



Habakkuk

translationNotes

v6

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translationNotes

Introduction to Habakkuk

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the book of Habakkuk

1. Will sins go unpunished? (1:1–4)
2. Yahweh’s answer: The Babylonians are his chosen instruments to punish Israel (1:5–11)
3. How can Yahweh use wicked, unholy, godless people as his instruments of punishment? (1:12–2:1)
4. Yahweh’s answer: All people will be punished and the “righteous will live by his faith” (2:2–4)
5. The five Woes of Habakkuk
 - a) Woe against the thieves (2:6–8)
 - b) Woe against those who unjust means to gain riches (2:9–11)
 - c) Woe against those who kill build a town (2:12–14)
 - d) Woe against those abuse their neighbors and do violence to them (2:15–18)
 - e) Woe against those who worship idols when Yahweh is in his holy temple (2:19–20)
6. The prayer of Habakkuk about the glory of Yahweh (3:1–19)

What is the Book of Habakkuk about?

While many other prophets complained about Israel’s sin and failure to obey the law of Yahweh, Habakkuk accuses Yahweh by asking him questions about the things he does. Habakkuk says the Babylonians are more evil and are more deserving of Yahweh’s punishment. Overall, the book is addressed to the rich people in Judah who mistreated the poor and the evil religious leaders. Because of this fact, the idea of justice is important in the Book of Habakkuk. (See: [prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess, law, law of Moses, God’s law, law of Yahweh, evil, wicked, wickedness and just, justice, justly](#))

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may decided to translate this traditional title “The book of Habakkuk” in a way that is more clear to the readers. They may decide to call it, “The sayings of Habakkuk.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Who wrote Habakkuk?

Nothing is known about Habakkuk, from whom these message came. The Chaldean empire, mentioned in several places in Habakkuk, helps us to date Habakkuk’s life. The Chaldean empire had power from about 720 to 538 BC. It is probable that Habakkuk worked about the time of Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Nahum during the reigns of Kings Josiah, Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim in Judah.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Why did God use an evil nation to punish Judah?

Habakkuk seeks to address this issue. He explains that a person's should be obedient to Yahweh and should live a righteous life. He says evil must be punished, but that God determines the timing of its punishment. (See: [righteous](#), [righteousness](#))

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How do I identify the speaker?

It should be noted that Habakkuk often speaks to Yahweh, and Yahweh replies to him. The translator should be careful to identify the speaker (Habakkuk, or Yahweh) in each section. The translator may wish to make the speaker explicit. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

What style of writing is the Book of Habakkuk?

While much of the book of Habakkuk is conversation between the prophet and God, the third chapter is a psalm. This chapter contains information about how to sing this psalm; the author uses musical terms.

Does Habakkuk question or challenge God?

There are times when Habakkuk speaks directly to God in a way that can be taken as challenging God. Habakkuk is not intending to question the authority of Yahweh, but is stating "I do not understand." In some cultures, it may be improper to speak to an authority in this way. It may be necessary to rephrase Habakkuk questions to emphasize his sincere desire to learn why God is doing what he is doing without doubting him.

List of translationAcademy Topics in Habakkuk

- * [Doublet](#) is found in: [01:05](#)
- * [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) is found in: [02:12](#), [02:15](#)
- * [Hyperbole](#) is found in: [01:05](#), [02:04](#)
- * [Idiom](#) is found in: [02:02](#), [02:06](#), [02:09](#), [02:15](#)
- * [Metaphor](#) is found in: [01:08](#), [01:10](#), [01:12](#), [01:15](#), [02:01](#), [03:07](#), [03:13](#), [03:14](#)
- * [Metonymy](#) is found in: [01:03](#), [01:05](#), [02:02](#), [02:12](#), [02:15](#)
- * [Parallelism](#) is found in: [01:15](#), [02:01](#), [02:02](#), [02:04](#), [02:12](#), [03:07](#), [03:11](#), [03:17](#)
- * [Personification](#) is found in: [02:09](#), [03:06](#), [03:09](#)
- * [Rhetorical Question](#) is found in: [01:01](#), [01:12](#), [02:06](#), [02:12](#)

- * **Simile** is found in: 01:08, 01:13, 03:14, 03:18
- * **Synecdoche** is found in: 03:16
- * **Forms of You** is found in: 02:09, 02:15
- * **How to Translate Names** is found in: 03:07
- * **Translate Unknowns** is found in: 01:08, 03:09

List of translationWords in Habakkuk

- * **afflict, affliction** is found in: 03:07
- * **anoint, anointed** is found in: 03:13
- * **believe, believe in, belief** is found in: 01:05
- * **betray, betrayer** is found in: 01:13, 02:04
- * **blood** is found in: 02:06, 02:12, 02:17
- * **bow and arrow** is found in: 03:09, 03:11, 03:14
- * **captive, captivity** is found in: 01:08
- * **Chaldea, Chaldean** is found in: 01:05
- * **chariot** is found in: 03:07
- * **compassion, compassionate** is found in: 01:15, 03:01
- * **cut off** is found in: 03:17
- * **death, die, dead** is found in: 01:12, 02:04
- * **devour** is found in: 03:14
- * **eagle** is found in: 01:08
- * **everlasting, eternal, eternity** is found in: 03:06
- * **evil, wicked, wickedness** is found in: 01:03, 01:13, 02:09, 03:13
- * **face** is found in: 03:04
- * **faith** is found in: 02:04
- * **false god, foreign god, god, goddess** is found in: 01:10, 02:18
- * **favor, favorable, favoritism** is found in: 01:13
- * **fig** is found in: 03:17
- * **fire** is found in: 02:12
- * **glory, glorious** is found in: 02:12, 03:03
- * **gnash teeth, grind teeth** is found in: 02:06

- * God is found in: 01:12, 03:03, 03:18
- * gold is found in: 02:18
- * guilt, guilty is found in: 01:10
- * Habakkuk is found in: 01:01
- * hand, right hand, to hand over is found in: 02:09
- * heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly is found in: 03:03
- * high places is found in: 03:18
- * holy, holiness is found in: 02:18
- * Holy One is found in: 01:12, 03:03
- * honor, to honor is found in: 02:15
- * horse is found in: 01:08, 03:14
- * house is found in: 02:09, 03:13
- * image, carved image, carved figure, cast metal figure is found in: 02:18
- * incense is found in: 01:15
- * iniquity is found in: 01:03, 02:12
- * judge, judgment is found in: 01:05, 01:12
- * just, justice, justly is found in: 01:03
- * king is found in: 01:10
- * know, knowledge, make known is found in: 02:12
- * labor, laborer is found in: 02:12
- * law, law of Moses, God's law, law of Yahweh is found in: 01:03
- * Lebanon is found in: 02:17
- * Lord is found in: 03:18
- * Midian, Midianites is found in: 03:07
- * mock, ridicule, scoff at is found in: 01:10
- * nation is found in: 01:05, 01:15, 02:04, 02:06, 02:12, 03:06, 03:11
- * neighbor is found in: 02:15
- * olive is found in: 03:17
- * ordain is found in: 01:12
- * people group, peoples, the people, a people is found in: 02:04, 02:06, 02:09
- * plague is found in: 03:04

- * **pledge** is found in: 02:06
- * **power, powers** is found in: 03:04
- * **praise** is found in: 03:03
- * **pray, prayer** is found in: 03:01
- * **profit, profitable** is found in: 02:18
- * **prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess** is found in: 01:01, 03:01
- * **proverb** is found in: 02:06
- * **puffed up** is found in: 02:04
- * **pure, purify, purification** is found in: 01:13
- * **raise, rise, risen, arise, arose** is found in: 01:03, 02:06
- * **rejoice** is found in: 01:15, 03:18
- * **remnant** is found in: 02:06
- * **report** is found in: 03:01
- * **righteous, righteousness** is found in: 01:03, 01:13, 02:04
- * **ruler, rulers, rule** is found in: 01:10, 01:13
- * **sacrifice, offering** is found in: 01:15
- * **salvation** is found in: 03:07, 03:13, 03:18
- * **save, safe** is found in: 01:01
- * **shame, shameful, ashamed** is found in: 02:09, 02:15
- * **silver** is found in: 02:18
- * **sin, sinful, sinner, sinning** is found in: 02:09
- * **spear** is found in: 03:11
- * **splendor** is found in: 01:05
- * **stone, stoning** is found in: 02:09
- * **strife** is found in: 01:03
- * **stronghold, fortress, fortified** is found in: 01:10
- * **teacher, Teacher** is found in: 02:18
- * **temple** is found in: 02:18
- * **tent** is found in: 03:07
- * **vine** is found in: 03:17
- * **vision** is found in: 02:02

- * **watchtower, tower** is found in: **02:01**
- * **water, waters** is found in: **02:12**
- * **wine, wineskin, new wine** is found in: **02:04**
- * **woe** is found in: **02:09, 02:12**
- * **wolf, wolves, wild dogs** is found in: **01:08**
- * **wrath, fury** is found in: **03:01, 03:07, 03:11**
- * **wrong, mistreat, hurt** is found in: **01:13**
- * **Yahweh** is found in: **01:01, 01:12, 02:02, 02:12, 02:18, 03:01, 03:07, 03:18**
- * **Yahweh of hosts, God of hosts, host** is found in: **02:12**

Habakkuk 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers or songs. The ULB and many other English translations indent the lines of 1:1-17, which are extended quotations.

This chapter is arranged in a series of questions and answers between Yahweh and Habakkuk.

Special concepts in this chapter

Injustice

Habakkuk sees great injustice, especially in the defeat of Israel by the Assyrians. He cries out to Yahweh to ask him to put an end to it. He is questioning Yahweh, but he trusts in him. (See: [unjust](#), [unjustly](#), [injustice](#) and [trust](#), [trustworthy](#), [trustworthiness](#))

Chaldeans

Yahweh will raise up the Chaldeans to bring justice to the Hebrew people. They will defeat the Assyrians. At this time, the Chaldeans were an insignificant city and people group. This was probably intended to show the power of Yahweh.

Links:

- [Habakkuk 01:01 Notes](#)
- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)

Habakkuk 1:1-2

UDB:

¹ This is the conversation between Habakkuk the prophet and Yahweh.

² I said, "Yahweh, how long must I continue to call to you for help before you respond?"

I cry out, "The people are acting so violently!"

but you do not rescue me!

ULB:

1 ¹ The message that Habakkuk the prophet received,

² "Yahweh, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?"

I have cried out to you in horror, 'Violence!' but you will not save me.

translationWords:

- [Habakkuk](#)
- [prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [save, safe](#)

translationNotes:

- **The message that Habakkuk the prophet received** - These words introduce the first two chapters of the book. If your language requires a complete sentence here, "This is the message that Habakkuk the prophet received from God."
- **Yahweh** - This is the name of God that he revealed to his people in the Old Testament. See the translationWord page about Yahweh concerning how to translate this.
- **how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?** - AT: "I have been crying for help for a long time, but you act as though you do not hear me!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 1:3-4**UDB:**

³ Why do you make me watch people do what is wrong, but you do nothing?

I see people destroying things and acting violently; they fight and quarrel everywhere.

⁴ No one obeys the law of Moses, and no one acts in a right way for very long.

Wicked people always defeat the righteous people in the courts,
because judges never make fair decisions.”

ULB:

³ Why do you make me see iniquity and look upon wrongdoing?

Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and contention rises up.

⁴ Therefore the law is weakened, and justice does not last for any time.

For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore false justice goes out.”

translationWords:

- iniquity
- strife
- raise, rise, risen, arise, arose
- law, law of Moses, God’s law, law of Yahweh
- just, justice, justly
- evil, wicked, wickedness
- righteous, righteousness

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk continues his prayer to God.
- **contention rises up** - “fighting among the people is becoming more common”
- **the wicked surround the righteous** - This can mean that righteous people suffer injustice because 1) “wicked people have more power than righteous people” or 2) “there are more wicked people than righteous people.” (See: **Metonymy**)
- **false justice goes out** - AT: “evil happens instead of justice” or “injustice increases”

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 1:5-7**UDB:**

⁵ Yahweh replied to me,

”This is happening, but look around at what is happening in the other nations.

If you look, you will be amazed, and even astonished, since I am doing something

during this time that you would never have believed would happen,

even if someone told you about it.

⁶ Very soon I will bring the soldiers of Babylonia, who are fierce and swift.

They will march across the entire earth

and conquer many other countries.

⁷ They are a people whom others fear very much,

and they do whatever they want to,

because they believe that they are very great and that they have the right to judge everyone else.

ULB:

⁵ ”Look at the nations and examine them; be amazed and astonished!

For I am surely about to do something in your days that you will not believe when it is reported to you.

⁶ For look! I am about to raise up the Chaldeans—that fierce and impetuous nation—

they are marching throughout the breadth of the land to seize homes that were not their own.

⁷ They are terrifying and fearsome; their judgment and splendor proceed from themselves.

translationWords:

- nation
- believe, believe in, belief
- Chaldea, Chaldean
- judge, judgment
- splendor

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Yahweh answers the prayer of Habakkuk.
- **Look at the nations and examine them** - “Learn what is happening in other nations”
- **the breadth of the land** - This can mean 1) everywhere in Judah or 2) everywhere in the world. (See: [Hyperbole](#))
- **seize** - take by force or steal from the rightful owners
- **homes** - “houses”
- **they ... They ... themselves** - The Chaldean soldiers. God will raise up the Chaldean nation, and the Chaldeans’ soldiers will invade Judah. (See: [Metonymy](#))
- **They are terrifying and fearsome** - The words “terrifying” and “fearsome” mean basically the same thing and emphasize that they made others very afraid. AT: “They make others very afraid.” (See: [Doublet](#))
- **proceed** - “come”

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 1:8-9**UDB:**

⁸ The horses that pull their chariots go faster than leopards,
 and they are fiercer than wolves are in the evening.
 The horses on which the soldiers ride gallop swiftly;
 the soldiers riding them come from distant places.
 They are like eagles that swoop down to snatch their prey.
⁹ As they ride along,
 they are determined to act violently.
 They advance eagerly, as fast as the wind over the desert,
 and gather up as many prisoners as there are grains of sand!

ULB:

⁸ Their horses also are swifter than leopards, quicker than the evening wolves.
 So their horses stamp,
 and their horsemen come from a great distance—they fly like an eagle hurrying to eat.
⁹ They all come for violence;
 their multitudes go like the desert wind, and they gather captives like sand.
 [1]The Hebrew text translated here as *their multitudes go like the desert wind* is very difficult; many modern versions have other interpretations.

translationWords:

- horse
- wolf, wolves, wild dogs
- eagle
- captive, captivity

translationNotes:

- **Their horses ... their horses** - the horses of the Chaldean soldiers

- **quicker than the evening wolves** - The horses of the Chaldeans are compared to fierce wolves that run after their prey in the evening when they are very hungry because they have not eaten all day. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- **their horsemen** - The Chaldeans' soldiers riding the horses.
- **leopards** - large, swift cats (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))
- **they fly like an eagle** - "the horsemen ride as quickly as eagles fly" (See: [Simile](#))
- **their multitudes go like the desert wind, and they gather captives like sand** - The Chaldeans are many, and like the grains of sand the wind picks up in a storm are too many to count, so no one can count the people they capture and make prisoners. (See: [Simile](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 1:10-11**UDB:**

¹⁰ They make fun of kings and princes of other countries,
 and they ridicule all the cities that have high walls around them.
 They pile up earth around those cities to capture them.
¹¹ They rush past like the wind,
 and then they go to attack other cities.
 But they are very guilty,
 because they think that their own power is their god!”

ULB:

¹⁰ So they mock kings, and rulers are only a mockery for them.
 They laugh at every stronghold, for they heap up earth and take them.
¹¹ Then the wind will rush on; it will move past—guilty men, those whose
 might is their god.”

translationWords:

- mock, ridicule, scoff at
- king
- ruler, rulers, rule
- stronghold, fortress, fortified
- guilt, guilty
- false god, foreign god, god, goddess

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Yahweh continues describing the Chaldean soldiers.
- **the wind will rush on** - The invading Chaldean army is compared to the wind which rushes through one area and quickly continues on to the next place. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 1:12

UDB:

¹² Then I said, "Yahweh, are you not the eternal God?

You are my Holy One, so we will not die.

So why have you sent those men from Babylonia to judge us and kill us?

You are like our Rock, on top of which we can hide,

so why have you sent them to punish us?

ULB:

¹² "Are you not from ancient times, Yahweh my God, my Holy One? We will not die.

Yahweh has ordained them for judgment, and you, Rock, have established them for correction.

translationWords:

- [Yahweh](#)
- [God](#)
- [Holy One](#)
- [death, die, dead](#)
- [ordain](#)
- [judge, judgment](#)

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk speaks to Yahweh about the Chaldeans.
- **Are you not from ancient times, Yahweh my God, my Holy One?** - AT: "You are eternal, Yahweh my God, my Holy One." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))
- **them ... them** - the Chaldeans
- **Rock** - the protector of Israel (See: [Metaphor](#))
- **established them for correction** - "established them for the purpose of correcting Israel"

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 1:13-14**UDB:**

- ¹³ You are pure, and you cannot endure looking at what is evil,
 so why are you ignoring men who are treacherous?
 Why do you do nothing
 to punish those wicked men from Babylonia,
 who destroy people who are more righteous than they are?
- ¹⁴ They treat us like fish in the sea,
 or like other creatures in the sea, that have no ruler.

ULB:

- ¹³ Your eyes are too pure to gaze upon evil, and you are not able to look on wrongdoing with favor;
 why then have you looked favorably on those who betray?
 Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than they are?
- ¹⁴ You make men like fish in the sea, like creeping things without a ruler over them.

translationWords:

- pure, purify, purification
- evil, wicked, wickedness
- wrong, mistreat, hurt
- favor, favorable, favoritism
- betray, betrayer
- righteous, righteousness
- ruler, rulers, rule

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk continues speaking to Yahweh about the Chaldeans.
- **those who betray** - “the Chaldeans, whom no one can trust”
- **swallow up** - “destroy” (UDB)
- **like fish in the sea ... like creeping things** - These two phrases express the same idea that God has allowed the Chaldeans to treat the Israelites as if they were creatures with very little value, and not like people should be treated. (See: **Simile** and **Parallelism**)

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 1:15-17**UDB:**

¹⁵ The soldiers of Babylonia think that we are fish for them to pull out of the sea with hooks
or to catch in their nets, while they rejoice and celebrate.

¹⁶ If they catch us, they will worship their weapons with which they captured us

and offer sacrifices to them and burn incense in front of them!

They will say, 'These weapons have enabled us to become rich and eat expensive food.'

¹⁷ Will you allow them to continue to conquer people forever?

Will you allow them to destroy people of other nations without any mercy for anyone?"

ULB:

¹⁵ They bring up all of them with fishhooks; they drag men away in fishnets and gather them in their net. This is why they rejoice and shout exuberantly.

¹⁶ Therefore they sacrifice to their fishing nets and burn incense to their net, for fattened beasts are their portion, and the fatty meat is their food.

¹⁷ Will they therefore empty their fishing nets and continue to slaughter the nations, feeling no compassion?"

translationWords:

- rejoice
- sacrifice, offering
- incense
- nation
- compassion, compassionate

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk continues speaking to Yahweh about the Chaldeans.
- **fishhooks ... fishnets** - tools used to catch fish
- **net** - a tool used to catch "creeping things" (1:14)

- **fattened beasts are their portion, and the fatty meat is their food** - Alternate translation: “the best animals and the finest meat is their share of the food” (See: [Parallelism](#))
- **portion** - a small part of something bigger that is shared between many people
- **empty their fishing nets** - Fishermen empty their nets in order to throw it again and catch more fish. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 01 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers or songs. The ULB and many other English translations indent the lines of 2:1-20, which are extended quotations.

This chapter is arranged in a series of questions and answers between Yahweh and Habakkuk.

Special concepts in this chapter

“The righteous will live by his faith”

This is an important phrase in Scripture. Paul also uses it to explain that man is justified by his faith. (See: [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [justify](#), [justification](#) and [faith](#))

Links:

- [Habakkuk 02:01 Notes](#)

Habakkuk 2:1**UDB:**

¹ After I said that, I said to myself, "I will climb up into my guard post,
and stand there in my watchtower.

I will wait there to find out what Yahweh will say,
what he will reply and how I should answer."

ULB:

² ¹ I will stand at my guard post and station myself on the watchtower, and
I will watch carefully

to see what he will say to me and how I should turn from my complaint.
[1] Instead of *how I should turn from my complaint*, which is what the Hebrew text has, some modern versions have *how I should answer when he replies to my complaint* or *how I should answer when he rebukes me*.

translationWords:

- [watchtower, tower](#)

translationNotes:

- **I ... my ... me** - Habakkuk
- **he** - Yahweh
- **I will stand at my guard post and station myself on the watchtower** - These phrases say the same thing in two different ways. "I will stand at my post on the watchtower." Habakkuk uses these phrases to compare himself waiting to hear from God to a soldier standing guard on a watchtower. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))
- **I should turn from my complaint** - The word "turn" speaks of changing one's mind as if it were turning from one thing to another. AT: "I should stop complaining and agree with God." (See: [Metaphor](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 2:2-3**UDB:**

² Then Yahweh replied to me,

”Write plainly on tablets what I am revealing to you in this vision,
and then read it to a messenger
so he can run with it to tell it to other people.

