use different ways to translate these terms. When the Bible uses two or more terms with similar meanings in the same context, usually its purpose is to emphasize what is being said or to show its importance.

(See: parallelism)

(See also: disobey, sin, trespass, iniquity)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 4:6
- Daniel 9:24-25
- Galatians 3:19-20
- Galatians 6:1-2
- Numbers 14:17-19
- Psalm 32:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0898, H4603, H4604, H6586, H6588, G04580, G04590, G38450, G38470, G38480, G39280

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:11

trust, trusted, trustworthy, trustworthiness

Definition:

To “trust” something or someone is to believe that the thing or person is true or dependable. That belief is also called “trust.” A “trustworthy” person is one you can trust to do and say what is right and true, and therefore one who has the quality of “trustworthiness.”

- Trust is closely related to faith. If we trust someone, we have faith in that person to do what they promised to do.
- Having trust in someone also means depending on that person.
- To “trust in” Jesus means to believe that he is God, to believe that he died on the cross to pay for our sins, and to rely on him to save us.
- A “trustworthy saying” refers to something that is said that can be counted on to be true.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “trust” could include “believe” or “have faith” or “have confidence” or “depend on.”
- The phrase “put your trust in” is very similar in meaning to “trust in.”
- The term “trustworthy” could be translated as “dependable” or “reliable” or “can always be trusted.”

(See also: believe, confidence, faith, faithful, true)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:22-24
- 1 Timothy 4:9
- Hosea 10:12-13
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Nehemiah 13:13
- Psalm 31:5
- Titus 3:8

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:12** When the Israelites saw that the Egyptians were dead, they **trusted** in God and believed that Moses was a prophet of God.
- **14:15** Joshua was a good leader because he **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **17:2** David was a humble and righteous man who **trusted** and obeyed God.
- **34:6** Then Jesus told a story about people who **trusted** in their own good deeds and despised other people.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0539, H0982, H1556, H2620, H2622, H3176, H4009, H4268, H7365, G16790, G38720, G39820, G40060, G41000, G42760

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:2 Zephaniah 3:12

woe

Definition:

The term “woe” refers to a feeling of great distress. It also gives a warning that someone will experience severe trouble.

- The expression “woe to” is followed by a warning to people that they will experience suffering as punishment for their sins.
- In several places in the Bible, the word “woe” is repeated, to emphasize an especially terrible judgment.
- A person who says “woe is me” or “woe to me” is expressing sorrow about severe suffering.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “woe” could also be translated as “great sorrow” or “sadness” or “calamity” or “disaster.”
- Other ways to translate the expression “Woe to (name of city)” could include, “How terrible it will be for (name of city)” or “The people in (that city) will be severely punished” or “Those people will suffer greatly.”
- The expression, “Woe is me!” or “Woe to me!” could be translated as “How sad I am!” or “I am so sad!” or “How terrible this is for me!”
- The expression “Woe to you” could also be translated as “You will suffer terribly” or “You will experience terrible troubles.”

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 13:17-18
- Habakkuk 2:12
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Jeremiah 45:1-3
- Jude 1:9-11
- Luke 6:24
- Luke 17:1-2
- Matthew 23:23

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0188, H0190, H0337, H0480, H1929, H1945, H1958, G37590

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:5 Zephaniah 3:1

word of God, word of Yahweh, word of the Lord, word of truth, scripture

Definition:

In the Bible, the term "word of God" refers to anything that God has communicated to people. This includes spoken and written messages. Jesus is also called "the Word of God."

- The term "scriptures" means "writings." It is only used in the New Testament and refers to the Hebrew scriptures, which is the Old Testament. These writings were God's message that he had told people to write down so that many years in the future people could still read it.
- The related terms "word of Yahweh" and "word of the Lord" often refer to a specific message from God that was given to a prophet or other person in the Bible.
- Sometimes this term occurs as simply "the word" or "my word" or "your word" (when talking about God's word).
- In the New Testament, Jesus is called "the Word" and "the Word of God." These titles mean that Jesus fully reveals who God is, because he is God himself.

The term "word of truth" is another way of referring to "God's word," which is his message or teaching. It does not refer to just one word.

- God's word of truth includes everything that God has taught people about himself, his creation, and his plan of salvation through Jesus.
- This term emphasizes the fact that what God has told us is true, faithful, and real.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include "the message of Yahweh" or "God's message" or "the teachings from God."

- It may be more natural in some languages to make this term plural and say "God's words" or "the words of Yahweh."

- The expression "the word of Yahweh came" is often used to introduce something that God told his prophets or his people. This could be translated as "Yahweh spoke this message" or "Yahweh spoke these words."

- The term "scripture" or "scriptures" could be translated as "the writings" or "the written message from God." This term should be translated differently from the translation of the term "word."

- When "word" occurs alone and it refers to God's word, it could be translated as "the message" or "God's word" or "the teachings." Also consider the alternate translations suggested above.

- When the Bible refers to Jesus as "the Word," this term could be translated as "the Message" or "the Truth."

- "Word of truth" could be translated as "God's true message" or "God's word, which is true."

- It is important for the translation of this term to include the meaning of being true.

(See also: prophet, true, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Genesis 15:1
- 1 Kings 13:1
- Jeremiah 36:1-3
- Luke 8:11
- John 5:39
- Acts 6:2
- Acts 12:24
- Romans 1:2
- 2 Corinthians 6:7
- Ephesians 1:13
- 2 Timothy 3:16
- James 1:18
- James 2:8-9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **25:7** In **God's word** he commands his people, "Worship only the Lord your God and only serve him."
- **33:6** So Jesus explained, "The seed is the **word of God**."

- **42:3** Then Jesus explained to them what **God's word** says about the Messiah.
- **42:7** Jesus said, "I told you that everything written about me in **God's word** must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds so they could understand **God's word**.
- **45:10** Philip also used other **scriptures** to tell him the good news of Jesus.
- **48:12** But Jesus is the greatest prophet of all. He is the **Word of God**.
- **49:18** God tells you to pray, to study his **word**, to worship him with other Christians, and to tell others what he has done for you.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0561, H0565, H1697, H3068, G30560, G44870

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1 Zephaniah 2:5

wrath, fury

Definition:

Wrath is an intense anger that is sometimes long-lasting. The Bible describes both people and God as experiencing intense anger. When speaking about God's "wrath," make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful fit of rage (which might be true of a human person).

- In the Bible, "wrath" often refers to God's righteous judgment of sin and punishment of people who rebel against him.
- The "wrath of God" can also refer to his judgment and punishment for sin.
- God's wrath is the righteous penalty for those who do not repent of their sin.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways this term could be translated include "intense anger" or "righteous judgment" or "anger."
- God's wrath is just and holy. When talking about God's wrath, make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful human rage.

(See also: judge, sin)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10
- 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- Luke 3:7
- Luke 21:23
- Matthew 3:7
- Revelation 14:10
- Romans 1:18
- Romans 5:9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0639, H2197, H2528, H2534, H2740, H3707, H3708, H5678, H7107, H7109, H7110, H7265, H7267, G23720, G37090, G39490, G39500

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:15 Zephaniah 1:18

Yahweh, Yah

Definition:

The term "Yahweh" is God's personal name in the Old Testament. The specific origin of this name is unknown, but it is probably derived from the Hebrew verb meaning, "to be."

- Following tradition, many Bible versions use the term "LORD" or "the LORD" to represent "Yahweh." This tradition resulted from the fact that historically, the Jewish people became afraid of mispronouncing Yahweh's name and started saying "Lord" every time the term "Yahweh" appeared in the text. Modern Bibles write "LORD" with all capital letters to show that this represents God's personal name and to distinguish it from "Lord" which is a different Hebrew word.
- The ULT and UST texts always translate this term as "Yahweh," in agreement with the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.
- The term "Yahweh" never occurs in the original text of the New Testament; only the Greek term for "Lord" is used, even when quoting the Old Testament.
- In the Old Testament, when God spoke about himself, he would often use his name instead of a pronoun.
- "Yah" is a shortened form of the name Yahweh that occurs in poetry and praise (e.g. Hallelujah = "Praise Yah"), and in some Hebrew names (e.g. Zechariah = "Yah remembers").

Translation Suggestions:

- "Yahweh" could be translated by a word or phrase that means "I am" or "existing one" or "the one who is" or "he who is present."
- This name could also be written in a way that is similar to how "Yahweh" is spelled, or how it sounds in your language.
- Some church denominations prefer not to use the term "Yahweh" and instead use the traditional rendering, "LORD." An important consideration is that this may be confusing when read aloud because it will sound the same as the title "Lord." Some languages may have an affix or other grammatical marker that could be added to distinguish "LORD" as a name (Yahweh) from "Lord" as a title.
- In most cases it is good to keep the name Yahweh where it occurs in the text, but some translations may decide to use only a pronoun in some places to make the text more natural and clear.
- An introduction of a quote from Yahweh could be something like, "This is what Yahweh says."

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: God, Lord)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 21:20
- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Daniel 9:3
- Ezekiel 17:24
- Genesis 2:4
- Genesis 4:3-5
- Genesis 28:13
- Hosea 11:12
- Isaiah 10:4
- Isaiah 38:8
- Job 12:10
- Joshua 1:9
- Lamentations 1:5
- Leviticus 25:35
- Malachi 3:4
- Micah 2:5
- Micah 6:5
- Numbers 8:11
- Psalm 124:3
- Ruth 1:21
- Zechariah 14:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:14** God said, "I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, 'I AM has sent me to you.' Also tell them, 'I am **Yahweh**, the God of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name forever.'"

- **13:4** Then God gave them the covenant and said, “I am **Yahweh**, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other gods.”
- **13:5** “Do not make idols or worship them, for I, **Yahweh**, am a jealous God.”
- **16:1** The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of **Yahweh**, the true God.
- **19:10** Then Elijah prayed, “O **Yahweh**, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3050, H3068, H3069

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:2 Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:6 Zephaniah 1:6 Zephaniah 1:7 Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 1:10 Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 1:17 Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:7 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 2:10 Zephaniah 2:11 Zephaniah 3:2 Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:9 Zephaniah 3:12 Zephaniah 3:15 Zephaniah 3:15 Zephaniah 3:17 Zephaniah 3:20

Zion, Mount Zion

Definition:

Originally, the term “Zion” or “Mount Zion” referred to a stronghold or fortress that King David captured from the Jebusites. Both these terms became other ways of referring to Jerusalem.

- Mount Zion and Mount Moriah were two of the hills that the city of Jerusalem was located on. Later, “Zion” and “Mount Zion” became used as general terms to refer to both of these mountains and to the city of Jerusalem. Sometimes they also referred to the temple that was located in Jerusalem. (See: metonymy)
- David named Zion, or Jerusalem, the “City of David.” This is different from David’s hometown, Bethlehem, which was also called the City of David.
- The term “Zion” is used in other figurative ways, to refer to Israel or to God’s spiritual kingdom or to the new, heavenly Jerusalem that God will create.

(See also: Abraham, David, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jebusites)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:5
- Amos 1:2
- Jeremiah 51:35
- Psalm 76:1-3
- Romans 11:26

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6726

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:14 Zephaniah 3:16

Ammon, Ammonite

Definition:

The “people of Ammon” or the “Ammonites” were a people group that lived on the east side of the Jordan River across from the Israelites.

- The book of Genesis reports that the Ammonite nation was descended from Ben-ammi, who was the son of Lot by his younger daughter.
- The term “Ammonitess” refers specifically to a female Ammonite. This could also be translated as “Ammonite woman.”
- At one point, the Ammonites hired a prophet named Balaam to curse Israel, but God did not allow him to do it.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: curse, Jordan River, Lot)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 19:1-3
- Ezekiel 25:2
- Genesis 19:38
- Joshua 12:1-2
- Judges 11:27
- Zephaniah 2:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5983, H5984, H5985

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:8 Zephaniah 2:9

Ashdod, Azotus

Definition:

Ashdod was one of the five most important cities of the Philistines. It was located in southwestern Canaan near the Mediterranean Sea, halfway between the cities of Gaza and Joppa.

- The temple of the Philistine’s false god Dagon was located in Ashdod.
- God severely punished the people of Ashdod when the Philistines stole the ark of the covenant and put it in the pagan temple at Ashdod.
- The Greek name for this city was Azotus. It was one of the cities where the evangelist Philip preached the gospel.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Ekron, Gath, Gaza, Joppa, Philip, Philistines)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 5:1-3
- Acts 8:40
- Amos 1:8
- Joshua 15:45-47
- Zechariah 9:6

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0795, G01080

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:4

Ashkelon

Definition:

In Bible times, Ashkelon was a major Philistine city located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It still exists in Israel today.

- Ashkelon was one of the five most important Philistine cities, along with Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza.
- The Israelites did not completely conquer the people of Ashkelon, even though the kingdom of Judah occupied its hill country.
- Ashkelon remained occupied by the Philistines for hundreds of years.

(Translation suggestions: Translate Names)

(See also: Ashdod, Canaan, Ekron, Gath, Gaza, Philistines, Mediterranean)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 6:17-18
- Amos 1:8
- Jeremiah 25:19-21
- Joshua 13:2-3
- Judges 1:18-19
- Zechariah 9:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0831

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:4 Zephaniah 2:7

Assyria, Assyrian, Assyrian Empire

Definition:

Assyria was a powerful nation during the time the Israelites were living in the land of Canaan. The Assyrian Empire was a group of nations ruled by an Assyrian king.

- The nation of Assyria was located in a region that is now the northern part of Iraq.
- The Assyrians fought against Israel at different times in their history.
- In the year 722 BC, the Assyrians completely conquered the kingdom of Israel and forced many of the Israelites to move to Assyria.
- The remaining Israelites intermarried with foreigners that the Assyrians had brought into Israel from Samaria. The descendants of those people who intermarried were later called the Samaritans.

(See also: Samaria)

Bible References:

- Genesis 10:11
- Genesis 25:17-18
- Isaiah 7:16-17
- Jeremiah 50:17
- Micah 7:11-13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **20:2** So God punished both kingdoms by allowing their enemies to destroy them. The kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the **Assyrian Empire**, a powerful, cruel nation. The **Assyrians** killed many people in the kingdom of Israel, took away everything of value, and burned much of the country.
- **20:3** The **Assyrians** gathered all the leaders, the rich people, and the people with skills and took them to **Assyria**.
- **20:4** Then the **Assyrians** brought foreigners to live in the land where the kingdom of Israel had been.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0804, H1121

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:13

Baal

Definition:

"Baal" means "lord" or "master" and was the name of the primary false god that was worshiped by the Canaanites.

- There were also local false gods that had "Baal" as part of their names, such as "Baal of Peor." Sometimes all these gods together are referred to as "the Baals."
- Some people had names that included the word "Baal" in them.
- The worship of Baal included evil practices such as sacrificing children and using prostitutes.
- At different time periods throughout their history, the Israelites also became deeply involved in Baal worship, following the example of the pagan nations around them.
- During the reign of King Ahab, God's prophet Elijah set up a test to prove to the people that Baal does not exist and that Yahweh is the only true God. As a result, the prophets of Baal were destroyed and the people started worshiping Yahweh again.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Ahab, Asherah, Elijah, false god, prostitute, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 16:31
- 1 Samuel 7:3-4
- Jeremiah 2:7-8
- Judges 2:11
- Numbers 22:41

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:2** Ahab was an evil man who encouraged people to worship a false god named **Baal**.

- **19:6** All the people of the entire kingdom of Israel, including the 450 prophets of **Baal**, came to Mount Carmel. Elijah said to the people, “How long will you keep changing your mind? If Yahweh is God, serve him! If **Baal** is God, serve him!”
- **19:7** Then Elijah said to the prophets of **Baal**, “Kill a bull and prepare it as a sacrifice, but do not light the fire.”
- **19:8** Then the prophets of **Baal** prayed to **Baal**, “Hear us, O **Baal**!”
- **19:12** So the people captured the prophets of **Baal**. Then Elijah took them away from there and killed them.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1120, G08960

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:4

Canaan, Canaanite

Definition:

Canaan was the son of Ham, who was one of Noah’s sons. The Canaanites were the descendants of Canaan.

