



Nahum

translationNotes

v11

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Version: 11

Published: 2017-11-29

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translationNotes

Introduction to Nahum

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Nahum

1. Nahum introduces this book (1:1)
2. Yahweh will destroy his enemies (1:2-15)
3. Nahum describes how Nineveh will fall (2:1–3:19)

What is the Book of Nahum about?

The Book of Nahum contains prophecies about how Yahweh would judge and punish Nineveh.

Nineveh was the capital city of the Assyrian Empire. The Assyrians had already conquered the northern kingdom of Israel. They were threatening the southern kingdom of Judah. The book gave Judah hope that the Assyrians would be defeated.

How should the title of this book be translated?

“The Book of Nahum” or just “Nahum” is the traditional title of this book. Translators may choose to call it “The Sayings of Nahum.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Who wrote the Book of Nahum?

The prophet Nahum probably wrote this book. He was a prophet from Elkosh, an unknown city probably in Judah.

Nahum wrote before Nineveh fell in about 612 B.C. Nahum also mentions the destruction of Thebes, a city in Egypt, which happened about 663 B.C. Therefore, the Book of Nahum was written sometime between 663 and 612 B.C. (See: [prophet, prophets, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess](#))

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the importance of the descriptions of locusts in 3:15–17?

Locust attacks occurred often in the ancient Near East. Certain kinds of grasshoppers would come in countless numbers. There would be so many that they would darken the sky like a black cloud that blocked the sunlight. They often came after a long period of no rain. They came down on whatever crops were surviving in the fields and stripped them bare of their leaves. The locusts could not be stopped and caused terrible damage. For this reason, locust attacks served as a powerful image of military attacks in the Old Testament.

The original language of the Old Testament used various names for locusts. It is uncertain whether these names refer to different kinds of locusts or to the same kind of locust in different stages of growth. For this reason, versions of the Bible differ in how they translate these terms.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What emotions were present in the various speakers in the Book of Nahum?

When Nahum spoke to the Israelites, he wanted to comfort them.

When Nahum and Yahweh spoke against the Ninevites, they often mocked them. This manner of speech was similar to speech in the ancient Near East when conquerors laughed at their victims.

It is important for translators to present both emotions of comfort and of mockery when translating this book.

Nahum 01 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers and songs. The ULB and many other English translations set the lines of the entire book (except for verse 1 of this chapter) farther to the right on the page than regular text because they are poetic prophecy. (See: [prophet](#), [prophets](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Despite being divided into three chapters, this book consists of one long prophecy.

Special concepts in this chapter

Yahweh's anger against Nineveh

This prophecy should be read in reference to the book of Jonah. That book described how the people of Niniveh, Assyria's capital city, repented when Jonah warned them that Yahweh was angry at them. The book of Nahum, written a little over one hundred years later than when Jonah was set, indicates that the Ninevites would be punished by God, but only after he had used them for his own purposes. These actions of Yahweh, although described as vengeance or anger, do not have the same sinful quality as they usually do with humans. (See: [evil](#), [wicked](#), [wickedness](#), [avenge](#), [avenges](#), [avenged](#), [avenging](#), [avenger](#), [revenge](#), [vengeance](#) and [sin](#), [sins](#), [sinned](#), [sinful](#), [sinner](#), [sinning](#))

Complete destruction

At that time, Assyria controlled almost the entire Near East. Nahum prophesied that the Assyrians would be so completely destroyed as a nation that they would no longer even be a people group. This prophecy came true very suddenly.

Links:

- [Nahum 01:01 Notes](#)
- [Nahum intro](#)

Nahum 1:1

UDB:

¹ I am Nahum, from the village of Elkosh. This is a message about the city of Nineveh, a message that Yahweh gave me in a vision.

ULB:

¹ The declaration about Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum, the Elkoshite.

translationNotes

General Information:

Nahum describes the destruction of Nineveh in poetry. (See: [Parallelism](#))

The declaration about Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum, the Elkoshite

These words are an introduction to the entire book. This can be stated as a complete sentence. AT: “This is the book of the vision of Nahum, the Elkoshite, which gives a declaration about Nineveh” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Elkoshite

A person from the village of Elkosh (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

translationWords

- [declare, declares, declared, declaring, declaration, declarations](#)
- [Nineveh, Ninevite](#)
- [vision, visions, envision](#)
- [Nahum](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 1 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 1:2-3**UDB:**

² Yahweh our God tolerates no rival gods to himself.

He is very angry with those who worship other gods,
and he continues to be angry with his enemies.

³ Yahweh does not quickly become angry;

but he is very powerful,
and he will never say that his enemies are innocent.

Wherever he walks, there are whirlwinds and storms,
and clouds are like the dust stirred up by his feet.

ULB:

² Yahweh is a jealous God and avenges; Yahweh avenges and is full of wrath;

Yahweh takes vengeance on his adversaries, and he continues his anger for his enemies.

³ Yahweh is slow to anger and great in power; he will not allow the wicked to go unpunished.

Yahweh makes his way in the whirlwind and the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Nahum begins to describe Yahweh coming to judge his enemies and to save his people. The vision is full of metaphorical language and uses different kinds of parallelism. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

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.

full of wrath

“very angry”

he continues his anger for

“continues to be angry with”

slow to anger

“slow to become angry”

he will not allow the wicked to go unpunished

This emphatic negative statement can be translated positively. AT: “he will always be sure to punish the wicked” (See: [Litotes](#))

Yahweh makes his way in the whirlwind and the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet

The biblical writers often associated Yahweh’s presence with powerful storms. Here Yahweh rides in strong storm winds and his feet are creating clouds by kicking up dust as he is coming to judge the people. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the dust of his feet

“the dust that his feet kick up”

translationWords

- [Yahweh](#)
- [jealous, jealousy](#)
- [God](#)
- [avenge, avenges, avenged, avenging, avenger, revenge, vengeance](#)
- [wrath, fury](#)
- [adversary, adversaries, enemy, enemies](#)
- [anger, angered, angry](#)
- [power, powers](#)
- [declare, declares, declared, declaring, declaration, declarations](#)
- [innocent](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 1 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 1:4-5**UDB:**

⁴ When he commands oceans and rivers to become dry, they dry up.

He causes the grass to wither

in the fields in the region of Bashan and on the slopes of Mount Carmel,

and he causes the flowers in Lebanon to fade.

⁵ When he appears, it is as though the mountains shake and the hills melt;

the earth quakes, and the people on the earth tremble.

ULB:

⁴ He rebukes the sea and makes it dry; he dries up all the rivers.

Bashan is weak, and Carmel also; the flowers of Lebanon are weak.

⁵ The mountains shake in his presence, and the hills melt;

the earth collapses in his presence, indeed, the world and all people who live in it.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Nahum continues to describe Yahweh coming to judge his enemies and to save his people.

Bashan is weak, and Carmel also; the flowers of Lebanon are weak

The word translated as “weak” can also mean “wither” or “dry out.” Bashan was known for its good pastureland where people tended sheep and cattle, “Carmel” refers to Mount Carmel, which was known for its tree orchards, and the snow from the mountains in Lebanon kept that place fertile. Since Yahweh dries up all the rivers and causes drought, these fertile places will no longer be fertile. AT: “The fields of Bashan wither, the trees of Mount Carmel die, and the flowers of Lebanon fade” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

the hills melt

Possible meanings are 1) the earthquake causing the hills to crumble to pieces is spoken of as if the hills were melting or 2) the water from the storms coursing down the hills and causing them to erode is spoken of as if the hills were melting. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the earth collapses

Possible meanings are 1) the mountains and hills collapse or 2) the entire ground begins to move with violent motions.

the world and all people who live in it

Here the word “world” refers to the inhabited places on the earth. The verb for this phrase is understood from the previous phrase. AT: “the world shakes and all the people who live in it collapse” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

translationWords

- [rebuke, rebukes, rebuked](#)
- [Bashan](#)
- [Carmel, Mount Carmel](#)
- [Lebanon](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 1 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 1:6**UDB:**

⁶ There is no one who can resist him when he becomes extremely angry;
 there is no one who can survive when his anger is very hot.
 When he is very angry, it is as though his anger is like a blazing fire,
 and it is as though mountains are shattered into pieces.

ULB:

⁶ Who can stand before his wrath? Who can resist the fierceness of his anger?
 His wrath is poured out like fire, and the rocks are broken apart by him.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Nahum continues to describe Yahweh coming to judge his enemies and to save his people.

Who can stand before his wrath? Who can resist the fierceness of his anger?

These two rhetorical questions mean basically the same thing. They can be translated with statements. AT: “No one can stand before his wrath! No one can resist the fierceness of his anger!” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Rhetorical Question](#))

fierceness of his anger

“intensity of his anger” or “amount of his anger”

His wrath is poured out like fire

Nahum speaks of Yahweh’s anger as if it were a liquid that he pours out and which burns like fire. This can be stated in active form. AT: “He pours out his wrath like fire” or “He expresses his fierce anger” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the rocks are broken apart by him

This can be stated in active form. AT: “he breaks apart the rocks” or “he causes the rocks to break apart” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

translationWords

- [wrath, fury](#)
- [anger, angered, angry](#)
- [fire, fires, firebrands, firepans, fireplaces, firepot, firepots](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 1 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 1:7-8**UDB:**

⁷ But he is good;

he protects us, his people, when we experience troubles.

He takes care of those who trust in him.

⁸ But he will get rid of his enemies;

he will be to them like a flood that destroys everything.

He will chase his enemies

into the darkness of the place where the dead are.

ULB:

⁷ Yahweh is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he is faithful to those who take refuge in him.

⁸ But he will make a full end to his enemies with an overwhelming flood; he will pursue them into darkness.

translationNotes**a stronghold ... those who take refuge in him**

Nahum speaks of Yahweh as if he were a place where people can be safe from those who wish to harm them, and of those who trust Yahweh to protect them as if they were taking refuge inside that safe place. (See: [Metaphor](#))

in the day of trouble

“in times of trouble” or “when troubles happen.” The word “day” here refers to a general period of time.

he will make a full end to his enemies

The idiom “make a full end” refers to causing his enemies to die. AT: “he will completely destroy his enemies” or “he will kill all his enemies” (See: [Idiom](#))

with an overwhelming flood

Nahum speaks of Yahweh destroying his enemies in such a way that they will be powerless to avoid death as if Yahweh caused them to drown in a great flood of water. (See: [Metaphor](#))

he will pursue them into darkness

Here the word “darkness” represents the place of the dead, which is characterized as a dark place. Nahum speaks of Yahweh killing his enemies as if he were chasing them into this dark place. AT: “he will cause all his enemies to die” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [Yahweh](#)
- [stronghold, strongholds, fortifications, fortified, fortress, fortresses](#)
- [refuge, refugee, refugees, shelter, shelters, sheltered, sheltering](#)
- [adversary, adversaries, enemy, enemies](#)
- [flood, floods, flooded, flooding, floodwaters](#)
- [darkness](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 1 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 1:9-11**UDB:**

⁹ So it is useless for you people of Nineveh to plot against Yahweh.