³ In this vision I will talk about things that will happen in the future.

Now is not the time when those things will happen,
but they certainly will happen,
and when they occur, they will occur quickly,
and they will not be delayed.

You want those things to happen immediately, but they are not happening.
But wait patiently for them to happen!

ULB:

² Yahweh answered me and said,

”Record this vision, and write plainly on the tablets so that the one reading them might run.

³ For the vision is yet for a future time and will finally speak and not fail.

Though it delays, wait for it. For it will surely come and will not tarry.

translationWords:

- **Yahweh**
- **vision**

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Yahweh answers Habakkuk.
- **Record this vision, and write plainly on the tablets** - Both of these phrases are saying the same thing in two different ways. Alternate translation: “Write clearly on tablets what God is about to tell you” (See: **Parallelism**)

- **tablets** - These are flat pieces of stone or clay that were used for writing.
- **the one reading them might run** - This can mean 1) someone will run with the tablets and read them to people or 2) anyone who reads them will be able to read them easily (See: [Metonymy](#))
- **and will finally speak** - What is written will happen or become real. (See: [Idiom](#))
- **and will not tarry** - Possible meanings: 1) “and will not wait” or 2) “and will not come slowly”

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 2:4-5**UDB:**

⁴ Think about the proud people!

They are certainly not doing what is righteous.

But people who are righteous will live

because they faithfully do what I want them to do.

⁵ If people live for excess such as wine, they will deceive themselves,

and proud people are never able to rest.

Greedy people open their mouths as wide as the place where dead people are,

and they never have enough,

just like the place of the dead never has enough dead people.

The armies of Babylonia conquer many nations for themselves,

and capture all their people.

ULB:

⁴ Look! The one whose desires are not right within him is puffed up. But the righteous will live by his faith.

⁵ For wine is a betrayer of the arrogant young man so that he will not abide, but enlarges his desire like the grave and, like death, is never satisfied.

He gathers to himself every nation and gathers up for himself all of the peoples.

translationWords:

- puffed up
- righteous, righteousness
- faith
- wine, wineskin, new wine
- betray, betrayer
- death, die, dead
- nation
- people group, peoples, the people, a people

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk.
- **Look!** - The word “Look!” here adds emphasis to what follows.
- **The one whose desires are not right within him ... the arrogant young man ... he will not abide, but enlarges his desire ... He gathers to himself ... gathers up for himself** - Yahweh speaks of the Chaldeans as though they are one person.
- **He gathers to himself every nation and gathers up for himself all of the peoples** - This is saying the same thing in two different ways. “He collects all the people from every nation” (See: [Parallelism](#)) “He” refers to the Chaldeans as though they are one person.
- **gathers** - “collects”
- **every ... all** - a very large number (See: [Hyperbole](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 2:6-8**UDB:**

⁶ But soon all those whom they have captured will ridicule the soldiers from Babylonia!

They will make fun of them, saying,

'Terrible things will happen to you who have stolen things from other countries!

You got many things by forcing people to give them to you.

But you certainly will not keep those things for long!

⁷ Suddenly those whom you forced to be unjustly indebted to you will rise up

and cause you to tremble,

and they will take away all the things that you have stolen from them.

⁸ You stole things from the people of many nations.

You murdered people of many people groups,

and you destroyed their land and their cities.

So those who are still alive will steal valuable things from you.

ULB:

⁶ Will not all these create a saying to ridicule him and a taunting song about him, saying,

'Woe to the one increasing what is not his! For how long will you increase the weight of the pledges you have taken?'

⁷ Will the ones biting at you not rise up suddenly, and the ones terrifying you awaken?

You will become a victim for them.

⁸ Because you have plundered many peoples, all the remnant of the peoples will plunder you.

For you have shed human blood and acted with violence against the land, the cities, and all who live in them.

translationWords:

- Parables
- proverb
- pledge
- gnash teeth, grind teeth
- raise, rise, risen, arise, arose
- nation
- remnant
- people group, peoples, the people, a people
- blood

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk. He refers to the Chaldeans as though they are one person.
- **For how long will you increase the weight of the pledges you have taken?** - “At some time you will no longer be able to take pledges from people.” This can mean 1) the Chaldeans are like robbers who are carrying around pledges they have forced other people to sign or 2) Yahweh is keeping an account of what the Chaldeans have stolen and will someday require them to pay it back. (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Metaphor](#))
- **pledges** - promise notes given for a debt that is owed, often written on clay
- **Will the ones biting at you not rise up suddenly, and the ones terrifying you awaken** - This question was asked in order to make the Chaldeans think about the answer. “The ones who are angry at you will come against you, the ones you are afraid of will begin to attack” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))
- **the ones biting at you** - This is an idiom meaning those who have debts that they must repay. However, some modern versions interpret this phrase to mean creditors, not debtors. (See: [Idiom](#))
- **the ones terrifying you** - This refers to the same debtors. They will terrify the Chaldeans by attacking them in revenge for the unjust debts that they were forced to have.
- **rise up** - “become more numerous” or “become more powerful”
- **plundered** - stolen or taken by force.

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 2:9-11**UDB:**

⁹ Terrible things will happen to you people of Babylonia who build big houses

with money that you got by forcing others to give it to you.

You are proud, and you think that your houses will be safe

because you have built them in places where you can easily defend them.

¹⁰ But because you have destroyed others,

you have caused your family

and yourselves shame!

¹¹ The stones in the walls of your houses cry out to accuse you,

and the beams in your ceilings also say the same things!

ULB:

⁹ 'Woe to the one who carves out evil gains for his house,

so he can set his nest on high to keep himself safe from the hand of evil.'

¹⁰ You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many people, and have sinned against yourself.

¹¹ For the stones will cry out from the wall, and the rafters of timber will answer them,

translationWords:

- woe
- evil, wicked, wickedness
- house
- hand, right hand, to hand over
- shame, shameful, ashamed
- people group, peoples, the people, a people
- sin, sinful, sinner, sinning
- stone, stoning

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk. He refers to the Chaldeans as though they are one person.
- **who carves out evil gains for his house** - “who works to get dishonest profits for his family”
- **set his nest on high** - “builds his house far from trouble”
- **the hand of evil** - AT: “the hand of evil,” treating “evil” as a person or “evil people” (See: [Personification](#) and [Synecdoche](#)).
- **You have devised shame for your house by cutting off many people** - “Because you cut off many people, your family will be suffer shame”
- **You** - singular (See: [Forms of You](#))
- **cutting off** - destroying (See: [Idiom](#))
- **have sinned against yourself.** - “hurt yourself”
- **stones ... rafters of timber** - The “stones” and “rafters of timber” represent the people hurt in the building of the house, who in turn represent the people destroyed by the Chaldeans. (See: [Personification](#) and [Idiom](#) and [Synecdoche](#))
- **cry out** - make accusations to God against the house builder
- **answer them** - agree with the accusations

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 2:12-14**UDB:**

¹² Terrible things will happen to you people of Babylonia who kill people in order to build cities, cities that you build by using money that you have gotten by committing crimes.

¹³ But Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has declared that everything that is built by people who do things like that will be destroyed by fire; they will have worked hard uselessly.

¹⁴ But in contrast, like the oceans are filled with water, the earth will be filled with people who know that Yahweh is very great!

ULB:

¹² 'Woe to the one who builds a city with blood, and who establishes a town in iniquity.'

¹³ Is it not from Yahweh of hosts that peoples labor for fire and all the other nations weary themselves for nothing?

¹⁴ Yet the land will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea.

translationWords:

- woe
- blood
- iniquity
- Yahweh of hosts, God of hosts, host
- labor, laborer
- fire
- nation
- know, knowledge, make known
- glory, glorious
- Yahweh
- water, waters

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk. He refers to the Chaldeans as though they are one person.
- **Woe to the one who builds a city with blood, and who establishes a town in iniquity** - These two phrases are saying the same thing in different ways. Alternate translation: “A warning to the Chaldeans who built their cities with what they have stolen from the people they have killed” (See: [Parallelism](#))
- **with blood** - by killing people (See: [Metonymy](#)). Alternate translation: “the one who kills people and steals their goods in order to build a city.” (See [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))
- **and who establishes a town in iniquity** - “The one who starts a town through evil behavior.” The Chaldeans built their cities using goods stolen from the people they killed. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))
- **Is it not from Yahweh of hosts that peoples labor for fire and all the other nations weary themselves for nothing?** - God has caused the destruction of what the people built. It is said in two different ways in order to make the meaning more clear. Alternate translation: “Yahweh is the one who causes what people work hard to build to be destroyed by fire and result in nothing.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#) and [Parallelism](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 2:15-16**UDB:**

¹⁵ Terrible things will happen to you people of Babylonia,

who cause people who live in nearby countries to become drunk.

You force them to drink a lot of drugged wine

until they are drunk and then they walk around naked

because you are happy when you see that.

¹⁶ But you are the ones who soon will be disgraced instead of being honored.

It will be as though you are forced to drink a lot of wine until you will also stagger around, drunk.

You will drink the wine that symbolizes that Yahweh will punish you,

and he will cause others to dishonor you instead of honoring you.

ULB:

¹⁵ 'Woe to the one making his neighbor drink, you who add your poison until you make them drunk

so you can look on their nakedness.'

¹⁶ You will be gorged with shame rather than glory. Drink of it also, and reveal your own nakedness.

The cup of Yahweh's right hand will come in its turn to you, and disgrace will cover your honor.

translationWords:

- neighbor
- shame, shameful, ashamed
- honor, to honor

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Yahweh continues to answer Habakkuk. He refers to the Chaldeans as though they are one person.
- **add your poison** - "add your poison to their drink" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

- **You will be gorged with shame rather than glory** - “As you sought great glory, God will bring on you great shame” (See: [Idiom](#))
- **You** - singular (See: [Forms of You](#))
- **Drink of it** - “Drink from the poisoned cup”
- **The cup of Yahweh’s right hand will come in its turn to you** - “As Yahweh has punished other nations with all his might, so he will punish you with all his might” (See: [Idiom](#))
- **The cup** - “The poisoned wine” (See: [Metonymy](#))
- **right hand** - the stronger hand
- **will come in its turn to you** - “will come to you as it did to others”
- **disgrace will cover your honor** - “everyone will see your disgrace and no one will see your honor” (See: [Idiom](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 2:17**UDB:**

¹⁷ You did violent things to the people in Lebanon,
and you killed the wild animals there,
but you will be punished severely for doing that.
You have killed many people
and you have destroyed their lands and their cities.

ULB:

¹⁷ The violence done to Lebanon will overwhelm you and the destruction of animals will terrify you.
For you have shed human blood and you have acted with violence against the land, the cities, and all who live in them.

translationWords:

- [Lebanon](#)
- [blood](#)

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - God continues to speak of how he will punish the Chaldeans
- **the destruction of animals will terrify you** - “the deaths of animals will make you afraid”

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 2:18-20**UDB:**

¹⁸ You people of Babylonia need to know that your idols are completely useless,
because it is people who made them.

Statues that have been carved or made in a mold deceive you.

Those who trust in idols
are trusting in things that they themselves created,
things that cannot speak!

¹⁹ Terrible things will happen to you who say to lifeless idols that are made of wood,

‘Wake up!’

Stone idols certainly cannot tell you what you should do;

they look nice because they are covered with silver and gold,
but they are not alive.

²⁰ But Yahweh is in his holy temple;

everyone on the earth should be silent in his presence!”

ULB:

¹⁸ What does the carved figure profit you? For the one who has carved it, or who casts a figure from molten metal, is a teacher of lies;

for he trusts his own handiwork when he makes these mute gods.

¹⁹ ‘Woe to the one saying to the wood, Wake up! Or to the silent stone, Arise!’
Do these things teach?

See, it is overlaid with gold and silver, but there is no breath at all within it.

²⁰ But Yahweh is in his holy temple! Be silent before him, all the land.”

translationWords:

- image, carved image, carved figure, cast metal figure
- profit, profitable
- teacher, Teacher
- false god, foreign god, god, goddess
- gold

- silver
- Yahweh
- holy, holiness
- temple

translationNotes:

- **you** - the word “you” refers to the Chaldeans.
- **casts a figure** - This is the process of forming a statue by pouring liquid metal into something carved in the form that is wanted. The metal will take the form of the cast and harden as a figure or statue.
- **molten** - This is the word for metal when it is in its liquid form.
- **a teacher of lies** - This phrase refers to the one who carved or cast the figure. By making a false god, he is teaching a lie.

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 02 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers or songs. The ULB and many other English translations indent the lines of 2:1-20, which is a prayer by Habakkuk.

Special concepts in this chapter

Poetry

Although this is a prayer, it is in the form of poetry. Habakkuk uses startling imagery to show his fear of Yahweh (See: [Poetry](#) and [fear, afraid, fear of Yahweh](#))

Links:

- [Habakkuk 03:01 Notes](#)

Habakkuk 3:1-2**UDB:**

¹ A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet.

² Yahweh, I have heard about you;

and I revere you because of all the amazing things that you have done.

In our time, do again some of those things that you did long ago!

Even when you are angry with us,

act mercifully toward us!

ULB:

3 ¹ The prayer of Habakkuk the prophet:[1]The Hebrew text adds the expression *on shigionoth* , which may refer to musical directions for singers.

² Yahweh, I have heard your report, and I am afraid.

Yahweh, revive your work in the midst of these times; in the midst of these times make it known;

remember to have compassion in your wrath.

translationWords:

- pray, prayer
- prophet, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess
- Yahweh
- report
- compassion, compassionate
- wrath, fury

translationNotes:

- **I have heard your report** - This can mean 1) “I have heard people talk about what you have done” or 2) “I heard what you just said.”
- **revive your work** - “bring your work back to life” or “do again what you did before”
- **make it known** - ” make your work known”

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:3**UDB:**

³ In a vision, I saw God, the Holy One, coming from the region of Teman in Edom;

I also saw him coming from the Paran hills in the region of Sinai.

His glory filled the sky,

and the earth was full of people who were praising him.

ULB:

³ God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount Paran. *Selah*.

His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise.

translationWords:

- [God](#)
- [Holy One](#)
- [glory, glorious](#)
- [heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly](#)
- [praise](#)

translationNotes:**Links:**

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:4-5**UDB:**

⁴ His glory was like the sunrise;

rays flashed from his hands

where he keeps his power.

⁵ He sent plagues in front of him,

and other plagues came behind him.

ULB:

⁴ The two rays of his hand were as bright as lightning,

where his strength was hidden.

⁵ Deadly disease went before him, and plague went after his feet.

translationWords:

- [power, powers](#)
- [face](#)
- [plague](#)

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.
- **rays** - These are the lines of light that come from light sources such as the sun.
- **his ... his ... his** - Yahweh's

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:6**UDB:**

⁶ When he stopped, the earth shook.

When he looked at the nations,
all the people trembled.

The hills and mountains that have existed since the beginning of
time collapsed and crumbled.

He is the only one who exists eternally!

ULB:

⁶ He stood and measured the earth; he looked and shook the nations.

Even the eternal mountains were shattered, and the everlasting hills bowed
down.

His path is everlasting.

translationWords:

- [nation](#)
- [everlasting, eternal, eternity](#)

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.
- **measured the earth** - This can mean 1) he surveyed it the way a conqueror would before assigning portions to his governors or 2) he made it shake.
- **eternal mountains ... everlasting hills** - “mountains that have existed since the beginning of time ... hills that will exist until the end of time.” If your language has no different words for “hills” and “mountains” or for “eternal” and “everlasting,” you can combine them as the ULB did.
- **bowed down** - in worship to God. “were flattened to the ground” (See: [Personification](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:7-8**UDB:**

⁷ In the vision I saw the people who live in tents in the region of Cushan were very afraid,
and the people in the region of Midian were trembling.

⁸ Yahweh, was it because you were angry with the rivers and streams that you struck them?

Did the seas cause you to be furious,
with the result that you rode through them with horses that were pulling
chariots
that you used to bring victory to your cause?

ULB:

⁷ I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction, and the fabric of the tents in the land
of Midian trembling.

⁸ Was Yahweh angry at the rivers? Was your wrath against the rivers,
or your fury against the sea,
when you rode upon your horses and your victorious chariots?

translationWords:

- tent
- afflict, affliction
- Midian, Midianites
- Yahweh
- wrath, fury
- chariot
- salvation

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.
- **the tents of Cushan in affliction, and the fabric of the tents ... of Midian trembling** - The people of Midian and Cushan who tremble or shake with fear are like tent cloth that moves when the wind blows. (See: **Metaphor**)

- **Cushan** - This can be 1) the name of a people group otherwise unknown or 2) the same as Cush. (See: [How to Translate Names](#) and [Translate Unknowns](#))
- **Was Yahweh angry at the rivers? Was your wrath against the rivers, or your fury against the sea ... victorious chariots?** - If your language does not have separate words for “angry” and “wrath” and “fury,” you can combine the lines: “Was Yahweh angry with the rivers? Was your fury against the sea ... victorious chariots?” AT: “Yahweh was not angry with the rivers. Your wrath was not against the rivers, nor was your fury against the sea ... victorious chariots.” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))
- **you rode upon your horses and your victorious chariots** - As a soldier would ride a horse or a chariot into battle, Yahweh came to save the people of Israel.

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:9-10**UDB:**

⁹ It was as though you uncovered your bow and prepared to shoot it,
and had grasped arrows to put to your bow.

Then you split open the earth,
and streams burst out.

¹⁰ It is as though the mountains saw you doing that,
and they trembled in pain.

The water rushed by in floods;
it was as though the deep ocean roared and caused its waves to
rise up high.

ULB:

⁹ You have brought out your bow without a cover; you put arrows to your
bow! *Selah*.

You divided the earth with rivers.

¹⁰ The mountains saw you and twisted in pain.

Downpours of water passed over them; the deep sea raised a shout.

It lifted up its waves.

translationWords:

Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.

- **bow and arrow**

translationNotes:

- **Selah** - This term means “stop and reflect” or “lift up, exalt.” (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))
- **The mountains saw you and twisted in pain** - As God divided the earth, the mountains moved, as if they could see God’s actions and react by turning away from where the earth was divided. (See: [Personification](#))
- **the deep sea raised a shout!** - the sound of large waves in the sea
- **It lifted up its waves!** - water levels rise

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:11-12

UDB:

¹¹ The sun and moon stopped moving in the sky,
while your lightning flashed past like a swift arrow,
and your glittering spear flashed.

¹² Being very angry, you walked across the earth
and trampled the armies of many nations!

ULB:

¹¹ The sun and moon stood still above in their high places
at the light of your arrows and they flew, at the brightness of the lightning
flash of your spear.

¹² You have marched over the earth with indignation. In wrath you have
threshed the nations.

translationWords:

- [bow and arrow](#)
- [spear](#)
- [wrath, fury](#)
- [nation](#)

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk continues to describe his vision of Yahweh.
- **at the light of your arrows** - because the light of Yahweh's arrows was so bright
- **You have marched over the earth with indignation. In wrath you have threshed the nations.** - These two sentences share similar meanings. Together they refer to Yahweh punishing the nations for their wickedness. (See: [Parallelism](#))
- **indignation** - anger at something that is wrong

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:13**UDB:**

¹³ But you also went to rescue your people,
and to save the one whom you have chosen.
You crushed the leader of those wicked people
and cut off his head so there was only the stump of a neck!

ULB:

¹³ You went out for the salvation of your people, for the salvation of your anointed one.
You shatter the head of the house of the wicked to expose the base of the neck. *Selah.*

translationWords:

- [salvation](#)
- [anoint, anointed](#)
- [house](#)
- [evil, wicked, wickedness](#)

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk describes Yahweh.
- **your anointed one** - This can also mean “your Messiah,” but the reference is clearly to “your people,” so use a common noun here, not as a proper name.
- **You shatter the head of the house of the wicked** - “You completely destroy the leader of the wicked people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:14-15**UDB:**

¹⁴ With his own spear you destroyed the leader of those soldiers who rushed like a whirlwind to attack and scatter us,

thinking that they could conquer us as easily as they defeat the weak people who hide from them.

¹⁵ You walked through the sea with your horses to destroy our enemies, and caused the waves to surge.

ULB:

¹⁴ You have pierced the head of his warriors with his own arrows since they came like a storm to scatter us,

their gloating was like one who devours the poor in a hiding place.