- The term “Canaan” or the “land of Canaan” also referred to an area of land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. It extended south to the border of Egypt and north to the border of Syria.
- This land was inhabited by the Canaanites, as well as several other people groups.
- God promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Ham, Promised Land)

Bible References:

- Acts 13:19-20
- Exodus 3:7-8
- Genesis 9:18
- Genesis 10:19-20
- Genesis 13:7
- Genesis 47:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:5** He (Abram) took his wife, Sarai, together with all his servants and everything he owned and went to the land God showed him, the land of **Canaan**.
- **4:6** When Abram arrived in **Canaan** God said, “Look all around you. I will give to you and your descendants all the land that you can see as an inheritance.”
- **4:9** “I give the land of **Canaan** to your descendants.”
- **5:3** “I will give you and your descendants the land of **Canaan** as their possession and I will be their God forever.”
- **7:8** After twenty years away from his home in **Canaan**, Jacob returned there with his family, his servants, and all his herds of animals.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3667, H3669, G54780

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:11 Zephaniah 2:5

Cherethites

Definition:

The Cherethites were a people group who were probably part of the Philistines. Some versions write this name as "Kerethites."

- The "Cherethites and Pelethites" were a special group of soldiers from King David's army who were especially devoted to him as his bodyguards.
- Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, a member of David's administrative corps, was the leader of the Cherethites and Pelethites.
- The Cherethites remained with David when he had to flee Jerusalem because of Absalom's revolt.

(Translation suggestions: Translate Names)

(See also: Absalom, Benaiah, David, Philistines)

Bible References:

- Zephaniah 2:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3774

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:5

Cush

Definition:

Cush was the oldest son of Noah's son Ham. He was also the ancestor of Nimrod. Two of his brothers were named Egypt and Canaan.

- In Old Testament times, "Cush" was the name of a large region of land south of Israel. It is probable that the land was named after Ham's son Cush.
- The ancient region of Cush covered an area of land that may have, at different times, included parts of the modern-day countries of Sudan, Egypt, Ethiopia, and possibly, Saudi Arabia.
- Another man named Cush is mentioned in the Psalms. He was a Benjamite.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Arabia, Canaan, Egypt, Ethiopia)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 1:8-10
- Ezekiel 29:10
- Genesis 2:13
- Genesis 10:6-7
- Jeremiah 13:23

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3568, H3569, H3570, 3571

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:10

Ekron, Ekronites

Definition:

Ekron was a major city of the Philistines, located nine miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea.

- A temple of the false god Baal-zebub was located at Ekron.
- When the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant, they took it to Ashdod and then moved it to Gath and Ekron because God kept causing people to get sick and die in whatever city the ark was taken to. Finally the Philistines sent the ark back to Israel.
- When King Ahaziah fell through the roof of his house and injured himself, he sinned by trying to find out from the false god Baal-zebub of Ekron as to whether or not he would die from his injuries. Because of this sin, Yahweh said that he would die.

(Translation suggestions: Translate Names)

(See also: Ahaziah, ark of the covenant, Ashdod, Beelzebul, false god, Gath, Philistines)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 5:10
- Joshua 13:2-3
- Judges 1:18-19
- Zechariah 9:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6138, H6139

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:4

Gaza

Definition:

During Bible times, Gaza was a prosperous Philistine city located on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, about 38 kilometers south of Ashdod. It was one of the Philistines' five major cities.

- Because of its location, Gaza was a key seaport where commercial activities took place between many different people groups and nations.
- Today, the city of Gaza is still an important seaport in the Gaza Strip, which is a region of land located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea bordered by Israel on the north and east, and by Egypt on the south.
- Gaza was the city that the Philistines took Samson to after they had captured him.
- Philip the evangelist was walking along the desert road to Gaza when he met an Ethiopian eunuch.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Ashdod, Philip, Philistines, Ethiopia, Gath)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 4:24-25
- Acts 8:26
- Genesis 10:19
- Joshua 10:40-41
- Judges 6:3-4

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5804, H5841, G10480

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:4

Gomorrah

Definition:

Gomorrah was a city located in a fertile valley near Sodom, where Abraham's nephew Lot chose to live.

- The exact location of Gomorrah and Sodom is unknown, but there are indications that they may have been located directly south of the Salt Sea, near the Valley of Siddim.
- There were many kings at war in the region where Sodom and Gomorrah were located.
- When Lot's family was captured in a conflict between Sodom and other cities, Abraham and his men rescued them.
- Not long after that, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed by God because of the wickedness of the people who lived there.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Abraham, Babylon, Lot, Salt Sea, Sodom)

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 2:6
- Genesis 10:19
- Genesis 14:1-2
- Genesis 18:21
- Isaiah 1:9
- Matthew 10:15

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6017

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:9

Hezekiah

Definition:

Hezekiah was the 13th king over the kingdom of Judah. He was a king who trusted and obeyed God.

- Unlike his father Ahaz, who had been an evil king, King Hezekiah was a good king who destroyed all the places of idol worship in Judah.
- One time when Hezekiah became very sick and almost died, he earnestly prayed that God would spare his life. God healed him and allowed him to live 15 more years.
- As a sign to Hezekiah that this would happen, God performed a miracle and caused the sun to move backwards in the sky.
- God also answered Hezekiah's prayer to save his people from King Sennacherib of Assyria, who was attacking them.

(See also: Ahaz, Assyria, false god, Judah, Sennacherib)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 3:13-14
- 2 Kings 16:19-20
- Hosea 1:1
- Matthew 1:9-11
- Proverbs 25:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2396, H3169, G14780

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1

Jerusalem

Definition:

Jerusalem was originally an ancient Canaanite city that later became the most important city in Israel. It is located about 34 kilometers west of the Salt Sea and just north of Bethlehem. It is still the capital city of Israel today.

- The name "Jerusalem" is first mentioned in the book of Joshua. Other Old Testament names for this city include "Salem" "city of Jebus," and "Zion." Both "Jerusalem" and "Salem," have the root meaning of "peace."
- Jerusalem was originally a Jebusite fortress called "Zion" which King David captured and made into his capital city.
- It was in Jerusalem that David's son Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, which was the mountain where Abraham had offered his son Isaac to God. The temple was rebuilt there after it was destroyed by the Babylonians.
- Because the temple was in Jerusalem, the major Jewish festivals were celebrated there.
- People normally referred to going "up" to Jerusalem since it is located in the mountains.

(See also: Babylon, Christ, David, Jebusites, Jesus, Solomon, temple, Zion)

Bible References:

- Galatians 4:26-27
- John 2:13
- Luke 4:9-11
- Luke 13:5
- Mark 3:7-8
- Mark 3:20-22
- Matthew 3:6
- Matthew 4:23-25
- Matthew 20:17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:5** David conquered **Jerusalem** and made it his capital city.

- **18:2** In **Jerusalem**, Solomon built the Temple for which his father David had planned and gathered materials.
- **20:7** They (Babylonians) captured the city of **Jerusalem**, destroyed the Temple, and took away all the treasures of the city and the Temple.
- **20:12** So, after seventy years in exile, a small group of Jews returned to the city of **Jerusalem** in Judah.
- **38:1** About three years after Jesus first began preaching and teaching publicly, Jesus told his disciples that he wanted to celebrate this Passover with them in **Jerusalem**, and that he would be killed there.
- **38:2** After Jesus and the disciples arrived in **Jerusalem**, Judas went to the Jewish leaders and offered to betray Jesus to them in exchange for money.
- **42:8** "It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in **Jerusalem**, and then go to all people groups everywhere."
- **42:11** Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he told his disciples, "Stay in **Jerusalem** until you receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3389, H3390, G24140, G24150, G24190

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:4 Zephaniah 1:12 Zephaniah 3:14 Zephaniah 3:16

Josiah

Definition:

Josiah was a godly king who reigned over the kingdom of Judah for thirty-one years. He led the people of Judah to repent and worship Yahweh.

- After his father King Amon was killed, Josiah became king over Judah at eight years of age.
- In the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah ordered Hilkiah the high priest to rebuild the temple of the Lord. While this was being done, the books of the Law were found.
- When the books of the Law were read to Josiah, he was grieved at how his people were disobeying God. He ordered that all the places of idol worship be destroyed and that the priests of the false gods be killed.
- He also ordered the people to start celebrating the Passover feast again.

(Translation suggestions: Translate Names)

(See also: false god, Judah, law, Passover, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 3:13-14
- 2 Chronicles 33:24-25
- 2 Chronicles 34:3
- Jeremiah 1:3
- Matthew 1:11

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2977, G25020

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1

Judah

Definition:

Judah was Jacob's fourth son. He was Leah's fourth son. His descendants became one of the tribes of Israel.

- The tribe descended from him was known as the "tribe of Judah" or "Judah."
- His name sounds similar to the Hebrew word meaning "praise."
- The tribe of Judah settled in the southern part of Canaan, including the mountainous area to the south of the city of Jerusalem. When used as the name of a region of land, the term "Judah" refers to the land given to the tribe of Judah.
- In the Old Testament, the name Judah is sometimes used to refer to the whole southern kingdom of Israel (similar to how the name Ephraim is sometimes used to refer to the whole northern kingdom).
- King David, King Solomon, and all the kings of the southern kingdom were descendants of Judah. Jesus, too, was a descendant of Judah.
- The words "Jew" and "Judea" come from the name "Judah."

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: twelve tribes of Israel, Judah (kingdom), Jew, Judea, Jacob, Leah)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 2:1-2
- 1 Kings 1:9
- Genesis 29:35
- Genesis 38:2
- Luke 3:33
- Ruth 1:2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3063

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:7

Judah, kingdom of Judah

Definition:

The tribe of Judah was the largest of the twelve tribes of Israel. The kingdom of Judah was made up of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

- After King Solomon died, the nation of Israel was divided into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. The kingdom of Judah was the southern kingdom, located west of the Salt Sea.
- The capital city of the kingdom of Judah was Jerusalem.
- Eight kings of Judah obeyed Yahweh and led the people to worship him. The other kings of Judah were evil and led the people to worship idols.
- Over 120 years after Assyria defeated Israel (the northern kingdom), Judah was conquered by the nation of Babylon. The Babylonians destroyed the city and the temple, and took most of the people of Judah to Babylon as captives.

(See also: Judah, Salt Sea)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 30:26-28
- 2 Samuel 12:8
- Hosea 5:14
- Jeremiah 7:33
- Judges 1:16-17

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **18:7** Only two tribes remained faithful to him (Rehoboam). These two tribes became the **kingdom of Judah**.
- **18:10** The **kingdoms of Judah** and Israel became enemies and often fought against each other.
- **18:13** The **kings of Judah** were descendants of David. Some of these kings were good men who ruled justly and worshiped God. But most of **Judah's** kings were evil, corrupt, and they worshiped idols.
- **20:1** The **kingdoms of Israel and Judah** both sinned against God.

- **20:5** The people in the **kingdom of Judah** saw how God had punished the people of the kingdom of Israel for not believing and obeying him. But they still worshiped idols, including the gods of the Canaanites.
- **20:6** About 100 years after the Assyrians destroyed the kingdom of Israel, God sent Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonians, to attack the **kingdom of Judah**.
- **20:9** Nebuchadnezzar and his army took almost all of the people of **the kingdom of Judah** to Babylon, leaving only the poorest people behind to plant the fields.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4438, H3063

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1 Zephaniah 1:4

Moab, Moabite

Definition:

The term "Moab" refers to a people group that lived to the east of the Salt Sea. The book of Genesis describes this people group as the descendents of a man named "Moab," who was the son of Lot's elder daughter.

- In the book of Ruth, Elimelek and his family went to live in Moab because of the famine around Bethlehem.
- Ruth is called a "Moabite woman" because she was born in the country of Moab and was from that people group.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Bethlehem, Judea, Lot, Ruth, Salt Sea)

Bible References:

- Genesis 19:37
- Genesis 36:34-36
- Ruth 1:1-2
- Ruth 1:22

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4124, H4125

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:8 Zephaniah 2:9

Nineveh, Ninevite

Definition:

Nineveh was the capital city of Assyrian empire. A “Ninevite” was a person who lived in Nineveh.

- God sent the prophet Jonah to warn the Ninevites to turn from their wicked ways. The people stopped acting so violently and God did not destroy them at that time.
- The prophets Nahum and Zephaniah both prophesied that God would destroy Nineveh as judgment for their sin.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Assyria, Jonah, repent, turn)

Bible References:

- Genesis 10:11-14
- Jonah 1:3
- Jonah 3:3
- Luke 11:32
- Matthew 12:41

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5210, G35350, G35360

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:13

Philistines

Definition:

The Philistines were a people group who occupied a region known as Philistia along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Their name means “people of the sea.”

- There were five main Philistine cities: Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza.
- The city of Ashdod was in the northern part of Philistia, and the city of Gaza was in the southern part.
- The Philistines are probably best known for the many years they were at war against the Israelites.
- The judge Samson was a famous warrior against the Philistines, using supernatural strength from God.
- King David often led battles against the Philistines, including the time as a youth when he defeated the Philistine warrior, Goliath.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Ashdod, Ashkelon, David, Ekron, Gath, Gaza, Goliath, Salt Sea)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:9-11
- 1 Samuel 13:4
- 2 Chronicles 9:25-26
- Genesis 10:11-14
- Psalm 56:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6429, H6430

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:5

Sodom

Definition:

Sodom was a city in the southern part of Canaan where Abraham's nephew Lot lived with his wife and children.

- The land of the region surrounding Sodom was very well watered and fertile, so Lot chose to live there when he first settled in Canaan.
- The exact location of this city is not known because Sodom and the nearby city of Gomorrah were completely destroyed by God as punishment for the evil things the people there were doing.
- The most significant sin that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were practicing was homosexuality.

(See also: Canaan, Gomorrah)

Bible References:

- Genesis 10:19
- Genesis 13:12
- Matthew 10:15
- Matthew 11:24

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5467, G46700

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:9

the sea, the Great Sea, the western sea

Definition:

In the Bible, the "Great Sea" or "western sea" refers to what is now called the "Mediterranean Sea," which was the largest body of water known to the people of Bible times.

- The Mediterranean Sea is bordered by: Israel (east), Europe (north and west), and Africa (south).
- This sea was very important in ancient times for trade and travel since it bordered so many countries. Cities and people groups located on the coast of this sea were very prosperous because of how easy it was to access goods from other countries by boat.
- Since the Great Sea was located to the west of Israel, it was sometimes referred to as the "western sea."

(Translation suggestions: Translate Names)

(See also: Israel, people group, prosper)

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 47:15-17
- Ezekiel 47:18-20
- Joshua 15:3-4
- Numbers 13:27-29

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0314, H1419, H3220

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:6

Zephaniah

Definition:

Zephaniah, son of Cushi, was a prophet who lived in Jerusalem and prophesied during the reign of King Josiah. He lived during the same time period as Jeremiah.

- He rebuked the people of Judah for worshipping false gods. His prophecies are written in the book of Zephaniah in the Old Testament.
- There were several other men in the Old Testament named Zephaniah, most of whom were priests.

(Translation suggestions: Translate Names)

(See also: Jeremiah, Josiah, priest)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 25:18
- Jeremiah 52:24-25
- Zechariah 6:9-11
- Zephaniah 1:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6846

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1

adversary, enemy

Definition:

An "adversary" is a person (or group of people) who is opposed to someone else. The term "enemy" has a similar meaning.

- Your adversary can be a person who tries to oppose or harm another person.
- When two nations fight, each can be called an "adversary" of the other.
- In the Bible, the devil is referred to as an "adversary" and an "enemy."
- The term "adversary" may be translated as "opponent" or "enemy," but it suggests a stronger form of opposition.

(See also: Satan)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 5:14
- Isaiah 9:11
- Job 6:23
- Lamentations 4:12
- Luke 12:59
- Matthew 13:25

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0341, H6146, H6887, H6862, H6965, H7790, H7854, H8130, H8324, G04760, G04800, G21890, G21900, G52270

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:15

afflict, affliction, distress

Definition:

The term “afflict” means to cause someone distress or suffering. An “affliction” is the disease, emotional grief, or other disaster that results from this.