He will not need to strike you two times to destroy you;
he will destroy you by striking you only once.

¹⁰ It will be as though his enemies are tangled in thorns
and they will stagger like people who have drunk a lot of wine.
It will be as though they will be burned up like dry stubble.

¹¹ In Nineveh there was a man who advised people to do very wicked things against Yahweh.

ULB:

⁹ What are you people plotting against Yahweh?

He will make a full end to it; trouble will not rise up a second time.

¹⁰ For they will become tangled up like thornbushes; they will be saturated in their own drink;
they will be completely devoured by fire like dry stubble.

¹¹ Someone arose among you, Nineveh, who planned evil against Yahweh, someone who promoted wickedness.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Nahum tells the people of Nineveh how Yahweh will deal with them.

What are you people plotting against Yahweh?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the futility of making evil plans against Yahweh. AT: “It is futile for you people to plot against Yahweh” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

He will make a full end to it

The idiom “make a full end” refers to causing something to exist no longer. AT: “He will completely stop what you do” or “He will cause your plotting to fail” (See: [Idiom](#))

trouble will not rise up a second time

Possible meanings are 1) “trouble” is a metonym for the punishment that Yahweh will inflict upon the people. AT: “Yahweh will not have to punish you a second time” or 2) “trouble” refers to the trouble that the people cause by plotting against Yahweh. AT: “you will not cause trouble a second time” (See: [Metonymy](#))

they will become tangled up like thornbushes

Possible meanings for this metaphor are 1) the people who plot against Yahweh will not be able to free themselves from the trouble that Yahweh will bring upon them, like a person who is tangled up in thornbushes cannot easily free himself or 2) just as thornbushes burn more quickly when they are tangled together, Yahweh will quickly destroy those who plot against him. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they will be saturated in their own drink

Nahum speaks of those who plot against Yahweh suffering the consequences of their plans as if they were completely drunk with alcohol. (See: [Metaphor](#))

they will be completely devoured by fire like dry stubble

Nahum speaks of Yahweh completely destroying those who plot against him as if fire would burn them up like fire burns up dry stubble. This can be stated in active form. AT: “fire will completely devour them like it devours dry stubble” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

devoured by fire

Nahum speaks of fire burning something completely as if the fire were devouring that thing. AT: “burned up by fire” (See: [Metaphor](#))

promoted wickedness

encouraged people to do wicked things

translationWords

- [people group, peoples, the people, a people](#)
- [Yahweh](#)
- [raise, raises, raised, rise, risen, arise, arose](#)
- [fire, fires, firebrands, firepans, fireplaces, firepot, firepots](#)
- [Nineveh, Ninevite](#)
- [evil, wicked, wickedness](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
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Nahum 1:12-13**UDB:**

¹² But this is what Yahweh says to you Israelites:

”Although the people of Assyria have very many people
and their army is very powerful,
they will be destroyed and they will disappear.

I say to my people in Judah,

I have already punished you,
but I will not punish you again.

¹³ Now I will cause the people of Assyria to no longer enslave you; it will be as though I will tear off the shackles on your hands and feet.”

ULB:

¹² This is what Yahweh says,

”Even if they are at their full strength and full numbers, they will nevertheless be sheared;
their people will be no more. But you, Judah: Though I have afflicted you, I will afflict you no more.

¹³ Now will I break that people’s yoke from off you; I will break your chains.”

translationNotes**General Information:**

Yahweh speaks to the Israelites about Nineveh.

Even if they are at their full strength and full numbers

This refers to the Assyrians or to the people of Nineveh.

they will nevertheless be sheared

Yahweh speaks of destroying the people of Nineveh as if they were sheep that he will shear. This can be stated in active form. AT: “I will nevertheless shear them” or “I will nevertheless destroy them” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

Now will I break that people's yoke from off you; I will break your chains

Yahweh speaks of freeing Judah from Assyrian oppression as if he were breaking the yoke and chains that the Assyrians had placed on them. AT: "Now I will free you from that people and they will no longer oppress you" (See: [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [Yahweh](#)
- [Judah](#)
- [afflicted, afflict, afflicted, afflicting, affliction, afflictions](#)
- [yoke, yokes, yoked](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
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Nahum 1:14**UDB:**

¹⁴ And this is what Yahweh also declares about you people of Nineveh:

”You will not have any descendants who will continue to have your family names.

And I will destroy all the statues of your gods

that were carved or formed in molds.

I will cause you to be killed and sent to your graves, because you are vile!”

ULB:

¹⁴ Yahweh has given a command about you, Nineveh:

”There will be no more descendants bearing your name.

I will cut off the carved figures and the cast metal figures from the houses of your gods.

I will dig your graves, for you are contemptible.”

translationNotes**I will cut off the carved figures and the cast metal figures from the houses of your gods**

Yahweh speaks of destroying the Assyrian idols as if he were cutting them off, like a person would cut a branch from a tree. The word “house” is a metonym for the temples in which the people worshiped these idols. AT: “I will destroy the carved figures and the cast metal figures that are in the temples of your gods” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

I will dig your graves

It is implied that Yahweh will also bury them in the graves that he digs for them. AT: “I will dig your graves and bury you in them” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

translationWords

- [Yahweh](#)
- [command, commands, commanded, commandment, commandments](#)
- [Nineveh, Ninevite](#)
- [descend, descends, descended, descending, descendant, descendants](#)
- [name, names, named](#)
- [cut off, cuts off, cutting off](#)
- [image, images, carved image, carved images, cast metal images, figure, figures, carved figure, carved figures, cast metal figure, cast metal figures](#)

- [grave, gravediggers, graves, tomb, tombs, burial place](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)
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Nahum 1:15**UDB:**

¹⁵ You people of Judah. Look! A messenger will come across the mountains,
and he will bring good news to you.

He will declare that you will now have peace.

So celebrate your festivals, and do what you solemnly promised
to do when your enemies were threatening to attack you,
because your wicked enemies will not invade your country again,
because they will be completely destroyed.

ULB:

¹⁵ Look, on the mountains there are the feet of someone who is bringing good news, who is
announcing peace!

Celebrate your festivals, Judah, and keep your vows,
for the wicked one will invade you no more; he is completely cut off.

translationNotes**on the mountains there are the feet of someone who is bringing good news**

Here the word “feet” represent the person who is running in order to declare a message. AT: “on
the mountains there is someone who is bringing good news” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

wicked one ... he

Nahum refers to the people of Nineveh as though they were one person.

he is completely cut off

Nahum speaks of the people of Nineveh being completely destroyed as if they had been cut off, like
a person would cut a branch from a tree. This can be stated in active form. AT: “he is completely
destroyed” or “Yahweh has completely destroyed him” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

translationWords

- [good news, gospel](#)
- [peace, peaceful, peacefully, peaceable, peacemakers](#)

- festival, festivals
- Judah
- vow, vows, vowed
- evil, wicked, wickedness
- cut off, cuts off, cutting off

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 1 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 02 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers and songs. The ULB and many other English translations set the lines of the entire book (except for verse 1 of chapter 1) farther to the right on the page than regular text because they are poetic prophecy. (See: [prophet](#), [prophets](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Despite being divided into three chapters, this book contains one long prophecy.

Special concepts in this chapter

Complete destruction

At that time, Assyria controlled almost the entire Near East. Nahum prophesied that the Assyrians would be so completely destroyed as a nation that they would no longer even be a people group. This prophecy came true and did so very suddenly. At times, this chapter is very violent in describing the destruction of Assyria, and this violence should not be toned down through the use of euphemism.

Links:

- [Nahum 02:01 Notes](#)

Nahum 2:1-2

UDB:

¹ You people of Nineveh, your enemies are coming to attack you. So place guards on the tops of the walls around the city! Guard the roads into the city! Get ready to fight! Gather your troops together! ² Even though your soldiers have destroyed the descendants of Jacob, Yahweh will cause other nations to honor them again. Invaders from your country have ruined Israel as enemies would uproot a vineyard, but Israel will prosper again.

ULB:

¹ The one who will dash you to pieces is coming up against you.

Man the city walls, guard the roads,
make yourselves strong, assemble your armies.

² For Yahweh is restoring the majesty of Jacob, like the majesty of Israel,
although the plunderers devastated them and destroyed their vine branches.

translationNotes

General Information:

Nahum often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. Here he begins to describe the destruction of Nineveh. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

The one who will dash you to pieces

The word “you” refers to Nineveh. Nahum speaks of an army or military leader destroying Nineveh as if he were to shatter Nineveh like one would shatter a clay pot. AT: “The one who will destroy you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

The one who will dash you

The person who is “the one” is not clear, so translate using a general term. AT: “Someone who will break you”

is coming up against you

The idiom to “come against” means to attack. AT: “is preparing to attack you” (See: [Idiom](#))

Man the city walls, guard the roads, make yourselves strong, assemble your armies

Nahum speaks to the people of Nineveh. He tells them to prepare for battle, although he knows that the enemy will destroy the city. (See: [Irony](#))

Man the city walls

Nineveh had a large, thick wall surrounding it. This refers to placing soldiers on the top of the wall in order to fight off attackers. This can be translated with a more general phrase if necessary. AT: “Man the fortifications” or “Prepare the defenses” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

guard the roads

This refers to having soldiers watch the roads leading to the city so that they can keep track of the enemy’s approach.

make yourselves strong

This is an idiom that means to prepare oneself for action. Here it applies to military action. AT: “prepare yourselves for battle” (See: [Idiom](#))

For Yahweh is restoring the majesty of Jacob, like the majesty of Israel

The words “Jacob” and “Israel” are metonyms for the people who are descended from Jacob. Possible meanings are 1) the word “Jacob” refers to the southern kingdom and the word “Israel” refers to the northern kingdom. AT: “For Yahweh is restoring the majesty of Judah, as he promised to restore the majesty of Israel” or 2) both “Jacob” and “Israel” refer to the nation as a whole, included both northern and southern kingdoms and the two lines are parallel. AT: “For Yahweh is restoring the majesty of all Israel” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Parallelism](#))

the plunderers

people who steal things by force, usually in war

destroyed their vine branches

Possible meanings are 1) this is a metaphor in which the Assyrians taking away Israel’s possessions by force is spoken of as if Israel were a vine whose branches the Assyrians had stripped bare. AT: “robbed them of all of their possession, like one would strip bare vine branches” or 2) the words “vine branches” are a synecdoche for the agricultural fields throughout the nation. AT: “destroyed their fields of crops” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

translationWords

- [Yahweh](#)
- [restore, restores, restored, restoration](#)
- [majesty](#)
- [Israel, Israelite, Israelites, Jacob](#)
- [Israel, Israelites](#)
- [vine, vines](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 02 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 2 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 2:3-4**UDB:**

³ The shields of the enemy soldiers who are coming to attack you will shine red as the sun shines on them,

and they will wear bright red uniforms.