¹⁵ You have traveled over the sea with your horses, and heaped up the great waters.

translationWords:

- bow and arrow
- devour
- horse

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk describes Yahweh destroying the Chaldeans.
- **they came like a storm** - The power and quickness of the Chaldeans as they attacked the people of Israel is compared to the coming of a sudden storm. (See: **Simile**)
- **gloating** - “bragging”
- **devours the poor in a hiding place** - finds poor people who are hiding from them and kills them and takes all their goods (See: **Metaphor**)
- **devours** - eats everything quickly

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:16**UDB:**

¹⁶ When I saw that vision,

my heart pounded
and my lips quivered
because I became afraid.

My legs became weak
and I shook, because I was terrified.

But I will wait quietly for the people of Babylonia, those who invaded our country, to experience disasters!

ULB:

¹⁶ I heard, and my inner parts trembled! My lips quivered at the sound.

Decay comes into my bones, and under myself I tremble

as I wait quietly for the day of distress to come upon the people who invade us.

translationWords:**translationNotes:**

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk describes his fear when he thinks about how Yahweh would punish the Chaldeans.
- **my inner parts trembled! My lips quivered ... Decay comes into my bones ... under myself I tremble** - These refer to fear caused by thinking about future events. Habakkuk uses several parts of his body to express that every part of him is afraid. (See: [Synecdoche](#) and [Parallelism](#))
- **Decay** - rot

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:17**UDB:**

¹⁷ Therefore,

even if there are no blossoms on the fig trees,
and there are no grapes on the grapevines,
and even if there are no olives growing on the olive trees,
and there are no crops in the fields,
and even if the flocks of sheep and goats die in the fields,
and there are no cattle in the stalls, this is what I will do.

ULB:

¹⁷ Though the fig tree does not bud and there is no produce from the vines;
and though the produce of the olive tree disappoints and the fields yield no food;
and though the flock is cut off from the fold and there is no cattle in the stalls, this is what I will do.

translationWords:

- [fig](#)
- [vine](#)
- [olive](#)
- [cut off](#)

translationNotes:

- **fig tree ... vines ... olive tree ... fields ... flock ... cattle** - there is no food. These are almost all the sources of food to be found in the land of Israel. (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Translate Unknowns](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

Habakkuk 3:18-19**UDB:**

¹⁸ I will rejoice because of Yahweh!

I will be joyful because my God is the one who saves me!

¹⁹ Yahweh the Lord is the one who gives me strength,
and he enables me to climb safely like a deer does.,
he makes me walk on my high hills.

(This message is for the choir director:

When this prayer is sung, it is to be accompanied by people playing
stringed instruments.)

ULB:

¹⁸ Still, I will rejoice in Yahweh. I will be joyful because of the God of my
salvation.

¹⁹ The Lord Yahweh is my strength
and he makes my feet like the deer's.
He makes me go forward on my high places.

—To the music director, on my stringed instruments.

translationWords:

- rejoice
- Yahweh
- God
- salvation
- Lord
- high places

translationNotes:

- **General Information:** - Habakkuk praises Yahweh.
- **rejoice ... be happy** - Both words mean “be joyful,” but if your language has a special word for rejoicing after winning a battle, use that “exult” here.

- **makes my feet like the deer's; he leads me upon my high places** - Feet like a deer would give Habakkuk the ability to climb steep rocky cliffs. The words “high places” refer to places out of the reach of danger. He is saying God is giving him the ability to find a place of safety. (See: [Simile](#) and [Translate Unknowns](#))

Links:

- [Introduction to Habakkuk](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 General Notes](#)
- [Habakkuk 03 Translation Questions](#)

translationQuestions

Habakkuk 1

Q? What question does Habakkuk ask Yahweh as he begins his pronouncement?

A. Habakkuk asks why Yahweh has not heard or saved him, even though he has cried for help. [1:2]

Q? What is Habakkuk being made to see?

A. Habakkuk is being made to see iniquity, wrongdoing, destruction, violence, strife, and contention. [1:3]

Q? What kind of justice is going forth?

A. False justice is going forth. [1:4]

Q? What does Yahweh tell Habakkuk that he will see in his days?

A. Yahweh says that Habakkuk will see the Chaldeans march through the land to seize dwellings. [1:6]

Q? What kind of people are the Chaldeans?

A. The Chaldeans are terrifying and fearsome. [1:7]

Q? What do the Chaldeans gather with violence?

A. The Chaldeans gather captives like sand with violence. [1:9]

Q? What is the Chaldeans' attitude toward other kings and rulers?

A. The Chaldeans mock other kings and rulers. [1:10]

Q? Who has ordained that the Chaldeans come and bring judgment?

A. Yahweh has ordained that the Chaldeans come and bring judgment. [1:12]

Q? What titles does Habakkuk use for Yahweh?

A. Habakkuk uses the titles “my God,” “Holy One,” and “Rock” for Yahweh. [1:12]

Q? What question or complaint does Habakkuk make to Yahweh?

A. Habakkuk asks Yahweh why he is silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous. [1:13]

Q? About what are those who are slaughtering the nations rejoicing?

A. They are rejoicing as they gather and drag men away. [1:15]

Q? What occupation does Habakkuk say is like the gathering of men for judgment?

A. Habakkuk says the gathering of men for judgment is like gathering in fishnets. [1:15]

Q? What emotion do those who are slaughtering the nations lack?

A. Those slaughtering the nations lack compassion. [1:17]

Habakkuk 2

Q? For what was Habakkuk watching carefully?

A. Habakkuk was watching carefully to see what Yahweh would say to him. [2:1]

Q? What did Yahweh tell Habakkuk to do with the vision?

A. Yahweh told Habakkuk to record the vision upon tablets. [2:2]

Q? What assurance did Yahweh give Habakkuk about this vision concerning the future?

A. Yahweh assured Habakkuk that this vision would speak even though it delays. [2:3]

Q? How did Yahweh say the righteous will live?

A. Yahweh said the righteous will live by his faith. [2:4]

Q? What three things does Yahweh say are never satisfied?

A. Yahweh says the arrogant young man's desire, the grave, and death are never satisfied. [2:5]

Q? What does Yahweh say will happen to the arrogant young man who plundered many nations?

A. Yahweh says the arrogant young man will be plundered by the remnant of the peoples. [2:8]

Q? Against whom does Yahweh declare a woe first?

A. Yahweh declares a woe against the one who carves out evil gains for his house. [2:9]

Q? What does Yahweh say will cry out because of the shame and sin?

A. Yahweh says the stones will cry out because of the shame and sin. [2:11]

Q? Against whom does Yahweh declare a woe second?

A. Yahweh declares a woe against the one who builds a city with blood and iniquity. [2:12]

Q? What does Yahweh promise will happen with the land in the future?

A. Yahweh promises that the land will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh. [2:14]

Q? Against whom does Yahweh declare a woe third?

A. Yahweh declares a woe against the one making his neighbor drink poison to look on their nakedness. [2:15]

Q? What will come in its turn to the one making his neighbor drink poison?

A. The cup of Yahweh's right hand will come in its turn to the one making his neighbor drink poison. [2:16]

Q? In what is the maker of a carved figure placing his trust?

A. He is placing his trust in his own handiwork when he makes these mute gods. [2:18]

Q? What must be done before Yahweh, who is in his holy temple?

A. All must be silent before Yahweh in his holy temple. [2:20]

Habakkuk 3

Q? Having heard Yahweh's report, what is Habakkuk's emotional response?

A. Having heard Yahweh's report, Habakkuk is afraid. [3:2]

Q? What does Habakkuk ask Yahweh to remember?

A. Habakkuk asks Yahweh to remember compassion in his wrath. [3:2]

Q? When God came, what went before and after him?

A. When God came, pestilence went before him and plague after him. [3:5]

Q? What did Yahweh do to the nations in his wrath?

A. Yahweh shook the nations. [3:6]

Q? Why did Yahweh go forth in his indignation?

A. Yahweh went forth in his indignation for the salvation of his people and his anointed one. [3:13]

Q? Who does Yahweh shatter in his indignation?

A. Yahweh shatters the head of the house of the wicked. [3:13]

Q? What did the wicked warriors do when they came to scatter Yahweh's people?

A. The warriors gloated over Yahweh's people. [3:14]

Q? For what is Habakkuk waiting quietly?

A. Habakkuk is waiting quietly for the day of distress to come upon the people who invaded Yahweh's people. [3:16]

Q? What hardships are the people of Yahweh suffering?

A. The fig and olive trees are not producing, the fields yield no food, and there is no livestock. [3:17]

Q? Despite the hardship, what will Habakkuk do?

A. Despite the hardship, Habakkuk will exult in Yahweh. [3:18]

Q? To where does Yahweh lead Habakkuk?

A. Yahweh leads Habakkuk to high places. [3:19]

translationWords

afflict, affliction

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.

- God afflicted his people with sickness or other hardships in order to cause 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 be suffering some kind of distress, such as a disease, persecution, or emotional grief.

Translation Suggestions:

- To afflict someone could be translated as “cause someone to experience troubles” or “cause someone to suffer” or “cause suffering to come.”
- In certain contexts “afflict” could be translated as “happen to” or “come to” or “bring suffering.”
- 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.” physical
- The phrase “afflicted with” could also be translated as, “suffering from” or “sick with.”

(See: [leprosy](#), [leper](#), [leprous](#), [plague](#), [suffer](#), [suffering](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

anoint, anointed

Definition:

The term “anoint” means to rub or pour oil on a person or object. Sometimes the oil was mixed with spices, giving it a sweet, perfumed smell. The term is also used figuratively to refer to the Holy Spirit choosing and empowering someone.

- In the Old Testament, priests, kings, and prophets were anointed with oil to set them apart for special service to God.
- Objects such as altars or the tabernacle, were also anointed with oil to show that they were to be used to worship and glorify God.
- In the New Testament, sick people were anointed with oil for their healing.
- The New Testament records two times that Jesus was anointed with perfumed oil by a woman, as an act of worship. One time Jesus commented that in doing this she was preparing him for his future burial.
- After Jesus died, his friends prepared his body for burial by anointing it with oils and spices.
- The titles “Messiah” (Hebrew) and “Christ” (Greek) mean “the Anointed (One).”
- Jesus the Messiah is the one who was chosen and anointed as a Prophet, High Priest, and King.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “anoint” could be translated as “pour oil on” or “put oil on” or “consecrate by pouring perfumed oil on.”
- To “be anointed” could be translated as “be consecrated with oil.” or “be appointed” or “be consecrated.”
- In some contexts the term “anoint” could be translated as “appoint.”
- A phrase like “the anointed priest,” could be translated as “the priest who was consecrated with oil” or “the priest who was set apart by the pouring on of oil.”

(See also: [Christ](#), [Messiah](#), [consecrate](#), [high priest](#), [King of the Jews](#), [priest](#), [priesthood](#), [prophet](#), [prophecy](#), [prophecy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

believe, believe in, belief

Definition:

The terms “believe” and “believe in” are closely related, but have slightly different meanings:

1. believe

- To believe something is to accept or trust that it is true.
- To believe someone is to acknowledge that what that person has said is true.

2. believe in

- To “believe in” someone means to “trust in” that person. It means to trust that the person is who he says he is, that he always speaks the truth, and that he will do what he has promised to do.
- When a person truly believes in something, he will act in such a way that shows that belief.
- The phrase “have faith in” usually has the same meaning as “believe in.”
- To “believe in Jesus” means to believe that he is the Son of God, that he is God himself who also became human and who died as a sacrifice to pay for our sins. It means to trust him as Savior and live in a way that honors him.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “believe” could be translated as to “know to be true” or “know to be right.”
- To “believe in” could be translated as, “trust completely” or “trust and obey” or “completely rely on and follow.”

(See also: [faith](#), [believer](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- [03-04] Noah warned the people about the coming flood and told them to turn to God, but they did not **believe** him.
- [04-08] Abram **believed** God’s promise. God declared that Abram was righteous because he **believed** God’s promise.
- [11-02] God provided a way to save the firstborn of anyone who **believed in** him.
- [11-06] But the Egyptians did not **believe** God or obey his commands.
- [37-05] Jesus replied, “I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever **believes in** me will live, even though he dies. Everyone who **believes in** me will never die. Do you **believe** this?”

betray, betrayer

Definition:

The term “betray” means to act in a way that deceives and harms someone. A “betrayer” is a person who betrays a friend who was trusting him.

- Judas was “the betrayer” because he told the Jewish leaders how to capture Jesus.
- The betrayal by Judas was especially evil because he was an apostle of Jesus who received money in exchange for giving the Jewish leaders information that would result in Jesus’ unjust death.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “betray” could be translated as “deceive and cause harm to” or “turn over to the enemy” or “treat treacherously.”
- The term “betrayer” could be translated as “person who betrays” or “double dealer” or “traitor.”

(See also: [Judas Iscariot](#), [Jewish leaders](#), [religious leaders](#), [apostle](#), [the twelve](#), [the eleven](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[21-11]** Other prophets foretold that those who killed the Messiah would gamble for his clothes and he would be **betrayed** by a friend. The prophet Zechariah foretold that the friend would be paid thirty silver coins as payment for **betraying** the Messiah.
- **[38-02]** 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.
- **[38-03]** The Jewish leaders, led by the high priest, paid Judas thirty silver coins to **betray** Jesus.
- **[38-06]** Then Jesus said to the disciples, “One of you will **betray** me.” ... Jesus said, “The person to whom I give this piece of bread is the **betrayer**.”
- **[38-13]** When he returned the third time, Jesus said, “Wake up! My **betrayer** is here.”
- **[38-14]** Then Jesus said, “Judas, do you **betray** me with a kiss?”
- **[39-08]** Meanwhile, Judas, the **betrayer**, saw that the Jewish leaders had condemned Jesus to die. He became full of sorrow and went away and killed himself.

blood

Definition:

The term “blood” refers to the red liquid that comes out of a person’s skin when there is an injury or wound. Blood brings life-giving nutrients to a person’s entire body.

- Blood symbolizes life and when it is shed or poured out, it symbolizes the loss of life, or death.
- When people made sacrifices to God, they killed an animal and poured its blood on the altar. This symbolized the sacrifice of the animal’s life to pay for people’s sins.
- Through his death on the cross, Jesus’ blood symbolically cleanses people from their sins and pays for the punishment they deserve for those sins.
- The expression “flesh and blood” refers to human beings.
- The expression “own flesh and blood” refers to people who are biologically related.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term should be translated with the term that is used for blood in the target language
- The expression “flesh and blood” could be translated as “people” or “human beings.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “my own flesh and blood” could be translated as “my own family” or “my own relatives” or “my own people.”
- If there is an expression in the target language that is used with this meaning, that expression could be used to translate “flesh and blood.”

(See: [flesh](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[08-03]** Before Joseph’s brothers returned home, they tore Joseph’s robe and dipped it in goat’s **blood**.
- **[10-03]** God turned the Nile River into **blood**, but Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go.
- **[11-05]** All the houses of the Israelites had **blood** around the doors, so God passed over those houses and everyone inside was safe. They were saved because of the lamb’s **blood**.
- **[13-09]** The **blood** of the animal that was sacrificed covered the person’s sin and made that person clean in God’s sight.
- **[38-05]** 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.
- **[48-10]** When anyone believes in Jesus, the **blood** of Jesus takes away that person’s sin, and God’s punishment passes over him.

bow and arrow**Definition:**

This is a type of weapon that consists of shooting arrows from a stringed bow. In Bible times it was used for fighting against enemies and for killing animals for food.

- The bow is made out of wood, bone, metal, or other hard material, such as a deer's antler. It has a curved shape and is strung tightly with a string, cord, or vine.
- An arrow is a thin shaft with a sharp, pointed head on one end. In ancient times, the arrows could be made of a variety of materials such as wood, bone, stone, or metal.
- Bows and arrows are commonly used by hunters and warriors.
- The term "arrow" is also sometimes used figuratively in the Bible to refer to enemy attacks or divine judgment.

Bible References:

Waiting

captive, captivity

Definition:

The terms “captive” and “captivity” refer to capturing people and forcing them to live somewhere they do not want to live, such as in a foreign country.

- The Israelites from the kingdom of Judah were held captive in the kingdom of Babylonia for 70 years.
- Captives are often required to work for the people or nation that captured them.
- Daniel and Nehemiah were Israelite captives who worked for the Babylonian king.
- The expression “to take captive” is another way of talking about capturing someone.
- The expression, “carry you away captive” could also be translated as, “force you to live as captives” or “take you away to another country as prisoners.”
- In a figurative sense, the apostle Paul tells Christians to “take captive” every thought and make it obedient to Christ.
- He also talks about how a person can be “taken captive” by sin, which means he is “controlled by” sin.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, to be “held captive” could also be translated by, “not allowed to be free” or “kept in prison” or “forced to live in a foreign country.”
- The expression, “led captive” or “taken captive” could be translated as, “captured” or “imprisoned” or “forced to go to a foreign land.”
- The term “captives” could also be translated as, “people who were captured” or “enslaved people.”
- Depending on the context, “captivity” could also be translated as, “imprisonment” or “exile” or “forced stay in a foreign country.”

(See also: [Babylon](#), [Babylonian](#), [exile](#), [the Exile](#), [prison](#), [prisoner](#), [imprison](#), [seize](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Chaldea, Chaldean

Facts:

Chaldea was a region in the southern part of Mesopotamia or Babylonia. The people who lived in this region were called Chaldeans.

- The city of Ur, where Abraham was from, was located in Chaldea. It is often referred to as “Ur of the Chaldeans.”
- King Nebuchadnezzar was one of several Chaldeans who became kings over Babylonia.
- After many years, around 600 BC, the term “Chaldean” came to mean “Babylonian.”
- In the book of Daniel, the term “Chaldean” also refers to a special class of men who were highly educated and studied the stars.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [Abraham](#), [Babylon](#), [Shinar](#), [Ur](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

chariot

Definition:

In ancient times, chariots were lightweight, two-wheeled carts that were pulled by horses.

- People would sit or stand in chariots, using them for war or travel.
- In war, an army that had chariots had a great advantage of speed and mobility over an army that did not have chariots.
- The ancient Egyptians and Romans were well-known for their use of horses and chariots.

(See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

(See: [Egypt](#), [Egyptian](#), [Rome](#), [Roman](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[12-10]** So they followed the Israelites onto the path through the sea, but God caused the Egyptians to panic and caused their **chariots** to get stuck.
- Rome, Romaning in his **chariot**.

compassion, compassionate

Definition:

The term “compassion” refers to a feeling of concern for people, especially for those who are suffering. A “compassionate” person cares about other people and helps them.

- The word “compassion” usually includes caring about people in need, as well as taking action to help them.
- The Bible says that God is compassionate, that is, he is full of love and mercy.
- In Paul’s letter to the Colossians, he tells them to “clothe themselves with compassion.” He is instructing them to care about people and to actively help others who are in need.

Translation Suggestions:

- The literal meaning of “compassion” is “bowels of mercy.” This is an expression that means “mercy” or “pity.” Other languages may have their own expression that means this.
- Ways of translating “compassion” could include, “a deep caring for” or “helpful mercy.”
- The term “compassionate” could also be translated as, “caring and helpful” or “deeply loving and merciful.”

Bible References:

Waiting

cut off**Definition:**

The expression “be cut off” is an expression that means to be excluded, banished or isolated from the main group. It can also refer to being killed as an act of divine judgment for sin.

- In the Old Testament, disobeying God’s commands resulted in being cut off, or separated, from God’s people and from his presence.
- God also said he would “cut off” or destroy the non-Israelite nations, because they did not worship or obey him and were enemies of Israel.
- The expression “cut off” is also used to refer to God causing a river to stop flowing.

Translation Suggestions:

- The expression “be cut off” could be translated as “be banished” or “be sent away” or “be separated from” or “be killed” or “be destroyed.”
- Depending on the context, “to cut off” could be translated as, “to destroy” or “to send away” or “to separate from” or “to destroy.”
- In the context of flowing waters being cut off, this could be translated as “were stopped” or “were caused to stop flowing” or “were divided.”
- The literal meaning of cutting something with a knife should be distinguished from the figurative uses of this term.

Bible References:

Waiting

death, die, dead

Definition:

This term is used to refer to both physical and spiritual death. Physically, it refers to when the physical body of a person stops living. Spiritually, it refers to sinners being separated from a holy God because of their sin.

1. Physical death

- To “die” means to stop living. Death is the end of physical life.
- A person’s spirit leaves his body when he dies.
- When Adam and Eve sinned, physical death came into the world.
- The expression “put to death” refers to killing or murdering someone, especially when a king or other ruler gives an order for someone to be killed.

2. Spiritual death

- Spiritual death is the separation of a person from God.
- Adam died spiritually when he disobeyed God. His relationship with God was broken. He became ashamed and tried to hide from God.
- Every descendant of Adam is a sinner, and is spiritually dead. God makes us spiritually alive again when we have faith in Jesus Christ.