- Sometimes God afflicted his people with sickness or other hardships with the intention for them to repent of their sins and turn back to him.
- God caused afflictions or plagues to come on the people of Egypt because their king refused to obey God.
- To “be afflicted with” means to suffer from some kind of distress, such as a disease, persecution, or emotional grief.
- In some Old Testament contexts, the idea of “afflicting oneself” or “afflicting one’s soul” means to abstain from eating food.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “afflict” someone could be translated as “cause someone to experience troubles” or “cause someone to suffer” or “cause suffering to come.”
- A phrase like “afflict someone with leprosy” could be translated as “cause someone to be sick with leprosy.”
- When a disease or disaster is sent to “afflict” people or animals, this could be translated as “cause suffering to.”
- Depending on the context, the term “affliction” could be translated as “calamity” or “sickness” or “suffering” or “great distress.”
- The phrase “afflicted with” could also be translated as “suffering from” or “sick with.”

(See also: leprosy, plague, suffer)

Bible References:

- 2 Thessalonians 1:6
- Amos 5:12
- Colossians 1:24
- Exodus 22:22-24
- Genesis 12:17-20
- Genesis 15:12-13
- Genesis 29:32

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0205, H3013, H3905, H3906, H6031, H6039, H6040, H6041, H6862, H6869, H6887, H7451, H7489, G23460, G23470, G38040

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:17

age, era, time

Definition:

Used in this sense the term “age” refers to a time period.

- Other words used to express an extended period of time include “era” and “season.”
- Jesus refers to “this age” as the present time when evil, sin, and disobedience toward God fill the earth.
- There will be a future age when righteousness will reign in a new heaven and a new earth.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “age” could be translated as “era” or “time period” or “time.”
- The phrase “this present evil age” means “during this time right now when people are very evil.”
- The phrase “end of the age” (used in Jesus’ words in Matthew 28:20) means “end of this period of history” or “end of this present age” and refers to the end of this present age at Jesus’ second coming.

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2165, H6256, H6471, G21190, G21210, G22350, G25400, G35680, G41830, G42180, G44550, G51190, G55500, G55510, G56100

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:19 Zephaniah 3:20 Zephaniah 3:20

anguish

Definition:

The term “anguish” refers to severe pain or distress.

- Anguish can be physical or emotional pain or distress.
- Often people who are in extreme anguish will show it in their face and behaviors.
- For example, a person in severe pain or anguish might grit his teeth or cry out.
- The term “anguish” could also be translated as “emotional distress” or “deep sorrow” or “severe pain.”

Bible References:

- Jeremiah 6:24
- Jeremiah 19:9
- Job 15:24
- Luke 16:24
- Psalms 116:3-4

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2342, H2470, H2479, H3708, H4164, H4689, H4691, H5100, H6695, H6862, H6869, H7267, H7581, G09280, G36000, G49280

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:15

assembly, assemble, congregation, meeting, gather, community

Definition:

The term “assembly” usually refers to a group of people who come together for some reason, often to discuss problems, give advice, or make decisions. An assembly can be a group that is organized in an official and somewhat permanent way, or it can be a group of people who come together temporarily for a specific purpose or occasion.

Old Testament

- In the Old Testament there was a special kind of assembly called a “sacred assembly” in which the people of Israel would gather to worship Yahweh.
- Sometimes the term “assembly” referred to the Israelites in general, as a group.

New Testament

- In the New Testament, an assembly of 70 Jewish leaders in major cities such as Jerusalem would meet to judge legal matters and to settle disputes between people. This assembly was known as the “Sanhedrin” or the “Council.”

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, “assembly” could also be translated as “special gathering” or “congregation” or “council” or “army” or “large group.”
- When the term “assembly” refers generally to the Israelites as a whole, it could also be translated as “community” or “people of Israel.”
- The phrase, “all the assembly” could be translated as “all the people” or “the whole group of Israelites” or “everyone.” (See: hyperbole)
- A large gathering of enemy soldiers was sometimes also referred to as an “assembly.” This could be translated as “army.”

(See also: council)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 8:14
- Acts 7:38
- Ezra 10:12-13
- Hebrews 12:22-24
- Leviticus 4:20-21
- Nehemiah 8:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0622, H1481, H2199, H3259, H4150, H4186, H4744, H5475, H5712, H6116, H6908, H6950, H6951, H6952, G15770, G38310, G48630, G48640, G48710, G49050

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:1 Zephaniah 2:1 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:18 Zephaniah 3:18 Zephaniah 3:19 Zephaniah 3:20

barren, dry

Definition:

To be “barren” means to not be fertile or fruitful.

- Soil or land that is barren is not able to produce any plants.
- A woman who is barren is one who is physically unable to conceive or bear a child.

Translation Suggestions:

- When “barren” is used to refer to land, it could be translated as “not fertile” or “unfruitful” or “without plants.”
- When it is referring to a barren woman, it could be translated as “childless” or “not able to bear children” or “unable to conceive a child.”

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 2:5
- Galatians 4:27
- Genesis 11:30
- Job 3:7

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4420, H6115, H6135, H6723, H7921, G06920, G47230

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:13

beast

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “beast” is often just another way of saying “animal.”

- A wild beast is a type of animal that lives freely in the forest or fields and has not been trained by people.
- A domestic beast is an animal that lives with people and is kept for food or for performing work, such as plowing fields. Often the term “livestock” is used to refer to this kind of animal.
- The Old Testament book of Daniel and the New Testament book of Revelation describe visions which have beasts that represent evil powers and authorities that oppose God. (See: Metaphor)
- Some of these beasts are described as having strange features, such as several heads and many horns. They often have power and authority, indicating that they may represent countries, nations, or other political powers.
- Ways to translate this could include “creature” or “created thing” or “animal” or “wild animal,” depending on the context.

(See also: authority, Daniel, livestock, nation, power, reveal, Beelzebul)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:32
- 1 Samuel 17:44
- 2 Chronicles 25:18
- Jeremiah 16:1-4
- Leviticus 7:21
- Psalms 49:12-13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0338, H0929, H1165, H2123, H2416, H2423, H2874, H3753, H4806, H7409, G22260, G23410, G23420, G29340, G49680, G50740

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:3 Zephaniah 2:15

day

Definition:

The term “day” generally refers to the time it takes for the alternating periods of light and darkness in the sky to complete one cycle (that is, 24 hours). However, in the Bible the same term is often used to refer to a shorter period of time (such as the time between sunrise and sunset) or a longer period of time that is often not specified.

- “Day” is sometimes used in contrast to “night.” In these cases, the term refers to the period of time when the sky is light.
- The term may also refer to a specific point in time, such as “today.”
- Sometimes the term “day” is used figuratively to refer to a longer period of time, such as the “day of Yahweh” or “last days.” Some languages will use a different expression to translate these figurative uses or will translate “day” non-figuratively.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term literally as “day” or “daytime” using the word in your language that refers to the part of the day when there is light.
- Other translations of “day” could include “daytime,” “time,” “season,” “occasion” or “event,” depending on the context.

(See also: time, judgment day, last day)

Bible References:

- Acts 20:6
- Daniel 10:4
- Ezra 6:15
- Ezra 6:19
- Matthew 9:15

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H3118, H6242, G22500

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1 Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 1:9 Zephaniah 1:10 Zephaniah 1:15 Zephaniah 1:15 Zephaniah 1:15 Zephaniah 1:15 Zephaniah 1:15 Zephaniah 1:15 Zephaniah 1:16 Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:2 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:11 Zephaniah 3:16

bow, bow down, kneel, bend, bend the knee

Definition:

To bow means to bend over to humbly express respect and honor toward someone. To "bow down" means to bend over or kneel down very low, often with face and hands toward the ground.

- Other expressions include "bow the knee" (meaning to kneel) and "bow the head" (meaning to bend the head forward in humble respect or in sorrow).
- Bowing down can also be a sign of distress or mourning. Someone who is "bowed down" has been brought to a low position of humility.
- Often a person will bow in the presence of someone who is of higher status or greater importance, such as kings and other rulers.
- Bowing down before God is an expression of worship to him.
- In the Bible, people bowed down to Jesus when they realized from his miracles and teaching that he had come from God.
- The Bible says that when Jesus comes back someday, everyone will bow the knee to worship him.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, this term could be translated with a word or phrase that means "bend forward" or "bend the head" or "kneel."
- The term "bow down" could be translated as "kneel down" or "prostrate oneself."
- Some languages will have more than one way of translating this term, depending on the context.

(See also: humble, worship)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 5:18
- Exodus 20:5
- Genesis 24:26
- Genesis 44:14
- Isaiah 44:19
- Luke 24:5
- Matthew 2:11
- Revelation 3:9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0086, H3721, H3766, H5753, H5791, H6915, H7743, H7812, H7817, G11200, G25780, G28270, G40980

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 2:11

cedar, cedarwood

Definition:

The term “cedar” refers to a large fir tree which normally has reddish-brown wood. Like other firs, it has cones and needle-like leaves.

- The Old Testament often mentions cedar trees in connection with Lebanon, where they grew plentifully.
- Cedar wood was used in the construction of the Jerusalem temple.
- It was also used for sacrifices and purification offerings.

(See also: fir, pure, sacrifice, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 14:1-2
- 1 Kings 7:1-2
- Isaiah 2:13
- Zechariah 11:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0730

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:14

chaff

Definition:

Chaff is a dry protective covering of a grain seed. The chaff is not good for food so people separate it from the seed and throw it away.

- Often, the chaff is separated from the seed by throwing the heads of grain up into the air. The wind blows the chaff away and the seed falls on the ground. This process is called “winnowing.”
- In the Bible, this term is also used figuratively to refer to evil people and evil, worthless things.

(See also: grain, wheat, winnow)

Bible References:

- Daniel 2:35
- Job 21:18
- Luke 3:17
- Matthew 3:12

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2842, H4671, H5784, H8401, G08920

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:2

commit, committed

Definition:

In the Bible the terms “commit” and “committed” most often refer to doing a certain wrong action such as “commit a sin” or “commit adultery” or “commit murder.”

(See also: adultery, sin)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 28:7
- 1 Peter 2:21-23
- Jeremiah 2:12-13
- Matthew 13:41
- Psalm 58:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0539, H0817, H1361, H1497, H1500, H1540, H1556, H2181, H2388, H2398, H2399, H2403, H4560, H4603, H5003, H5753, H5766, H5771, H6213, H6466, H7683, H7760, H7847, G02640, G20380, G27160, G34290, G34310, G38600, G38720, G39080, G41020, G41600, G42030

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:13

consume, devour

Definition:

The term “consume” literally means to use up something. It has several figurative meanings.

- In the Bible, the word “consume” often refers to destroying things or people.
- A fire is said to consume things, which means it destroys them by burning them up.
- God is described as a “consuming fire,” which is a description of his anger against sin. His anger results in terrible punishment for sinners who do not repent.
- To consume food means to eat or drink something.
- The phrase, “consume the land” could be translated as “destroy the land.”

Translation Suggestions

- In the context of consuming the land or people, this term could be translated as “destroy.”
- When fire is referred to, “consume” could be translated as “burn up.”
- The burning bush that Moses saw “was not consumed” which could be translated as “did not get burned up” or “did not burn up.”
- When referring to eating, “consume” could be translated as “eat” or “devour.”
- If someone’s strength is “consumed,” it means his strength is “used up” or “gone.”
- The expression, “God is a consuming fire” could be translated as “God is like a fire that burns things up” or “God is angry against sin and will destroy sinners like a fire.”

(See also: devour, wrath)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:38-40
- Deuteronomy 7:16
- Jeremiah 3:23-25
- Job 7:9
- Numbers 11:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0398, H0402, H1086, H1104, H1197, H2628, H3615, H3617, H3857, H4529, H5595, H8046, H8552, G03550, G26180, G26540, G27190, G53150

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:8

corrupt, corrupted, corruption, incorruptibility, depraved

Definition:

The terms "corrupt" and "corruption" refer to a state of affairs in which people have become ruined, immoral, or dishonest.

- The term "corrupt" literally means to be "bent" or "broken" morally.
- A person who is corrupt has turned away from truth and is doing things that are dishonest or immoral.
- To corrupt someone means to influence that person to do dishonest and immoral things.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term to "corrupt" could be translated as to "influence to do evil" or to "cause to be immoral."
- A corrupt person could be described as a person "who has become immoral" or "who practices evil."
- This term could also be translated as "bad" or "immoral" or "evil."
- The term "corruption" could be translated as "the practice of evil" or "evil" or "immorality."

(See also: evil)

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 20:42-44
- Galatians 6:6-8
- Genesis 6:12
- Matthew 12:33-35
- Psalm 14:1

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2610, H3891, H4889, H7843, H7844, G08610, G13110, G27040, G53510, G53560

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:7

cry, cry out, outcry

Definition:

The terms “cry” or “cry out” usually mean to say something loudly or urgently. Someone can “cry out” in pain, distress, anger, or fear, often with the intent of asking for help.

- The phrase “cry out” can mean to shout or to call out with the intent of asking for help.
- The terms “cry” or “cry out” can also mean to pray.
- This term could also be translated as “exclaim loudly” or “urgently ask for help,” depending on the context.
- An expression such as, “I cry out to you” could be translated as “I call to you for help” or “I urgently ask you for help.”

(See also: call speak loudly, plead, pray)

Bible References:

- Job 27:9
- Mark 5:5-6
- Mark 6:48-50
- Psalm 22:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1058, H2199, H2201, H6030, H6463, H6670, H6682, H6817, H6818, H6873, H6963, H7121, H7123, H7321, H7440, H7442, H7723, H7737, H7768, H7771, H7775, H8663, G03100, G03490, G08630, G09940, G09950, G19160, G20190, G27990, G28050, G28960, G29050, G29060, G29290, G43770, G54550

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:10 Zephaniah 1:14 Zephaniah 1:16

deceive, lie, deception, illusion

Definition:

The term “deceive” means to cause someone to believe something that is not true, often by telling a “lie.” The act of deceiving someone is called “lying,” “deceit,” or “deception.”

- Someone who causes others to believe something false is a “deceiver.” For example, Satan is called a “deceiver.” The evil spirits that he controls are also deceivers.
- To “lie” is to say something that is not true.
- A person, action, or message that is not truthful can be described as “deceptive.”
- The terms “deceit” and “deception” have the same meaning, but there are some small differences in how they are used.
- The descriptive terms “deceitful” and “deceptive” have the same meaning and are used in the same contexts.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “deceive” could include “lie to” or “cause to have a false belief” or “cause someone to think something that is not true.”
- The term “deceived” could also be translated as “caused to think something false” or “lied to” or “tricked” or “fooled” or “misled.”
- “Deceiver” could be translated as “liar” or “one who misleads” or “someone who deceives.”
- Depending on the context, the terms “deception” or “deceit” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “falsehood” or “lying” or “trickery” or “dishonesty.”
- The terms “deceptive” or “deceitful” could be translated as “untruthful” or “misleading” or “lying” to describe a person who speaks or acts in a way that causes other people to believe things that are not true.

(See also: true)

Bible References:

- 1 John 1:8
- 1 Timothy 2:14
- 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4
- Genesis 3:12-13
- Genesis 31:26-28
- Leviticus 19:11-12
- Matthew 27:64
- Micah 6:11

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0898, H2048, H3577, H3584, H3868, H4123, H4820, H4860, H5230, H5377, H5558, H6121, H6231, H6601, H7411, H7423, H7683, H7686, H7952, H8267, H8496, H8582, H8591, H8649, G05380, G05390, G13860, G13870, G13880, G18180, G38840, G41050, G41060, G41080, G54220, G54230

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:13

defile, defiled, desecrate

Definition:

The terms "defile" and "be defiled" refer to becoming polluted or dirty. Something can be defiled in a physical, moral, or ritual sense.

- God warned the Israelites to not defile themselves by eating or touching things that he had declared as "unclean" and "unholy."
- Certain things such as dead bodies and contagious diseases were declared by God to be unclean and would defile a person if they touched them.
- God commanded the Israelites to avoid sexual sins. These would defile them and make them unacceptable to God.
- There were also certain kinds of bodily processes that defiled a person temporarily until he could become ritually pure again.
- In the New Testament, Jesus taught that sinful thoughts and actions are what truly defile a person.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "defile" can also be translated as "cause to be unclean" or "cause to be unrighteous" or "cause to be ritually unacceptable."
- To "be defiled" could be translated as "become unclean" or "be caused to be morally unacceptable (to God)" or "become ritually unacceptable."