The metal of their chariot wheels will flash when they line up before the battle,

and their soldiers will lift up their cypress spear and wave them.

⁴ Their chariots dash through the streets of Nineveh

and rush furiously through the plazas.

Going as quickly as lightning,

they look like flaming torches.

ULB:

³ The shields of his mighty men are red, and the soldiers are clothed in scarlet;

the chariots flash with their metal on the day that they are made ready, and the cypress spears are waved in the air.

⁴ The chariots speed through the streets; they rush back and forth in the wide streets.

They look like torches, and they run like lightning.

translationNotes**The shields of his mighty men are red**

Possible meanings are 1) the shields appear red as the light from the sun reflects upon their metal surfaces or 2) the shields are covered with leather that has been dyed red.

his mighty men

the soldiers of the one “who will dash” Nineveh “to pieces” ([Nahum 2:1](#)).

the chariots flash with their metal

This likely refers to the light from the sun reflecting upon the metal chariots.

on the day that they are made ready

This can be stated in active form. AT: “when the soldiers have made them ready” or “when the soldiers have prepared them to attack” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the cypress spears are waved in the air

This can be stated in active form. AT: “the soldiers wave their cypress spears in the air” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

cypress

a type of tree whose wood is good for weapons (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

The chariots speed through the streets

“The soldiers drive the chariots wildly through the streets”

They look like torches

Nahum compares the way that the light from the sun reflects upon the chariots with torches whose fire gives light. (See: [Simile](#))

they run like lightning

Nahum compares the way that the light from the sun reflects upon the chariots, and the quickness with which the chariots move, with lightning that flashes quickly in the sky. (See: [Simile](#))

translationWords

- [might, mighty, mightier, mightily](#)
- [clothe, clothed, clothes, clothing, unclothed](#)
- [chariot, chariots, charioteers](#)
- [spear, spears, spearmen](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 02 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 2 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 2:5**UDB:**

⁵ An officer gives a command to his officials,
and they come to him so quickly that they stumble.
They run up the city wall to attack it,
and they set up a large wooden shield above the soldiers to protect them.

ULB:

⁵ The one who will dash you to pieces calls his officers; they stumble over each other in their march;
they hurry to attack the city wall. The large shield is made ready to protect these attackers.

translationNotes**The one who will dash you to pieces**

The word “you” refers to Nineveh. Nahum speaks of an army or military leader destroying Nineveh as if he were to shatter Nineveh like one would shatter a clay pot. See how you translated this in [Nahum 2:1](#). AT: “The one who will destroy you” (See: [Metaphor](#))

in their march

The word “march” can be translated as a verb. AT: “as they march” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

The large shield is made ready to protect these attackers

This can be stated in active form. AT: “The attackers make ready the large shield to protect themselves” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

The large shield

This refers to a large cover that those who besieged a city would set up over themselves and their battering rams to protect themselves against the arrows and other projectiles with which the people in the city would attack them.

translationWords

- [stumble, stumbles, stumbled, stumbling](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 02 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 2 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 2:6-7**UDB:**

⁶ The enemy soldiers will force open the city gates on the rivers;
the palace will collapse.

⁷ The queen will have her clothes stripped off her by enemy soldiers,
and her slave girls will moan like doves
and beat their breasts to show that they are very sad.

ULB:

⁶ The gates at the rivers are forced open, and the palace falls to ruins.

⁷ Huzzab is stripped of her clothes and is taken away;
her female servants moan like doves, beating on their breasts.

translationNotes**The gates at the rivers are forced open**

This can be stated in active form. AT: “The enemy forces open the gates at the rivers” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

The gates at the rivers

This refers to the gates that controlled the flow and direction of the river.

Huzzab is stripped of her clothes and is taken away

This can be stated in active form. AT: “The enemy strips Huzzab of her clothes and takes her away” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

Huzzab is stripped of her clothes and is taken away

The exact meaning of the word “Huzzab” is uncertain. Two possible meanings are 1) it is the name of a queen in Nineveh and the sentence means that the attacking soldiers have stripped her of her clothes in order to humiliate her and then have carried her off into captivity or 2) it is the name of an idol and the sentence means that the attackers have stripped the gold and silver off the idol and have carried it away. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#) and [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

her female servants moan like doves

The moaning sounds that the female servants make sound like the sounds that doves make.

her female servants

If the word “Huzzab” refers to a queen, then this phrase refers to the young women who attended her. If the word “Huzzab” refers to an idol, then this phrase refers to the young women who worked as temple prostitutes.

beating on their breasts

Beating one’s breast was a gesture used to express great mourning. (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

translationWords

- [gate, gates, gate bars, gatekeeper, gatekeepers, gateposts, gateway, gateways](#)
- [ruin, ruins, ruined](#)
- [queen, queens](#)
- [enslave, enslaves, enslaved, servant, servants, slave, slaves, slaved, slavery, maidservants, serve, serves, served, serving, service, services, eyeservice](#)
- [dove, pigeon](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 02 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 2 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 2:8-10**UDB:**

⁸ The people will rush from Nineveh

like water rushes from a broken dam.

The officials will shout, "Stop! Stop!"

but the people will not even look back as they run away.

⁹ The enemy attackers say to each other,

"Seize the silver!

Grab the gold!

There is a huge amount of very valuable things in the city,

more valuable things than anyone can count!"

¹⁰ Soon everything valuable in the city will be seized or ruined. People will be trembling, with the result that they will not be able to fight. Their faces will all become pale with fear.

ULB:

⁸ Nineveh is like a leaking pool of water, with its people fleeing away like rushing water.

Others shout, "Stop, stop," but no one looks back.

⁹ Take the silver plunder, take the gold plunder, for there is no end to it,

to the splendor of all Nineveh's beautiful things.

¹⁰ Nineveh is empty and ruined. Everyone's heart melts, everyone's knees strike together, and anguish is in everyone; their faces are all pale.

translationNotes**Nineveh is like a leaking pool of water, with its people fleeing away like rushing water**

Nahum compares the way that the people flee from the city of Nineveh with the way that water gushes from a reservoir of water when the dam has been broken. (See: [Simile](#))

Take the silver plunder ... Nineveh's beautiful things

It is not clear who is speaking here. This may be an apostrophe in which Nahum gives directions to the attackers, or the attackers may be speaking and giving directions to one another. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

Take the silver plunder, take the gold plunder

The word “plunder” means things stolen by force, usually in war. AT: “Take the silver as plunder, take the gold as plunder” or “Take the silver, take the gold”

there is no end to it

The words “no end” are an exaggeration to express that there is a great amount of something. AT: “there is so much of it” (See: [Hyperbole and Generalization](#))

to the splendor of all Nineveh’s beautiful things

This phrase refers to the silver, gold, and other treasures in Nineveh. The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. AT: “there is no end to the splendor of all Nineveh’s beautiful treasures” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

Everyone’s heart melts

Nahum speaks of the people losing courage as if their hearts melt like wax. AT: “Everyone loses courage” (See: [Metaphor](#))

everyone’s knees strike together

This describes a physical response to great fear. The people’s legs shake so badly that their knees knock together and they are unable to walk or run.

translationWords

- [Nineveh, Ninevite](#)
- [water, waters, watered, watering](#)
- [people group, peoples, the people, a people](#)
- [silver](#)
- [gold, golden](#)
- [ruin, ruins, ruined](#)
- [heart, hearts](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 02 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 2 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 2:11-12**UDB:**

¹¹ After that happens, people will say,

”What happened to that great city of Nineveh?

It was like a den full of young lions,

where the male and female lions lived and fed the young ones, where they were afraid of nothing.

¹² The soldiers in Nineveh were like lions that killed or strangled other animals and brought the meat to their dens.”

ULB:

¹¹ Where now is the lions’ den, the place where the young lion cubs were fed, the place where the lion and lioness walked, with the cubs, where they were afraid of nothing?

¹² The lion tore his victims to pieces for his cubs; he strangled victims for his lionesses, and filled his cave with victims, his dens with torn carcasses.

translationNotes**General Information:**

In these verses, Nahum speaks of the people of Nineveh as if they were a group of lions, and of the city Nineveh as if it were their den. The metaphor speaks of the way in which the Assyrians would conquer other people and take their possessions as their own as if they were lions hunting prey and bringing the dead animals back to their den. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Where now is the lions’ den ... afraid of nothing?

Nahum uses this rhetorical question to mock Nineveh, which has been destroyed. AT: “The lions’ den is nowhere to be found ... afraid of nothing.” or “Look at what has become of the lions’ den ... afraid of nothing!” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

he strangled victims

“he choked victims.” This is probably a reference to the way that lions usually kill their prey, by biting its throat. AT: “he killed his victims” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

filled his cave with victims, his dens with torn carcasses

These two phrases are saying the same thing in different ways. The verb may be supplied for the second phrase. AT: “filled his cave with victims, and filled his dens with torn carcasses” (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Ellipsis](#))

translationWords

- [lions, lion, lioness, lionesses](#)
- [fear, fears, afraid](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 02 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 2 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 2:13**UDB:**

¹³ Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says to the people of Nineveh,

”I am your enemy;

I will cause your chariots to burn in fire and go up in smoke.

Your young men will be killed with swords.

I will make all the valuable things you stole from other nations disappear.

Your messengers will never again take messages to other nations, demanding that their armies surrender to them.”

ULB:

¹³ ”See, I am against you—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts.

I will burn your chariots in the smoke, and the sword will devour your young lions.

I will cut off your prey from your land, and the voices of your messengers will be heard no more.”

translationNotes**See, I am against you**

Here Yahweh begins to speak.

See

“Look” or “Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you.”

the sword will devour your young lions

Here the word “sword” is a metonym for soldiers who attack with swords and is spoken of as if it were a person who eats its victims. Nahum also continues to speak to the people of Nineveh as if they were lions. AT: “attackers will kill your people with swords” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

I will cut off your prey from your land

Yahweh speaks of the people of Nineveh as if they were lions who preyed upon the nations. Possible meanings are 1) the word “prey” is a metonym for the things that they have taken from those upon whom they preyed, and Yahweh speaks of taking those things away from them as if it were cutting off their prey. AT: “I will take away from your land all the things that you took from others” or 2) Yahweh speaks of the nations whom the people of Nineveh had plundered as if they were Nineveh’s prey, and preventing Nineveh from plundering any more nations as if he were cutting off their prey. AT: “I will stop you from preying upon any other nation” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Metonymy](#))

the voices of your messengers will be heard no more

This likely refers to the messengers that the Assyrians sent out to other nations to demand surrender or payment of tribute. This can be stated in active form. AT: “no one will ever hear the voices of your messengers again” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

translationWords

- [Yahweh of hosts, God of hosts, host of heaven, host of the heavens, Lord of hosts](#)
- [chariot, chariots, charioteers](#)
- [sword, swords, swordsmen](#)
- [lions, lion, lioness, lionesses](#)
- [voice, voices](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 02 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 2 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 03 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations prefer to set apart extended quotations, prayers and songs. The ULB and many other English translations set the lines of the entire book (except for verse 1 of chapter 1) farther to the right on the page than regular text because they are poetic prophecy. (See: [prophet](#), [prophets](#), [prophecy](#), [prophesy](#), [seer](#), [prophetess](#))

Despite being divided into three chapters, the book contains one long prophecy.