Translation Suggestions:

- To translate this term, it is best to use the everyday, natural word or expression that refers to death in the target language.
- In some languages, “to die” may be expressed as “to not live.” The term “dead” may be translated as “not alive” or “not having any life” or “not living.”
- Many languages use figurative expressions to describe death, such as “to pass away” in English. However in the Bible it is best to use the most direct term for death that is used in everyday language.
- In the Bible, physical life and death are often compared to spiritual life and death. It is important in a translation to use the same word or phrase for both physical death and spiritual death.
- In some languages it may be more clear to say “spiritual death” when the context requires that meaning. Some translators may also feel it is best to say “physical death” in contexts where it is being contrasted to spiritual death.
- The expression, “the dead” is a nominal adjective that refers to people who have died. Some languages will translate this as, “dead people” or “people who have died.” (See: nominal adjective)
- The expression, “put to death” could also be translated as, “kill” or “murder” or “execute.”

(See also: [believe](#), [believe in](#), [belief](#), [faith](#), [life](#), [live](#), [living](#), [alive](#), [spirit](#), [spiritual](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[01-11]** God told Adam that he could eat from any tree in the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If he ate from this tree, he would **die**.
- **[02-11]** "Then you will **die**, and your body will return to dirt."
- **[07-10]** Then Isaac **died**, and Jacob and Esau buried him.
- **[37-05]** "Jesus replied, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he **dies**. Everyone who believes in me will never **die**."
- **[40-08]** Through his **death**, Jesus opened a way for people to come to God.
- **[43-07]** "Although Jesus **died**, God raised him from the dead."
- **[48-02]** Because they sinned, everyone on earth gets sick and everyone **dies**.
- **[50-17]** He (Jesus) will wipe away every tear and there will be no more suffering, sadness, crying, evil, pain, or **death**.
-

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: other)

Bible References:

Waiting

eagle

Definition:

An eagle is a very large, powerful bird of prey that eats small animals such as fish, mice, snakes, and chickens.

- The Bible compares the speed and strength of an army to how fast and suddenly an eagle swoops down to catch its prey.
- Isaiah states that those who trust in the Lord will soar as an eagle does. This is figurative language used to describe the freedom and strength that comes from trusting and obeying God.
- In the book of Daniel, King Nebuchadnezzar's hair length was compared to the length of an eagle's feathers, which can be more than 50 centimeters long.

(See: [Daniel](#), [free](#), [freedom](#), [liberty](#), [Nebuchadnezzar](#), [power](#), [powers](#))

(See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

everlasting, eternal, eternity

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 phrase “forever and ever” has the idea of time that never ends and expresses what eternity or eternal life is like.

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](#))

(See also: [forever](#), [life](#), [live](#), [living](#), [alive](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[27-01]** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit **eternal life**?”
- **[28-01]** 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**.”

evil, wicked, wickedness

Definition:

The terms “evil” and “wicked” both refer to anything that is opposed to God’s holy character and will.

- 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 or 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](#), [disobedient](#), [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [good](#), [goodness](#), [righteous](#), demon, evil spirit, unclean spirit)

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[02-04]** “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand good and **evil** like he does.”
- **[03-01]** After a long time, many people were living in the world. They had become very **wicked** and violent.
- **[03-02]** But Noah found favor with God. He was a righteous man living among **wicked** people.
- **[04-02]** God saw that if they all kept working together to do **evil**, they could do many more sinful things.
- **[08-12]** “You tried to do **evil** when you sold me as a slave, but God used the **evil** for good!”
- **[14-02]** They (Canaanites) worshiped false gods and did many **evil** things.
- **[17-01]** 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**.

- [29-08] The king was so angry that he threw the **wicked** servant into prison until he could pay back all of his debt.
- [45-02] 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.

face

Definition:

The word “face” literally refers to the front part of a person’s head. This term also has several figurative meanings.

- The expression “your face” is often a figurative way of saying “you.” Similarly, the expression “my face” often means, “I” or “me.”
- In a physical sense, “to face” someone or something means to look in the direction of that person or thing.
- To “face each other” means to “look directly at each other.”
- Being “face to face” means that two people are seeing each other in person, at a close distance.
- When Jesus “steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,” it means that he very firmly decided to go.
- To “set one’s face against” people or a city means to firmly decide: to no longer support, or to reject that city or person.
- The expression “face of the land” refers to the surface of the earth and often is a general reference to the whole earth. For example, a “famine covering the face of the earth” refers to a widespread famine that affected many people living on earth.
- The figurative expression, “do not hide your face from your people” means “do not reject your people” or “do not desert your people” or “do not stop taking care of your people.”

Translation Suggestions:

- If possible, it is best to keep the expression or use an expression in the project language that has a similar meaning.
- The term “to face” could be translated as “to turn toward” or “to look at directly” or “to look at the face of.”
- The expression “face to face” could be translated as “up close” or “right in front of” or “in the presence of.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “before his face” could be translated as, “ahead of him” or “in front of him” or “before him” or “in his presence.”
- The expression, “set his face toward” could be translated as “began traveling toward” or “firmly made up his mind to go to.”
- The expression, “hide his face from” could be translated as, “turn away from” or “stop helping or protecting” or “reject.”
- To “set his face against” a city or people could be translated as, “look at with anger and condemn” or “refuse to accept” or “decide to reject” or “condemn and reject” or “pass judgment on.”
- The expression, “say it to their face” could be translated as, “say it to them directly” or “say it to them in their presence” or “say it to them in person.”
- The expression, “on the face of the land” could also be translated as, “throughout the land” or “over the whole earth” or “living throughout the earth.”

Bible References:

Waiting

faith

Definition:

In general, the term “faith” refers to a belief, trust or confidence in someone or something.

- To “have faith” in someone is to believe that what he says and does is true and trustworthy.
- To “have faith in Jesus” means to believe all of God’s teachings about Jesus. It especially means that people trust in Jesus and his sacrifice to cleanse them from their sin and to rescue them from the punishment they deserve because of their sin.
- True faith or belief in Jesus will cause a person to produce good spiritual fruits or behaviors because the Holy Spirit is living in him.
- Sometimes “faith” refers generally to all the teachings about Jesus, as in the expression, “the truths of the faith.”
- In contexts such as “keep the faith” or “abandon the faith,” the term “faith” refers to the state or condition of believing all the teachings about Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- In some contexts, “faith” can be translated as “belief” or “conviction” or “confidence” or “trust.”
- For some languages these terms will be translated using forms of the verb “believe.” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))
- The expression, “keep the faith” could be translated by, “keep believing in Jesus” or “continue to believe in Jesus.”
- The sentence, “they must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith” could be translated by, “they must keep believing all the true things about Jesus that they have been taught.”
- The expression, “my true son in the faith” could be translated by something like, “who is like a son to me because I taught him to believe in Jesus” or “my true spiritual son, who believes in Jesus.”

(See also: [believe](#), [believe in](#), [belief](#), [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[05-06]** When Isaac was a young man, God tested Abraham’s **faith** by saying, “Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a sacrifice to me.”
- **[31-07]** Then he (Jesus) said to Peter, “You man of little **faith**, why did you doubt?”
- **[32-16]** Jesus said to her, “Your **faith** has healed you. Go in peace.”

- **[38-09]** Then Jesus said to Peter, "Satan wants to have all of you, but I have prayed for you, Peter, that your **faith** will not fail.

false god, foreign god, god, goddess

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.

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](#), [Asherah poles](#), [Ashtoreth](#), [Baal](#), [Molech](#), [Moloch](#), [idol](#), [idolatrous](#), [demon](#), [evil spirit](#), [unclean spirit](#), [image](#), [carved image](#), [carved figure](#), [cast metal figure](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[10-02]** Through these plagues, God showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt’s **gods**.
- **[13-04]** 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**.”
- **[14-02]** They (Canaanites) worshiped false **gods** and did many evil things.
- **[16-01]** 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**.

favor, favorable, favoritism

Definition:

The term “favor” refers to doing something to benefit someone who is regarded positively. Something that is “favorable” is positive, approving, or beneficial.

- The term “favoritism” means to act favorably toward some people but not others. Often favoritism is The term “favoritism” means acting favorably toward some people, but not others. shown toward people who are rich or are considered
- Jesus grew up “in favor with” God and men. This means they approved of his character and behavior.
- The expression “find favor” means that someone is approved of by someone else.
- When a king shows favor to someone, it often means that he approves of that person’s request and grants it.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate the term “favor” could include, “blessing” or “benefit.”
- The “favorable year of Yahweh” could be translated as, “the year (or time) when Yahweh will bring great blessing.”
- The term “favoritism” could be translated as, “partiality” or “being prejudiced” or “unjust treatment.” This word is related to the word “favorite” which means “the one who is preferred or loved best.”

“find favor” “increased in favor” “won the favor of”

Bible References:

Waiting

fear, afraid, fear of Yahweh

Definition:

The terms “fear” and “afraid” refer to the unpleasant feeling a person has when there is a threat of harm to himself or others.

- The term “fear” can also refer to a deep respect and awe for a person in authority.
- The phrase “fear of Yahweh,” and related terms “fear of God” and “fear of the Lord,” refer to deeply respecting God and showing that respect by obeying him. This fear is motivated by knowing that God is holy and hates sin.
- The Bible teaches that a person who fears Yahweh will become wise.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “to fear” can be translated as “to be afraid” or “to deeply respect” or “to revere” or “to be in awe of.”
- The term “afraid” could be translated as “terrified” or “scared” or “fearful.”
- The sentence, “The fear of God fell on all of them” could be translated as, “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 not” could also be translated as, “do not be afraid” or “stop being afraid.”
- Note that the phrase “fear of Yahweh” does not occur in the New Testament. The phrase “fear of the Lord” or “fear of the Lord God” would be used instead.

(See also: [marvel](#), [wonder](#), [amazed](#), [astonished](#), [awe](#), [awesome](#), [Lord](#), [power](#), [powers](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

fig**Definition:**

A fig is a small, soft, sweet fruit that grows on trees. When ripe, this fruit can be a variety of colors, including brown, yellow, or purple.

- Fig trees can grow to be as tall as 6 meters high and their large leaves provide pleasant shade. The fruit is about 3-5 centimeters long.
- Adam and Eve used the leaves from fig trees to make clothing for themselves after they had sinned.
- Figs can be eaten raw, cooked, or dried. People also chop them into small pieces and press them into cakes to eat later.
- In Bible times, figs were important as a source of food and income.
- The presence of fruitful fig trees is frequently mentioned in the Bible as a sign of prosperity.
- Several times Jesus used fig trees as an illustration to teach his disciples spiritual truths.

Bible References:

Waiting

fire**Definition:**

Fire is the heat, light, and flames that are produced when something is burned.

- Burning wood by fire turns the wood into ashes.
- The term “fire” is also used figuratively, usually referring to judgment or purification.
- The final judgment of unbelievers is in the fire of hell.
- Fire is used to refine gold and other metals. In the Bible, this process is used to explain how God refines people through difficult things that happen in their lives.
- The phrase “baptize with fire” could also be translated as, “cause you to experience suffering in order to purify you.”

(See also: [pure](#), [purify](#), [purification](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

glory, glorious

Definition:

In general, the term “glory” means honor, splendor, and extreme greatness. Anything that has glory is said to be “glorious.”

- Sometimes “glory” refers to something of great value and importance. In other contexts it communicates splendor, brightness, or judgment.
- For example, the expression “glory of the shepherds” refers to the lush pastures where their sheep had plenty of grass to eat.
- Glory is especially used to describe God, who is more glorious than anyone or anything in the universe. Everything in his character reveals his glory and his splendor.
- The expression “to glory in” means to boast about or take pride in something.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, different ways to translate “glory” could include, “splendor” or “brightness” or “majesty” or “awesome greatness” or “extreme value.”
- The term “glorious” could be translated as “full of glory” or “extremely valuable” or “brightly shining” or “awesomely majestic.”
- The expression, “give glory to God” could be translated as “honor God’s greatness” or “praise God because of his splendor” or “tell others how great God is.”
- The expression “glory in” could also be translated as, “praise” or “take pride in” or “boast about” or “take pleasure in.”

(See also: [glorify](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- [23-07] Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “**Glory** to God in heaven and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- [25-06] Then Satan showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world and all their **glory** and said, “I will give you all this if you bow down and worship me.”
- [37-01] When Jesus heard this news, he said, “This sickness will not end in death, but it is for the **glory** of God.”
- [37-08] Jesus responded, “Did I not tell you that you would see God’s **glory** if you believe in me?”

gnash teeth, grind teeth

Definition:

To gnash or grind the teeth means to clench the teeth and scrape them back and forth against each other. This often shows extreme pain or anger.

- The Bible tells us that gnashing teeth is one thing those in hell will do in their terrible distress.
- This term could also be translated as “scraping the teeth against each other” or, if it is not clear what this action means, “grinding the teeth in pain” or “gnashing the teeth in anguish.”

Bible References:

Waiting

God

Facts:

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.”
- Other ways to translate “God” could be, “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 two different terms for “God” and “god.”
- 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](#), [creation](#), [Creator](#), [false god](#), [god](#), [God the Father](#), [Heavenly Father](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [Spirit of God](#), [Spirit of the Lord](#), [idol](#), [Son of God](#), [the Son](#), [Yahweh](#).)

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- [01-01]**God** created the universe and everything in it in six days.
- [01-15]**God** made man and woman in his own image.
- [05-03]"I am **God** Almighty. I will make a covenant with you."
- [09-14]**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.'"
- [10-02] Through these plagues, **God** showed Pharaoh that he is more powerful than Pharaoh and all of Egypt's gods.
- [16-01] The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of Yahweh, the true **God**.
- [22-07] You, my son, will be called the prophet of the **Most High God** who will prepare the people to receive the Messiah!"
- [24-09] 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.
- [25-07]"Worship only the Lord your **God** and only serve him."
- [28-01]"There is only one who is good, and that is **God**."
- [49-09] 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.

gold

Definition:

Gold is a yellow-colored 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 ear rings and other jewelry, 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](#), [ark of the covenant decrees](#), [ark of Yahweh](#), [false god](#), [foreign god](#), [god](#), [goddess](#), [silver](#), [tabernacle](#), [temple](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

guilt, guilty

Definition:

The term “guilt” refers to the fact of having sinned or committed a crime.

- To “be guilty” means to have done something morally wrong, that is, to have disobeyed God.
- The opposite of “guilty” is “innocent.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Some languages might translate “guilt” as “the weight of sin” or “the counting of sins.”
- Ways to translate “to be guilty” could include a word or phrase that means, “to be at fault” or “having done something morally wrong” or “having committed a sin.”

ULB exs: take away the guilt of your sin, take away your guilt, guilt offering, punish your guilt, no guilt for murder will attach to him, carry his own guilt, wash away his guilt, be in great guilt, our guilt grows to the heavens

(See also: [innocent](#), [iniquity](#)[punish](#), [punishment](#), [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#).)

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[39-02]** They brought many witnesses who lied about him (Jesus). However, their statements did not agree with each other, so the Jewish leaders could not prove he was **guilty** of anything.
- **[39-11]** After speaking with Jesus, Pilate went out to the crowd and said, “I find no **guilt** in this man.” But the Jewish leaders and the crowd shouted, “Crucify him!” Pilate replied, “He is not **guilty**.” But they shouted even louder. Then Pilate said a third time, “He is not **guilty!**”
- **[40-04]** Jesus was crucified between two robbers. One of them mocked Jesus, but the other said, “Don’t you fear God? We are **guilty**, but this man is innocent.
- **[49-10]** Because of your sin, you are **guilty** and deserve to die.

Habakkuk

Facts:

Habakkuk was an Old Testament prophet who lived around the time that King Jehoiakim was reigning over Judah. The prophet Jeremiah was also alive during some of this time.

- This prophet wrote the book of Habakkuk around 600 BC when the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and took many of the people of Judah into exile.
- Yahweh gave Habakkuk the prophecy about how the “Chaldeans” (Babylonians) would come and conquer the people of Judah.
- One of Habakkuk’s most well-known statements is: “the righteous person shall live by his faith.”

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [Babylon](#), [Babylonian](#), [Jehoiakim](#), [Jeremiah](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

hand, right hand, to hand over

Definition:

There are several figurative ways that “hand” is used in the Bible:

- To “hand” something to someone means to put something into that person’s hands.
- The term “hand” is often used in reference to God’s power and action, such as when God says, “Has not my hand made all these things?” (See: **Metonymy**)
- Expressions such as “hand over to” or “deliver into the hands of” refer to causing someone to be under the control or power of someone else.
- Placing hands on someone is often done while speaking a blessing over that person.
- The term “laying on of hands” refers to placing a hand on a person in order to dedicate that person to God’s service or to pray for healing.
- Some other figurative uses of “hand” include:
 - To “lay a hand on” means to “harm.”
 - To “save from the hand of” means to stop someone from harming someone else.
 - To be “close at hand” means to be “nearby.”
 - The position of being “on the right hand” means “on the right side” or “to the right.”
 - The expression “by the hand of” someone means “by” or “through” the action of that person. For example, “by the hand of the Lord” means that the Lord is the one who caused something to happen.
- When Paul says “written by my hand,” it means that this part of the letter was physically written down by him, rather than spoken to someone else to write down.

Translation Suggestions

- These expressions and other figures of speech could be translated using other figurative expressions that have the same meaning. Or the meaning could be translated using direct, literal language (see examples above).
- The expression, “handed him the scroll” could also be translated as “gave him the scroll” or “put the scroll in his hand.” It was not given to him permanently, but just for the purpose of using it at that time.
- When “hand” refers to the person, such as in “the hand of God did this,” it could be translated as “God did this.”
- An expression such as “delivered them into the hands of their enemies” or “handed them over to their enemies,” could be translated as, “allowed their enemies to conquer them” or “caused them to be captured by their enemies” or “empowered their enemies to gain control over them.”
- To “die by the hand of” could be translated as, “be killed by.”
- The expression “on the right hand of” could be translated as “on the right side of.”
- In regard to Jesus being “seated at the right hand of God,” if this does not communicate in the language that it refers to a position of high honor and equal authority, a different expression

with that meaning could be used. Or a short explanation could be added: “on the right side of God, in the position of highest authority.”

(See also: [adversary](#), [enemy](#), [bless](#), [blessed](#), [blessing](#), [captive](#), [captivity](#), [honor](#), [to honor](#), [power](#), [powers](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

heaven, sky, heavens, heavenly

Definition:

The term that is translated as “heaven” refers to where God lives. The same word can also mean “sky,” depending on the context.

- The term “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars. It also includes the heavenly bodies, such as far-off planets, that we can’t directly see from the earth.
- The term “sky” refers to the blue expanse above the earth that has clouds and the air we breathe. Often the sun and moon are also said to be “up in the sky.”
- In some contexts in the Bible, the word “heaven” could refer to either the sky or the place where God lives.
- When “heaven” is used figuratively, it is a way of referring to God. For example, when Matthew writes about the “kingdom of heaven” he is referring to the kingdom of God.

Translation Suggestions:

- When “heaven” is used figuratively, it could be translated as “God.”
- 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: [kingdom of God](#), [kingdom of heaven](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- [04-02] They even began building a tall tower to reach **heaven**.
- [14-11] He (God) gave them bread from **heaven**, called “manna.”
- [23-07] Suddenly, the skies were filled with angels praising God, saying, “Glory to God in **heaven** and peace on earth to the people he favors!”
- [29-09] 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.”
- [37-09] 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.

high places

Definition:

The term “high places” refers to the altars and shrines that were used for worshiping idols. They were usually built on higher ground, such as on a hill or mountainside.

- Many of the kings of Israel sinned against God by building altars to false gods on these high places. This led the people to become deeply involved in worshiping idols.
- When a God-fearing king started ruling in Israel or Judah, often he would remove the high places or altars in order to stop the worship of these idols.
- However, some of these good kings were careless and did not remove the high places, which resulted in the entire nation of Israel continuing to worship idols.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate this term could include, “elevated places for idol worship” or “hilltop idol shrines” or “idol altar mounds.”
- Make sure it is clear that this term refers to the idol altars, not just to the high place where those altars are located.

(See also: [altar](#), [idol](#), [idolatrous](#), [worship](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

holy, holiness

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.
- Since God is holy, people cannot approach him unless he allows them to, because they are mere 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.

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.”

(See also: [Holy Spirit](#), [Spirit of God](#), [Spirit of the Lord](#), [consecratesanctify](#), [sanctification](#), [set apart](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[01-16]** He (God) blessed the seventh day and made it **holy**, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **[09-12]** “You are standing on **holy** ground.”
- **[13-02]** “If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a kingdom of priests, and a **holy** nation.”
- **[13-05]** “Always be sure to keep the Sabbath day **holy**.”
- **[22-05]** “So the baby will be **holy**, the Son of God.”
- **[50-02]** As we wait for Jesus to return, God wants us to live in a way that is **holy** and that honors him.

Holy One

Definition:

The term “Holy One” is a title in the Bible that almost always refers to God.

- In the Old Testament, this title often occurs in the phrase “Holy One of Israel.”
- In the New Testament, Jesus is also referred to as the “Holy One.”
- The term “holy one” is sometimes used in the Bible to refer to an angel.