(See also: profane, clean)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 23:8
- Exodus 20:24-26
- Genesis 34:27
- Genesis 49:4
- Isaiah 43:27-28
- Leviticus 11:43-45
- Mark 7:14-16
- Matthew 15:10

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1351, H1352, H1602, H2490, H2491, H2610, H2930, H2931, G28390, G28400, G33920, G34350

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:1

deliver, deliverer, deliverance, delivered

Definition:

To "deliver" someone means to rescue that person. The term "deliverer" refers to someone who rescues or frees people from slavery, oppression, or other dangers. The term "deliverance" refers to what happens when someone rescues or frees people from slavery, oppression, or other dangers.

- In the Old Testament, God appointed deliverers to protect the Israelites by leading them in battle against other people groups who came to attack them.
- These deliverers were also called "judges" and the Old Testament book of Judges records the time in history when these judges were governing Israel.
- God is also called a "deliverer." Throughout the history of Israel, he delivered or rescued his people from their enemies.

Translation Suggestions:

- In the context of helping people escape from their enemies, the term "deliver" can be translated as "rescue" or "liberate" or "save."
- When the term "deliverer" refers to the judges who led Israel, it could also be translated as "judge" or "leader."

(See also: judge, save)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 1:10
- Acts 7:35
- Galatians 1:4
- Judges 10:12

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **16:3** Then God provided a **deliverer** who rescued them from their enemies and brought peace to the land.
- **16:16** They (Israel) finally asked God for help again, and God sent them another **deliverer**.

- **16:17** Over many years, God sent many **deliverers** who saved the Israelites from their enemies.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1350, H2020, H2502, H3205, H3444, H3467, H4042, H4422, H4672, H5337, H5414, H5462, H6299, H6403, H6413, H6475, H6561, H7725, H7804, H8199, G03250, G05250, G06290, G10800, G13250, G15600, G16590, G18070, G19290, G26730, G30860, G38600, G45060, G49910, G50880, G54830

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:18

desert, wilderness

Definition:

A desert, or wilderness, is a dry, barren place where very few plants and trees can grow.

- A desert is a land area with a dry climate and few plants or animals.
- Because of the harsh conditions, very few people can live in the desert, so it is also referred to as "wilderness."
- "Wilderness" conveys the meaning of being remote, desolate and isolated from people.
- This word can also be translated as "deserted place" or "remote place" or "uninhabited place."

Bible References:

- Acts 13:16-18
- Acts 21:38
- Exodus 4:27-28
- Genesis 37:21-22
- John 3:14
- Luke 1:80
- Luke 9:12-14
- Mark 1:3
- Matthew 4:1
- Matthew 11:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0776, H2723, H3293, H3452, H4057, H6160, H6723, H6728, H6921, H8047, H8414, G20470, G20480

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:13 Zephaniah 2:14

desolate, desolated, desolation, deserted, desolator

Definition:

The terms “desolate” and “desolation,” when used to refer to a place or location, refer to the state or condition of being ruined and left fully or partially uninhabited. The term “desolate,” when referring to a person or group of people, describes a state or condition of ruin, loneliness, and grief.

- If a field where crops are growing is made desolate, it means that something has destroyed the crops, such as insects or an invading army.
- A “desolate region” refers to an area of land that is partially deserted or abandoned and therefore has few people living there.
- If a city is “made desolate” it means that its buildings and goods have been destroyed or stolen, and its people have been killed or captured. The city becomes “empty” and “ruined.” This is similar to the meaning of “devastate” or “devastated,” but with more emphasis on the emptiness.
- A “desolate land” or “wilderness” was often where outcasts (such as lepers) and dangerous animals lived.
- Depending on the context, this term, when referring to a city or region, could be translated as “ruined” or “destroyed” or “laid waste” or “abandoned” or “deserted.”
- Depending on the context, this term, when referring to a person or people group, could be translated as “lonely and outcast” or “deserted.”
- A “desolator” is one who causes desolation.

(See also: desert, devastate, ruin, waste)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 22:19
- Acts 1:20
- Daniel 9:17-19
- Lamentations 3:11
- Luke 11:17
- Matthew 12:25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0490, H0816, H0910, H1565, H2717, H2720, H2721, H2723, H3173, H3341, H3456, H3582, H4875, H4923, H5352, H5800, H7582, H7701, H7722, H8047, H8074, H8076, H8077, G20480, G20490, G20500, G34430

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:15

destroy, destruction, annihilate

Definition:

The term “destroy” means to completely make an end to something, so that it no longer exists.

- The term “destroyer” means “a person who destroys.”
- This term is often used in the Old Testament as a general reference to anyone who destroys other people, such as an invading army.
- When God sent the angel to kill all the firstborn males in Egypt, that angel was referred to as “the destroyer of the firstborn.” This could be translated as “the one (or angel) who killed the firstborn males.”
- In the book of Revelation about the end times, Satan or some other evil spirit is called “the Destroyer.” He is the “one who destroys” because his purpose is to destroy and ruin everything God created.

(See also: angel, Egypt, firstborn, Passover)

Bible References:

- Exodus 12:23
- Hebrews 11:28
- Jeremiah 6:26
- Judges 16:24

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0006, H0007, H0622, H0398, H1104, H1197, H1820, H1826, H1942, H2000, H2015, H2026, H2040, H2254, H2255, H2717, H2718, H2763, H2764, H3238, H3341, H3381, H3423, H3582, H3615, H3617, H3772, H3807, H4191, H4229, H4591, H4658, H4889, H5218, H5221, H5307, H5362, H5420, H5422, H5428, H5595, H5642, H6365, H6789, H6979, H7665, H7667, H7703, H7722, H7760, H7843, H7921, H8045, H8074, H8077, H8316, H8552, G03550, G03960, G06220, G08530, G13110, G18420, G20490, G25060, G25070, G26470, G26730, G27040, G30890, G36450, G41990, G53510, G53560

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:2 Zephaniah 1:11 Zephaniah 1:15
Zephaniah 2:5 Zephaniah 2:13 Zephaniah 3:6

devastate, devastation

Definition:

The term “devastated” or “devastation” refers to having one’s property or land ruined or destroyed. It also often includes destroying or capturing the people living on that land.

- This refers to a very severe and complete destruction.
- For example, the city of Sodom was devastated by God as punishment for the sins of the people living there.
- The term “devastation” can also include causing great emotional grief resulting from the punishment or destruction.

Translation Suggestions

- The term “devastate” could be translated as “completely destroy” or “completely ruin.”
- Depending on the context, “devastation” could be translated as “complete destruction” or “total ruin” or “disaster.”

(See also: ruin)

Bible References:

- Daniel 8:24-25
- Jeremiah 4:13
- Numbers 21:30
- Zephaniah 1:13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1110, H1238, H2721, H1826, H3615, H3772, H4875, H7701, H7703, H7722, H7843, H8074, H8077

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:14

devour

Definition:

The term “devour” means to eat or consume in an aggressive manner.

- Using this word in a figurative sense, Paul warned believers to not devour one another, meaning to not attack or destroy each other with words or actions (Galatians 5:15).
- Also in a figurative sense, the term “devour” is often used with a meaning of “completely destroy” as when talking about nations devouring each other or a fire devouring buildings and people.
- This term could also be translated as “completely consume” or “totally destroy.”

(See also: consume)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 5:8
- Amos 1:10
- Exodus 24:17
- Ezekiel 16:20
- Luke 15:30
- Matthew 23:13-15
- Psalms 21:9

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0398, H0399, H0400, H0402, H1104, H1105, H3216, H3615, H3857, H3898, H7462, H7602, G20680, G26660, G27190, G53150

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:18

disperse, dispersion, scatter, distributed

Definition:

The terms “disperse” and “dispersion” refer to the scattering of people or things into many different directions.

- In the Old Testament, God talks about “dispersing” people, causing them to have to separate and live in different places apart from each other. He did this to punish them for their sin. Perhaps being dispersed would help them repent and start worshiping God again.
- The term “dispersion” is used in the New Testament to refer to Christians who had to leave their homes and move to many different locations to escape persecution.
- The phrase “the dispersion” could be translated as “believers in many different places” or “the people who moved away to live in different nations.”
- The term “disperse” could be translated as “send away into many different places” or “scatter abroad” or “cause to move away to live in different countries.”

(See also: believe, persecute, captive, exile)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:1
- Ezekiel 12:15
- Ezekiel 30:23
- Psalms 18:14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2219, H5310, H6327, H6340, H6504, H8600, G12870, G12900, G46500

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:10

dung, manure

Definition:

The term “dung” refers to human or animal solid waste, and is also called feces or excrement. When used as fertilizer for enriching the soil, it is called “manure.”

- These terms can also be used figuratively to refer to something that is worthless or not important.
- Dried animal dung is often used for fuel.
- The expression “like dung on the ground” could be translated as “be scattered like worthless dung over the land.”
- The “Dung Gate” in the South Wall of Jerusalem was probably the gate where garbage and trash were taken out of the city.

(See also: gate)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 14:10
- 2 Kings 6:25
- Isaiah 25:10
- Jeremiah 8:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0830, H1119, H1557, H1561, H1686, H1828, H6569, H6675, G28740

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:17

earth, land

Definition:

The term “earth” refers to the world on which human beings and other living things live. In the Bible, this term is sometimes translated as “land” when used in a general way to refer to the ground or the soil, or when used in a specific way to refer to a particular geographical area, usually a country or nation.

- In the Bible, the term “earth” is often paired with the term “heaven” as a way of indicating the abode of humankind on the earth in contrast with the abode of God in heaven.
- This term is usually translated “land” when paired with the name of a people group to denote the territory belonging to those people, such as “the land of Canaan.”
- The term “earthly” is sometimes used to refer to things that are physical and/or visible in contrast to things that are non-physical and/or invisible.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term can be translated by the word or phrase that the local language or nearby national languages use to refer to the planet earth on which we live.

- Depending on the context, “earth” could also be translated as “world” or “land” or “dirt” or “soil.”

- Ways to translate “earthly” could include “physical” or “things of this earth” or “visible.”

(See also: world, heaven)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 1:38-40
- 2 Chronicles 2:11-12
- Daniel 4:35
- Luke 12:51
- Matthew 6:10
- Matthew 11:25
- Zechariah 6:5

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0127, H0772, H0776, H0778, H2789, H3007, H3335, H6083, H7494, G10930, G19190, G27090, G28860, G36250, G45780, G55170

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 1:18 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:11 Zephaniah 3:8 Zephaniah 3:19 Zephaniah 3:20

exult, exultant

Definition:

The terms “exult” and “exultant” refer to being very happy because of a success or special blessing.

- To “exult” includes a feeling of celebrating something wonderful.
- A person can exult in God’s goodness.
- The term “exultant” can also include being arrogant in one’s feeling of gladness about success or prosperity.
- The term “exult” could also be translated as “celebrate joyfully” or “praise with great joy.”
- Depending on the context, the term “exultant” could be translated as “praising triumphantly” or “celebrating with self praise” or “arrogant.”

(See also: arrogant, joy, praise, rejoice)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 2:1
- Isaiah 13:3
- Job 6:10
- Psalm 68:1-3
- Zephaniah 2:15

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5539, H5947, H5970

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:15 Zephaniah 3:11 Zephaniah 3:14 Zephaniah 3:17

flock, herd

Definition:

In the Bible, “flock” refers to a group of sheep or goats and “herd” refers to a group of cattle or pigs.

- Different languages may have different ways of naming groups of animals or birds.

Translation Suggestions

- Consider what terms are used in your language to refer to different groups of animals, and use the appropriate term for each kind of animal.
- If your language uses the same word to refer to both groups of sheep and cattle, then you may need to say “groups of sheep” where the Bible says only “flocks,” and “groups of cattle” where the Bible says only “herds.” Alternatively, if the Biblical context does not demand differentiation (if the text simply says “flocks and herds,” meaning all their domesticated animals) you may just use the one word once.

(See also: goat, cow, pig, sheep)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 10:28-29
- 2 Chronicles 17:11
- Deuteronomy 14:22-23
- Luke 2:8-9
- Matthew 8:30
- Matthew 26:31

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0951, H1241, H2835, H4029, H4735, H4830, H5349, H5739, H6251, H6629, H7399, H7462, G00340, G41670, G41680

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:6 Zephaniah 2:14

alien, foreigner, sojourn

Definition:

The term “foreigner” refers to a person living in a country that is not his own. Another name for a foreigner is an “alien.” To sojourn is to live temporarily as a foreigner.

- In the Old Testament, this term especially refers to anyone who came from a different people group than the people he was living among.
- A foreigner is also a person whose language and culture is different from those of a particular region.
- For example, when Naomi and her family moved to Moab, they were foreigners there. When Naomi and her daughter-in-law Ruth later moved to Israel, Ruth was called a “foreigner” there because she was not originally from Israel.
- A sojourner is another word for a temporary foreign resident.
- The apostle Paul told the Ephesians that before they knew Christ, they were “foreigners” to God’s covenant.
- Sometimes “foreigner” is translated as “stranger,” but it should not refer only to someone who is unfamiliar or unknown.

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 2:17
- Acts 7:29-30
- Deuteronomy 1:15-16
- Genesis 15:12-13
- Genesis 17:27
- Luke 17:18
- Matthew 17:24-25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0312, H0628, H0776, H1471, H1481, H1616, H2114, H3937, H4033, H5236, H5237, H6154, H8453, G02410, G02450, G05260, G09150, G18540, G35810, G39270, G39410

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:8

forsake, forsaken, leave

Definition:

The term “forsake” means to abandon someone or to give up something. Someone who has been “forsaken” has been deserted or abandoned by someone else.

- When people “forsake” God, they are being unfaithful to him by disobeying him.
- When God “forsakes” people, he has stopped helping them and allowed them to experience suffering in order to cause them to turn back to him.
- This term can also mean to forsake things, such as forsaking, or not following, God’s teachings.
- The term “forsaken” can be used in the past tense, as in “he has forsaken you” or as in referring to someone who has “been forsaken.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate this term could include “abandon” or “neglect” or “give up” or “go away from” or “leave behind,” depending on the context.
- To “forsake” God’s law could be translated “disobey God’s law.” This could also be translated as “abandon” or “give up on” or “stop obeying” his teachings or his laws.
- The phrase “be forsaken” can be translated as “be abandoned” or “be deserted.”
- It more clearer to use different words to translate this term, depending on whether the text describes forsaking a thing or a person.

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 6:11-13
- Daniel 11:29-30
- Genesis 24:27
- Joshua 24:16-18
- Matthew 27:45-47
- Proverbs 27:9-10
- Psalms 71:18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0488, H2308, H5203, H5428, H5800, H5805, H7503, G06460, G06570, G08630, G14590, G26410

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:4

gate, gate bar, gatekeeper, gatepost, gateway

Definition:

The term "gate" refers to an access point in a fence, wall, or other kind of barrier that surrounds a house, property, city, etc.

- A city gate could be opened to allow people, animals, and cargo to travel in and out of the city.
- To protect the city, its walls and gates were thick and strong. Gates were closed and locked with a metal or wooden bar to prevent enemy soldiers from entering the city.
- A "bar" for a gate refers to a wood or metal bar that can be moved into place so that the doors of the gate cannot be opened from the outside.
- In Bible times, a city gate was often the social center for that town or city. It was a place where news of current events was exchanged between people, where business transactions occurred, and where civil judgments were made.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate "gate" could be "door" or "wall opening" or "barrier" or "entranceway."
- The phrase "bars of the gate" could be translated as "gate bolts" or "wooden beams to lock the gate" or "metal locking rods of the gate."

Bible References:

- Acts 9:24
- Acts 10:18
- Deuteronomy 21:18-19
- Genesis 19:1
- Genesis 24:60
- Matthew 7:13

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1817, H5592, H6607, H8179, G23740, G44390, G44400

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:10

gold, golden

Definition:

Gold is a yellow, high quality metal that was used for making jewelry and religious objects. It was the most valuable metal in ancient times.