Special concepts in this chapter

Euphemism

This chapter speaks about the evils of the Assyrians in violent ways. It is important to avoiding toning down this language through the use of euphemism, if at all possible. Although there is some hyperbole, the reader should not assume that the author intends this writing to be taken as completely hyperbolic. (See: [Hyperbole and Generalization](#) and [evil](#), [wicked](#), [wickedness](#))

Links:

- [Nahum 03:01 Notes](#)

Nahum 3:1-2**UDB:**

¹ Terrible things will happen to Nineveh, that city that is full of people who murder, steal and lie. The city is full of people who the soldiers carried away from other countries. ² But now listen to the enemy soldiers coming to attack Nineveh; listen to them cracking their whips, and listen to the rattle of their chariot wheels! Listen to their galloping horses and their chariots as they bounce along!

ULB:

¹ Woe to the city full of blood!

It is all full of lies and stolen property; victims are always in her.

² But now there is the noise of whips and the sound of rattling wheels, prancing horses, and bounding chariots.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Nahum often wrote prophecy in the form of poetry. Hebrew poetry uses different kinds of parallelism. Here he continues to describe the destruction of Nineveh. (See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#))

the city full of blood

Here the word “blood” represents bloodshed and refers to the people who have committed murder. AT: “the city full of murderers” (See: [Metonymy](#))

It is all full of lies

Here the word “lies” is a metonym for those who tell lies. AT: “It is full of liars” (See: [Metonymy](#))

the noise of whips and the sound of rattling wheels, prancing horses, and bounding chariots

These phrases describe the sound of chariots rushing through the streets as their drivers use their whips on the horses.

translationWords

- [woe](#)
- [blood](#)

- [horse, horses, warhorse, warhorses, horseback](#)
- [chariot, chariots, charioteers](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 3:3-4**UDB:**

³ Look at their flashing swords and glittering spears as the horsemen race forward! Many people of Nineveh will be killed; there will be piles of corpses, so many that the attackers will stumble over them. ⁴ All that will happen because Nineveh is like a beautiful prostitute

who lures men to where they will be ruined;

Nineveh is a beautiful city

that has attracted people of other nations to come there.

The people of Nineveh taught those people of other nations rituals of magic, and caused them to become their slaves.

ULB:

³ There are attacking horsemen,
flashing swords, glittering spears,
heaps of corpses, great piles of bodies.

There is no end to the bodies; their attackers stumble over them.

⁴ This is happening because of the lustful actions of the beautiful prostitute, the expert in witchcraft,

who sells nations through her prostitution, and peoples through her acts of witchcraft.

translationNotes**heaps of corpses, great piles of bodies**

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and indicate that there were so many dead bodies that the attackers piled them in heaps. (See: [Parallelism](#))

corpses

bodies of people who have died

There is no end to the bodies

The words “no end” are an exaggeration for the great number of bodies that the attackers piled into heaps. AT: “There are too many bodies to count” or “There are a great number of bodies” (See: [Hyperbole and Generalization](#))

the lustful actions of the beautiful prostitute

Nahum speaks of Nineveh causing other nations to be subject to her as if the city were a prostitute who seduces men with her beauty. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the expert in witchcraft

Nahum speaks of Nineveh causing other nations to be subject to her as if the city were a witch who casts a spells on others. (See: [Metaphor](#))

who sells nations through her prostitution, and peoples through her acts of witchcraft

Here the word “sells” implies that the people of Nineveh cause other nations and peoples to become slaves. Nineveh uses her beauty, power, and influence to make others her slaves. AT: “who by her prostitution and witchcraft causes the people of other nations to become her slaves” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

translationWords

- [horseman, horsemen](#)
- [sword, swords, swordsmen](#)
- [lust, lusts, lusted, lusting, lustful](#)
- [prostitute, prostituted, prostitutes, harlot, whored](#)
- [sorcerer, sorcerers, sorceress, sorcery, sorceries, witchcraft](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 3:5-7**UDB:**

⁵ So Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says to the people of Nineveh:

”I am your enemy, and I will cause the people
in other nations to see you completely humiliated;
like women who have committed adultery are humiliated
by having their skirts lifted high,
with the result that people can see their naked bodies.

⁶ I will cause others to throw garbage at you;
I will show others that I despise you very much,
and I will cause everyone to ridicule you in public.

⁷ All those who see you will turn their backs to you and say,
’Nineveh is ruined,
but absolutely no one will mourn for it.’
Nineveh, no one will want to comfort you.”

ULB:

⁵ ”See, I am against you—this is the declaration of Yahweh of hosts—I will raise up your skirt
over your face

and show your private parts to the nations, your shame to the kingdoms.

⁶ I will throw disgusting filth on you and make you vile; I will make you someone that everyone
will look at.

⁷ It will come about that everyone who looks at you will flee from you and say,

’Nineveh is destroyed; who will weep for her?’

Where can I find anyone to comfort you?”

translationNotes**See**

“Look” or “Listen” or “Pay attention to what I am about to tell you”

I will raise up your skirt over your face and show your private parts to the nations

This refers to the practice of publicly humiliating prostitutes by stripping them naked in front of the community. This continues the metaphor of Yahweh speaking of the city of Nineveh as if it were a prostitute. AT: “I will publicly humiliate you, as one would humiliate a prostitute by raising up her skirt over her face and showing her private parts to all the people” (See: [Metaphor](#))

your shame to the kingdoms

This phrase explains the purpose of lifting up Nineveh’s skirt. The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. AT: “I will show your shame to the kingdoms” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

I will throw disgusting filth on you

The words “disgusting filth” refer to all kinds of garbage. Throwing garbage at a person was a sign of strong contempt. AT: “I will show my contempt for you, like a person would throw disgusting filth at another” (See: [Symbolic Action](#))

who will weep for her?

The people ask this rhetorical question to emphasize the negative answer. AT: “no one will weep for her.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Where can I find anyone to comfort you?

Yahweh uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that there will be no one who will be able to comfort Nineveh. AT: “There will be no one to comfort you.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

translationWords

- [Yahweh of hosts, God of hosts, host of heaven, host of the heavens, Lord of hosts](#)
- [nation, nations](#)
- [kingdom, kingdoms](#)
- [Nineveh, Ninevite](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 3:8-9**UDB:**

⁸ Your city is certainly no safer than the city of Thebes was.

Thebes was an important city beside the Nile River;
the river was like a wall around her.

⁹ The rulers of Ethiopia and Egypt helped Thebes; there was no limit to their power.

The governments of the nearby countries of Put and Libya
were also allies of Thebes.

ULB:

⁸ Nineveh, are you better than Thebes, that was built on the Nile River, that had water around her,

whose defense was the ocean, whose wall was the sea itself?

⁹ Cush and Egypt were her strength, and there was no end to it;

Put and Libya were allies to her.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Nahum speaks to the people of Nineveh as though they were the city itself. (See: [Metonymy](#))

are you better than Thebes ... itself?

Nahum asks this rhetorical question to emphasize the negative answer that it anticipates. AT: “you are not better than Thebes ... itself.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

Thebes

This was the former capital of Egypt, which the Assyrians had conquered. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

that was built on the Nile River

“that was situated by the Nile River”

whose defense was the ocean, whose wall was the sea itself

These two phrases share similar meanings. The words “ocean” and “sea” both refer to the Nile River, which ran near the city. Nahum speaks of the Nile as if it were the wall that protected the city. AT: “which had the Nile river as its defenses, as some cities have a wall for theirs” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Parallelism](#))

Cush and Egypt were her strength

“Ethiopia and Egypt strengthened her” or “Cush and Egypt were her allies”

there was no end to it

The word “it” refers to the “strength” that Cush and Egypt gave to Thebes. That there was no end to it is a hyperbole that expresses the great amount of strength. AT: “their strength was very great” (See: [Hyperbole](#) and [Generalization](#))

Put and Libya

These are the names of places in northern Africa that were close to Thebes. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

translationWords

- [Nineveh, Ninevite](#)
- [Nile River, River of Egypt, the Nile](#)
- [Ethiopia, Ethiopian](#)
- [Egypt, Egyptian, Egyptians](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 3:10-11**UDB:**

¹⁰ Nevertheless, Thebes was captured,

and its people were exiled.

Their babies were dashed to pieces in the streets of the city.

Enemy soldiers cast lots to decide who would get

each official in Thebes to become his slave.

All the leaders of Thebes were fastened by chains.

¹¹ You people of Nineveh will similarly become dazed and drunk,

and you will search for places to hide

to escape from your enemies.

ULB:

¹⁰ Yet Thebes was carried away; she went into captivity;

her young children were dashed in pieces at the head of every street;

her enemies threw lots for her honorable men,

and all her great men were bound in chains.

¹¹ You also will become drunk; you will try to hide,

and you will also look for a refuge from your enemy.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Nahum continues to speak to the people of Nineveh as though they were the city itself. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Yet Thebes was carried away

The word “Thebes” represents the people who lived in Thebes. This can be stated in active form. AT: “Yet those who attacked Thebes carried the people away” (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

she went into captivity

The word “she” refers to Thebes and represents the people who lived there. AT: “they went into captivity” (See: [Metonymy](#))

her young children were dashed in pieces

This is a brutal description of the soldiers killing children. This can be stated in active form. AT: “enemy soldiers dashed her young children to pieces” or “enemy soldiers beat her young children to death” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

at the head of every street

The beginning of a street is spoken of as if it were the head. Also, “every” is a generalization that means many places all over the city. AT: “on every street corner” or “in the streets all over the city” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Hyperbole and Generalization](#))

all her great men were bound in chains

This can be stated in active form. AT: “they bound all her great men in chains” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

You also will become drunk

Here the word “You” refers to Nineveh. Nahum speaks of the people of Nineveh suffering and dying in battle as if they had become drunk from drinking too much wine. (See: [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [captive, captives, captivate, captivated, captivity](#)
- [lots, casting lots](#)
- [drunk, drunkard](#)
- [refuge, refugee, refugees, shelter, shelters, sheltered, sheltering](#)
- [adversary, adversaries, enemy, enemies](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 3:12-13**UDB:**

¹² Your enemies will cause the walls around your city to fall down
 like the first figs that fall right into your mouths when you shake the tree.
 This is how easily your city will be captured.

¹³ Look at your soldiers!
 They will be like weak women!
 The gates of your city will be opened wide
 to allow your enemies to enter them,
 and then the bars of those gates will be burned.