Translation Suggestions:

- The literal term is, “the Holy” (with “One” being implied.) Many languages (like English) will translate this with the implied noun included (such as “One” or “God”).
- This term could also be translated as, “God, who is holy” or “the Set Apart One.”
- The phrase, “the Holy One of Israel” could be translated as, “the Holy God whom Israel worships” or “Holy One who rules Israel.”
- It is best to translate this term using the same word or phrase that is used to translate “holy.”

(See also: [holy](#), [holiness](#), [God](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

honor, to honor

Definition:

The terms “honor” and “to honor” refer to giving someone respect, esteem, or reverence.

- Honor is usually given to someone who is of higher status and importance, such as a king or God.
- God also instructs Christians to honor others, but not to try to get honor for themselves.
- Children are instructed to honor their parents, which includes respect and obedience.
- the terms “honor” and “glory” are often used together, especially when referring to Jesus. These may be two different ways of referring to the same thing.
- Honor for God includes thanking and praising him, and showing him respect by obeying him and living in a way that shows how great he is.

Translation Suggestions:

- Other ways to translate “honor” could include, “respect” or “esteem” or “high regard.”
- The term “to honor” could be translated as “to show special respect to” or “to cause to be praised” or “to show high regard for” or “to highly value.”

(See also: [dishonor](#), [dishonorable](#), [glory](#), [glorious](#), [glorify](#), [praise](#) other)

Bible References:

Waiting

horse

Definition:

A horse is a large, four-legged animal that in Bible times was mostly used for doing farm work and for transporting people.

- Some horses were used to pull carts or chariots, while others were used to carry individual riders.
- Horses often wear a bit and bridle on their heads so they can be guided.
- In the Bible, horses were considered to be valuable possessions and a measure of wealth, mainly because of their use in war. For example, part of King Solomon's great wealth was the thousands of horses and chariots that he had.
- Animals that are similar to the horse are the donkey and the mule.

(See also: [chariot](#), , [donkey](#), [mule](#), [Solomon](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

house

Definition:

The term “house” is often used figuratively in the Bible.

- Sometimes it means “household,” referring to the people who live together in one house.
- Often “house” refers to a person’s descendants or other relatives. For example, the phrase “house of David” refers to all the descendants of King David.
- The terms “house of God” and “house of Yahweh” refer to the tabernacle or temple. These expressions can also refer generally to where God is or dwells.
- In Hebrews 3, “God’s house” is used as a metaphor to refer to God’s people or more generally, to everything pertaining to God.
- 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” or “temple” or “dwelling place.”
- 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.”
- The phrase “house of Yahweh” could be translated as “Yahweh’s temple” or “place where Yahweh is worshiped” or “place where Yahweh meets with his people” or “where Yahweh dwells.”
- “House of God” could be translated in a similar way.

(See also: [David](#), [descendant](#), [descended from](#), [house of God](#), [Yahweh’s house](#), [household](#), [kingdom of Israel](#), [tabernacle](#), [temple](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

image, carved image, carved figure, cast metal figure

Definition:

These terms are all used to refer to idols that have been made for worshiping a false god. In the context of worshiping idols, the term “image” is a shortened form of “carved image.”

- A “carved image” or “carved figure” is a wooden object that has been made to look like an animal, person, or thing.
- A “cast metal figure” is an object or statue created by melting metal and pouring it into a mold that is in the shape of an object, animal, or person.
- These wooden and metal objects were used in the worship of false gods.
- The term “image” when referring to an idol could either refer to a wooden or metal idol.

Translation Suggestions:

- When referring to an idol, the term “image” could also be translated as “statue” or “engraved idol” or “carved religious object.”
- It may be more clear in some languages to always use a descriptive word with this term, such as “carved image” or “cast metal figure,” even in places where only the term “image” or “figure” is in the original text.
- Make sure it is clear that this term is different than the term used to refer to being in the image of God.

(See also: [false god](#), [foreign god](#), [god](#), [goddess](#), [God](#), [idol](#), [idolatrous](#), [image of God](#), [image](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

incense

Definition:

The term “incense” refers to a mixture of fragrant spices that are burned to produce smoke that has a pleasant smell.

- God told the Israelites to burn incense as an offering to him.
- The incense had to be made from mixing equal amounts of five specific spices exactly as God directed. This was a sacred incense, so they were not allowed to use it for any other purpose.
- The “altar of incense” was a special altar that was only used for burning incense.
- The incense was offered at least four times a day, at each hour of prayer. It was also offered every time a burnt offering was made.
- The burning of incense represents prayer and worship rising up to God from his people.
- Other ways to translate “incense” could include, “fragrant spices” or “good-smelling plants.”

(See also: [altar of incense](#), [burnt offering](#), [offering by fire](#), [frankincense](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

iniquity

Definition:

The term “iniquity” is a word that is very similar in meaning to the term “sin,” but may more specifically refer to conscious acts of wrongdoing or great wickedness.

- The word “iniquity” literally means a twisting or distorting (of the law). It refers to major injustice.
- Iniquity could be described as deliberate, harmful actions against other people.
- Other definitions of iniquity include “perversity” and “depravity,” which are both words that describe conditions of terrible sin.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “iniquity” could be translated as “wickedness” or “perverse actions” or “harmful acts.”
- Often, “iniquity” occurs in the same text as the word “sin” and “transgression” so it is important to have different ways of translating these terms.

(See also: [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#), [transgress](#), [transgression](#), [trespass](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

judge, judgment

Definition:

The terms “judge” and “judgment” often refer to making a decision about whether something is morally right or wrong.

- 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](#), [justice](#), [justly](#), [law](#), [principle](#), [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [God’s law](#), [law of Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

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.
- **[21-08]** 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.

- **[39-04]** 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.

just, justice, justly

Definition:

These terms 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 law or being punished for breaking the law.
- Sometimes the term "just" has the broader meaning of "righteous" or "following God's laws."

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."

(See also: [judge](#), [judgment](#), [righteous](#), [righteousness](#), [upright](#), [uprightness](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[17-09]** 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.

justify, justification

Definition:

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:

- 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](#), [forgiveness](#), [guilt](#), [guilty](#), [righteous](#), [righteousness](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

king

Definition:

The term “king” refers to a man who is the supreme ruler of a city, state, or country.

- A king is usually chosen to rule because of his family relation to previous kings.
- When a king dies, it is usually his oldest son who becomes the next king.
- In ancient times, the king had absolute authority over the people in his kingdom.
- Rarely the term “king” may be used to refer to someone who is not a true king, such as “King Herod” in the New Testament.
- In the Bible, God is often referred to as a king who rules over his people.
- The “kingdom of God” refers to God’s rule over his people.
- Jesus was called “king of the Jews,” “king of Israel,” and “king of kings.”
- When Jesus comes back, he will rule as king over the world.
- This term could also be translated as, “supreme chief” or “absolute leader” or “sovereign ruler.”
- The phrase “king of kings” could 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](#), [kingdom of heaven](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[08-06]** One night, the Pharaoh, which is what the Egyptians called their kings, had two dreams that disturbed him greatly.
- **[16-01]** 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.
- **[17-05]** Eventually, Saul died in battle, and David became **king** of Israel. He was a good **king**, and the people loved him.
- **[21-06]** 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!

know, knowledge, make known

Definition:

To “know” means to understand something or to be aware of a fact. The expression “make known” is an expression that means to tell information.

- The term “knowledge” refers to information that people know. It can apply to knowing things in both the physical and spiritual worlds.
- To “know about” God means to understand facts about him because of what he has revealed to us.
- To “know” God means to have a relationship with him. This also applies to knowing people.
- To know God’s will means to be aware of what he has commanded, or to understand what he wants a person to do.
- 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” or “be in relationship with.”
- Some languages have two different words for “know” depending on whether it refers to knowing facts or to knowing a person and having a relationship with him.
- 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.

(See also: [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [God’s law](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [reveal](#), [revelation](#), [understand](#), [understanding](#), [wise](#), [wisdom](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

labor, laborer

Definition:

The term “labor” refers to doing hard work of any kind.

- In general, labor is any task which uses energy. It often implies that the task is difficult.
- A laborer is a person who does any type of labor.
- In English, the word “labor” is also used for part of the process of giving birth. Other languages may have a completely different word for this.
- Ways to translate “labor” could include, “work” or “hard work” or “difficult work” or “to work hard.”

(See also: [hard](#), [hardness](#), [harden](#), [labor pains](#), [in labor](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

law, law of Moses, God's law, law of Yahweh

Definition:

All these terms refer to the commandments and instructions that God gave Moses for the Israelites to obey. The terms “law” and “God’s law” are also used more generally to refer to everything God wants his people 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 “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](#), [instruction](#), [Moses](#), [Ten Commandments](#), [lawful](#), [lawfully](#), [unlawful](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[13-07]** 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.

- **[13-09]** 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**.
- **[16-01]** After Joshua died, the Israelites disobeyed God and did not drive out the rest of the Canaanites or obey **God's laws**.
- **[21-05]** 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.
- **[27-01]** Jesus answered, "What is written in **God's law**?"
- **[28-01]** 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**."

Lebanon

Facts:

Lebanon is a beautiful mountainous region located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Israel. In Bible times this region was also thickly wooded with fir trees, such as cedar and cypress.

- King Solomon sent workers to Lebanon to harvest cedar trees for use in building God's temple.
- Ancient Lebanon was inhabited by Phoenician people who were skilled builders of ships that were used for a successful trading industry.
- The cities of Tyre and Sidon were located in Lebanon. It was in these cities that a valuable purple dye was first used.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [cedar](#), [cypress](#), [fir](#), [Phoenicia](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Lord

Facts:

The term “Lord” refers to someone who has ownership or authority over people. When it is capitalized, it is a title that refers to God. (Note however that when used as a form of addressing someone or 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 ULB and UDB, 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.

Translation Suggestions:

- Some languages translate this term as “Master” or “Ruler” or some other term that communicates ownership or supreme ruler.
- 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: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [God](#), [Jesus](#), [Jesus Christ](#), [Christ Jesus](#), [lord](#), [master](#), [sir](#), [ruler](#), [rulers](#), [rule](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Midian, Midianites

Facts:

Midian was a son of Abraham and his wife Keturah. It is also the name of a people group and region located in the northern Arabian Desert to the south of the land of Canaan. The people of that group were called “Midianites.”

- When Moses first left Egypt, he went to the region of Midian where he met the daughters of Jethro and helped them water their flocks. Later Moses married one of Jethro’s daughters.
- Joseph was taken to Egypt by a group of Midianite slave traders.
- Many years later the Midianites attacked and raided the Israelites in the land of Canaan. Gideon led the Israelites in defeating them.
- Many of the modern-day Arabian tribes are descendants of this group.

(See also [Arabia](#), [Arabian](#), [Egypt](#), [Egyptian](#), [flock](#), [herd](#), [Gideon](#), [Jethro](#), [Reuel](#), [Moses](#),

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[16-03]** But then the people forgot about God and started worshiping idols again. So God allowed the **Midianites**, a nearby enemy people group, to defeat them.
- **[16-04]** The Israelites were so scared, they hid in caves so the **Midianites** would not find them.
- **[16-11]** The man’s friend said, ”This dream means that Gideon’s army will defeat the **Midianite** army!”
- **[16-14]** God confused the **Midianites**, so that they started attacking and killing each other.

mock, ridicule, scoff at

Definition:

The terms “mock,” “ridicule,” and “scoff at” all refer to making fun of someone, especially in a cruel way.

- Mocking often involves imitating people’s words or actions with the intent to embarrass them or show contempt for them.
- The Roman soldiers mocked or ridiculed Jesus when they put a robe on him and pretended to honor him as king.
- A group of young people ridiculed or scoffed at Elisha when they called him a name, making fun of his bald head.
- The term “scoff at” can also refer to ridiculing an idea that is not considered believable or important.

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- [21-12] Isaiah prophesied that people would spit on, **mock**, and beat the Messiah.
- [39-05] The Jewish leaders all answered the high priest, “He deserves to die!” Then they blindfolded Jesus, spit on him, hit him, and **mocked** him.
- [39-12] The soldiers whipped Jesus, and put a royal robe and a crown made of thorns on him. Then they **mocked** him by saying, “Look, the King of the Jews!”
- [40-04] Jesus was crucified between two robbers. One of them **mocked** Jesus, but the other said, “Do you have no fear of God?”
- [40-05] The Jewish leaders and the other people in the crowd **mocked** Jesus. They said to him, “If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross and save yourself! Then we will believe you.”

nation

Definition:

A nation is a large group of people ruled by some form of government. The people of a nation often have the same ancestors and share a common ethnicity.

- The term “nation” usually includes the idea of a well-defined culture and territorial boundaries.
- In the Bible, a “nation” can be a country (like Egypt or Ethiopia), but often it is more general and refers to a people group, especially when used in the plural. It is important to check the context.
- 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” is 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.”
- The word translated as “nation” is also sometimes used to refer to “Gentiles” or to 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 “nonJews.”

(See also: [Assyria](#), [Assyrian](#), [Assyrian Empire](#), [Babylon](#), [Babylonian](#), [Canaan](#), [Canaanite](#), [Gentile](#), [Greek](#), [Grecian](#), [people group](#), [peoples](#), [the people](#), [a people](#), [Philistines](#), [Rome](#), [Roman](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

neighbor

Definition:

The term “neighbor” usually refers to a person who lives nearby. It can also refer more generally to someone who lives in the same community or people group.

- A “neighbor” is someone who would be protected and treated kindly because he is part of the same community.
- In the New Testament parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus used the term “neighbor” figuratively, expanding its meaning to include all human beings, even someone who is considered an enemy.
- If possible, it is best to translate this term literally with a word or phrase that means “person who lives nearby.”

(See also: [adversary](#), [enemy](#), [parable](#), [people group](#), [peoples](#), [the people](#), [a people](#), [Samaria](#), [Samaritan](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

olive

Definition:

The olive is the small, oval fruit from an olive tree, which is mostly grown in the regions surrounding the Mediterranean Sea.

- Olive trees are a type of large evergreen shrub with tiny white flowers. They grow best in hot weather and can survive well with little water.
- The olive tree's fruit is green in color, changing to black as they ripen. Olives are used for eating and extracting oil.
- Olive oil was used for cooking, for lighting lamps, and for religious ceremonies.
- In the Bible, olive trees and branches are sometimes used figuratively to refer to people.

(See also: [lamp](#), [the sea](#), [the Great Sea](#), [the western sea](#), [Mediterranean Sea](#), [Mount of Olives](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

ordain

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](#), [to command](#), [commandment](#), [covenant](#), [decree](#), [law](#), [principle](#), [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [God’s law](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [priest](#), [priesthood](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

people group, peoples, the people, a people

Definition:

The term “peoples” or “people groups” refers to groups of people who share a common language and culture. The phrase “the people” often refers to a gathering of people in a certain place or at a specific event.

- When God set apart “a people” for himself, it means that he chose certain people to belong to him and serve him.
- In Bible times, the members of a people group usually had the same ancestors and lived together in a particular country or area of land.
- Depending on the context, a phrase such as “your people” can mean “your people group” or “your family” or “your relatives.”
- The term “peoples” is often used to refer to all people groups on the earth. Sometimes it refers more specifically to people who are not Israelites or who do not serve Yahweh. In some English Bible translations the term “nations” is also used in this way.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “people group” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “large family group” or “clan” or “ethnic group.”
- A phrase such as “my people” could be translated as “my relatives” or “my fellow Israelites” or “my family” or “my people group,” depending on the context.
- The expression “scatter you among the peoples” could also be translated as “cause you to go live with many different people groups” or “cause you to separate from each other and go live in many different regions of the world.”
- The term “the peoples” or “the people” could also be translated as “the people in the world” or “people groups,” depending on the context.
- The phrase, “the people of” could be translated as, “the people living in” or “the people descended from” or “the family of” depending on whether it is followed by the name of a place or a person.
- “All the peoples of the earth” could be translated as, “everyone living on earth” or “every person in the world” or “all people.”
- The phrase “a people” could also be translated as, “a group of people” or “certain people” or “a community of people” or “a family of people.”

(See also: [descendant](#), [descended from](#), [nation](#), [tribe](#), [world](#), [worldly](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[14-02]** God had promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that he would give the Promised Land to their descendants, but now there were many **people groups** living there. what follows is
- **[21-02]** God promised Abraham that through him all **people groups** of the world would receive a blessing. This blessing would be that the Messiah would come sometime in the future and provide the way of salvation for people from all the **people groups** of the world.
- **[42-08]** "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."
- **[42-10]** "So go, make disciples of all **people groups** by baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and by teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."
- **[48-11]** Because of this New Covenant, anyone from any **people group** can become part of God's people by believing in Jesus.
- **[50-03]** He (Jesus) said, "Go and make disciples of all **people groups!**" and, "The fields are ripe for harvest!"

plague

Definition:

Plagues are events which cause suffering or death to a large number of people. Often a plague is a disease that spreads quickly and causes many people to die before it can be stopped.

- Many plagues have natural causes, but some were sent by God to punish people for sin.
- In the time of Moses, God sent ten plagues against Egypt to force Pharaoh to let Israel leave Egypt. These plagues included water turning into blood, physical diseases, destruction of crops by insects and hail, three days of complete darkness, and death of the firstborn sons.
- This could also be translated as, “widespread disasters” or “widespread disease,” depending on the context.

(See also: [Egypt](#), [Egyptian](#), [hail](#), [Israel](#), [Israelites](#), [nation of Israel](#), [Moses](#), [Pharaoh](#), [king of Egypt](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

pledge

Definition:

The term “pledge” refers to formally and solemnly promising to do something or give something.

- In the Old Testament the officials of Israel pledged to be loyal to King David.
- The object given as a pledge would be returned to its owner when the promise was fulfilled.
- “To pledge” could be translate as, “to formally commit to” or “to strongly promise.”
- The term “pledge” can also refer to an object given as a guarantee or promise that a debt will be paid.
- Ways to translate “a pledge” could include “a solemn promise” or “a formal commitment” or “a guarantee” or “a formal assurance,” depending on the context.

(See also: [promise](#), [oath](#), [swear](#), [swear by](#), [vow](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

power, powers

Definition:

The term “power” refers to the ability to do things or make things happen, often using great strength. “Powers” refers to people or spirits who have great ability to cause things to happen.

- The “power of God” refers to God’s ability to do everything, especially things that are not possible for people to do.
- God has complete power over everything that he has created.
- God gives his people power to do what he wants, so that when they heal people or do other miracles, they do this by the power of God.
- Because Jesus and the Holy Spirit are also God, they have this same power.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “power” could also be translated as “ability” or “strength” or “energy” or “ability to do miracles” or “control.”
- Possible ways to translate the term “powers” could include, “powerful beings” or “controlling spirits” or “those who control others.”
- An expression like “save us from the power of our enemies” could be translated as, “save us from being oppressed by our enemies” or “rescue us from being controlled by our enemies.” In this case, “power” has the meaning of using one’s strength to control and oppress others.

(See also: [Holy Spirit](#), [Spirit of God](#), [Spirit of the Lord](#), [Jesus](#), [Jesus Christ](#), [Christ Jesus](#), [miracle](#), [wonder](#), [sign](#),)

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[22-05]** The angel explained, “The Holy Spirit will come to you, and the **power** of God will overshadow you. So the baby will be holy, the Son of God.”
- **[26-01]** After overcoming Satan’s temptations, Jesus returned in the **power** of the Holy Spirit to the region of Galilee where he lived.
- **[32-15]** Immediately Jesus realized that **power** had gone out from him.
- **[42-11]** Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he told his disciples, “Stay in Jerusalem until my Father gives you **power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you.”
- **[43-06]** “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.”
- **[44-08]** Peter answered them, “This man stands before you healed by the **power** of Jesus the Messiah.”

praise

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:

Waiting

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.
- **[17-08]** When David heard these words, he immediately thanked and **praised** God because he had promised David this great honor and many blessings.
- **[22-07]** 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.
- **[47-08]** 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.

pray, prayer

Definition:

The terms “pray” and “prayer” refer to talking with God. This term is also used to refer to people trying to talk to a false god.

- People can pray silently, talking to God with their thoughts or they can pray aloud, speaking to God with their voice. Sometimes prayers are written down, such as when David wrote his prayers in the book of Psalms.
- Prayer can include asking God for mercy, for help with a problem, for wisdom in making decisions.
- Often people ask God to heal people who are sick or who need his help in other ways.
- People also thank and praise God when they are praying to him.
- Praying includes confessing our sins to God and asking him to forgive us.
- Talking to God is sometimes called “communing” with him as our spirit communicates with his spirit, sharing our emotions and enjoying his presence.
- This term could be translated as “talking to God” or “communicating with God.” The translation of this term should be able to include praying that is silent.