- In Bible times, many different kinds of objects were made out of solid gold or were covered with a thin layer of gold.
- These objects included earrings and other jewelry, and idols, altars, and other objects used in the tabernacle or temple, such as the ark of the covenant.
- In Old Testament times, gold was used as a means of exchange in buying and selling. It was weighed on a scale to determine its value.
- Later on, gold and other metals such as silver were used to make coins to use in buying and selling
- When referring to something that is not solid gold, but only has a thin covering of gold, the term “golden” or “gold-covered” or “gold-overlaid” could also be used.
- Sometimes an object is described as “gold-colored,” which means it has the yellow color of gold, but may not actually be made of gold.

(See also: altar, ark of the covenant, false god, silver, tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:7
- 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- 2 Chronicles 1:15
- Acts 3:6
- Daniel 2:32

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1220, H1722, H2091, H2742, H3800, H5458, H6884, H6885, G55520, G55530, G55540, G55570

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:18

grain offering

Definition:

A grain offering was a gift of wheat or barley flour offered to God, often after a burnt offering.

- The grain used for the grain offering had to be finely ground up. Sometimes it was cooked before being offered, but other times it was left uncooked.
- Oil and salt were added to the grain flour, but no yeast or honey was permitted.
- Part of the grain offering was burned up and part of it was eaten by the priests.

(See also: burnt offering, guilt offering, sacrifice, sin offering)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 23:27-29
- Exodus 29:41-42
- Judges 13:19
- Leviticus 2:2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4503, H8641

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:10

haughty, lofty

Definition:

The term "haughty" means to be prideful or arrogant. Someone who is "haughty" thinks too highly of himself.

- Often this term describes a proud person who persists in sinning against God.
- Usually a person who is haughty boasts about himself.
- A haughty person is foolish, not wise.
- This term could also be translated as "proud" or "arrogant" or "self-centered."
- The figurative expression "haughty eyes" could also be translated as "proud way of looking" or "looking at others as less important" or "proud person who looks down on others."

(See also: boast, proud)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 3:1-4
- Isaiah 2:17
- Proverbs 16:18
- Proverbs 21:24
- Psalm 131:1

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1361, H1363, H1364, H3093, H7312

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:11

house

Definition:

The term “house” refers to a small building, shelter, or tent, usually the place where a family sleeps.

- When referring to a building where people live and sleep the term “house” could be translated as “dwelling place” or “dwelling structure” or with another term that expresses the meaning.

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1004, H1005, H1035, H1397, G36140, G36240

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:9 Zephaniah 1:13 Zephaniah 1:13 Zephaniah 2:7

house, household, house of Israel, house of David

Definition:

The term “house,” in this sense, refers to “descendants.”

- The term “house,” in this sense, means “family” or “descendants,” and refers to all the people related to or descended from a particular person. For example, the phrase “house of David” refers to all the descendants of King David.
- The phrase “house of Israel” can refer generally to the entire nation of Israel or more specifically to the tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, “house” could be translated as “household” or “people” or “family” or “descendants.”
- The phrase “house of David” could be translated as “clan of David” or “family of David” or “descendants of David.” Related expressions could be translated in a similar way.
- Different ways to translate “house of Israel” could include “people of Israel” or “Israel’s descendants” or “Israelites.”

(See also: descendant, house of David, kingdom of Israel)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:7

joy, joyful, rejoice, glad

Definition:

joy

The term "joy" refers to a feeling of delight or deep satisfaction. The related term "joyful" describes a person who feels very glad and is full of deep happiness.

- A person feels joy when he has a deep sense that what he is experiencing is very good.
- God is the one who gives true joy to people.
- Having joy does not depend on pleasant circumstances. God can give people joy even when very difficult things are happening in their lives.
- Sometimes places are described as joyful, such as houses or cities. This means that the people who live there are joyful.

rejoice

The term "rejoice" means to be full of joy and gladness.

- This term often refers to being very happy about the good things that God has done.
- It could be translated as "be very happy" or "be very glad" or "be full of joy."
- When Mary said "my soul rejoices in God my Savior," she meant "God my Savior has made me very happy" or "I feel so joyful because of what God my Savior has done for me."

Translation Suggestions:

- The term "joy" could also be translated as "gladness" or "delight" or "great happiness."
- The phrase, "be joyful" could be translated as "rejoice" or "be very glad" or it could be translated "be very happy in God's goodness."
- A person who is joyful could be described as "very happy" or "delighted" or "deeply glad."
- A phrase such as "make a joyful shout" could be translated as "shout in a way that shows you are very happy."
- A "joyful city" or "joyful house" could be translated as "city where joyful people live" or "house full of joyful people" or "city whose people are very happy." (See: metonymy)

Bible References:

- Nehemiah 8:10
- Psalm 48:2
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- Matthew 2:9-10
- Luke 15:7
- Luke 19:37-38
- John 3:29
- Acts 16:32-34
- Romans 5:1-2
- Romans 15:30-32
- Galatians 5:23
- Philippians 4:10-13
- 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16
- Philemon 1:4-7
- James 1:2
- 3 John 1:1-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **33:7** "The rocky ground is a person who hears God's word and accepts it with **joy**."
- **34:4** "The kingdom of God is also like hidden treasure that someone hid in a field.. Another man found the treasure and then buried it again. He was so filled with **joy**, that he went and sold everything he had and used the money to buy that field."
- **41:7** The women were full of fear and great **joy**. They ran to tell the disciples the good news.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1523, H1524, H1525, H2302, H2304, H2305, H2654, H2898, H4885, H5937, H5947, H5965, H5970, H6342, H6670, H7440, H7442, H7444, H7445, H7797, H7832, H8055, H8056, H8057, H8342, H8643, G00200, G00210, G21650, G21670, G27440, G46400, G47960, G49130, G54630, G54790

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:14 Zephaniah 3:17 Zephaniah 3:17 Zephaniah 3:17

king, kingship

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “king” refers to a man who is the supreme ruler of a particular group of people or a particular region of land (or both).

- In biblical times, a king was usually chosen to rule on the basis of family relation to the previous king(s). When a king died, usually his oldest son became the next king.
- The Bible often refers to God is as a king who rules over the entire universe (in a general sense) and over his people (in a specific sense).
- The New Testament refers to Jesus as a king in various ways, including: “king of the Jews;” “king of Israel;” and “king of kings.”
- Depending on the context, the term “king” might also be translated as “supreme chief” or “sovereign ruler.”
- The phrase “king of kings” might be translated as “king who rules over all other kings” or “supreme ruler who has authority over all other rulers.”

(See also: authority, Herod Antipas, kingdom, kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 6:15-16
- 2 Kings 5:18
- 2 Samuel 5:3
- Acts 7:9-10
- Acts 13:22
- John 1:49-51
- Luke 1:5
- Luke 22:24-25
- Matthew 5:35
- Matthew 14:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:6** One night, the Pharaoh, which is what the Egyptians called their kings, had two dreams that disturbed him greatly.
- **16:1** The Israelites had no **king**, so everyone did what they thought was right for them.

- **16:18** Finally, the people asked God for a **king** like all the other nations had.
- **17:5** Eventually, Saul died in battle, and David became **king** of Israel. He was a good **king**, and the people loved him.
- **21:6** God's prophets also said that the Messiah would be a prophet, a priest, and a **king**.
- **48:14** David was the **king** of Israel, but Jesus is the **king** of the entire universe!

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4427, H4428, H4430, G09350, G09360

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:1 Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 3:15

kingdom

Definition:

A kingdom is a group of people ruled by a king. It also refers to the realm or political regions over which a king or other ruler has control and authority.

- A kingdom can be of any geographical size. A king might govern a nation or country or only one city.
- The term "kingdom" can also refer to a spiritual reign or authority, as in the term "kingdom of God."
- God is the ruler of all creation, but the term "kingdom of God" especially refers to his reign and authority over the people who have believed in Jesus and who have submitted to his authority.
- The Bible also talks about Satan having a "kingdom" in which he temporarily rules over many things on this earth. His kingdom is evil and is referred to as "darkness."

Translation Suggestions:

- When referring to a physical region that is ruled over by a king, the term "kingdom" could be translated as "country (ruled by a king)" or "king's territory" or "region ruled by a king."
- In a spiritual sense, "kingdom" could be translated as "ruling" or "reigning" or "controlling" or "governing."
- One way to translate "kingdom of priests" might be "spiritual priests who are ruled by God."
- The phrase "kingdom of light" could be translated as "God's reign that is good like light" or "when God, who is light, rules people" or "the light and goodness of God's kingdom." It is best to keep the word "light" in this expression since that is a very important term in the Bible.
- Note that the term "kingdom" is different from an empire, in which an emperor rules over several countries.

(See also: authority, king, kingdom of God, kingdom of Israel, Judah, Judah, priest)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 2:12
- 2 Timothy 4:17-18
- Colossians 1:13-14
- John 18:36
- Mark 3:24
- Matthew 4:7-9
- Matthew 13:19
- Matthew 16:28
- Revelation 1:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:2** God said to Moses and the people of Israel, "If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a **kingdom** of priests, and a holy nation."
- **18:4** God was angry with Solomon and, as a punishment for Solomon's unfaithfulness, he promised to divide the nation of Israel in two **kingdoms** after Solomon's death.
- **18:7** Ten of the tribes of the nation of Israel rebelled against Rehoboam. Only two tribes remained faithful to him. These two tribes became the **kingdom** of Judah.
- **18:8** The other ten tribes of the nation of Israel that rebelled against Rehoboam appointed a man named Jeroboam to be their king. They set up their **kingdom** in the northern part of the land and were called the **kingdom** of Israel.
- **21:8** A king is someone who rules over a **kingdom** and judges the people.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4410, H4437, H4438, H4467, H4468, H4474, H4475, G09320

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:8

know, knew, knowledge, known, unknown, distinguish

Definition:

Used in this sense the term "know" and "knowledge" mean generally to understand something. It can also mean to be aware of a fact. The expression "to make known" means to tell information.

- The term "knowledge" refers to information that people know. It can apply to knowing physical concepts or abstract concepts.
- To "know about" God means to understand facts about him because of what he has revealed to us.
- To "know the Law" means to be aware of what God has commanded or to understand what God has instructed in the laws he gave to Moses.
- Sometimes "knowledge" is used as a synonym for "wisdom," which includes living in a way that is pleasing to God.
- The "knowledge of God" is sometimes used as a synonym for the "fear of Yahweh."

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, ways to translate "know" could include "understand" or "be familiar with" or "be aware of" or "be acquainted with."
- In the context of understanding the difference between two things, the term is usually translated as "distinguish." When used in this way, the term is often followed by the preposition "between."
- The term "make known" could be translated as "cause people to know" or "reveal" or "tell about" or "explain."
- To "know about" something could be translated as "be aware of" or "be familiar with."
- The expression "know how to" means to understand the process or method of getting something done. It could also be translated as "be able to" or "have the skill to."

- The term “knowledge” could also be translated as “what is known” or “wisdom” or “understanding,” depending on the context.
- Some languages have two different words for “know,” one for knowing facts and one for knowing a person and having a relationship with that person. The word for knowing facts should be used when translating this sense of the word “know.”

(See also: know-relationship, law, reveal, understand, wise)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1844, H1847, H3045, H3046, H3318, G00500, G00560, G03190, G10970, G11070, G11080, G11100, G14920, G19210, G19220, G19870, G42670

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:5

lamp

Definition:

The term “lamp” generally refers to something that produces light. The lamps used in Bible times were usually oil lamps.

The type of lamp that was used in Bible times is a small container with a fuel source, usually oil, that gives light when it burns.

- An ordinary oil lamp usually consisted of a common piece of pottery filled with olive oil, with a wick placed in the oil to burn.
- For some lamps, the pot or jar was oval, with one end pinched close together to hold the wick.
- An oil lamp could be carried or placed on a stand so that its light could fill a room or house.
- In scripture, lamps are used in several figurative ways as symbols of light and life.

(See also: lampstand, life, light)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 11:36
- Exodus 25:3-7
- Luke 8:16-18
- Matthew 5:15
- Matthew 6:22
- Matthew 25:3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3940, H3974, H4501, H5215, H5216, G29850, G30880

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:12

lion, lioness

Definition:

A lion is a large, cat-like, that has animal, with powerful teeth and claws for killing and tearing apart its prey.

- Lions have powerful bodies and great speed to catch their prey. Their fur is short and golden-brown.
- Male lions have a mane of hair that encircles their heads.
- Lions kill other animals to eat them and can be dangerous to human beings.
- When King David was a boy, he killed lions that tried to attack the sheep he was caring for.
- Samson also killed a lion, with his bare hands.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: David, leopard, Samson, sheep)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:22-23
- 1 Kings 7:29
- Proverbs 19:12
- Psalms 17:12
- Revelation 5:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0738, H0739, H0744, H3715, H3833, H3918, H7826, H7830, G30230

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:3

lowly, lowliness

Definition:

The terms "lowly" and "lowliness" refer to being poor or having low status. Being lowly can also have the meaning of being humble.

- Jesus humbled himself to the lowly position of becoming a human being and serving others.
- His birth was lowly because he was born in a place where animals were kept, not in a palace.
- Having a lowly attitude is the opposite of being proud.
- Ways to translate "lowly" could include "humble" or "of low status" or "unimportant."
- The word "lowliness" could also be translated as "humility" or "little importance."

(See also: humble, proud)

Bible References:

- Acts 20:19
- Ezekiel 17:14
- Luke 1:48-49
- Romans 12:16

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6041, H6819, H8217, G50110, G50120, G50140

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:12

might, mighty, mighty works

Definition:

The terms “mighty” and “might” refer to having great strength or power.

- Often the word “might” is another word for “strength.” When talking about God, it can mean “power.”
- The phrase “mighty men” often refers to men who are courageous and victorious in battle. David’s band of faithful men who helped protect and defend him were often called “mighty men.”
- God is also referred to as the “mighty one.”
- The phrase “mighty works” usually refers to the amazing things God does, especially miracles.
- This term is related to the term “almighty,” which is a common description for God, meaning that he has complete power.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “mighty” could be translated as “powerful” or “amazing” or “very strong.”
- The phrase “his might” could be translated as “his strength” or “his power.”
- In Acts 7, Moses is described as a man who was “mighty in word and deed.” This could be translated as “Moses spoke powerful words from God and did miraculous things” or “Moses spoke God’s word powerfully and did many amazing things.”
- Depending on the context, “mighty works” could be translated as “amazing things that God does” or “miracles” or “God doing things with power.”
- The term “might” could also be translated as “power” or “great strength.”
- Do not confuse this term with the English word that is used to express a possibility, as in “It might rain.”

(See also: Almighty, miracle, power, strength)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:22
- Genesis 6:4
- Mark 9:38-39
- Matthew 11:23

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0046, H0047, H0117, H0202, H0386, H0410, H0430, H0533, H0650, H1219, H1368, H1369, H1396, H1397, H1419, H2220, H2389, H2428, H3201, H3524, H3581, H3966, H4101, H5794, H5797, H6099, H6105, H6108, H6184, H7227, H7580, H8623, H8624, G14110, G14150, G14980, G24780, G24790, G29000, G29040, G31670, G31730

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:17

nation

Definition:

In the Bible, a nation is a large group of people who share a common identity and speak the same language. The people of a nation often have the same ancestors and share a common ethnicity.

- In the Bible, a nation could be a country with an extensive government structure and defined boundaries (such as Egypt or Ethiopia), but usually it is more general and refers to a people group.
- Nations in the Bible included the Israelites, the Philistines, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Canaanites, the Romans, and the Greeks, among many others.
- Sometimes the word "nation" was used figuratively to refer to the ancestor of a certain people group, as when Rebekah was told by God that her unborn sons were "nations" that would fight against each other. This could be translated as "the founders of two nations" or the "ancestors of two people groups."
- When used in the plural in a general way, the word translated as "nations" often referred to the people who were not Israelites, that is, to Gentiles, the people who do not worship Yahweh. The context usually makes the meaning clear.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the word "nation" could also be translated as "people group" or "people" or "country."
- If a language has a term for "nation" that is distinct from these other terms, then that term can be used wherever it occurs in the Bible text, as long as it is natural and accurate in each context.
- The plural term "nations" can often be translated as "people groups."
- In certain contexts, this term could also be translated as "Gentiles" or "non-Jews."