ULB:

¹² All your fortresses will be like fig trees with the earliest ripe figs:
 if they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater.
¹³ See, the people among you are women;
 the gates of your land have been opened wide to your enemies;
 fire has devoured their bars.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Nahum continues to speak to the people of Nineveh as though they were the city itself. (See: [Metonymy](#))

All your fortresses

Possible meanings for the word “fortresses” are 1) it refers to Nineveh’s fortifications, such as the wall that surrounded the city AT: “All of your fortifications” or “All of your defenses” or 2) it refers to the fortified cities that were situated along Assyria’s borders and prevented enemy armies from attacking Nineveh. AT: “All of your fortified cities” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

All your fortresses will be like fig trees with the earliest ripe figs: if they are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater

Nahum compares the ease with which the attackers will conquer Nineveh with the ease with which a person can cause ripe figs to fall from a tree. AT: “Your enemies will destroy your fortresses as easily as a person can shake a fig tree and eat the first ripe figs that fall” (See: [Simile](#))

the earliest ripe figs

This refers to the figs that would ripen first on the tree. These figs fell from the tree easily, so that a person only had to shake the tree to make them fall. Figs that ripened later would require a person to climb the tree and pick them by hand. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

if they are shaken

“if the trees are shaken.” This can be stated in active form. AT: “if a person shakes the trees” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

they fall into the mouth of the eater

“the figs fall into the mouth of the eater.” This is an exaggeration. By saying that the figs fall from the tree into the mouth of the one who eats it, Nahum emphasizes that the figs are ready to eat immediately. AT: “a person can eat the fig immediately” (See: [Hyperbole and Generalization](#))

the people among you are women

In this ancient culture, women were not warriors for a number of reasons, including their being generally weaker physically than men. Here Nahum speaks of Nineveh’s warriors losing their strength and courage to fight as if the people in the city were all women. AT: “your people are all like women who are weak and cannot defend themselves” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the gates of your land have been opened wide to your enemies

This can be stated in active form. AT: “the gates of your land are wide open to your enemies” or “someone has opened wide to your enemies the gates of your land” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

the gates of your land have been opened wide to your enemies

Possible meanings are 1) if “fortresses” in v. 12 refers to the Nineveh’s defenses, then “the gates of your land” refers to the gates in the walls around Nineveh. AT: “the gates of your city are wide open for your enemies to attack” or 2) if “fortresses” in v. 12 refers to the fortified cities that were situated along Assyria’s borders, then “the gates of your land” is a metaphor in which those cities are spoken of as if they were gates that prevented enemy armies from entering the land. AT: “your land is defenseless before your enemies because they have destroyed the cities that protected your borders” (See: [Metaphor](#))

fire has devoured their bars

Possible meanings are 1) if “fortresses” in v. 12 refers to the Nineveh’s defenses, then “their bars” refers to the bars that locked the gates in the walls around Nineveh. AT: “fire has destroyed the bars that lock your city gates” or 2) if “fortresses” in v. 12 refers to the fortified cities that were situated along Assyria’s borders, then “their bars” is a metaphor in which those cities are spoken of as if they were locked gates that prevented enemy armies from entering the land. AT: “the cities on your borders can no longer protect you, just as gates can no longer protect a city when fire has destroyed their bars” (See: [Metaphor](#))

fire has devoured

Nahum speaks of fire burning up and destroying as if fire were eating. AT: “fire has destroyed” or “fire has burned up” (See: [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [fig, figs](#)
- [gate, gates, gate bars, gatekeeper, gatekeepers, gateposts, gateway, gateways](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 3:14-15**UDB:**

¹⁴ Store up water now to use when your enemies surround the city!

Repair the forts!

Dig up clay and trample it to make it soft,

and put it into molds to make bricks to repair the walls!

¹⁵ Nevertheless, your enemies will burn your city;

they will kill you with their swords;

they will kill you as locusts destroy crops.

Go ahead and increase your population like swarms of locusts and grasshoppers.

ULB:

¹⁴ Go draw water for the siege; strengthen your fortresses;

go into the clay and tread the mortar;

pick up the molds for the bricks.

¹⁵ Fire will devour you there, and the sword will destroy you. It will devour you as young locusts devour everything.

Make yourselves as many as the young locusts, as many as the full-grown locusts.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Nahum continues to speak to the people of Nineveh as though they were the city itself. (See: [Metonymy](#))

Go draw water for the siege ... pick up the molds for the bricks

Nahum speaks to the people of Nineveh. He tells them to prepare for battle and to repair the walls, although he knows that the enemy will destroy the city. (See: [Irony](#))

strengthen your fortresses

“repair the fortifications”

go into the clay and tread the mortar; pick up the molds for the bricks

These phrases refer to making mud bricks that they will use to repair the city's wall.

Fire will devour you there

Nahum speaks of fire burning and destroying as if it were eating. AT: "Fire will destroy you there" or "Your enemies will burn you with fire there" (See: [Metaphor](#))

the sword will destroy you

Here the word "sword" is a metonym for the enemies who will attack with swords. AT: "your enemies will kill you with their swords" (See: [Metonymy](#))

It will devour you as young locusts devour everything

The word "It" refers to the "sword," which is personified as eating those whom it kills. The soldiers using their swords to kill everyone in Nineveh is compared with the way that a swarm of locusts eats every plant in its path. AT: "Your enemies' swords will kill all of you, just as easily as a swarm of locusts devours everything in its path" (See: [Personification](#) and [Simile](#))

Make yourselves as many as the young locusts, as many as the full-grown locusts

These words begin a new paragraph where Nahum compares the number of people in Nineveh with the large number of locusts in a swarm.

translationWords

- [siege, besiege, besieged, besiegers, besieging, siegeworks](#)
- [sword, swords, swordsmen](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 3:16-17**UDB:**

- ¹⁶ In your city there are now very many merchants;
more than stars.
But when your city is being destroyed,
those merchants will take the valuable things and disappear
like locusts that strip the leaves from plants and then fly away.
- ¹⁷ Your leaders are also like a swarm of locusts
that crowd together on the fences on a cold day,
and then fly away when the sun comes up,
and no one knows where they have gone.

ULB:

- ¹⁶ You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars in the heavens; but they are like young locusts: they plunder the land and then fly away.
- ¹⁷ Your princes are as many as the full-grown locusts, and your generals are like swarms of them that camp in the walls on a cold day.
But when the sun rises they fly away to no one knows where.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Nahum speaks to the people of Nineveh as though they were the city itself. (See: [Metonymy](#))

You have multiplied your merchants more than the stars in the heavens

This exaggeration emphasizes the great number of merchants who lived and worked in Nineveh. AT: “It is as if you have more merchants than there are stars in the sky” or “You have more merchants than anyone could count” (See: [Hyperbole and Generalization](#))

they are like young locusts: they plunder the land and then fly away

Nahum compares the way that these merchants, who have made their profit by selling their goods in Nineveh, will flee from the city when the battle begins with the way that locusts fly away after they have eaten all of the plants in their path. (See: [Simile](#))

your generals are like swarms of them that camp in the walls on a cold day. But when the sun rises they fly away

Nahum compares the way that the officials in Nineveh will flee when the battle starts with the way that locusts will remain still while it is cold, but will fly away when the sun rises and the air becomes warm. (See: [Simile](#))

to no one knows where

“and no one knows where they have gone”

translationWords

- [heaven, sky, skies, heavens, heavenly](#)
- [prince, princes, princess, princesses](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3 translationQuestions](#)

Nahum 3:18-19**UDB:**

¹⁸ King of Assyria, your officials will all die;

your important people will lie down and rest forever.

Your people will be scattered over the mountains,

and there will be no one to gather them together. ¹⁹ You are like someone who has a wound that cannot be healed;

it will be a wound that causes him to die.

And all those who hear about what has happened to you will clap their hands joyfully.

They will say, "Everyone has suffered because he continually acted very cruelly toward us."

ULB:

¹⁸ King of Assyria, your shepherds are asleep; your rulers are lying down resting.

Your people are scattered on the mountains, and there is no one to gather them.

¹⁹ No healing is possible for your wounds. Your wounds are severe.

Everyone who hears the news about you will clap their hands in joy over you.

Who has escaped your constant wickedness?

translationNotes**your shepherds are asleep; your rulers are lying down resting**

These two lines share similar meanings. Nahum speaks of the leaders of Assyria as if they were shepherd who are to care for their sheep. He speaks of the shepherds and rulers dying as if they had fallen asleep. AT: "your leaders who are like shepherds are dead; your rulers are all dead" (See: [Parallelism](#) and [Metaphor](#))

Your people are scattered on the mountains

Nahum speaks of the people of Nineveh as if they were sheep that scatter after the shepherds have died. AT: "Your people are scattered like sheep on the mountains" (See: [Metaphor](#))

No healing is possible for your wounds. Your wounds are severe

Nahum speaks of the certainty of the destruction of Nineveh and the defeat of its king as if the king had suffered an incurable wound. (See: [Metaphor](#))

No healing is possible for your wounds

The word “healing” can be translated with a verbal phrase. AT: “No one is able to heal your wounds” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#))

Who has escaped your constant wickedness?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the negative answer that it anticipates. All of the nations that were near Assyria had suffered because of Assyria’s constant wickedness. AT: “No one has escaped your constant wickedness.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

translationWords

- [king, kings, kingdom, kingdoms, kingship, kingly](#)
- [Assyria, Assyrian, Assyrians, Assyrian Empire](#)
- [shepherd, shepherds, shepherded, shepherding](#)
- [cure, cured, heal, heals, healed, healing, healings, healer, health, healthy, unhealthy](#)
- [joy, joyful, joyfully, joyfulness, enjoy, enjoys, enjoyed, enjoying, enjoyment, rejoice, rejoices, rejoiced, rejoicing](#)
- [evil, wicked, wickedness](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3 translationQuestions](#)

translationQuestions

Nahum 1

Of what is Yahweh full?

Yahweh is full of wrath. [1:2]

On whom does Yahweh take vengeance?

Yahweh takes vengeance on his adversaries. [1:2]

Where does Yahweh make his way?

Yahweh makes his way in the whirlwind and the storm. [1:3]

What is happening to the flowers of Lebanon?

The flowers of Lebanon are weak. [1:4]

What happens to the earth in Yahweh's presence?

The earth collapses in Yahweh's presence. [1:5]

To what can we compare Yahweh in the day of trouble?

Yahweh is a stronghold in the day of trouble. [1:7]

Into what will Yahweh pursue his enemies?

Yahweh will pursue his enemies into darkness. [1:8]

What will Yahweh do to the people's yoke?

He will break the people's yoke from them. [1:13]

Why will Yahweh dig graves for the people of Nineveh?

He will dig their graves, for they are wicked. [1:14]

Where are the feet of him who brings good news?

On the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news. [1:15]

Why should Judah celebrate the festivals and keep its vows?

Judah should celebrate its festivals and keep its vows, for the wicked one will invade them no more.
[1:15]

Nahum 2

What is Yahweh restoring?

Yahweh is restoring the majesty of Jacob. [2:2]

What color are the shields of his mighty men?

The shields of his mighty men are red. [2:3]

What speeds through the streets?

The chariots speed through the streets. [2:4]

What has been decreed?