(See: [false god](#), [foreign god](#), [god](#), [goddess](#), [forgive](#), [forgiveness](#), [praise](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- [06-05] Isaac **prayed** for Rebekah, and God allowed her to get pregnant with twins.
- [13-12] But Moses **prayed** for them, and God listened to his **prayer** and did not destroy them.
- [19-08] Then the prophets of Baal **prayed** to Baal, “Hear us, O Baal!”
- [21-07] Priests also **prayed** to God for the people.
- [38-11] Jesus told his disciples to **pray** that they would not enter into temptation.
- [43-13] The disciples continually listened to the teaching of the apostles, spent time together, ate together, and **prayed** with each other.
- [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.

profit, profitable

Definition:

In general, the terms “profit” and “profitable” refer to gaining something good through doing certain actions or behaviors.

refers to something good that is gained. Something is “profitable” to someone if it brings them good things or if it helps them bring about good things for other people.

- More specifically, the term “profit” often refers to money that is gained from doing business. A business is “profitable” if it gains more money than it spends.
- Actions are profitable if they bring about good things for people.
- 2 Timothy 3:16 says that all Scripture is “profitable” for correcting and training people in righteousness. This means that the Bible’s teachings are helpful and useful for teaching people to live according to God’s will.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “profit” could also be translated as “benefit” or “help” or “gain.”
- The term “profitable” could be translated as “useful” or “beneficial” or “helpful.”
- To “profit from” something could be translated as “benefit from” or “gain money from” or “receive help from.”
- In the context of a business, “profit” could be translated with a word or phrase that means, “money gained” or “surplus of money” or “extra money.”

Bible References:

Waiting

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](#), [diviner](#), [soothsaying](#), [soothsayer](#), [false god](#), [foreign god](#), [god](#), [goddess](#), [false prophet](#), [fulfill](#), [law](#), [law of Moses](#), [God’s law](#), [law of Yahweh](#), [vision](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

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.
- [19-01] Throughout the history of the Israelites, God sent them **prophets**. The **prophets** heard messages from God and then told the people God's messages.
- [19-06] 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.
- [21-09] The **prophet** Isaiah **prophesied** that the Messiah would be born from a virgin.
- [43-05] "This fulfills the **prophecy** made by the **prophet** Joel in which God said, 'In the last days, I will pour out my Spirit.'"
- [43-07] "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.
-

proverb

Definition:

A proverb is a short statement that expresses some wisdom or truth.

- Proverbs are powerful because they are easy to remember and repeat.
- Often a proverb will include practical examples from everyday life.
- Some proverbs are very clear and direct, while others are more difficult to understand.
- King Solomon was known for his wisdom and wrote over 1,000 proverbs.
- Jesus often used proverbs or parables when he taught people.
- Ways to translate “proverb” could include, “wise saying” or “true word.”

(See also: [Solomon](#), [true](#), [truth](#), [come true](#), [wise](#), [wisdom](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

puffed up

Definition:

The term “puffed up” is a figurative expression that refers to being proud or arrogant. (See: **Idiom**)

- A person who is puffed up has an attitude of feeling superior to others.
- Paul taught that knowing a lot of information or having religious experiences can lead to being “puffed up” or proud.
- Other languages may have a similar idiom or a different one that expresses this meaning, such as “having a big head.”
- This could also be translated as, “very proud” or “disdainful of others” or “haughty” or “thinking oneself better than others.”

(See also: **arrogant, proud, pride, prideful**)

Bible References:

Waiting

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: [atonement](#), [atone](#), [clean](#), [cleanse](#), [spirit](#), [spiritual](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

raise, rise, risen, arise, arose

Definition:

raise, raise up

In general, the word “raise” means to “lift up” or “make higher.”

- The figurative phrase, “raise up” means to cause something to come into being or to appear. It can also mean to appoint someone to do something.
- Sometimes “raise up” means to “restore” or “rebuild.”
- “Raise” has a specialized meaning in the phrase, “raise from the dead.” It means to cause a dead person to become alive again.
- Sometimes “raise up” means to “exalt” someone or something.

rise, arise

To “rise” or “arise” means to “go up” or “get up.” The terms “risen,” “rose” and “arose” are used for expressing past action.

- When a person gets up to go somewhere, this is sometimes expressed as, “he arose and went” or “he rose up and went.”
- If something “arises” it means it “happens” or “begins to happen.”
- Jesus predicted that he would “rise from the dead.” Three days after Jesus died, the angel said, “He has risen”!

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “raise” or “raise up” can be translated as “to lift up” or “to make higher.”
- To “raise up” could also be translated as, “to cause to appear” or “to appoint” or “to bring into existence.”
- To “raise up the strength of your enemies” could be translated as, “cause your enemies to be very strong.”
- The phrase “raise someone from the dead,” could be translated as “cause someone to return from death to life” or “cause someone to come back to life.”
- Depending on the context, “raise up” could also be translated as, “provide” or “appoint” or “cause to have” or “build up” or “rebuild” or “repair.”
- The phrase “arose and went” could be translated as “got up and went” or “went.”
- Depending on the context, the term “arose” could also be translated as “began” or “started up” or “got up” or “stood up.”

(See also: [resurrection](#), [appoint](#), [appointed](#), [exalt](#), [exaltation](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- [21-14] The prophets foretold that the Messiah would die and that God would also **raise** him from the dead.
- [41-05] "Jesus is not here. He has **risen** from the dead, just like he said he would!"
- [43-07] "Although Jesus died, God **raised** him from the dead. This fulfills the prophecy which says, 'You will not let your Holy One rot in the grave.' We are witnesses to the fact that God **raised** Jesus to life again."
- [44-05] "You killed the author of life, but God **raised** him from the dead. "
- [44-08] Peter answered them, "This man stands before you healed by the power of Jesus the Messiah. You crucified Jesus, but God **raised** him to life again!"
- [48-04] This meant that Satan would kill the Messiah, but God would **raise** him to life again, and then the Messiah will crush the power of Satan forever.
- [49-02] He (Jesus) walked on water, calmed storms, healed many sick people, drove out demons, **raised** the dead to life, and turned five loaves of bread and two small fish into enough food for over 5,000 people.
- [49-12] You must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died on the cross instead of you, and that God **raised** him to life again.

rejoice

Definition:

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.”

(See also: [joy](#), [joyful](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

remnant**Definition:**

The term “remnant” literally refers to people or things that are “remaining” or “leftover” 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 survived attacks from outsiders and lived 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” implies that there were other people who did not remain faithful or who did not survive or who were not chosen.

Translation Suggestions:

- A phrase such as, “the remnant of this people” could be translated as “the rest of these people” or “the people who remain faithful” 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:

Waiting

report**Definition:**

The term “to report” means to tell people about something that happened, often giving details about that event. A report can be spoken or written.

- “Report” could also be translated as “tell” or “explain” or “tell the details of.”
- The expression, “Report this to no one” could be translated as, “Don’t talk about this with anyone” or “Don’t tell anyone about this.”
- Ways to translate “a report” could include, “an explanation” or “a story” or “a detailed account,” depending on the context.

Bible References:

Waiting

shows the interruption of thought and

shows the interruption of thought and

righteous, righteousness

Definition:

The terms “righteous” and “righteousness” refer to God’s absolute goodness, justice, faithfulness, and love. 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 who the Bible calls “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 based on Jesus’ righteousness.

Translation Suggestions:

- When referring to 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 referring to 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
- Sometimes “the righteous” is used figuratively and refers to “people who think they are good” or “people who seem to be righteous.”

(See also: [good](#), [goodness](#), [holy](#), [holiness](#), [evil](#), [wicked](#), [wickedness](#), [just](#), [justice](#), [justly](#), [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[03-02]** But Noah found favor with God. He was a **righteous** man, living among wicked people.
- **[04-08]** God declared that Abram was **righteous** because he believed in God’s promise.
- **[17-02]** David was a humble and **righteous** man who trusted and obeyed God.
- **[23-01]** 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.”

ruler, rulers, rule

Definition:

The term “ruler” is a general reference to a person who has authority over other people, such as a leader of a country, kingdom, or religious group.

- In the Old Testament, a king was also referred to with the general term “ruler,” as in the phrase, “appointed him ruler over Israel.”
- God is referred to as the ultimate ruler, who rules over all other rulers.
- In the New Testament, the leader of a synagogue was called a “ruler.”
- Another type of ruler in the New Testament was a “governor.”
- Depending on the context, “ruler” could be translated as “leader” or “person who has authority over.”
- The action “to rule” means to “lead” to “have authority over.” It means the same thing as “reign” when referring a king ruling.

(See also: [authority](#), [governor](#), [govern](#), [proconsul](#), [government](#), [king](#), [synagogue](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

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.

- 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.
- 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.
- The figurative expression “offer yourselves as a living sacrifice” means, “live your life in complete obedience to God, giving up everything in order to serve him.”

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 that is offered on an altar.”

(See also: [altar](#), [burnt offering](#), [offering by fire](#), [drink offering](#), [false god](#), [foreign god](#), [god](#), [goddess](#), [fellowship offering](#), [freewill offering](#) [peace offering](#), [priest](#), [priesthood](#), [sin offering](#), [worship](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[03-14]** 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.

- [05-06] "Take Isaac, your only son, and kill him as a **sacrifice** to me." Again Abraham obeyed God and prepared to **sacrifice** his son.
- [05-09] God had provided the ram to be the **sacrifice** instead of Isaac.
- [13-09] 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.
- [17-06] David wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him **sacrifices**.
- [48-06] Jesus is the Great High Priest. Unlike other priests, he offered himself as the only **sacrifice** that could take away the sin of all the people in the world.
- [48-08] 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.

salvation

Definition:

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:

- This term could also be translated using the word “save” or “rescue” as in, “when God saves people (from being punished for their sins)” or “God will rescue 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: [save](#), [safe](#), [Savior](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

save, safe

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,” it means that through Jesus’ death on the cross, God 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.

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.”

(See also: [cross](#), [deliver](#), [deliverer](#), [deliverance](#), [punish](#), [punishment](#), [salvation](#), [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[09-08]** Moses tried to **save** his fellow Israelite.
- **[11-02]** God provided a way to **save** the firstborn son of anyone who believed in him.
- **[12-05]** 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.
- **[44-08]** “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.

shame, shameful, ashamed

Definition:

The term “shame” refers to a painful feeling of being disgraced a person has because of something dishonorable or improper that he or someone else has done.

- Something that is “shameful” is “improper” or “dishonorable.”
- The term “ashamed” describes how a person feels when he has done something shameful.
- The phrase “put to shame” means to defeat people or expose their sin so that they feel ashamed of themselves.
- The prophet Isaiah said that those who make and worship idols will be put to shame.
- God can bring shame to a person who does not repent, by exposing that person’s sin and causing him to be humiliated.

(See also: [false god](#), [foreign god](#), [god](#), [goddess](#), [humble](#), [humility](#), [humiliate](#), [humiliation](#), [Isaiah](#), [repent](#), [repentance](#), [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#), [worship](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

silver

Definition:

Silver is a shiny, gray precious metal used to make coins, jewelry, containers, and ornaments.

- The containers would include silver cups and bowls, among 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, silver coins and silver weights called shekels were used.
- Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave for twenty shekels of silver.
- Judas was paid thirty silver coins for betraying Jesus.

(See also: [tabernacle](#), [temple](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

sin, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

The term “sin” refers to actions, thoughts, and words that are against God’s will and laws. Sin can also refer to not doing something that God wants us to do.

- Sin includes anything we do that does not obey or please God, even things that other people don’t know about.
- Thoughts and actions that disobey God’s will are called “sinful.”
- Because Adam sinned, all human beings are born with a sinful nature that controls them.
- A “sinner” is someone who sins, so every human being is a sinner.
- Sometimes the word “sinners” was used by religious people like the Pharisees to refer to people who didn’t keep the law as well as the Pharisees thought they should.
- The term “sinner” was also used for people who were considered to be worse sinners than other people. For example, this label was given to tax collectors and prostitutes.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means, “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- “To sin” could also be translated as “to disobey God” or “to do wrong.”
- Depending on the context, “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context, the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means, “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means, “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include, “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- In expressions like “slaves to sin” or “ruled by sin,” the term “sin” could be translated as “disobedience” or “evil desires and actions.”
- Make sure the translation of this term can include sinful behavior and thoughts, even those that other people don’t see or know about.
- The term “sin” should be general, and different from the terms for “wickedness” and “evil.”

(See also: [disobey](#), [disobedient](#), [disobedience](#), [evil](#), [wicked](#), [wickedness](#), [flesh](#), [tax collector](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- * **[03-15]** 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.
- * **[20-01]** 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**.
- * **[35-01]** One day, Jesus was teaching many tax collectors and other **sinner**s who had gathered to hear him.
- * **[38-05]** 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**."
- * **[48-08]** 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**.

spear

Definition:

A spear is a weapon with a long wooden handle and sharp metal blade on one end that is thrown a long distance.

- Spears were commonly used for war in biblical times. They are sometimes still used in present-day conflicts between certain people groups.
- A spear was used by a Roman soldier to pierce the side of Jesus while he hung on the cross.
- Sometimes people throw spears to catch fish or other prey to eat.
- Similar weapons are the “javelin” or “lance.”
- Make sure that the translation of “spear” is different from the translation of “sword,” which is a weapon that is used for thrusting or stabbing, not throwing. Also, a sword has a long blade with a handle, while a spear has a small blade on the end of a long shaft.

(See also: [prey, to prey on](#), [Rome](#), [Roman](#), [sword](#), [warrior](#), [soldier](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

splendor

Definition:

The term “splendor” refers to extreme beauty and elegance that is often associated with wealth and a magnificent appearance.

- Often splendor is used to describe the wealth that a king has, or how he looks in his expensive, beautiful finery.
- The word “splendor” can also be used to describe the beauty of trees, mountains, and other things that God has created.
- Certain cities are said to have splendor, referring to their natural resources, elaborate buildings and roads, and the wealth of the people, including rich clothing, gold and silver.
- Depending on the context, this word could be translated as, “magnificent beauty” or “amazing majesty” or “kingly greatness.”

(See also: [glory](#), [glorious](#), [king](#), [majesty](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

stone, stoning

Definition:

A stone is a small rock. The term “stoning” refers to throwing stones and larger rocks at a person in order to kill him.

- In ancient times, stoning was a common method of executing people as punishment for crimes they had committed.
- God commanded the Israelite leaders to stone people for certain sins, such as adultery.
- The New Testament tells of a time that Jesus forgave a woman caught in adultery and stopped people from stoning her.
- Stephen, who was the first person in the Bible to be killed because of testifying about Jesus, was stoned to death.
- In the city of Lystra, the apostle Paul was stoned, but he did not die from his wounds.

(See also: [adultery](#), [adulterous](#), [adulterer](#), [adulteress](#), [commit](#), [committed](#), [commitment](#), [crime](#), [criminal](#), [death](#), [die](#), [dead](#), [Lystra](#), [testimony](#), [testify](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

strife

Definition:

The term “strife” refers to physical or emotional conflict between people.

- A person who causes strife does things that result in strong disagreements and hurt feelings between people.
- Strife sometimes implies that strong emotions are involved, such as anger or bitterness.
- Other ways to translate this term could include, “disagreement” or “dispute” or “conflict.”

(See also: [angry](#), [anger](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

stronghold, fortress, fortified

Definition:

The terms “stronghold” and “fortress” both refer to places that are well protected against an attack by enemy soldiers. The term “fortified” describes a city or other place that has been made safe from attack.

- Often, strongholds and fortresses are manmade structures with defensive walls. They can also be natural protective barriers such as rocky cliffs or high mountains.
- People fortify strongholds by building thick walls or other structures that make it difficult for an enemy to break through.
- “Stronghold” or “fortress” could be translated as “securely strong place” or “strongly protected place.”
- The term “fortified city” could be translated as “securely protected city” or “strongly built city.”
- This term is also used figuratively to refer to God as a stronghold or fortress for those who trust in him. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- Another figurative meaning for the term “stronghold” refers to something that someone wrongly trusts in for security, such as a false god or other thing that is worshiped instead of Yahweh. This could be translated as, “false strongholds.”
- This term should be translated differently from “refuge,” which emphasizes safety more than the concept of being fortified.

(See also: [false god](#), [foreign god](#), [god](#), [goddess](#), [idol](#), [idolatrous](#), [refuge](#), [shelter](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

teacher, Teacher

Definition:

A teacher is a person who gives other people new information. Teachers help others to obtain and use both knowledge and skills.

- In the Bible, the word “teacher” is used in a special sense to refer to someone who teaches about God. It does not refer to a school teacher.
- People who learn from a teacher are called “students” or “disciples.”
- In some Bible translations, this term is capitalized (“Teacher”) when it is used as a title for Jesus.

Translation Suggestions:

- The usual word for a teacher can be used to translate this term, unless that word is only used for a school teacher.
- Some cultures may have a special title that is used for religious teachers, such as “Sir” or “Rabbi” or “Preacher.”

(See also: [disciple](#), [preach](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[27-01]** One day, an expert in the Jewish law came to Jesus to test him, saying, “**Teacher**, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
- **[28-01]** One day a rich young ruler came up to Jesus and asked him, “Good **Teacher**, what must I do to have eternal life?”
- **[37-02]** After the two days had passed, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s go back to Judea.” “But **Teacher**,” the disciples answered, “Just a short time ago the people there wanted to kill you!”
- **[38-14]** Judas came to Jesus and said, “Greetings, **Teacher**,” and kissed him.
- **[49-03]** Jesus was also a great **teacher**, and he spoke with authority because he is the Son of God.

temple

Facts:

The temple was a building surrounded by walled courtyards where the Israelites came to pray and to offer sacrifices to God. It was located on Mount Moriah in the city of Jerusalem.

- Often the term “temple” refers to the whole temple complex, including the courtyards that surrounded the main building. Sometimes it refers only to the building.
- The temple building had two rooms, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.
- God referred to the temple as his dwelling place.
- During the reign of King Solomon he built the Temple, which was the permanent place of worship in Jerusalem.
- In the New Testament, the term “temple of the Holy Spirit” is used to refer to believers in Jesus, because the Holy Spirit lives in them.

Translation Suggestions:

- Usually when the text says that people were “in the temple,” it is referring to the courtyards outside the building. This could be translated as “in the temple courtyards” or “in the temple complex.”
- When it refers specifically to the building itself, some translations will translate “temple” as “temple building,” to make it clear what is being referred to.
- Ways to translate “temple” could include, “God’s holy house” or “sacred worship place.”
- Often in the Bible, the temple is referred to as “the house of Yahweh” or “the house of God.”

(See also: [sacrifice](#), [offering](#), [Solomon](#), [Babylon](#), [Babylonian](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [Spirit of God](#), [Spirit of the Lord](#), [tabernacle](#), [courtyard](#), [court Zion](#), [Mount Zion house](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[17-06]** David wanted to build a **temple** where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices.
- **[18-02]** In Jerusalem, Solomon built the **Temple** for which his father David had planned and gathered materials. Instead of at the Tent of Meeting, people now worshiped God and offered sacrifices to him at the **Temple**. God came and was present in the **Temple**, and he lived there with his people.
- **[20-07]** They (Babylonians) captured the city of Jerusalem, destroyed the **Temple**, and took away all the treasures.

- **[20-13]** When the people arrived in Jerusalem, they rebuilt the **Temple** and the wall around the city of the city and the **Temple**.
- **[25-04]** Then Satan took Jesus to the highest point on the **Temple** and said, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ‘God will command his angels to carry you so your foot does not hit a stone.’”
- **[40-07]** When he died, there was an earthquake and the large curtain that separated the people from the presence of God in the **Temple** was torn in two, from the top to the bottom.

tent

Definition:

A tent is a portable shelter made of sturdy fabric that is draped over a structure of poles and attached to them.

- Tents can be small, with just enough space for a few people to sleep in, or they can be very large, with space for an entire family to sleep, cook, and live in.
- For many people, tents are used as permanent dwelling places. For example, during most of the time that Abraham's family lived in the land of Canaan, they dwelled in large tents made of sturdy cloth made of goat hair.
- The Israelites also lived in tents during their forty-year wanderings through the desert of Sinai.
- The tabernacle building was a kind of very large tent, with thick walls made of cloth curtains.
- When the apostle Paul traveled to different cities to share the gospel, he made tents to earn money to support himself.
- The term "tents" is sometimes used figuratively to refer generally to where people live. This could also be translated as "homes" or "dwellings" or "houses." (See: [Synecdoche](#))

(See also: [Abraham](#), [Abram](#), [Canaan](#), [Canaanite](#), [curtain](#), [Paul](#), [Saul](#), [Sinai](#), [Mount Sinai](#), [tabernacle](#), [tent of meeting](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

trust, trustworthy, trustworthiness

Definition:

The term “trust” refers to believing that something or someone is true or dependable. A “trustworthy” person can be relied on to do and say what is right and true.