(See also: Assyria, Babylon, Canaan, Gentile, Greek, people group, Philistines, Rome)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 14:15-17
- 2 Chronicles 15:6
- 2 Kings 17:11-12
- Acts 2:5
- Acts 13:19
- Acts 17:26
- Acts 26:4
- Daniel 3:4
- Genesis 10:2-5
- Genesis 27:29
- Genesis 35:11
- Genesis 49:10
- Luke 7:5
- Mark 13:7-8
- Matthew 21:43
- Romans 4:16-17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0523, H0524, H0776, H1471, H3816, H4940, H5971, G02460, G10740, G10850, G14840

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:1 Zephaniah 2:5 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 2:11 Zephaniah 2:14 Zephaniah 3:6 Zephaniah 3:8

oath, vow, swear, swearing, swear by, sworn

Definition:

The term “oath” in the Bible refers to a formal promise, usually made in a legal or religious context, in which the person making the oath accepts some kind of accountability or punishment if he does not fulfill his promise. In the Bible, the term “swear” means to make an oath. A “vow” is a solemn promise or oath that a person makes to God.

- In a court of law, a witness often gives an oath to promise that whatever he says will be true and factual.
- In modern times, one meaning of the word “swear” is to use foul or vulgar language. This is never its meaning in the Bible.
- The term “swear by” means to use the name of something or someone as the basis or power on which the oath is made.
- Abraham and Abimelech swore an oath when they made a covenant together concerning the use of a well.
- Abraham told his servant to swear (formally promise) that he would find Isaac a wife from among Abraham’s relatives.
- God also made oaths in which he made promises to his people.
- If a person in ancient Israel made a vow to God, that person was obligated to fulfill the vow. The ancient Israelites believed that God might punish a person who did not fulfill a vow that he made.
- In ancient Israel, sometimes a person would ask God to protect him or provide for him in exchange for making the vow. However, the ancient Israelites did not believe that God was obligated to fulfill these requests.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “an oath” could also be translated as “a pledge” or “a solemn promise.”
- To “swear” could be translated as to “formally promise” or to “pledge” or to “commit to do something.”
- Other ways to translate “swear by my name” could include “make a promise using my name to confirm it.”
- To “swear by heaven and earth” could be translated as to, “promise to do something, stating that heaven and earth will confirm it.”
- Make sure the translation of “swear” or “oath” does not refer to cursing. In the Bible it does not have that meaning.
- Depending on the context, the term “vow” can be translated as “solemn promise” or “solemn oath” or “promise made to God.”

(See also: Abimelech, covenant, promise)

Bible References:

- Genesis 21:23
- Genesis 24:3
- Genesis 31:51-53
- Genesis 47:31
- Luke 1:73
- Mark 6:26
- Matthew 5:36
- Matthew 14:6-7
- Matthew 26:72
- 1 Corinthians 7:27-28
- Acts 21:23
- Genesis 28:21
- Genesis 31:12-13
- Jonah 1:14-16
- Jonah 2:9-10
- Proverbs 7:14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0422, H0423, H3027, H5375, H7621, H7650, G03320, G36600, G37270, G37280, H5087, H5088, G21710

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:5 Zephaniah 1:5

ordain, ordained, ordination, planned long ago, set up, prepared

Definition:

To ordain means to formally appoint a person for a special task or role. It also means to formally make a rule or decree.

- The term "ordain" often refers to formally appointing somebody as a priest, minister, or rabbi.
- For example, God ordained Aaron and his descendants to be priests.
- It can also mean to institute or establish something, such as a religious feast or covenant.
- Depending on the context, to "ordain" could be translated as to "assign" or to "appoint" or to "command" or to "make a rule" or to "institute."

(See also: command, covenant, decree, law, law, priest)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 12:31-32
- 2 Samuel 17:13-14
- Exodus 28:40-41
- Numbers 3:3
- Psalms 111:7-9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3245, H4390, H6186, H6213, H6680, H7760, H8239, G12990, G25250, G42700, G42820

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:7

column, pillar

Definition:

The term "pillar" usually refers to a large vertical structure that is used to hold up a roof or other part of a building. Another word for "pillar" is "column."

- In Bible times, pillars used as support in buildings were normally carved from a single piece of stone.
- When Samson in the Old Testament was captured by the Philistines, he destroyed their pagan temple by pushing the supporting pillars and causing the temple to collapse.
- The word "pillar" sometimes refers to a large stone or boulder that is set up as a memorial to mark a grave or to mark the place where an important event happened.
- It can also refer to an idol that was made to worship a false god. It is another name for a "carved image" and could be translated as "statue."
- The term "pillar" is used to refer to something that is shaped like a pillar, such as the "pillar of fire" that led the Israelites at night through the desert or the "pillar of salt" that Lot's wife became after she looked back at the city.
- As a structure supporting a building, the term "pillar" or "column" could be translated as "upright stone support beam" or "supporting stone structure."
- Other uses of "pillar" could be translated as "statue" or "pile" or "mound" or "monument" or "tall mass," depending on the context.

(See also: foundation, false god, image)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 18:4
- Exodus 13:21
- Exodus 33:9
- Genesis 31:45
- Proverbs 9:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0352, H0547, H2106, H2553, H3730, H4552, H4676, H4678, H4690, H5324, H5333, H5982, H8490, G47690

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:14

pit, pitfall, trench, cistern

Definition:

A pit is a deep hole that has been dug in the ground.

- A "cistern" was a hole dug in order to hold water.
- People dig pits for the purpose of trapping animals or finding water.
- A pit can also be used as a temporary place to hold a prisoner.
- Sometimes the phrase "the pit" refers to the grave or to hell. Other times it may refer to "the abyss."
- The term "pit" is also used figuratively in phrases such as, "pit of destruction" which describes being trapped in a disastrous situation or being deeply involved in sinful, destructive practices.

(See also: abyss, hell, prison)

Bible References:

- Genesis 37:21-22
- Job 33:18
- Luke 6:39
- Proverbs 1:12

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0875, H0953, H1356, H1475, H2352, H4087, H4113, H4379, H6354, H7585, H7745, H7816, H7825, H7845, H7882, G00120, G09990, G54210

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:9

plunder, plundered, spoil, spoils

Definition:

The terms “spoil” and “plunder,” when used as a noun, refer to things that are taken by force from a person or place, normally during a time of war. The verb “plunder” means to take things from a person or place, normally by force and during a time of war.

- When translating the verb “plunder” in the context of war you should use a different word than “steal” as “to steal” normally implies wrong doing and to “plunder”” something in war is not necessarily sinful.
- You could translate the verb “plunder” with a word such as “pillage” or with a descriptive phrase “take the goods of.”
- You could translate the term “spoil” with a descriptive phrase such as “plundered goods” or “plundered things.”
- Depending on context, you could translate the term “plunder” with a descriptive phrase such as “captured goods” or with some other descriptive phrase or with a term such as “spoil” or “spoils.”
- Your language may have a word for things that are taken by force and/or in a time of war.

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0957, H0962, H7998

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:13 Zephaniah 2:9

possess, possessed, possession, dispossess

Definition:

The terms “possess” and “possession” usually refer to owning something. They can also mean to gain control over something or occupy an area of land.

- In the Old Testament, this term is often used in the context of “possessing” or “taking possession of” an area of land.
- When Yahweh commanded the Israelites to “possess” the land of Canaan, it meant that they should go into the land and live there. This involved first conquering the Canaanite peoples who were living on that land.
- Yahweh told the Israelites that he had given them the land of Canaan as “their possession.” This could also be translated as “their rightful place to live.”
- The people of Israel were also called Yahweh’s “special possession.” This means that they belonged to him as his people whom he had specifically called to worship and serve him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “possess” could also be translated as “own” or “have” or “have charge over.”
- The phrase “take possession of” could be translated as “take control of” or “occupy” or “live on,” depending on the context.
- When referring to things that people own, “possessions” could be translated as “belongings” or “property” or “owned things” or “things they owned.”
- When Yahweh calls the Israelites, “my special possession” this could also be translated as “my special people” or “people who belong to me” or “my people whom I love and rule.”
- The sentence, “they will become their possession” when referring to land, means “they will occupy the land” or “the land will belong to them.”

- The expression, “found in his possession” could be translated as “that he was holding” or “that he had with him.”
- The phrase “as your possession” could also be translated as “as something that belongs to you” or “as a place where your people will live.”
- The phrase, “in his possession” could be translated as “that he owned” or “which belonged to him.”

(See also: Canaan, worship, inherit)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 6:70
- 1 Kings 9:17-19
- Acts 2:45
- Deuteronomy 4:5-6
- Genesis 31:36-37
- Matthew 13:44

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0270, H0272, H0834, H2505, H2631, H3027, H3423, H3424, H3425, H3426, H4180, H4181, H4672, H4735, H4736, H5157, H5159, H5459, H7069, G11390, G21920, G26970, G27220, G29320, G29330, G29350, G40470, G52240, G55640

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:9

praise, praised, praiseworthy

Definition:

To praise someone is to express admiration and honor for that person.

- People praise God because of how great he is and because of all the amazing things he has done as the Creator and Savior of the world.
- Praise for God often includes being thankful for what he has done.
- Music and singing is often used as a way to praise God.
- Praising God is part of what it means to worship him.
- The term to “praise” could also be translated as to “speak well of” or to “highly honor with words” or to “say good things about.”
- The noun “praise” could be translated as “spoken honor” or “speech that honors” or “speaking good things about.”

(See also: worship)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 1:3
- Acts 2:47
- Acts 13:48
- Daniel 3:28
- Ephesians 1:3
- Genesis 49:8
- James 3:9-10
- John 5:41-42
- Luke 1:46
- Luke 1:64-66
- Luke 19:37-38
- Matthew 11:25-27
- Matthew 15:29-31

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:13** The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to **praise** God because he saved them from the Egyptian army.
- **17:8** When David heard these words, he immediately thanked and **praised** God because he had promised David this great honor and many blessings.

- **22:7** Zechariah said, "**Praise** God, because he has remembered his people!"
- **43:13** They (disciples) enjoyed **praising** God together and they shared everything they had with each other.
- **47:8** They put Paul and Silas in the most secure part of the prison and even locked up their feet. Yet in the middle of the night, they were singing songs of **praise** to God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1319, H7121, H8416, G29800, G38530

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:19 Zephaniah 3:20

prey, prey on

Definition:

The term "prey" refers to something that is hunted, usually an animal that is used for food.

- In a figurative sense, "prey" can refer to a person who is taken advantage of, abused, or oppressed by a more powerful person.
- To "prey on" people means to take advantage of them by oppressing them or stealing something from them.
- The term "prey" could also be translated as "hunted animal" or "hunted one" or "victim."

(See also: oppress)

Bible References:

- Jeremiah 12:9
- Psalms 104:21

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0400, H0957, H0962, H2963, H2964, H5706, H5861, H7997, H7998

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:8

prince, princess, governor, provincial governor, official, nobleman, noblemen, nobility

Definition:

A “prince” is the son of a king. A “princess” is a daughter of a king.

- The term “prince” is often used figuratively to refer to a leader, ruler, or other powerful person.
- Because of Abraham’s wealth and importance, he was referred to as a “prince” by the Hittites he was living among.
- In the book of Daniel, the term “prince” is used in the expressions “prince of Persia” and “prince of Greece,” which in those contexts probably refer to powerful evil spirits who had authority over those regions.
- The archangel Michael is also referred to as a “prince” in the book of Daniel.
- Sometimes in the Bible Satan is referred to as “the prince of this world.”
- Jesus is called the “Prince of Peace” and the “Prince of Life.”
- In Acts 2:36, Jesus is referred to as “Lord and Christ” and in Acts 5:31 he is referred to as “Prince and Savior,” showing the parallel meaning of “Lord” and “Prince.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “prince” could include, “king’s son” or “ruler” or “leader” or “chieftain” or “captain.”
- When referring to angels, this could also be translated as “spirit ruler” or “leading angel.”
- When referring to Satan or other evil spirits, this term could also be translated as “evil spirit ruler” or “powerful spirit leader” or “ruling spirit,” depending on the context.

(See also: angel, authority, Christ, demon, lord, power, ruler, Satan, Savior, spirit)

Bible References:

- Acts 5:29-32
- Genesis 12:15
- Genesis 49:26
- Luke 1:52

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0001, H0117, H0324, H2831, H3548, H4502, H5057, H5081, H5139, H5257, H5387, H5633, H5993, H6579, H7261, H7333, H7786, H8269, H8282, H8323, G07470, G07580, G14130, G31750

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 3:3

profane, profaned

Definition:

To profane something means to act in a way that defiles, pollutes, or disrespects something that is holy.

- A profane person is one who acts in a way that is unholy and dishonoring of God.
- The verb to "profane" could be translated as to "treat as unholy" or to "be irreverent toward" or to "dishonor."
- God told the Israelites that they "profaned" themselves with idols, meaning that the people were making themselves "unclean" or "dishonored" by this sin. They were also dishonoring God.
- Depending on the context, the adjective "profane" could be translated as "dishonoring" or "godless" or "unholy."

(See also: defile, holy, clean)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 2:16-18
- Ezekiel 20:9
- Malachi 1:10-12
- Matthew 12:5
- Numbers 18:30-32

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2455, H2490, H2491, H5234, H8610, G09520, G09530

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:4

prosper, prosperity, prosperous

Definition:

The term "prosper" generally refers to living well, whether it be physically, morally, emotionally, etc. This term often expresses the idea of being wealthy or successful in life.

- The term "prosperous" often refers to success in owning money and property or in producing everything needed for people to live well.
- In the Bible, the term "prosperous" also includes good health and being blessed with children.
- A "prosperous" city or country is one that has many people, good production of food, and businesses that bring in plenty of money.
- The Bible teaches that a person will prosper spiritually when he obeys God's teachings. He will also experience the blessings of joy and peace. God does not always give people a lot of material wealth, but he will always prosper them spiritually as they follow his ways.
- Depending on the context, the term "prosper" could also be translated as "succeed spiritually" or "be blessed by God" or "experience good things" or "live well."
- The term "prosperous" could also be translated as "successful" or "wealthy" or "spiritually fruitful."
- "Prosperity" could also be translated as "well-being" or "wealth" or "success" or "abundant blessings."

(See also: bless, good, fruit, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 29:22-23
- Deuteronomy 23:6
- Job 36:11
- Leviticus 25:26-28
- Psalms 1:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1129, H1767, H1878, H1879, H2428, H2896, H2898, H3027, H3190, H3444, H3498, H3787, H4195, H5381, H6500, H6509, H6555, H6743, H6744, H7230, H7487, H7919, H7951, H7961, H7963, H7965

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:13 Zephaniah 2:7 Zephaniah 3:20

proud, pride, prideful, boast, boastful, boasting

Definition:

The terms "proud" and "pride," in this sense, refer to a person thinking too highly of themself, and especially, thinking that he is better than other people. The term "boast," when used with this sense, means to talk proudly about something or someone. Often it means to brag about oneself.

- A proud person often does not admit his own faults. He is not humble.
- Pride can lead to disobeying God in other ways.
- The term "prideful" is always negative, with the meaning of being "arrogant" or "conceited" or "self-important."
- The term "boastful" is always negative, and refers to a person who brags about themself or what they possess or have done or can do.
- Someone who is "boastful" frequently talks about himself in a proud way.
- God rebuked the Israelites for "boasting in" their idols. They arrogantly worshiped false gods instead of the true God.
- The Bible also talks about people boasting in such things as their wealth, their strength, their fruitful fields, and their laws. This means that they were proud about these things and did not acknowledge that God is the one who provided these things.

Translation Suggestions:

- The noun "pride" could be translated as "arrogance" or "conceit" or "self-importance."
- Other ways to translate "boast" could include "brag" or "talk proudly" or "be proud."
- The term "boastful" could be translated by a word or phrase that means "full of prideful talk" or "prideful" or "talking proudly about oneself."