It has been decreed: the queen is stripped and taken away; her female servants moan like doves, beating on their breasts. [2:7]

What will the people of Nineveh do?

They will flee away like rushing water. [2:8]

Of what were the lions afraid?

They were afraid of nothing. [2:11]

With what did the lion fill his cave and his dens?

The lion filled his cave with victims and his dens with his prey. [2:12]

What will Yahweh do to Nineveh?

Yahweh will burn their chariots in the smoke, devour their young lions, and cut off their prey from the land. [2:13]

Nahum 3**Of what is the city full?**

The city is full of blood, lies and stolen property. [3:1]

How many people will be killed by the attacking horsemen?

There will be heaps of corpses, a great pile of bodies, and no end of the bodies. [3:3]

Why are these things happening?

This is happening because of the lustful actions of the beautiful prostitute. [3:4]

What will Yahweh of hosts do against the prostitute because he is against her?

Yahweh will raise up her skirt over her face and show her private parts to the nations, her shame to the kingdoms. He will throw disgusting filth on her and make her vile. He will make her someone that everyone will look at. [3:5]

What will Yahweh of hosts do against the prostitute because he is against her?

Yahweh will raise up her skirt over her face and show her private parts to the nations, her shame to the kingdoms. He will throw disgusting filth on her and make her vile. He will make her someone that everyone will look at. [3:6]

Whose wall was the sea?

Thebe's wall was the sea. [3:8]

Who threw lots for Thebes' honorable men?

Thebes' enemies threw lots for her honorable men. [3:10]

If Nineveh's fortresses are shaken, what happens?

If Nineveh's fortresses are shaken, they fall into the mouth of the eater. [3:12]

How many princes are there?

The princes are as many as the locusts. [3:17]

What will everyone who hears the news about you do?

Everyone who hears the news about you will clap their hands in joy over you. [3:19]

translationWords

adversary, adversaries, enemy, enemies

Definition:

An “adversary” is a person or group who is opposed to someone or something. The term “enemy” has a similar meaning.

- Your adversary can be a person who tries to oppose you or harm you.
- When two nations fight, each can be called an “adversary” of the other.
- In the Bible, the devil is referred to as an “adversary” and an “enemy.”
- Adversary may be translated as “opponent” or “enemy,” but it suggests a stronger form of opposition.

(See also: Satan)

Bible References:

- [1 Timothy 05:14-16](#)
- [Isaiah 09:11-12](#)
- [Job 06:21-23](#)
- [Lamentations 04:12-13](#)
- [Luke 12:57-59](#)
- [Matthew 13:24-26](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H341, H6146, H6887, H6862, H6965, H7790, H7854, H8130, H8324, G476, G480, G2189, G2190, G4567, G5227

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:2-3](#)
- [Nahum 1:7-8](#)
- [Nahum 3:10-11](#)

afflicted, afflict, afflicted, afflicting, affliction, afflictions

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.”
- The phrase “afflicted with” could also be translated as “suffering from” or “sick with.”

(See also: leprosy, plague, suffer)

Bible References:

- [2 Thessalonians 01:6-8](#)
- Amos 05:12-13
- [Colossians 01:24-27](#)
- Exodus 22:22-24
- Genesis 12:17-20
- Genesis 15:12-13
- Genesis 29:31-32

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H205, H1790, H3013, H3905, H3906, H4157, H4523, H6031, H6039, H6040, H6041, H6862, H6869, H6887, H7451, H7489, H7667, G2346, G2347, G2552, G2553, G2561, G3804,

G4777, G4778, G5003

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:12-13](#)

anger, angered, angry

Definition:

To “be angry” or to “have anger” means to be very displeased, irritated and upset about something or against someone.

- When people get angry, they are often sinful and selfish, but sometimes they have righteous anger against injustice or oppression.
- God’s anger (also called “wrath”) expresses his strong displeasure regarding sin.
- The phrase “provoke to anger” means “cause to be angry.”

(See also: [wrath](#))

Bible References:

- [Ephesians 04:25-27](#)
- Exodus 32:9-11
- Isaiah 57:16-17
- [John 06:52-53](#)
- [Mark 10:13-14](#)
- [Matthew 26:6-9](#)
- Psalms 018:7-8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H599, H639, H1149, H2152, H2194, H2195, H2198, H2534, H2734, H2787, H3179, H3707, H3708, H3824, H4751, H4843, H5674, H5678, H6225, H7107, H7110, H7266, H7307, G23, G1758, G2371, G2372, G3164, G3709, G3710, G3711, G3947, G3949, G5520

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:2-3](#)
- [Nahum 1:6](#)

Assyria, Assyrian, Assyrians, Assyrian Empire

Facts:

Assyria was a powerful nation during the time the Israelites were living in the land of Canaan. The Assyrian Empire was a group of nations ruled by an Assyrian king.

- The nation of Assyria was located in a region that is now the northern part of Iraq.
- The Assyrians fought against Israel at different times in their history.
- In the year 722 BC, the Assyrians completely conquered the kingdom of Israel and forced many of the Israelites to move to Assyria.
- The remaining Israelites intermarried with foreigners that the Assyrians had brought into Israel from Samaria. The descendants of those people who intermarried were later called the Samaritans.

(See also: Samaria)

Bible References:

- Genesis 10:11-14
- Genesis 25:17-18
- Isaiah 07:16-17
- Jeremiah 50:17-18
- Micah 07:11-13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **20:02** So God punished both kingdoms by allowing their enemies to destroy them. The kingdom of Israel was destroyed by the **Assyrian Empire**, a powerful, cruel nation. The **Assyrians** killed many people in the kingdom of Israel, took away everything of value, and burned much of the country.
- **20:03** The **Assyrians** gathered all the leaders, the rich people, and the people with skills and took them to **Assyria**.
- **20:04** Then the **Assyrians** brought foreigners to live in the land where the kingdom of Israel had been.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H804, H1121

Uses:

- **Nahum 3:18-19**

avenge, avenges, avenged, avenging, avenger, revenge, vengeance**Definition:**

To “avenge” or “take revenge” or “execute vengeance” is to punish someone in order to pay him back for the harm he did. The act of avenging or taking revenge is “vengeance.”

- Usually “avenge” implies an intent to see justice done or to right a wrong,
- When referring to people, the expression “take revenge” or “get revenge” usually involves wanting to get back at the person who did the harm.
- When God “takes vengeance” or “executes vengeance,” he is acting in righteousness because he is punishing sin and rebellion.

Translation Suggestions:

- The expression to “avenge” could also be translated as to “right a wrong” or to “get justice for.”
- When referring to human beings, to “take revenge” could be translated as “pay back” or “hurt in order to punish” or “get back at.”
- Depending on the context, “vengeance” could be translated as “punishment” or “punishment of sin” or “payment for wrongs done.” If a word meaning “retaliation” is used, this would apply to human beings only.
- When God says, “take my vengeance,” this could be translated by “punish them for wrongs done against me” or “cause bad things to happen because they have sinned against me.”
- When referring to God’s vengeance, make sure it is clear that God is right in his punishment of sin.

(See also: punish, just, righteous)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:12-13
- Ezekiel 25:15-17
- Isaiah 47:3-5
- Leviticus 19:17-18
- Psalms 018:46-47
- **Romans 12:19-21**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1350, H3467, H5358, H5359, H5360, H6544, H6546, H8199, G1349, G1556, G1557, G1558, G2917, G3709

Uses:

- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 1:2-3](#)

Bashan

Facts:

Bashan was a region of land east of the Sea of Galilee. It covered an area that is now part of Syria and the Golan Heights.

- An Old Testament city of refuge called “Golan” was located in the region of Bashan.
- Bashan was a very fertile region known for its oak trees and pasturing animals.
- Genesis 14 records that Bashan was the site of a war between several kings and their nations.
- During Israel’s wanderings in the desert after their escape from Egypt, they took possession of part of the region of Bashan.
- Years later, King Solomon obtained supplies from that region.

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

(See also: [Egypt](#), oak, Sea of Galilee, Syria)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 04:11-14
- Amos 04:1-2
- Jeremiah 22:20-21
- Joshua 09:9-10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1316

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:4-5](#)

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 also: flesh)

Bible References:

- [1 John 01:5-7](#)
- [1 Samuel 14:31-32](#)
- [Acts 02:20-21](#)
- [Acts 05:26-28](#)
- [Colossians 01:18-20](#)
- [Galatians 01:15-17](#)
- [Genesis 04:10-12](#)
- [Psalms 016:4](#)
- [Psalms 105:28-30](#)

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.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1818, H5332, G129, G130, G131, G1420

Uses:

- **Nahum 3:1-2**

captive, captives, captivate, captivated, 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, exile, prison, seize)

Bible References:

- [2 Corinthians 10:5-6](#)
- [Isaiah 20:3-4](#)
- [Jeremiah 43:1-3](#)
- [Luke 04:18-19](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1123, H1473, H1540, H1546, H1547, H2925, H6808, H7617, H7622, H7628, H7633, H7686, H7870, G161, G162, G163, G164, G2221

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:10-11](#)

Carmel, Mount Carmel

Facts:

“Mount Carmel” refers to a mountain range that was located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea just north of the Plain of Sharon. Its highest peak is 546 meters high.

- There was also a town called “Carmel” located in Judah, south of the Salt Sea.
- The wealthy landowner Nabal and his wife Abigail lived near the town of Carmel where David and his men helped guard Nabal’s sheep shearers.
- On Mount Carmel, Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest in order to prove that Yahweh is the only true God.
- To make it clear that this wasn’t just a single mountain, “Mount Carmel” could be translated as, “mountain on the Carmel mountain range” or “Carmel mountain range.”

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

(See also: Baal, Elijah, [Judah](#), Salt Sea)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:18-19
- 1 Samuel 15:12-13
- Jeremiah 46:18-19
- Micah 07:14-15

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3760, H3761, H3762

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:4-5](#)

chariot, chariots, charioteers

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

(See also: [Egypt](#), Rome)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 09:22
- 2 Chronicles 18:28-30
- [Acts 08:29-31](#)
- [Acts 08:36-38](#)
- Daniel 11:40-41
- Exodus 14:23-25
- Genesis 41:42-43

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.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H668, H2021, H4817, H4818, H5699, H7393, H7395, H7396, H7398, G716, G4480

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:3-4](#)
- [Nahum 2:13](#)
- [Nahum 3:1-2](#)

clothe, clothed, clothes, clothing, unclothed

Definition:

When used figuratively in the Bible, “clothed with” means to be endowed or equipped with something. To “clothe” oneself with something means to seek to have a certain character quality.

- In the same way that clothing is external to your body and is visible to all, when you are “clothed” with a certain character quality, others can readily see it. To “clothe yourself with kindness” means to let your actions be so characterized by kindness that it is easily seen by everyone.
- To be “clothed with power from on high” means to have power given to you.
- This term is also used to express negative experiences, such as “clothed with shame” or “clothed with terror.”