- 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 and 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](#), [believe in](#), [belief](#), [confidence](#), [confident](#), [faith](#), [faithful](#), [faithfulness](#), [true](#), [truth](#), [come true](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

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.
- [17-02] David was a humble and righteous man who **trusted** and obeyed God.
- [34-06] Then Jesus told a story about people who **trusted** in their own good deeds and despised other people.

unjust, unjustly, injustice

Definition:

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.

Translation Suggestions:

- 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: [Abstract Nouns](#))

(See also: [just](#), [justice](#), [justly](#), [unrighteous](#), [unrighteousness](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

vine

Definition:

The term “vine” refers to a plant that grows by trailing along the ground or by climbing trees and other structures. The word “vine” in the Bible is used only of fruit-bearing vines and usually refers to grape vines.

- In the Bible, the word “vine” almost always means, “grapevine.”
- The branches of the grapevine are attached to the main stem which gives them water and other nutrients so that they can grow.
- Jesus called himself the “vine” and called his people the “branches.” In this context, the word “vine” could also be translated as “grapevine stem” or “grape plant stem.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

(See also: [grape](#), [vineyard](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

vision

Facts:

The term “vision” refers to something that a person sees. It especially refers to something unusual or supernatural that God shows people in order to give them a message.

- Usually, visions are seen while the person is awake. However sometimes a vision is something a person sees in a dream while asleep.
- God sends visions to tell people something that is very important. For example, Peter was shown a vision to tell him that God wanted him to welcome Gentiles.

Translation Suggestion

- The phrase “saw a vision” could be translated as, “saw something unusual from God” or “God showed him something special.”
- Some languages may not have separate words for “vision” and “dream.” So a sentence such as, “Daniel had dreams and visions in his mind” could be translated as something like, “Daniel was dreaming while asleep and God caused him to see unusual things.”

(See also: [dream](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

watchtower, tower**Definition:**

The term “watchtower” refers to a tall structure built as a place from which guards could look out for any danger. These towers were often made of stone.

- Landowners sometimes built watchtowers from which they could guard their crops and protect them from being stolen.
- The towers often included rooms where the watchmen or family lived, so that they could guard the crops day and night.
- Watchtowers for cities were built higher than the city walls so that watchmen could see if any enemies were coming to attack the city.
- The term “watchtower” is also used as a symbol of protection from enemies. (See: [Metaphor](#))

(See also: [adversary](#), [enemy](#), [watch](#), [watchman](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

water, waters

Definition:

In addition to its primary meaning, “water” also often refers to a body of water, such as an ocean, sea, lake, or river.

- The term “waters” refers to bodies of water or many sources of water. It can also be a general reference for a large amount of water.
- A figurative use of “waters” refers to great distress, difficulties, and suffering. For example, God promises that when we “go through the waters” he will be with us.
- The phrase “many waters” emphasizes how great the difficulties are.
- To “water” livestock and other animals means to “provide water for” them. In Bible times, this usually involved drawing water from a well with a bucket and pouring the water into a trough or other container for the animals to drink from.
- In the Old Testament, God is referred to as the spring or fountain of “living waters” for his people. This means he is the source of spiritual power and refreshment.
- In the New Testament, Jesus used the phrase “living water” to refer to the Holy Spirit working in a person to transform and bring new life.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase, “draw water” could be translated as, “pull water up from a well with a bucket.”
- “Streams of living water will flow from them” could be translated as, “the power and blessings from the Holy Spirit will flow out of them them like streams of water.” Instead of “blessings” the term “gifts” or “fruits” or “godly character” could be used.
- When Jesus is talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, the phrase “living water” could be translated as “water that gives life” or “lifegiving water.” In this context, the imagery of water must be kept in the translation.
- Depending on the context, the term “waters” or “many waters” could be translated as “great suffering (that surrounds you like water)” or “overwhelming difficulties (like a flood of water)” or “large amounts of water.”

(See also: [life](#), [live](#), [living](#), [alive](#), [spirit](#), [spiritual](#), [Holy Spirit](#), [Spirit of God](#), [Spirit of the Lord](#), [power](#), [powers](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

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 refer 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:

Waiting

smashed

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:

Waiting

wolf, wolves, wild dogs

Definition:

A wolf is a fierce, meat-eating animal that is similar to a wild dog.

- Wolves usually hunt in groups and stalk their prey in a clever and stealthy manner.
- In the Bible, the term “wolves” is used figuratively to refer to false teachers or false prophets who destroy believers, who are compared to sheep. False teaching causes people to believe wrong things that bring harm to them.
- This comparison is based on the fact that sheep are especially vulnerable to being attacked and eaten by wolves, because they are weak and cannot defend themselves.

Translation Suggestion

- This term could be translated as “wild dog” or “wild animal.”
- Other names for wild dogs could be “jackal” or “coyote.”
- When used figuratively to refer to people, this could be translated as, “evil people who harm people like animals that attack sheep.”

(See also: [believer](#), [evil](#), [wicked](#), [wickedness](#), [false prophet](#), [sheep](#), [ram](#), [ewe](#), [teach](#), [teaching](#), [teacher](#), [taught](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

wrath, fury**Definition:**

Wrath is an intense anger that is sometimes long-lasting. It especially refers to God's righteous judgment of sin and punishment of people who rebel against him.

- In the Bible, "wrath" usually refers to God's anger toward those who sin 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."
- When talking about God's wrath, make sure the word or phrase used to translate this term does not refer to a sinful fit of rage. God's wrath is just and holy.

(See: [judge](#), [judgment](#), [sin](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

wrong, mistreat, hurt

Definition:

To “wrong” someone means to treat that person unjustly and dishonestly.

- The term “mistreat” means to act badly or roughly toward someone, causing physical or emotional harm to that person.
- The term “hurt” is more general and means “to cause someone harm in some way.” It often has the meaning of “physically injure.”
- Depending on the context, these terms could also be translated as, “do wrong to” or “treat unjustly” or “cause harm to” or “treat in a harmful way” or “injure.”

Bible References:

Waiting

Yahweh

Facts:

The term “Yahweh” is God’s personal name that he revealed when he spoke to Moses at the burning bush.

- The name “Yahweh” comes from the word that means, “to be” or “to exist.”
- Possible meanings of “Yahweh” include, “he is” or “I am” or “the one who causes to be.”
- This name reveals that God has always lived and will continue to live forever. It also means that he is always present.
- Following tradition, many Bible versions use the term “LORD” or “the LORD” to represent “Yahweh.” This tradition resulted from the fact that historically, the Jewish people became afraid of mispronouncing Yahweh’s name and started saying “Lord” every time the term “Yahweh” appeared in the text. Modern Bibles write “LORD” with all capital letters to show respect for God’s personal name and to distinguish it from “Lord” which is a different Hebrew word.
- The ULB and UDB texts always translate this term as, “Yahweh,” as it literally occurs in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.
- The term “Yahweh” does not ever occur in the original text of the New Testament; only the Greek term for “Lord” is used, even in quotes from the Old Testament.

Translation Suggestions:

- “Yahweh” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “I am” or “living one” or “the one who is” or “he who is alive.”
- This term could also be written in a way that is similar to how “Yahweh” is spelled.
- Some church denominations prefer not to use the term “Yahweh” and instead use the traditional rendering, “LORD.” An important consideration is that this may be confusing when read aloud because it will sound the same as the title “Lord.” Some languages may have an affix or other grammatical marker that could be added to distinguish “LORD” as a name (Yahweh) from “Lord” as a title.

(Translation suggestions: [How to Translate Names](#))

(See also: [God](#), [lord](#), [master](#), [sir](#), [Lord](#), [Moses](#), [reveal](#), [revelation](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **[09-14]** 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.’”

- **[13-04]** 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."
- **[13-05]** "Do not make idols or worship them, for I, **Yahweh**, am a jealous God."
- **[16-01]** 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."

Yahweh of hosts, God of hosts, host

Definition:

The terms “Yahweh of hosts” and “God of hosts” are titles that express God’s authority over the thousands of angels who obey him.

- The term “host” or “hosts” is a word that refers to a large number of something, such as an army of people or the massive number of stars. It can also refer to all the many spirit beings, including evil spirits. The context makes it clear what is being referred to.
- Phrases similar to “host of the heavens” refer to all the stars, planets and other heavenly bodies.
- In the New Testament, the phrase, “Lord of hosts” means the same as “Yahweh of hosts” but it cannot be translated that way since the Hebrew word “Yahweh” is not used in the New Testament.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “Yahweh of hosts” could include, “Yahweh, who rules all the angels” or “Yahweh, the ruler over armies of angels” or “Yahweh, the ruler of all creation.”
- The phrase “of hosts” in the terms “God of hosts” and “Lord of hosts” would be translated the same way as in the phrase “Yahweh of hosts” above.
- Certain churches do not accept the literal term “Yahweh” and prefer to use the capitalized word, “LORD” instead, following the tradition of many Bible versions. For these churches, a translation of the term “LORD of hosts” would be used in the Old Testament for “Yahweh of hosts.”

(See also: [angel](#), [archangel](#), [authority](#), [God](#), [lord](#), [master](#), [sir](#), [Lord](#), [Lord Yahweh](#), [Yahweh God Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

Waiting

translationAcademy

Abstract Nouns

This answers the question: What are abstract nouns and how do I deal with them in my translation?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Parts of Speech*
- *Sentences*

Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even to relationships among these ideas. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, injury, 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. For example, "What is its *weight*?" could be expressed as "How much does it *weigh*?" or "How *heavy* is it?"

Description

Remember that nouns are words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea. **ABSTRACT NOUNS** are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even to relationships among these 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, and weight.

Abstract nouns allow us to express thoughts about ideas in fewer words than if we did not have those nouns. For example, we can say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin." But if English did not have the two abstract nouns "forgiveness" and "sin," then we would have to make a longer sentence to express the same meaning. We would have to say, for example, "I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned."

Abstract nouns also allow us to refer to a situation without telling more details about it than we want to tell. For example, we can say "I got here late because there was an accident on the highway." "Accident" is an abstract noun. If it does not matter whose accident it was, or what kind of accident it was, then it can be better if I do not have to say these things about it.

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 have other kinds of words such as adjectives, verbs, or adverbs, that express some of the meaning in the abstract noun.

Examples from the Bible

from *childhood* you have known the sacred writings (2 Timothy 3:15 ULB)

The abstract noun "childhood" refers to when someone is a child.

But *godliness with contentment* is great *gain*. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULB)

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 ULB)

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 3:9 ULB)

The abstract noun “slowness” refers how slowly something is done.

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the *purposes* of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5 ULB)

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.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun.

- **from *childhood* you have known the sacred writings** (2 Timothy 3:15 ULB)
 - “Ever since *you were a child* you have known the sacred writings.”
- **But *godliness with contentment* is great *gain*.** (1 Timothy 6:6 ULB)
 - “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 ULB)
 - “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 3:9 ULB)
 - "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 4:5 ULB)
 - "He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal *the things that people want to do and the reasons they want to do them.*"

Doublet

This answers the question: What are doublets and how can I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*

A doublet is a pair of words used together that mean nearly the same nearly thing. In some languages people do not use doublets, or they may use them only in certain situations. Translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning.

King David was *old* and *advanced in years*. (1 Kings 1:1 ULB)

The underlined words mean the same thing. Together they mean “very old.”

Description

We are using the word doublet to refer to two words or very short phrases that mean the same thing and that are used in the same phrase. Often they are joined with the word “and.” Often they are used to emphasize or intensify the idea expressed by the two words.

Reason this is a translation issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but they may do it for a reason that would not fit in a particular verse.

Examples from the Bible

King David was *old* and *advanced in years*. (1 Kings 1:1 ULB)

This means that he was “very old.”

he attacked two men *more righteous* and *better* than himself (1 Kings 2:32 ULB)

This means that they were “much more righteous” than he was.

You have decided to prepare *false* and *deceptive* words (Daniel 2:9 ULB)

This means that they had prepared “many false things to say.”

as of a lamb *without blemish* and *without spot*. (1 Peter 1:19 ULB)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any blemish—not even one.

Translation Strategies

If a doublet would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using one. If not, consider these strategies.

1. Translate only one of the words.
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.”
3. If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use your culture’s way of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

1. Translate only one of the words.

- **You have decided to prepare *false* and *deceptive* words** (Daniel 2:9 ULB)

- ”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.”

- **King David was *old* and *advanced in years***. (1 Kings 1:1 ULB)

- ”King David was *very old*.”

3. If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

- **a lamb *without blemish* and *without spot***. (1 Peter 1:19 ULB) - English can emphasize this with “any” and “at all.”

- ”a lamb *without any blemish at all*”

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

This answers the question: What are assumed knowledge, implicit information, and explicit information?

Assumed knowledge is whatever a speaker assumes his audience knows before he speaks and gives them some kind of information. There are two types information.

- **Explicit information** is what the speaker states directly.
- **Implicit information** is what the speaker does not state directly because he expects his audience to be able to learn it from what he says.

Description

When someone speaks or writes, he has something specific that he wants people to know. He normally states this directly. This is **explicit information**.

The speaker assumes that his audience already knows certain things that they will think about in order to understand this information. Normally he does not tell people these things, although what he says may remind 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. Information that he expects people to learn from what he says even though he does not state it directly is **implicit information**.

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 8:20 ULB)

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. 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 it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. (Matthew 11:21, 22 ULB)

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 because the people he was speaking to did not repent, they would be judged more severely than the people of Tyre and Sidon would be judged.

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For *they do not wash their hands when they eat*. (Matthew 15:2 ULB)

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. They were accusing his disciples of not following the traditions. This is **implicit information** that they wanted him to understand from what they said.

Next we recommend you learn about:

- *Making Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information Explicit*

Hyperbole

This answers the question: What is hyperbole?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*

Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which the speaker shows that something is very important by describing it as larger or greater than it really is. He may greatly exaggerate something in order to show his strong feeling or opinion about it, or he may generalize the situation by using words like “every” or “all” to mean “many.”

Description

Hyperbole is a figure of speech in which the speaker shows that something is very important by describing it as larger or greater than it really is. There are two kinds of hyperbole:

1. Exaggeration: This is when a speaker deliberately describes something by an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it.

Whoever does not *carry his own cross* and come after me cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:27 ULB) - This is an exaggeration. It means that whoever wants to be Jesus’ disciple must be determined to follow him faithfully, even if his enemies were to kill that person.

2. Generalization: This is when a speaker uses words like “every” or “all” to mean something like “very many,” but not “every one.” (Some people may not call generalization like this “hyperbole.”)

Moses was educated in *all the learning of the Egyptians* (Acts 7:22 ULB) - This is a generalization. It means that he had learned much of what the Egyptians knew and taught.

Reason this is a translation issue

If readers do not understand that a statement is a hyperbole, they may either think that something happened that did not happen, or they may think that the speaker or writer was saying something that is not true.

Examples from the Bible

Examples of Exaggeration

If your hand causes you to stumble, *cut it off*. It is better for you to enter into life maimed... (Mark 9:43 ULB)

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.

If anyone comes to me and does not *hate* his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters—yes, and his own life also—he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:26 ULB)

Because of many other things that Jesus said, we know that his use of the word “hate” here is hyperbole. He meant that we must not love even our own family members more than we love him. We must love him more than we love ourselves or anyone else.

The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: thirty thousand chariots, six thousand men to drive the chariots, and troops *as numerous as the sand on the seashore*. (1 Samuel 13:5 ULB)

The underlined phrase is an exaggeration. It means that there were many, many soldiers in the Philistine army.

Examples of Generalization

They found him, and they said to him, “*Everyone* is looking for you.” (Mark 1:37 ULB)

The disciples told Jesus that everyone was looking looking for him. They probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for him, but that many people were looking for him, or that all of Jesus closest friends there were looking for him.

But as his anointing teaches you about *all things* and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27 ULB)

This is a generalization. God’s Spirit teaches us about all things that we need to know.

Caution

Do not assume that something is hyperbole just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

... they saw Jesus *walking on the sea* and coming near the boat ... (John 6:19 ULB)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

... for *all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23 ULB)

The word “all” here is not hyperbole. All humans have sinned. The only human who has never sinned is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here is another option.

1. Express the meaning without the hyperbole. For example “all the people” could be translated as “large crowds of people.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Express the meaning without the hyperbole.

- **If anyone comes to me and does not *hate* his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters—yes, and his own life also—he cannot be my disciple.** (Luke 14:26 ULB)
 - “If anyone comes to me and does not *love me much more than* he loves his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters—yes, and his own life also—he cannot be my disciple.”
- **The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: thirty thousand chariots, six thousand men to drive the chariots, and troops *as numerous as the sand on the seashore*.** (1 Samuel 13:5 ULB)
 - “The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: thirty thousand chariots, six thousand men to drive the chariots, and *a great number of troops*.”

Idiom

This answers the question: What are idioms and how can I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*

An idiom is a certain kind of figure of speech, the kind that usually cannot be correctly understood without being told its true meaning. Every language has them. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg (This means, “You are telling me a lie”)
- 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 that uses it. Its meaning may be different from what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

he resolutely *set his face* to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51 ULB)

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 should *enter under my roof*. (Luke 7:6 ULB)

The words “enter under my roof” is an idiom that means “enter my house.”

Let these words go deeply into your ears (Luke 9:44 ULB)

This idiom means “Listen carefully and remember what I say.”

Purpose: An idiom is created in a culture probably 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.

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 originally wrote 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.

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 ULB)

This means, “We and you belong to the same race, the same family.”

The kings of the earth take their stand together (Psalm 2:2 ULB)

This means, “The kings on earth plan together.”

the one who lifts up my head” (Psalm 3:3 ULB)

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 ULB)
 - “...Look, we all belong to the same nation.”
- **he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem.** (Luke 9:51 ULB)
 - “He started to travel to Jerusalem, determined to reach it.”
- **I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.** (Luke 7:6 ULB)
 - “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.

- **Let these words go deeply into your ears** (Luke 9:44 ULB)
 - “Be all ears when I say these words to you.”
- **”My eyes grow dim from grief** (Psalm 6:7ULB)
 - “I am crying my eyes out”

Metaphor

This answers the question: What is a metaphor and how can I translate a sentence that has one?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*
- *Simile*

Description

A metaphor is the use of words to speak of one thing as if it were a different thing. Sometimes a speaker does this in ways that are very common in the language. At other times, a speaker does this in ways that are less common in the language and that might even be unique.

1. First we will discuss very common metaphors.

The metaphors that are very common in a language are usually not very vivid. They may even be “dead.” Examples in English are “table leg,” “family tree,” and “the price of food is going up.” Examples in biblical languages are “hand” to mean “power,” “face” to mean “presence,” and “clothing” to mean emotions or moral qualities.

Metaphors like these are in constant use in the world’s languages, because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, languages speak of abstract qualities, such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities, as if they were objects that can be seen or held, or as if they were body parts, or as if they were events that you can watch happen.

When these metaphors are used in their normal ways, the speaker and audience do not normally even regard them as figurative language. This is why, for example, it would be wrong to translate the English expression, “The price of petrol is going up” into another language in a way that would draw undeserved attention to it, because English speakers do not view it as a vivid expression, that is, as an unusual expression that carries meaning in an unusual manner.

For a description of important patterns of this kind of metaphor, please see [Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#) and the pages it will direct you to.

2. Next we will discuss the less common metaphors, metaphors that are sometimes even unique in a language.

The speaker usually produces metaphors of this kind in order to emphasize the importance of what he is talking about. For example,

For you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings.
(Malachi 4:2 ULB)

Here God speaks about his salvation as if it were the sun rising to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. And he 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.

We call this kind of metaphor “live.” It is unique in the biblical languages, which means that it is very memorable.

Parts of a Metaphor

When talking about metaphors, it can be helpful to talk about their parts. The thing someone speaks of is called the **topic**. The thing he calls it is the **image**. The way that they are similar is the **point of comparison**.

In the metaphor below, the speaker describes the woman he loves as a rose. The woman (his “love”) is the topic and the red rose is the image. Both are beautiful and delicate.

- My love is a red, red rose.

1. Sometimes the **topic** and the **image** are both stated clearly.

Jesus said to them. *“I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will not hunger, and he who believes on me will never thirst.”* (John 6:35 ULB)

Jesus called himself the bread of life. The topic is “I” and the image is “bread.” Bread is a food that people ate all the time. Just as people need to eat food in order to have physical life, people need to trust in Jesus in order to have spiritual life.

2. Sometimes only the **image** is stated clearly.

Produce *fruits* that are worthy of repentance (Luke 3:8 ULB)

The image here is “fruits”. The topic is not stated, but it is actions or behavior. Trees can produce good fruit or bad fruit, and people can produce good behavior or bad behavior. Fruits that are worthy of repentance are good behavior that is appropriate for people who have repented.

Purposes of this second kind 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 know (the **image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something has a particular quality or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about one thing as they would feel toward another.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- People may not realize that a word is being used as an image in a metaphor.
- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know how the topic and the image are alike.

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 it was to the original audience.

Examples from the Bible

And 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 ULB)

The example above has two metaphors. The topics are “we” and “you” and the images are “clay and ”potter.” Just as a potter takes clay and forms a jar or dish out of it, God makes us into what he wants us to be.