(See also: arrogant, humble, proud positive sense)

Bible References:

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **4:2** They were very **proud**, and they did not care about what God said.
- **34:10** Then Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, God heard the tax collector’s prayer and declared him to be righteous. But he did not like the prayer of the religious leader. God will humble everyone who is **proud**, and he will lift up whoever humbles himself.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1343, H1344, H1346, H1347, H1364, H1431, H2087, H2102, H3093, H4994, G51870, G52430, G52440, G53080, G53090, G54260, G54500

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:10 Zephaniah 3:11

punish, punished, punishment, unpunished

Definition:

The term “punish” means to cause someone to suffer a negative consequence for doing something wrong. The term “punishment” refers to the negative consequence that is given as a result of that wrong behavior.

- Often punishment is intended to motivate a person to stop sinning.
- God punished the Israelites when they disobeyed him, especially when they worshiped false gods. Because of their sin, God allowed their enemies to attack and capture them.
- God is righteous and just, so he has to punish sin. Every human being has sinned against God and deserves punishment.
- Jesus was punished for all the evil things that every person has ever done. He received each person’s punishment on himself even though he did nothing wrong and did not deserve that punishment.
- The expressions “go unpunished” and “leave unpunished” mean to decide not to punish people for their wrongdoing. God often allows sin to go unpunished as he waits for people to repent.

(See also: just, repent, righteous, sin)

Bible References:

- 1 John 4:18
- 2 Thessalonians 1:9
- Acts 4:21
- Acts 7:59-60
- Genesis 4:15
- Luke 23:16
- Matthew 25:46

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:7** God also gave many other laws and rules to follow. If the people obeyed these laws, God promised that he would bless and protect them. If they disobeyed them, God would **punish** them.

- **16:2** Because the Israelites kept disobeying God, he **punished** them by allowing their enemies to defeat them.
- **19:16** The prophets warned the people that if they did not stop doing evil and start obeying God, then God would judge them as guilty, and he would **punish** them.
- **48:6** Jesus was the perfect high priest because he took the **punishment** for every sin that anyone has ever committed.
- **48:10** When anyone believes in Jesus, the blood of Jesus takes away that person's sin, and God's **punishment** passes over him.
- **49:9** But God loved everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be **punished** for his sins, but will live with God forever.
- **49:11** Jesus never sinned, but he chose to be **punished** and die as the perfect sacrifice to take away your sins and the sins of every person in the world.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3027, H3256, H4148, H4941, H5221, H5414, H6031, H6064, H6213, H6485, H7999, H8011, H8199, G13490, G15560, G15570, G28490, G38110, G50970

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:8 Zephaniah 1:9 Zephaniah 1:12

rebel, rebellion, rebellious, rebelliousness

Definition:

The term "rebel" means to refuse to submit to someone's authority. A "rebellious" person often disobeys and does evil things. This kind of person is called "a rebel."

- A person is rebelling when he does something the authorities over him have told him not to do.
- A person can also rebel by refusing to do what the authorities have commanded him to do.
- Sometimes people rebel against their government or leader who is ruling over them.
- The term to "rebel" could also be translated as to "disobey" or to "revolt," depending on the context.
- "Rebellious" could also be translated as "continually disobedient" or "refusing to obey."
- The term "rebellion" means "refusal to obey" or "disobedience" or "law-breaking."
- The phrase "the rebellion" or "a rebellion" can also refer to an organized group of people who publicly rebel against ruling authorities by breaking the law and attacking leaders and other people. Often they try to get other people to join them in rebelling.

(See also: authority, governor)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 12:18-19
- 1 Samuel 12:14
- 1 Timothy 1:9-11
- 2 Chronicles 10:17-19
- Acts 21:38
- Luke 23:19

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **14:14** After the Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for forty years, all of them who had **rebelled** against God were dead.

- **18:7** Ten of the tribes of the nation of Israel **rebelled** against Rehoboam.
- **18:9** Jeroboam **rebelled** against God and caused the people to sin.
- **18:13** Most of the people of Judah also **rebelled** against God and worshiped other gods.
- **20:7** But after a few years, the king of Judah **rebelled** against Babylon.
- **45:3** Then he (Stephen) said, "You stubborn and **rebellious** people always reject the Holy Spirit, just as your ancestors always rejected God and killed his prophets."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4775, H4776, H4777, H4779, H4780, H4784, H4805, H5327, H5627, H5637, H6586, H6588, H7846, G38930, G49550

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:1

ruin, ruins, ruined

Definition:

To "ruin" something means to spoil, destroy, or cause to be useless. The term "ruin" or "ruins" refers to the rubble and spoiled remains of something that has been destroyed.

- The prophet Zephaniah spoke about the day of God's wrath as a "day of ruin" when the world will be judged and punished.
- The book of Proverbs says that ruin and destruction await those who are ungodly.
- Depending on the context, to "ruin" could be translated as to "destroy" or to "spoil" or to "make useless" or to "break."
- The term "ruin" or "ruins" could be translated as "rubble" or "broken-down buildings" or "destroyed city" or "devastation" or "brokenness" or "destruction," depending on the context.

(See also: devastated)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 12:7-8
- 2 Kings 19:25-26
- Acts 15:16
- Isaiah 23:13-14

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0006, H1197, H1530, H1820, H1942, H2034, H2040, H2717, H2719, H2720, H2723, H2930, H3510, H3765, H3782, H3832, H4072, H4288, H4384, H4654, H4876, H4889, H5221, H5327, H5557, H5754, H5856, H7451, H7489, H7582, H7591, H7612, H7701, H7703, H7843, H8047, H8074, H8077, H8414, H8510, G26790, G26920, G36390, G44850

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:10 Zephaniah 1:13 Zephaniah 2:4 Zephaniah 2:9 Zephaniah 2:13 Zephaniah 2:15 Zephaniah 3:6

sacrifice, offering

Definition:

In the Bible, the terms “sacrifice” and “offering” refer to special gifts given to God as an act of worshiping him. People also offered sacrifices to false gods.

sacrifice

- Sacrifices to God often involved the killing of an animal.
- Only the sacrifice of Jesus, God’s perfect sinless Son, can completely cleanse people from sin; animal sacrifices could never do that.

offering

- The word “offering” generally refers to anything that is offered or given. The term “sacrifice” refers to something that is given or done at great cost to the giver.
- Offerings to God were specific things that he commanded the Israelites to give in order to express devotion and obedience to him.
- The names of the different offerings, such as “burnt offering” and “peace offering,” indicated what kind of offering was being given.

Translation Suggestions

- The term “offering” could also be translated as “a gift to God” or “something given to God” or “something valuable that is presented to God.”
- Depending on the context, the term “sacrifice” could also be translated as “something valuable given in worship” or “a special animal killed and presented to God.”
- The action to “sacrifice” could be translated as to “give up something valuable” or to “kill an animal and give it to God.”
- Another way to translate “present yourself as a living sacrifice” could be “as you live your life, offer yourself to God as completely as an animal is offered on an altar.”

(See also: altar, burnt offering, drink offering, false god, fellowship offering, freewill offering peace offering, priest, sin offering, worship)

Bible References:

- 2 Timothy 4:6
- Acts 7:42
- Acts 21:25
- Genesis 4:3-5
- James 2:21-24
- Mark 1:43-44
- Mark 14:12
- Matthew 5:23

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **3:14** After Noah got off the boat, he built an altar and **sacrificed** some of each kind of animal which could be used for a **sacrifice**. God was happy with the **sacrifice** and blessed Noah and his family.
- **5:6** “Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a **sacrifice** to me.” Again Abraham obeyed God and prepared to **sacrifice** his son.
- **5:9** God had provided the ram to be the **sacrifice** instead of Isaac.
- **13:9** Anyone who disobeyed God’s law could bring an animal to the Tent of Meeting as a **sacrifice** to God. A priest would kill the animal and burn it on the altar. The blood of the animal that was **sacrificed** covered the person’s sin and made that person clean in God’s sight.
- **17:6** David wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him **sacrifices**.
- **48:6** Jesus is the Great High Priest. Unlike other priests, he offered himself as the only **sacrifice** that could to take away the sin of all the people in the world.
- **48:8** But God provided Jesus, the Lamb of God, as a **sacrifice** to die in our place.
- **49:11** Because Jesus **sacrificed** himself, God can forgive any sin, even terrible sins.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0801, H0817, H0819, H1685, H1890, H1974, H2076, H2077, H2281, H2282, H2398, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2409, H3632, H4394, H4503, H4504, H5066, H5068, H5071, H5257, H5258, H5261, H5262, H5927, H5928, H5930, H6453, H6944, H6999, H7133, H7311, H8002, H8426, H8548, H8573, H8641, G02660, G03340, G10490, G14350, G14940, G23780, G23800, G36460, G43760, G54850

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:7 Zephaniah 1:8

seek, search, look for

Definition:

The term "seek" means to look for something or someone. In the past tense, the verb is "sought." This term is sometimes used figuratively, meaning to "attempt" or "make an effort" to do something or to ask for something.

- To "seek" or "look for" an opportunity to do something can mean to "try to find a time" to do it.
- To "seek Yahweh" means to "spend time and energy getting to know Yahweh and learning to obey him."
- To "seek protection" means to "try to find a person or place that will protect you from danger."
- To "seek justice" means to "make an effort to see that people are treated justly or fairly."
- To "seek the truth" means to "make an effort to find out what the truth is."
- To "seek favor" means to "urgently ask for favor" or to "do things to cause someone to help you."

(See also: just, true)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 10:14
- Acts 17:26-27
- Hebrews 11:6
- Luke 11:9
- Psalms 27:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0579, H1156, H1239, H1243, H1245, H1556, H1875, H2470, H2603, H2658, H2664, H3289, H7125, H7592, H7836, H8446, G03270, G15670, G19340, G20520, G22120

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:6 Zephaniah 1:6 Zephaniah 1:12
Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:3 Zephaniah 2:3

servant, serve, maidservant, young man, young women

Definition:

A "servant" refers to a person who works for (or obeys) another person, either by choice or by force. A servant was under his master's direction. In the Bible, "servant" and "slave" are mostly interchangeable terms. The term "serve" generally means to do work for someone, and the concept can be applied in a wide variety of contexts.

- In the Bible the words "young man" or "young woman" often mean "servant" or "slave." This meaning will be discerned from context. One indicator of this situation is if the possessive is used, eg. "her young women" which could be translated as "her servants" or "her slaves."

Translation Suggestions

- The term "serve" can also be translated as "minister to" or "work for" or "take care of" or "obey," depending on the context.
- To "serve God" can be translated as to "worship and obey God" or to "do the work that God has commanded."
- In the Old Testament, God's prophets and other people who worshiped God were often called his "servants."
- In the New Testament, people who obeyed God through faith in Christ were often called his "servants."
- To "serve tables" means to bring food to people who are sitting at tables, or more generally, to "distribute food."
- In the context of a person serving guests, this term means "care for" or "serve food to" or "provide food for." When Jesus told the disciples to "serve" the fish to the people, this could be translated as, "distribute" or "hand out" or "give."
- People who teach others about God are said to serve both God and the ones they are teaching.
- The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians about how they used to "serve" the old covenant. This refers to obeying the laws of Moses. Now they "serve" the new covenant. That is, because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, believers in Jesus are enabled by the Holy Spirit to please God and live holy lives.
- Paul talks about their actions in terms of their "service" to either the old or new covenant. This could be translated as "serving" or "obeying" or "devotion to."
- Often, when a person referred to himself as "your servant" he was showing respect to the person addressed. That person may have had higher social status, or the speaker may be showing humility. It did not mean that the person speaking was an actual servant.

(See also: enslave, works, obey, house, lord)

Bible References:

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **6:1** When Abraham was very old and his son, Isaac, had grown to be a man, Abraham sent one of his **servants** back to the land where his relatives lived to find a wife for his son, Isaac.
- **19:10** Then Elijah prayed, "O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your **servant**."
- **29:3** "Since the **servant** could not pay the debt, the king said, 'Sell this man and his family as **slaves** to make payment on his debt.'"
- **35:6** "All my father's **servants** have plenty to eat, and yet here I am starving."
- **47:4** The **slave** girl kept yelling as they walked, "These men are servants of the Most High God."
- **50:4** Jesus also said, "A **servant** is not greater than his master."

Word Data:

- Strong's for Servant: H0519, H5288, H5647, H5649, H5650, H5657, H7916, H8198, H8334, G12490, G14010, G14020, G23240, G34070, G34110, G36100, G38160, G49830, G52570

Strong's for Serve: H3547, H4929, H4931, H5647, H5656, H5673, H5975, H6213, H6399, H6402, H6440, H6633, H6635, H7272, H8104, H8120, H8199, H8278, H8334, G12470, G12480, G13980, G14020, G14380, G19830, G20640, G22120, G23230, G29990, G30000, G30090, G43370, G43420, G47540, G50870, G52560

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:9

shame, ashamed, disgrace, humiliate, reproach

Definition:

The term "shame" refers to the painful feeling of being disgraced or humiliated that a person feels when they do something that others consider dishonorable or improper.

- Something that is "shameful" is "improper" or "dishonorable."
- The term "ashamed" describes how a person feels when he has done something improper or dishonorable.
- The term "humiliate" means to cause someone to feel shamed or disgraced, usually publicly. The act of shaming someone is called "humiliation."
- To "reproach" someone means to criticize or disapprove of that person's character or behavior.
- The phrase "put to shame" means to defeat people or expose their actions so that they feel ashamed of themselves. The prophet Isaiah said that those who make and worship idols will be put to shame.
- The term "disgraceful" can be used to describe a sinful act or the person who did it. When a person does something sinful, it can cause him to be in a state of disgrace or dishonor.
- Sometimes a person who is doing good things is treated in a way that causes him disgrace or shame. For example, when Jesus was killed on a cross, this was a disgraceful way to die. Jesus had done nothing wrong to deserve this disgrace.
- When God humbles someone, it means that he is causing a prideful person to experience failure to help him overcome his pride. This is different from humiliating someone, which is often done in order to hurt that person.
- Saying that a person is "above reproach" or "beyond reproach" or "without reproach" means that this person behaves in a God-honoring way and there is little or nothing that could be said in criticism of him.

Translation Suggestions

- Ways to translate “disgrace” could include “shame” or “dishonor.”
- Ways to translate “disgraceful” could include “shameful” or “dishonoring.”
- To “humiliate” could also be translated as to “shame” or to “cause to feel shame” or to “embarrass.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate “humiliation” could include “shame” or “degrading” or “disgrace.”
- The word “reproach” could also be translated as “accusation” or “shame” or “disgrace.”
- To “reproach” could also be translated as to “rebuke” or to “accuse” or to “criticize,” depending on the context.

(See also: dishonor, accuse, rebuke, false god, humble, Isaiah, worship)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 3:15-17
- 2 Kings 2:17
- 2 Samuel 13:13
- Luke 20:11
- Mark 8:38
- Mark 12:4-5
- 1 Timothy 3:7
- Genesis 34:7
- Hebrews 11:26
- Lamentations 2:1-2
- Psalms 22:6
- Deuteronomy 21:14
- Ezra 9:5
- Proverbs 25:7-8
- Psalms 6:8-10
- Psalms 123:3
- 1 Timothy 5:7-8
- 1 Timothy 6:13-14
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- Job 16:9-10
- Proverbs 18:3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0937, H0954, H0955, H1317, H1322, H1421, H1442, H1984, H2490, H2616, H2617, H2659, H2778, H2781, H2865, H3001, H3637, H3639, H3640, H3971, H5007, H5034, H5039, H6030, H6031, H6172, H6256, H7022, H7034, H7036, H7043, H7511, H7817, H8103, H8213, H8216, H8217, H8589, G01520, G01530, G04100, G04220, G04230, G08080, G08180, G08190, G08210, G17880, G17910, G18700, G26170, G30590, G36790, G36800, G36810, G38560, G50140, G51950, G51960, G54840

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:8 Zephaniah 2:8 Zephaniah 2:10 Zephaniah 3:5 Zephaniah 3:11 Zephaniah 3:18 Zephaniah 3:19

shepherd, herder, pastor

Definition:

A “shepherd” is a person who takes care of sheep. In the Old Testament, this word can also refer to a “herder” who takes care of other kinds of domestic livestock such as goats or cattle.