Translation Suggestions:

- If possible, it is best to keep the literal figure of speech, “clothe yourselves with.” Another way to translate this could be “put on” if this refers to putting on clothes.
- If that does not give the correct meaning, other ways to translate “clothed with” could be “showing” or “manifesting” or “filled with” or “having the quality of.”
- The term “clothe yourself with” could also be translated as “cover yourself with” or “behave in a way that shows.”

Bible References:

- [Luke 24:48-49](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H899, H1545, H3680, H3736, H3830, H3847, H3848, H4055, H4346, H4374, H5497, H8008, H8071, H8516, G294, G1463, G1562, G1737, G1742, G1746, G1902, G2066, G2439, G2440, G3608, G4016, G4470, G4616, G4683, G4749, G5509, G6005

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:3-4](#)

command, commands, commanded, commandment, commandments**Definition:**

The term to “command” means to order someone to do something. A “command” or “commandment” is what the person was ordered to do.

- Although these terms have basically the same meaning, “commandment” often refers to certain commands of God which are more formal and permanent, such as the “Ten Commandments.”
- A command can be positive (“Honor your parents”) or negative (“Do not steal”).
- To “take command” means to “take control” or “take charge” of something or someone.

Translation Suggestions

- It is best to translate this term differently from the term, “law.” Also compare with the definitions of “decree” and “statute.”
- Some translators may prefer to translate “command” and “commandment” with the same word in their language.
- Others may prefer to use a special word for commandment that refers to lasting, formal commands that God has made.

(See decree, statute, law, Ten Commandments)

Bible References:

- [Luke 01:5-7](#)
- [Matthew 01:24-25](#)
- [Matthew 22:37-38](#)
- [Matthew 28:20](#)
- Numbers 01:17-19
- [Romans 07:7-8](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H559, H560, H565, H1696, H1697, H1881, H2706, H2708, H2710, H2941, H2942, H2951, H3027, H3982, H3983, H4406, H4662, H4687, H4929, H4931, H4941, H5057, H5713, H5749, H6213, H6310, H6346, H6490, H6673, H6680, H7101, H7218, H7227, H7262, H7761, H7970, H8269, G1263, G1291, G1296, G1297, G1299, G1690, G1778, G1781, G1785, G2003, G2004, G2008, G2036, G2753, G3056, G3726, G3852, G3853, G4367, G4483, G4487, G5506

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:14](#)

cure, cured, heal, heals, healed, healing, healings, healer, health, healthy, unhealthy

Definition:

The terms “heal” and “cure” both mean to cause a sick, wounded, or disabled person to be healthy again.

- A person who is “healed” or “cured” has been “made well” or “made healthy.”
- Healing can happen naturally since God gave our bodies the ability to recover from many kinds of wounds and diseases. This kind of healing usually happens slowly.
- However, certain conditions, such as being blind or paralyzed, and certain serious diseases, such as leprosy, however do not heal on their own. When people are healed of these things, it is a miracle that usually happens suddenly.
- For example, Jesus healed many people who were blind or lame or diseased, and they became well right away.
- The apostles also healed people miraculously, such as when Peter caused a crippled man to immediately be able to walk.

(See also: miracle)

Bible References:

- [Acts 05:14-16](#)
- [Acts 08:6-8](#)
- [Luke 05:12-13](#)
- [Luke 06:17-19](#)
- [Luke 08:43-44](#)
- [Matthew 04:23-25](#)
- [Matthew 09:35-36](#)
- [Matthew 13:15](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **19:14** One of the miracles happened to Naaman, an enemy commander, who had a horrible skin disease. He had heard of Elisha so he went and asked Elisha to **heal** him.
- **21:10** He (Isaiah) also predicted that the Messiah would **heal** sick people and those who could not hear, see, speak, or walk.
- **26:06** Jesus continued saying, “And during the time of the prophet Elisha, there were many people in Israel with skin diseases. But Elisha did not **heal** any of them. He only **healed** the skin disease of Naaman, a commander of Israel’s enemies.”
- **26:08** They brought many people who were sick or handicapped, including those who could not see, walk, hear, or speak, and Jesus **healed** them.

- **32:14** She had heard that Jesus had **healed** many sick people and thought, "I'm sure that if I can just touch Jesus' clothes, then I will be **healed**, too!"
- **44:03** Immediately, God **healed** the lame man, and he began to walk and jump around, and to praise God.
- **44:08** Peter answered them, "This man stands before you **healed** by the power of Jesus the Messiah."
- **49:02**] Jesus did many miracles that prove he is God. He 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.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H724, H1369, H1455, H2280, H2421, H2896, H3444, H3545, H4832, H4974, H7495, H7499, H7500, H7725, H7965, H8549, H8585, H8644, H622, G1295, G1743, G2322, G2323, G2386, G2390, G2392, G2511, G3647, G4982, G4991, G5198, G5199

Uses:

- **Nahum 3:18-19**

cut off, cuts off, cutting 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:

- Genesis 17:12-14
- Judges 21:6-7
- Proverbs 23:17-18

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1214, H1219, H1438, H1468, H1494, H1504, H1629, H1820, H1824, H1826, H2498, H2686, H3582, H3772, H5243, H5352, H6202, H6789, H6990, H7082, H7088, H7096, H7112, H7113, G609, G851, G1581, G2407, G5257

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:14](#)
- [Nahum 1:15](#)

darkness

Definition:

The term “darkness” literally means an absence of light. There are also several figurative meanings of this term:

- As a metaphor, “darkness” means “impurity” or “evil” or “spiritual blindness.”
- It also refers to anything related to sin and moral corruption.
- The expression “dominion of darkness” refers to all that is evil and ruled by Satan.
- The term “darkness” can also be used as a metaphor for death. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- People who do not know God are said to be “living in darkness,” which means they do not understand or practice righteousness.
- God is light (righteousness) and the darkness (evil) cannot overcome that light.
- The place of punishment for those who reject God is sometimes referred to as “outer darkness.”

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term literally, with a word in the project language that refers to the absence of light. This could also be a term that refers to the darkness of a room with no light or to the time of day when there is no light.
- For the figurative uses, it is also important to keep the image of darkness in contrast to light, as a way to describe evil and deception in contrast to goodness and truth.
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this could be, “darkness of night” (as opposed to “light of day”) or “not seeing anything, like at night” or “evil, like a dark place”.

(See also: corrupt, dominion, [kingdom](#), light, redeem, righteous)

Bible References:

- [1 John 01:5-7](#)
- [1 John 02:7-8](#)
- [1 Thessalonians 05:4-7](#)
- [2 Samuel 22:10-12](#)
- [Colossians 01:13-14](#)
- [Isaiah 05:29-30](#)
- [Jeremiah 13:15-17](#)
- [Joshua 24:7](#)
- [Matthew 08:11-13](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H652, H653, H2816, H2821, H2822, H2825, H3990, H3991, H4285, H5890, H6205, G2217, G4652, G4653, G4655, G4656

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:7-8](#)

declare, declares, declared, declaring, declaration, declarations

Definition:

The terms “declare” and “declaration” refer to making a formal or public statement, often to emphasize something.

- A “declaration” not only emphasizes the importance of what is being proclaimed, but it also calls attention to the one making the declaration.
- For example, in the Old Testament, a message from God is often preceded by “the declaration of Yahweh” or “this is what Yahweh declares.” This expression emphasizes that it is Yahweh himself who is saying this. The fact that the message comes from Yahweh shows how important that message is.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “declare” could also be translated as “proclaim” or “publicly state” or “strongly say” or “emphatically state.”
- The term “declaration” could also be translated as “statement” or “proclamation.”
- The phrase “this is Yahweh’s declaration” could be translated as “this is what Yahweh declares” or “this is what Yahweh says.”

(See also: proclaim)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 16:23-24
- [1 Corinthians 15:31-32](#)
- 1 Samuel 24:17-18
- Amos 02:15-16
- Ezekiel 05:11-12
- [Matthew 07:21-23](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H262, H559, H560, H816, H874, H952, H1696, H3045, H4853, H5002, H5042, H5046, H5608, H6567, H6575, H7121, H7561, H7878, H8085, G312, G394, G518, G669, G1107, G1213, G1229, G1335, G1344, G1555, G1718, G1732, G1834, G2097, G2511, G2605, G2607, G3140, G3670, G3724, G3822, G3853, G3870, G3955, G5319, G5419

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:1](#)
- [Nahum 1:2-3](#)

descend, descends, descended, descending, descendant, descendants

Definition:

A “descendant” is someone who is a direct blood relative of someone else further back in history.

- For example, Abraham was a descendant of Noah.
- A person’s descendants are his children, grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, and so on. Jacob’s descendants were the twelve tribes of Israel.
- The phrase “descended from” is another way of saying “a descendant of” as in “Abraham was descended from Noah.” This could also be translated as “from the family line of.”

(See also: Abraham, ancestor, **Jacob**, Noah, twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 09:4-5
- **Acts 13:23-25**
- Deuteronomy 02:20-22
- Genesis 10:1
- Genesis 28:12-13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **02:09** “The woman’s **descendant** will crush your head, and you will wound his heel.”
- **04:09** “I give the land of Canaan to your **descendants**.”
- **05:10** “Your **descendants** will be more than the stars in the sky.”
- **17:07** “Someone from your family will always rule as king over Israel, and the Messiah will be one of your **descendants!**”
- **18:13** The kings of Judah were **descendants** of David.
- **21:04** God promised King David that the Messiah would be one of David’s own **descendants**.
- **48:13** God promised David that the Messiah would be one of his **descendants**. Jesus, the Messiah, was that special **descendant** of David.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H319, H1004, H1121, H1323, H1755, H2232, H2233, H3205, H3211, H3318, H3409, H4294, H5220, H6849, H7611, H8435, G1074, G1085, G4690

Uses:

- **Nahum 1:14**

dove, pigeon

Definition:

Doves and pigeons are two kinds of small, gray-brown birds that look similar. A dove is often thought of as being lighter in color, almost white.

- Some languages have two different names for them, while others use the same name for both.
- Doves and pigeons were used in sacrifices to God, especially for people who could not afford to buy a larger animal.
- A dove brought the leaf of an olive tree to Noah when the flood waters were going down.
- Doves sometimes symbolize purity, innocence, or peace.
- If doves or pigeons are not known in the language area where the translation is being done, this term could be translated as “a small grayish brown bird called a dove” or “a small gray or brown bird, similar to a (name of local bird)”.
- If both a dove and a pigeon are referred to in the same verse, it is best to use two different words for these birds, if possible.

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

(See also: olive, [innocent](#), pure)

Bible References:

- Genesis 08:8-9
- [Luke 02:22-24](#)
- [Mark 01:9-11](#)
- [Matthew 03:16-17](#)
- [Matthew 21:12-14](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1469, H1686, H3123, H8449, G4058

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:6-7](#)

drunk, drunkard

Facts:

The term “drunk” means to be intoxicated from drinking too much of an alcoholic beverage.