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 took no bread.” (Matthew 16:6-7 ULB)

Jesus used a metaphor, 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 about the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples 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. If not, here are some other strategies.

1. If the metaphor is common and seems to be a normal way to say something in the biblical language, express the main idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.
2. If the target audience would think that the phrase should be understood literally, change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.”
3. If the target audience would not know the **image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.
4. 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.
5. Or, if the target audience would not use that **image** for that meaning, simply state the truth that the metaphor was used to communicate.
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 how the topic is like the image, state it clearly.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If the metaphor is common and seems to be a normal way to say something in the biblical language, express the main idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.

- **For after David had in his own generation served the desires of God, *he fell asleep*, was laid with his fathers, and saw decay,** (Acts 13:36 ULB)

- "For after David had in his own generation served the desires of God, *he died*, was laid with his fathers, and saw decay."

2. If the target audience would think that the phrase should be understood literally, change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding "like" or "as."

- **And 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 ULB)

- "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."

3. 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 a goad*.** (Acts 26:14 ULB)

- "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against a pointed stick."

4. 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.

- **And 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 ULB)

- "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."

5. Or, if the target audience would not use that **image** for that meaning, simply state the truth that the metaphor was used to communicate.

- **I will make you become *fishers of men*.** (Mark 1:17 ULB)

- "I will make you become *people who gather men*."

- "Now you gather fish. I will make you *gather people*."

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 ULB)

- "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 how the topic is like the image, state it clearly.

- **Yahweh lives; may *my rock* be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.** (Psalm 18:46 ULB)
 - "Yahweh lives; may he be praised because like a huge rock, *he shields me 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 a goad*.** (Acts 26:14 ULB)
 - "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."

To learn more about common metaphors read:

- [Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#)

Metonymy

This answers the question: What is a metonymy?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*

Many times the Bible uses metonymy. If you do not recognize it as a metonymy you will not understand the passage or worse yet, get the wrong understanding of the passage.

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which a thing or idea 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 it is associated with.

and *the blood* of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7 ULB)

The blood represents Christ's death.

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 ULB)

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 concrete object associated with it.

Reason this is a translation issue

- If a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples from the Bible

The Lord God will give him *the throne* of his father, David. (Luke 1:32 ULB)

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 the king who was to follow King David.

Immediately his mouth was opened (Luke 1:64 ULB)

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 3:7 ULB)

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 is an option.

1. Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
2. Use 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.

- **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 ULB)
 - “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.”

2. Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

- **The Lord God will give him *the throne* of his father, David.** (Luke 1:32 ULB)
 - “The Lord God will give him *the kingly authority* of his father, David.”
 - “The Lord God will *make him king* like his ancestor, King David.”
- **who warned you to flee from *the wrath* to come?** (Luke 3:7 ULB)
 - “who warned you to flee from God’s coming *punishment*?”

To learn about some common metonymies, we suggest you read:

- [Biblical Imagery - Common Metonymies](#)

Parables

This answers the question: What is a parable?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*

A parable is a short story that makes truth easy to understand and hard to forget.

Description

A parable is a short story that is told to teach a truth. Though the events in a parable could happen, they did not actually happen. They are told only to teach a truth. Parables rarely contain the names of specific people. (This may help you identify what is a parable and what is an account of a real event.) Parables often have figures of speech such as simile and metaphor.

Then he also told them a parable. “Can a blind person guide another blind person? If he did, they would both fall into a pit, would they not?” (Luke 6:39 ULB)

This parable teaches that if a person does not have spiritual understanding, he cannot help someone else to understand spiritual things.

Examples from the Bible

Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but rather, on the lampstand, and it shines for everyone in the house. Let your light shine before people in such a way that they see your good deeds and praise your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:15-16 ULB)

This parable teaches us not to hide the way we live for God from other people.

Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all other seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” (Matthew 13:31-32 ULB)

This parable teaches that the kingdom of God may seem small at first, but it will grow and spread throughout the world.

Translation Strategies

1. If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown things in it, you can replace the unknown things with things that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the teaching the same. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

2. If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as “Jesus told this story about being generous.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If a parable is hard to understand because it has unknown things in it, you can replace the unknown things with things that people in your culture know. However, be careful to keep the teaching the same.

- **Jesus said to them, “Do you bring a lamp inside the house to put it under a basket, or under the bed? You bring it in and you put it on a lampstand”.** (Mark 4:21 ULB) - If people do not know what a lampstand is, you could substitute something else that people put a light on so it can give light to the house.
 - Jesus said to them, “Do you bring a lamp inside the house to put it under a basket, or under the bed? You bring it in and you put it on a *high shelf*.”
- **Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all other seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.”** (Matthew 13:31-32) - To sow seeds means to toss them so that they scatter on the ground. If people are not familiar with sowing, you can substitute planting.
 - “Then Jesus presented another parable to them. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which a man took and *planted* in his field. This seed is indeed the smallest of all other seeds. But when it has grown, it is greater than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” ”

2. If the teaching of the parable is unclear, consider telling a little about what it teaches in the introduction, such as “Jesus told this story about being generous.”

- **Jesus said to them, “Do you bring a lamp inside the house to put it under a basket, or under the bed? You bring it in and you put it on a lampstand”.** (Mark 4:21 ULB)
 - *”Jesus told them a parable about why they should witness openly. “Do you bring a lamp inside the house to put it under a basket, or under the bed? You bring it in and you put it on a lampstand.” ”* (Mark 4:21 ULB)
- **He said, “To what can we compare the kingdom of God and what parable can we use to explain it? It is like a mustard seed, which when it is sown it is the smallest of all the seeds sown that lay upon the ground. Yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all the garden plants. It puts out great branches, so even the birds of heaven can make their nests under its shade.”** (Mark 4:30-32 ULB)

- *”He told them a story about how the Kingdom of God grows. “To what can we compare the kingdom of God and what parable can we use to explain it? It is like a mustard seed, which when it is sown it is the smallest of all the seeds sown that lay upon the ground. Yet when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all the garden plants. It puts out great branches, so even the birds of heaven can make their nests under its shade.”*

Parallelism

This answers the question: What is parallelism?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*

Description

In **parallelism** two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. There are different kinds of parallelism. Some of them are the following:

1. The second clause or phrase means the same as the first.
2. The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
3. The second completes what is said in the first.
4. The second says something that contrasts with the first.

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.

Reason this is a translation issue

Some languages would not use the kind of parallelism in which the two phrases mean the same thing. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or they think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning.

Examples from the Bible

1. The second clause or phrase means the same as the first.

You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULB)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything.

2. The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.

The eyes of Yahweh are everywhere,
keeping watch over the evil and the good. (Proverbs 15:3 ULB)

The second line tells more specifically what Yahweh watches.

3. The second completes what is said in the first.

I lift up my voice to Yahweh,
and he answers me from his holy hill. (Psalm 3:4 ULB)

The second line tells what Yahweh does in response to what the person does in the first clause.

4. The second says something that contrasts with the first.

For Yahweh approves of the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked will perish. (Psalm 1:6 ULB)

This contrasts what happens to righteous people with what happens to wicked people.

A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger. (Proverbs 15:1 ULB)

This contrasts what happens when someone gives a gentle answer with what happens when someone says something harsh.

Translation Strategies

1. For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases.
2. When the two clauses or phrases mean the same thing, some languages would not translate them both. (See [Parallelism with the Same Meaning](#))

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(See [Parallelism with the Same Meaning](#))

Next we recommend you learn about:

- [Parallelism with the Same Meaning](#)

Personification

This answers the question: What is personification?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*

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 speak this way because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see, such as wisdom and sin.

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1 ULB)

sin crouches at the door (Genesis 4:7 ULB)

Some languages do not use personification, and some languages use it only in certain situations.

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, sin, and wind. For example:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1 ULB)

sin crouches at the door (Genesis 4:7 ULB)

People also do this because it is sometimes easier to talk about relationships between people and other people than about relationships between people and non-human things, such as wealth.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24 ULB)

Reason 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 6:24 ULB)

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 ULB)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they are a woman who calls out to teach people. They are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would not be understood clearly, here are some strategies for dealing with it.

1. Add words or phrases to make it clear.
2. Use the words “like” or “as” to show that the sentences 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 it clear.

- **sin crouches at the door** (Genesis 4:7 ULB) - God speaks of sin as 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. Use the words “like” or “as” to show that the sentences is not to be understood literally.

- **sin crouches at the door** (Genesis 4:7 ULB) - This can be translated with the word “as.”

- “sin is about to destroy you, just *as* a wild animal could harm a person.”

3. Find a way to translate it without the personification.

- **even the winds and the sea obey him** (Matthew 8:27 ULB) - The men speak of the wind and the sea as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus 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 other things as if they had human characteristics).

Next we recommend you learn about:

- *Apostrophe*
- *Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns*

Rhetorical Question

This answers the question: What are rhetorical questions and how can I translate them?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*
- *Sentences*

A rhetorical question is a question to which the speaker does not expect an answer because he is not looking for information. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express sarcasm or to rebuke or scold the hearer. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other reasons as well.

Description

A rhetorical question is a question to which the speaker does not expect an answer because he is not looking for information. Speakers often use rhetorical questions to rebuke or scold people.

Those who stood by said, *Is this how you insult God's high priest?*" (Acts 23:4 ULB) The people did not ask this question in order to get information. Rather they used it to scold Paul because they did not think he should have spoken as he did to the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. Some of the purposes of these rhetorical questions are to remind people of something that they already know, to express strong emotion, to say something in a strong way, or to introduce something they want to talk about.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Some readers may think that a question is a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions only for scolding.
- Some readers might think that the purpose of a question is something other than what it really is.

Examples from the Bible

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7 ULB)

Jezebel used the question above to remind King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. She did this in order to rebuke him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that since he was the king of Israel he should feel free to take the man's property.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULB)

God used the question above to remind his people of something they already knew: a woman would never forget her jewelry and veils. He then rebuked his people for forgetting him, who is so much greater than those things.

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11 ULB)

Job used the question above to show how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

And why has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULB)

Elizabeth used the question above to show how surprised and happy she was that the mother of her Lord came to her.

Or what man among you is there who, if his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULB)

Jesus used the question above to remind the people of something they already knew: a good father would never give his son something bad to eat.

Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give good things to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11 ULB)

Jesus used this question to teach the people in an emphatic way that God gives good things to those who ask him.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed which a man took and threw into his garden... (Luke 13:18-19 ULB)

Jesus used the question above to introduce what he was going to talk about. He was going to compare the kingdom of God to something.

Translation Strategies

Be sure you know that you are dealing with a rhetorical question and not an information question. Then be sure you know what the purpose of the rhetorical question is. Is it to encourage or rebuke or shame the hearer? Is it to bring up a new topic? Is it to do something else?

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

1. Add the answer after the question.
2. Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
3. Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Add the answer after the question.

- **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!** (Jeremiah 2:32 ULB)
 - *Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Of course not! Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!*
- **Or what man among you is there who, if his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone?** (Matthew 7:9 ULB)
 - *”Or what man among you is there who, if his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone? None of you would do that!”*

2. Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

- **What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed...** (Luke 13:18-19 ULB)
 - *“This is what the kingdom of God is like. It is like a mustard seed...”*
- **Is this how you insult God’s high priest?** (Acts 23:4 ULB)
 - *You should not insult God’s high priest!”*
- **Why did I not die when I came out from the womb?** (Job 3:11 ULB)
 - *I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!”*
- **And why has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?** (Luke 1:43 ULB)
 - *“How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!”*

3. Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

- **Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel?** (1 Kings 21:7 ULB)
 - *”You still rule the kingdom of Israel, don’t you?”*

Simile

This answers the question: What is a simile?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. One is said to be “like” the other. It focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as” or “than.”

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. It 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 worried and confused, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. (Matthew 9:36 ULB)

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 serpents* and harmless *as doves*. (Matthew 10:16 ULB)

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 4:12 ULB)

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 the item that something is compared to.

Examples from the Bible

Suffer hardship with me, *as a good soldier of Christ Jesus*. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULB)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

for as the lightning appears when it flashes from one part of the sky to another part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in his day. (Luke 17:24 ULB)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But from the context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lightning 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.
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 10:16 ULB) - 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 4:12 ULB)
 - "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.

- **See, I send you out *as sheep in the midst of wolves***, (Matthew 10:16 ULB) - 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 did not agree!** (Matthew 23:37 ULB)
 - How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a mother closely watches over her infants, but you refused!
- **If you have faith even as small as a grain of mustard**, (Matthew 17:20 ULB)
 - "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 10:16 ULB)
 - "See, I send you out and people 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 did not agree!** (Matthew 23:37 ULB)
 - "How often I wanted to protect you, but you refused!"

Next we recommend you learn about:

- *Metaphor*
- *Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns*

Synecdoche

This answers the question: What does the word synecdoche mean?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*

Synecdoche is when a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole or uses the whole to refer to a part.

Description

Synecdoche is when a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole or uses the whole to refer to a part.

My soul exalts the Lord. (Luke 1:46 ULB)

Mary was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said “my soul”, the part of herself that has emotions, to refer to her whole self.

the Pharisees said to him, “Look, why are they doing something that is not lawful ...?”
(Mark 2:24 ULB)

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 understand the words literally.
- 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

I looked on all the deeds that *my hands* had accomplished (Ecclesiastes 2:11 ULB)

“My hands” is a synecdoche for the whole person, because clearly the legs and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved.

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 exalts the Lord.** (Luke 1:46 ULB)
 - "I exalt the Lord."
- **the Pharisees said to him** (Mark 2:24 ULB)
 - "a representative of the Pharisees said to him"
- **I looked on all the deeds that my hands had accomplished** (Ecclesiastes 2:11 ULB)
 - "I looked on all the deeds that I had accomplished"

Next we recommend you learn about:

- *Metonymy*
- *Biblical Imagery - Common Metonymies*

Forms of You

This answers the question: What are the different forms of you?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Forms of 'You' - Singular*
- *Forms of 'You' - Dual/Plural*

Singular, Dual, and Plural

Some languages have more than one word for “you” based on how many people the word “you” refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some have other forms that refer to three or four people.

Watch the video for Singular, Dual, and Plural “you” for computer (see <http://youtu.be/cPtjzJ2Advk>) or tablet/phone (see <http://youtu.be/AVITfDEk8nc>).

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of “you” even though he is speaking to a crowd.

- *Forms of 'You' - Singular to a Crowd*

Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of “you” based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend. Watch the video on Formal and Informal ‘You’ on the **computer** or on the **tablet/phone**. For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- *Forms of “You” - Formal or Informal*

How to Translate Names

This answers the question: How can I translate names that are new to my culture?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Translate Unknowns*

The Bible has 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.

Description

The Bible has names of many people, groups of people, and places. All 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.

It was this *Melchizedek*, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1ULB)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” simply to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” simply to tell us something about Melchizedek.

His name “Melchizedek” means “king of righteousness,” and also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace. (Hebrews 7:2 ULB)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title.

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.
- 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

You went over the *Jordan* and came to *Jericho*. The leaders of Jericho fought against you, along with the *Amorites* (Joshua 24:11 ULB)

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 *Beerlahairoi*; (Genesis 16:13-14 ULB)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that “Beerlahairoi” means “Well of the the Living One who sees me.”

She named him *Moses* and said, “Because I drew him from the water.” (Exodus 2:11 ULB)

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 death (Acts 8:1 ULB)

It came about in Iconium that *Paul* and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULB)

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.
4. If a person or place has two different names, use one name all of the time and write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
5. Or use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that explains who or what the name refers to.

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.

- **You went over the *Jordan* and came to *Jericho*. The leaders of *Jericho* fought against you, along with the *Amorites*** (Joshua 24:11 ULB)
 - “You went over the *Jordan River* and came to the city of *Jericho*. The leaders of *Jericho* fought against you, along with *the tribe of the Amorites*”
- **Shortly after, some *Pharisees* came and said to him, “Go and leave here because *Herod* wants to kill you.”** (Luke 13:31 ULB)

- “Shortly after, some Pharisees came and said 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.

- **She named him *Moses* and said, “Because I drew him from the water.”** (Exodus 2:11 ULB)
 - “She named him *Moses*, which sounds like ‘drawn out,’ and said, “Because I drew him from the water.”

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.

- **she said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore the well was called *Beerlahairoi*;** (Genesis 16:13-14 ULB)
 - “she said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore the well was called *Well of the 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 talks about 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 7:58 ULB)
 - “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.

- **But *Saul*, who is also called *Paul*, was filled with the Holy Spirit;** (Acts 13:9 ULB)
 - “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 explains who or what the name refers to.

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 ULB)
 - “a young man named *Saul*”
- **But *Saul*, who is also called *Paul*, was filled with the Holy Spirit;** (Acts 13:9 ULB) *
 “But __Saul__, who is also called __Paul__, was filled with the Holy Spirit;” * **It came about in Iconium that __Paul__ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue**
 ([[en:bible:notes:act:14:01 | Acts 14:1 ULB)

- "It came about in Iconium that *Paul*¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue"
(Acts 14:1 ULB) The footnote would look like:
 - ◇ ^[1]This is the man that was called Saul before Acts 13.

Next we recommend you learn about:

- *Copy or Borrow Words*

Translate Unknowns

This answers the question: How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Sentences*

How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The translationWords pages and the translationNotes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

We have here only five loaves of *bread* and two fish (Matthew 14:17 ULB)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread or know what it is.

Reason this is a translation issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God's commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples from the Bible

I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for *jackals* (Jeremiah 9:11 ULB)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

Beware of false prophets, those who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are truly ravenous *wolves*. (Matthew 7:15 ULB)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with *myrrh*. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULB)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

to him who made *great lights* (Psalm 136:7ULB)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

your sins ... will be white like *snow* (Isaiah 1:18 ULB)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

1. Use a phrase that describes the part of the meaning that is important in the particular verse being translated.
2. Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
3. Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
4. Use a word that is more general in meaning.
5. Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use a phrase that describes the part of the meaning that is important in the particular verse being translated.

- **Beware of false prophets, those who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are truly ravenous wolves.** (Matthew 7:15 ULB)
 - "Beware of false prophets, those who come to you in sheep's clothing, but *are truly hungry and dangerous animals.*"
- **We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish** (Matthew 14:17 ULB)
 - "We have here only five *loaves of baked grain seeds* and two fish"

2. Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

- **your sins ... will be white like *snow*** (Isaiah 1:18 ULB) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.
 - "your sins ... will be white like *milk*"
 - "your sins ... will be white like *the moon*"

3. Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

- **Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with *myrrh*. But he refused to drink it.** (Mark 15:23 ULB) - People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word "medicine."
 - "Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with *a medicine called myrrh*. But he refused to drink it."
- **We have here only five loaves of *bread* and two fish** (Matthew 14:17 ULB) - People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).
 - "We have here only five loaves of *baked crushed seed bread* and two fish"

4. Use a word that is more general in meaning.

- **I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for *jackals*** (Jeremiah 9:11 ULB)
 - "I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for *wild dogs*"
- **We have here only five loaves of *bread* and two fish** (Matthew 14:17 ULB)
 - "We have here only five *loaves of baked food* and two fish"

5. Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

- **to him who made *great lights*** (Psalm 136:7 ULB)
 - "to him who made *the sun and the moon*"

Next we recommend you learn about:

- *Copy or Borrow Words*
- *How to Translate Names*

Poetry

This answers the question: What is poetry and how do I translate it into my language?

In order to understand this topic, it would be good to read:

- *Figures of Speech*
- *Writing Styles*

Poetry combines figures of speech with pleasant sounds and deep feelings to make a passage both beautiful and easier to remember.

Description

Poetry is one of various way in which to use words to make the writing more beautiful and to show the feeling. It is used to express a stronger emotional feeling than simple non-poetic forms would express. Poetry is easier to remember and tends to last longer than ordinary speech.

Some things commonly found in poetry

- Many figures of speech such as **Metaphor**, **Simile**, **Metonymy**, **Personification**, and **Apostrophe**.
- Parallel lines (See: **Parallelism** and **Parallelism with the Same Meaning**)
- Repetition of some or all of a line
 - **Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his angel armies. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars.** (Psalm 148:2-3 ULB)
- Lines of similar length.
 - **Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude.** (1 Corinthians 13:4 ULB)
- 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)
- Old words and expressions

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 the 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.
- 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 poetry.

for you saw my affliction;
you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7 ULB)

This example of **Parallelism with the Same Meaning** has two lines that mean the same thing.

Yahweh, judge the nations;
vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High.

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 19:13 ULB)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See: **Personification**)

Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
Oh, give thanks to the God of gods, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his covenant faithfulness endures forever.
(Psalm 136:1-3 ULB)

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 ULB)

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, or stop along the road to speak with sinners, or 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 with those who do not respect God. They love to obey Yahweh’s law, and they think about it all the time.”

Next we recommend you learn about:

- *Symbolic Language*