- As a verb, the term “shepherd” means to lead sheep (or other livestock) to places with good food and water, protect them from wild animals, keep them from getting lost and other duties necessary to keep livestock alive and healthy.
- In the Bible, this term is often used figuratively to refer to taking care of the needs of people (not only animals), both physical and spiritual.
- In the Old Testament, God was called the “shepherd” of his people because he took care of them. In the New Testament, Jesus called himself the “good shepherd,” and in other places Jesus is called the “great shepherd” of the Church.
- The term “shepherd” is also used in the New Testament to refer to a person who is a spiritual leader over other believers. The word translated as “pastor” is the same word that is translated as “shepherd.” Elders and overseers are also called shepherds.

Translation Suggestions

- The noun “shepherd” can be translated as “person who takes care of sheep” or “sheep tender” or “sheep caregiver.”
- When referring to someone who cares for livestock other than sheep, the term can be translated as “herder,” “tender of livestock” or “person who takes care of livestock.”
- When used as a verb, the term “shepherd” could be translated as “take care of sheep” or “watch over sheep.”
- In some contexts, the term “shepherd” could be translated as “leader” or “guide” or “caregiver.”
- When used figuratively, the noun “shepherd” could be translated in different ways, including “spiritual shepherd” or “spiritual leader” or “one who is like a shepherd” or “one who cares for his people like a shepherd cares for his sheep” or “one who leads his people like a shepherd guides his sheep” or “one who takes care of God’s sheep.”
- When used figuratively, the verb “shepherd” could be translated as to “take care of” or to “spiritually nourish” or to “guide and teach” or to “lead and take care of (like a shepherd cares for sheep).”

(See also: sheep, livestock, pastor)

Bible References:

- Genesis 13:7
- Genesis 49:24
- Luke 2:9
- Mark 6:34
- Mark 14:26-27
- Matthew 2:6
- Matthew 9:36
- Matthew 25:32
- Matthew 26:31

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:11** Moses became a **shepherd** in the wilderness far away from Egypt.to
- **17:2** David was a **shepherd** from the town of Bethlehem. At different times while he was watching his father’s sheep, David had killed both a lion and a bear that had attacked the sheep.
- **23:6** That night, there were some **shepherds** in a nearby field guarding their flocks.
- **23:8** The **shepherds** soon arrived at the place where Jesus was and they found him lying in a feeding trough, just as the angel had told them.
- **30:3** To Jesus, these people were like sheep without a **shepherd**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6629, H7462, H7469, H7473, G07500, G41650, G41660

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:6 Zephaniah 2:7

silver

Definition:

Silver is a shiny, gray precious metal used to make coins, jewelry, containers, and ornaments.

- The various containers that are made from silver include silver cups and bowls, and other things used for cooking, eating, or serving.
- Silver and gold were used in the building of the tabernacle and the temple. The temple in Jerusalem had containers made of silver.
- In Bible times, a shekel was a unit of weight, and a purchase was often priced at a certain number of shekels of silver. By New Testament times there were silver coins of various weights that were measured in shekels.
- Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave for twenty shekels of silver.
- Judas was paid thirty silver coins for betraying Jesus.
- If your culture does not have silver you could translate this term as "precious metal"

(See also: tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:9-11
- 1 Samuel 2:36
- 2 Kings 25:13-15
- Acts 3:6
- Matthew 26:15

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3701, H3702, H7192, G06930, G06940, G06950, G06960, G14060

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:11 Zephaniah 1:18

slander, slanderer, revile, insult

Definition:

A slander consists of negative, defaming things spoken (not written) about another person. To say such things (not to write them) about someone is to slander that person. The person saying such things is a slanderer.

- Slander may be a true report or a false accusation, but its effect is to cause others to think negatively of the person being slandered.
- To "slander" could be translated as to "speak against" or to "spread an evil report" or to "defame."
- A slanderer is also called an "informer" or a "tale-bearer."

(See also: blasphemy)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 4:13
- 1 Timothy 3:11
- 2 Corinthians 6:8-10
- Mark 7:20-23

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1681, H1696, H1848, H3960, H5791, H7270, H7400, H8267, G09870, G09880, G12280, G14260, G26360, G26370, G30590, G30600

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:8

sow, sower, plant, planted, replanted, transplanted

Definition:

To "sow" means to put seeds on top of or in the ground in order to grow plants. A "sower" is a person who sows or plants seeds. A "plant" is generally something that grows and is attached to the ground.

- One method of sowing or planting seeds during biblical times was to take handfuls of seeds and scatter them on the ground.
- Farmers would often plow the ground on which they had sown seeds after they had sown the seeds. The reason farmers would plow the ground after they had sown the seed is so that the seed would be covered with soil.
- Sometimes farmers may have plowed the field that they sowed seeds in both before and after sowing seeds.

Translations Suggestions

- The term to "sow" could also be translated as to "plant." Make sure the word or phrase you use to translate this term refers to, or can include, planting seeds by scattering them because this is the method of sowing that Jesus was referring to in his parable in Matthew 13:3-23, Mark 4:2-20, and Luke 8:4-8 where he describes a sower who sowed seeds.
- Other ways to translate "sower" could include "planter" or "farmer" or "person who plants seeds."
- In English, "sow" is only used for planting seeds, but the English word "plant" can be used for planting seeds as well as larger things, such as trees. Other languages may also use different words, depending on what is being planted.

(See also: harvest)

Bible References:

- Luke 8:5
- Matthew 6:25-26
- Matthew 13:4
- Matthew 13:19
- Matthew 25:24

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2221, H2232, H2233, H2236, H4218, H4302, H5193, H7971, H8362, G46870, G47030, G54520

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:13

statute

Definition:

A statute is a specific written law that provides guidance for people to live by.

- The term “statute” is similar in meaning to “ordinance” and “command” and “law” and “decree.” All these terms involve instructions and requirements that God gives to his people or rulers give to their people.
- King David said that he delighted himself in Yahweh’s statutes.
- The term “statute” could also be translated as “specific command” or “special decree.”

(See also: command, decree, law, ordinance, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 11:11-13
- Deuteronomy 6:20-23
- Ezekiel 33:15
- Numbers 19:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2706, H2708, H7010, G13450

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:2

stumble, reeling

Definition:

The term “stumble” means “almost fall” when walking or running. Usually it involves tripping over something.

- Figuratively, to “stumble” can mean to “sin” or to “falter” in believing.
- This term can also refer to faltering or showing weakness when fighting a battle or when being persecuted or punished.

Translation Suggestions

- In contexts where the term “stumble” means to physically trip over something, it should be translated with a term that means “almost fall” or “trip over.”
- This literal meaning could also be used in a figurative context, if it communicates the correct meaning in that context.
- For figurative uses where the literal meaning would not make sense in the project language, “stumble” could be translated as “sin” or “falter” or “stop believing” or “become weak,” depending on the context.
- Another way to translate this term could be, “stumble by sinning” or “stumble by not believing.”
- The phrase “made to stumble” could be translated as “caused to become weak” or “caused to falter.”

(See also: believe, persecute, sin, stumbling block)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 2:8
- Hosea 4:5
- Isaiah 31:3
- Matthew 11:4-6
- Matthew 18:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1762, H3782, H4383, H5062, H5063, H5307, H6328, H6761, H8058, G06790, G43480, G43500, G44170, G46240, G46250

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:3

sword, swordsmen

Definition:

A sword is a flat-bladed metal weapon used to cut or stab. It has a handle and a long, pointed blade with a very sharp cutting edge.

- In ancient times the length of a sword's blade was about 60 to 91 centimeters.
- Some swords have two sharp edges and are called "double-edged" or "two-edged" swords.
- Jesus' disciples had swords for self defense. With his sword, Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.
- Both John the Baptist and the apostle James were beheaded with swords.

Translation Suggestions

- A sword is used as a metaphor for God's word. God's teachings in the Bible exposed people's innermost thoughts and convicted them of their sin. In a similar way, a sword cuts deeply, causing pain. (See: Metaphor)
- One way to translate this figurative use would be, "God's word is like a sword, which cuts deeply and exposes sin."
- Another figurative use of this term occurred in the book of Psalms, where the tongue or speech of a person was compared to a sword, which can injure people. This could be translated as "the tongue is like a sword that can badly injure someone."
- If swords are not known in your culture, this word could be translated with the name of another long-bladed weapon that is used to cut or stab.
- A sword could also be described as a "sharp weapon" or "long knife." Some translations could include a picture of a sword.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: James (brother of Jesus), John (the Baptist), tongue, word of God)

Bible References:

- Acts 12:2

- Genesis 27:40
- Genesis 34:25
- Luke 2:33-35
- Luke 21:24
- Matthew 10:34
- Matthew 26:55
- Revelation 1:16

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0019, H1300, H2719, H4380, H6609, H7524, H7973, G31620, G45010

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 2:12

threshold, doorway

Definition:

The term "threshold" refers to the bottom part of a doorway or the part of a building that is just inside the door.

- Sometimes a threshold is a strip of wood or stone that must be stepped over in order to enter a room or building.
- Both a gate and the opening to a tent can also have a threshold.
- This term should be translated with a term in the project language that refers to the place at the very entrance to a home that a person steps across.
- If there is no term for this, "threshold" could also be translated as "doorway" or "opening" or "entranceway," depending on the context.

(See also: gate, tent)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 9:17-19
- Ezekiel 9:3
- Isaiah 6:4
- Proverbs 17:19

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4670, H5592

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:9 Zephaniah 2:14

tongue, language

Definition:

The term “tongue” refers to the organ inside a person’s mouth that is used to speak. The term is often used figuratively to mean “language” or “speaking.” There also several other figurative meanings as well.

- In the Bible, the most common figurative meaning for this term is “language” or “speech.”
- Sometimes “tongue” may refer to a human language spoken by a certain people group.
- Other times it refers to a supernatural language that the Holy Spirit gives believers in Christ as one of the “gifts of the Spirit.”
- In the book of Acts, the expression “tongues” of fire refers to “flames” of fire, presumably shaped like tongues.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, the term “tongue” can be translated as “language” or “supernatural language.” If it is not clear which one it is referring to, it is better to translate it as “language.”
- When referring to fire, this term could be translated as “flames.”
- The expression “my tongue rejoices” could be translated as “I rejoice and praise God” or “I am joyfully praising God.”
- The phrase, “tongue that lies” could be translated as “person who tell lies” or “people who lie.”
- Phrases such as “with their tongues” could be translated as “with what they say” or “by their words.”

(See also: gift, Holy Spirit, joy, praise, rejoice, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 12:10
- 1 John 3:18
- 2 Samuel 23:2
- Acts 2:26
- Ezekiel 36:3
- Philippians 2:11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3956, G11000, G12580, G20840

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 3:13

trouble, disturb, stir up, distress, hardship, calamity

Definition:

A “trouble” is an experience in life that is very difficult and distressing. To “trouble” someone means to “bother” that person or to cause him distress. To be “troubled” means to feel upset or distressed about something.

- Troubles can be physical, emotional, or spiritual things that hurt a person.
- In the Bible, often troubles are times of testing that God uses to help believers mature and grow in their faith.
- The Old Testament use of “trouble” also referred to judgment that came on people groups who were immoral and rejected God.

Translation Suggestions

- The term “trouble” or “troubles” could also be translated as “danger” or “painful things that happen” or “persecution” or “difficult experiences” or “distress.”
- The term “troubled” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “undergoing distress” or “feeling terrible distress” or “worried” or “anxious” or “distressed” or “terrified” or “disturbed.”
- “Do not trouble her” could also be translated as “do not bother her” or “do not criticize her.”
- The phrase “day of trouble” or “times of trouble” could also be translated as “when you experience distress” or “when difficult things happen to you” or “when God causes distressing things to happen.”
- Ways to translate “make trouble” or “bring trouble” could include “cause distressing things to happen” or “cause difficulties” or “make them experience very difficult things.”

(See also: afflict, persecute)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:18-19
- 2 Chronicles 25:19
- Luke 24:38
- Matthew 24:6
- Matthew 26:36-38

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0205, H0926, H0927, H1204, H1607, H1644, H1804, H2000, H4103, H5916, H5999, H6031, H6040, H6470, H6696, H6862, H6869, H6887, H7264, H7267, H7451, H7489, H8513, G03870, G16130, G17760, G23460, G23470, G23500, G23600, G28730, G36360, G39260, G39300, G39860, G44230, G46600, G50150, G51820

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:15

trumpet, trumpeter

Definition:

The term “trumpet” refers to an instrument for producing music or for calling people to gather together for an announcement or meeting.

- A trumpet was commonly made from either metal, seashell, or an animal horn.
- Trumpets were most commonly blown to call people to come together for battle, and for Israel’s public assemblies.
- The book of Revelation describes a scene in the end times in which angels blow their trumpets to signal the outpouring of the wrath of God on the earth.

(See also: angel, assembly, earth, horn, Israel, wrath)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 13:7-8
- 2 Kings 9:13
- Exodus 19:12-13
- Hebrews 12:19
- Matthew 6:2
- Matthew 24:31

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2689, H2690, H3104, H7782, H8619, H8643, G45360, G45370, G45380

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:16

vineyard

Definition:

A vineyard is a large garden area where grapevines are grown and grapes are cultivated.

- A vineyard often has a wall around it to protect the fruit from thieves and animals.
- God compared the people of Israel to a vineyard that did not bear good fruit. (See: Metaphor)
- Vineyard could be also translated as “grapevine garden” or “grape plantation.”

(See also: grape, Israel, vine)

Bible References:

- Genesis 9:20-21
- Luke 13:6
- Luke 20:15
- Matthew 20:2
- Matthew 21:40-41

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1612, H3754, H3755, H8284, G02900

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:13

soldier, warrior

Definition:

The terms “warrior” and “soldier” both can refer to someone who fights in an army. But there are also some differences.

- Usually the term “warrior” is a general, broad term to refer to a man who is gifted and courageous in battle.
- Yahweh is figuratively described as a “warrior.”
- The term “soldier” more specifically refers to someone who belongs to a certain army or who is fighting in a certain battle.
- Roman soldiers in Jerusalem were there to keep order and to carry out duties such as executing prisoners. They guarded Jesus before crucifying him and some were ordered to stand guard at his tomb.
- The translator should consider whether there are two words in the project language for “warrior” and “soldier” that also differ in meaning and use.

(See also: courage, crucify, Rome, tomb)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 21:5
- Acts 21:33
- Luke 3:14
- Luke 23:11
- Matthew 8:8-10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0352, H0510, H1368, H1416, H1995, H2389, H2428, H2502, H3715, H4421, H5971, H6518, H6635, H7273, H7916, G46860, G47530, G47540, G47570, G47580, G49610

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:14

wine, wineskin, new wine

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “wine” refers to a kind of fermented drink made from the juice of a fruit called grapes. Wine was stored in “wineskins,” which were containers made out of animal skin.

- The term “new wine” referred to grape juice that had just been taken from the grape and was not fermented yet. Sometimes the term “wine” also referred to unfermented grape juice.
- To make wine, grapes are crushed in a winepress so that the juice comes out. The juice eventually ferments and alcohol forms in it.
- In Bible times, wine was the normal drink with meals. It did not have as much alcohol as present-day wine has.
- Before wine was served for a meal, it was often mixed with water.
- A wineskin that was old and brittle would get cracks in it, which allowed the wine to leak out. New wineskins were soft and flexible, which meant they did not tear easily and could store the wine safely.
- If wine is unknown in your culture, it could be translated as “fermented grape juice” or “fermented drink made from a fruit called grapes” or “fermented fruit juice.” (See: How to Translate Unknowns)
- Ways to translate “wineskin” could include “bag for wine” or “animal skin wine bag” or “animal skin container for wine.”

(See also: grape, vine, vineyard, winepress)

Bible References:

- 1 Timothy 5:23
- Genesis 9:21
- Genesis 49:12
- John 2:3-5
- John 2:10
- Matthew 9:17
- Matthew 11:18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2561, H2562, H3196, H4469, H4997, H5435, H6025, H6071, H8492, G10980, G36310, G38200, G39430

Zephaniah References:

Zephaniah 1:13