- A “drunkard” is a person who is often drunk. This kind of person could also be referred to as an “alcoholic.”
- The Bible tells believers not to be drunk with alcoholic drinks, but to be controlled by God’s Holy Spirit.
- The Bible teaches that drunkenness is unwise and influences a person to sin in other ways.
- Other ways to translate “drunk” could include “inebriated” or “intoxicated” or “having too much alcohol” or “filled with fermented drink.”

(See also: wine)

Bible References:

- [1 Corinthians 05:11-13](#)
- 1 Samuel 25:36
- Jeremiah 13:12-14
- [Luke 07:33-35](#)
- [Luke 21:34-35](#)
- Proverbs 23:19-21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5433, H5435, H7301, H7302, H7910, H7937, H7941, H7943, H8354, H8358, G3178, G3182, G3183, G3184, G3630, G3632

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:10-11](#)

Egypt, Egyptian, Egyptians

Facts:

Egypt is a country in the northeast part of Africa, to the southwest of the land of Canaan. An Egyptian is a person who is from the country of Egypt.

- In ancient times, Egypt was a powerful and wealthy country.
- Ancient Egypt was divided into two parts, Lower Egypt (northern part where the Nile River flowed downward into the sea) and Upper Egypt (southern part). In the Old Testament, these parts are referred to as “Egypt” and “Pathros” in the original language text.
- Several times when there was little food in Canaan, Israel’s patriarchs traveled to Egypt to buy food for their families.
- For several hundred years, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt.
- Joseph and Mary went down to Egypt with the young child Jesus, to escape from Herod the Great.

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

(See also: Herod the Great, Joseph (NT), [Nile River](#), patriarchs)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 04:7-9
- [Acts 07:9-10](#)
- Exodus 03:7-8
- Genesis 41:27-29
- Genesis 41:55-57
- [Matthew 02:13-15](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **08:04** The slave traders took Joseph to **Egypt**. **Egypt** was a large, powerful country located along the Nile River.
- **08:08** Pharaoh was so impressed with Joseph that he appointed him to be the second most powerful man in all of **Egypt**!
- **08:11** So Jacob sent his older sons to **Egypt** to buy food.
- **08:14** Even though Jacob was an old man, he moved to **Egypt** with all of his family, and they all lived there.
- **09:01** After Joseph died, all of his relatives stayed in **Egypt**.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4713, H4714, G124, G125

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:8-9](#)

enslave, enslaves, enslaved, servant, servants, slave, slaves, slaved, slavery, maidservants, serve, serves, served, serving, service, services, eyeservice

Definition:

The word for “servant” can also mean “slave” and refers to a person who works for another person, either by choice or by force. The surrounding text usually makes it clear whether a person is a servant or a slave. The word for “serve” means to do things to help other people. It can also mean to “worship.” In Bible times, there was less of a difference between a servant and a slave than there is today. Both servants and slaves were an important part of their master’s household and many were treated almost like members of the family. Sometimes a servant would choose to become a lifetime servant to his master.

- A slave was a kind of servant who was the property of the person he worked for. The person who bought a slave was called his “owner” or “master.” Some masters treated their slaves very cruelly, while other masters treated their slaves very well, as a servant who was a valued member of the household.
- In ancient times, some people willingly became slaves to a person they owed money to in order to pay off their debt to that person.
- In the context of a person serving guests, this term means “care for” or “serve food to” or “provide food for.” When Jesus told the disciples to “serve” the fish to the people, this could be translated as, “distribute” or “hand out” or “give.”
- In the Bible, the phrase “I am your servant” was used as a sign of respect and service to a person of higher rank, such as a king. It did not mean that the person speaking was an actual servant.
- The term “serve” can also be translated as “minister to” or “work for” or “take care of” or “obey,” depending on the context.
- In the Old Testament, God’s prophets and other people who worshiped God were often referred to as his “servants.”
- To “serve God” can be translated as to “worship and obey God” or to “do the work that God has commanded.”
- In the New Testament, people who obeyed God through faith in Christ were often called his “servants.”
- To “serve tables” means to bring food to people who are sitting at tables, or more generally, to “distribute food.”
- People who teach others about God are said to serve both God and the ones they are teaching.
- The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians about how they used to “serve” the old covenant. This refers to obeying the laws of Moses. Now they “serve” the new covenant. That is, because of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, believers in Jesus are enabled by the Holy Spirit to please God and live holy lives.
- Paul talks about their actions in terms of their “service” to either the old or new covenant. This could be translated as “serving” or “obeying” or “devotion to.”
- Christians are also called “slaves to righteousness,” which is a metaphor that compares the commitment to obey God to a slave’s commitment to obey his master.

(See also: commit, enslave, household, lord, obey, righteous, covenant, law,)

Bible References

- Acts 04:29-31
- Acts 10:7-8
- Colossians 01:7-8
- Colossians 03:22-25
- Genesis 21:10-11
- Luke 12:47-48
- Mark 09:33-35
- Matthew 10:24-25
- Matthew 13:27-28
- 2 Timothy 02:3-5
- Acts 06:2-4
- Genesis 25:23
- Luke 04:8
- Luke 12:37-38
- Luke 22:26-27
- Mark 08:7-10
- Matthew 04:10-11
- Matthew 06:24

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **06:01** When Abraham was very old and his son, Isaac, had grown to be a man, Abraham sent one of his **servants** back to the land where his relatives lived to find a wife for his son, Isaac.
- **08:04** The **slave** traders sold Joseph as a **slave** to a wealthy government official.
- **09:13** "I (God) will send you (Moses) to Pharaoh so that you can bring the Israelites out of their **slavery** in Egypt."
- **19:10** Then Elijah prayed, "O Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your **servant**."
- **29:03** "Since the **servant** could not pay the debt, the king said, 'Sell this man and his family as **slaves** to make payment on his debt.'"
- **35:06** "All my father's **servants** have plenty to eat, and yet here I am starving."
- **47:04** The **slave** girl kept yelling as they walked, "These men are servants of the Most High God.
- **50:04** Jesus also said, "A **servant** is not greater than his master."

Word Data:

- (Servant) Strong's: H5288, H5647, H5649, H5650, H5657, H7916, H8198, H8334, G1249, G1401, G1402, G2324, G3407, G3411, G3610, G3816, G4983, G5257
- (Serve) H327, H3547, H4929, H4931, H5647, H5656, H5673, H5975, H6213, H6399, H6402, H6440, H6633, H6635, H7272, H8104, H8120, H8199, H8278, H8334, G1247, G1248, G1398, G1402, G1438, G1983, G2064, G2212, G2323, G2999, G3000, G3009, G4337, G4342, G4754, G5087, G5256

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:6-7](#)

Ethiopia, Ethiopian

Facts:

Ethiopia is a country in Africa located just south of Egypt, bordered by the Nile River to the west and by the Red Sea to the east. A person from Ethiopia is an “Ethiopian.”

- Ancient Ethiopia was located south of Egypt and included land that is now part of several modern-day African countries, such as Sudan, modern Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, Central African Republic, and Chad.
- In the Bible, Ethiopia is sometimes called “Cush” or “Nubia.”
- The countries of Ethiopia (“Cush”) and Egypt are often mentioned together in the Bible, perhaps because they were located next to each other and their people may have had some of the same ancestors.
- God sent Philip the evangelist to a desert where he shared the good news about Jesus with an Ethiopian eunuch.

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

(See also: Cush, [Egypt](#), eunuch, Philip)

Bible References:

- [Acts 08:26-28](#)
- [Acts 08:29-31](#)
- [Acts 08:32-33](#)
- [Acts 08:36-38](#)
- [Isaiah 18:1-2](#)
- [Nahum 03:8-9](#)
- [Zephaniah 03:9-11](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3568, H3569, H3571, G128

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:8-9](#)

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 and being cruel and unkind.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the terms “evil” and “wicked” can be translated as “bad” or “sinful” or “immoral.”
- Other ways to translate these could include “not good” or “not righteous” or “not moral.”
- Make sure the words or phrases that are used to translate these terms fit the context that is natural in the target language.

(See also: disobey, [sin](#), good, righteous, demon)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 24:10-11
- [1 Timothy 06:9-10](#)
- [3 John 01:9-10](#)
- Genesis 02:15-17
- Genesis 06:5-6
- Job 01:1-3
- Job 08:19-20
- Judges 09:55-57
- [Luke 06:22-23](#)
- [Matthew 07:11-12](#)
- Proverbs 03:7-8
- Psalms 022:16-17

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.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H205, H605, H1100, H1681, H1942, H2154, H2162, H2617, H3415, H4209, H4849, H5753, H5766, H5767, H5999, H6001, H6090, H7451, H7455, H7489, H7561, H7562, H7563, H7564, G92, G113, G459, G932, G987, G988, G1426, G2549, G2551, G2554, G2555, G2556, G2557, G2559, G2560, G2635, G2636, G4151, G4189, G4190, G4191, G5337

Uses:

- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 1:9-11](#)
- [Nahum 1:15](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3:18-19](#)

fear, fears, afraid

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,” as well as related terms “fear of God” and “fear of the Lord,” refer to a deep respect of God and the showing of 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” is used instead.

(See also: marvel, awe, Lord, [power](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- [1 John 04:17-18](#)
- [Acts 02:43-45](#)
- [Acts 19:15-17](#)
- Genesis 50:18-21
- Isaiah 11:3-5
- Job 06:14-17
- Jonah 01:8-10
- [Luke 12:4-5](#)
- [Matthew 10:28-31](#)
- Proverbs 10:24-25

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H367, H926, H1204, H1481, H1672, H1674, H1763, H2119, H2296, H2727, H2729, H2730, H2731, H2844, H2849, H2865, H3016, H3025, H3068, H3372, H3373, H3374, H4032,

H4034, H4035, H4116, H4172, H6206, H6342, H6343, H6345, H6427, H7264, H7267, H7297, H7374, H7461, H7493, H8175, G870, G1167, G1168, G1169, G1630, G1719, G2124, G2125, G2962, G5398, G5399, G5400, G5401

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:11-12](#)

festival, festivals

Definition:

In general, a festival is a celebration held by a community of people.

- The word for “festival” in the Old Testament literally means “appointed time.”
- The festivals celebrated by the Israelites were specially appointed times or seasons that God had commanded them to observe.
- In some English translations, the word “feast” is used instead of festival because the celebrations included having a large meal together.
- There were several main festivals that the Israelites celebrated every year:
 - Passover
 - Festival of Unleavened Bread
 - Firstfruits
 - Festival of Weeks (Pentecost)
 - Festival of Trumpets
 - Day of Atonement
 - Festival of Shelters
- The purpose of these festivals was to thank God and to remember the amazing things he had done to rescue, protect, and provide for his people.

(See also: feast)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 23:30-31
- 2 Chronicles 08:12-13
- Exodus 05:1-2
- [John 04:43-45](#)
- [Luke 22:1-2](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1974, H2166, H2282, H2287, H6213, H4150, G1456, G1858, G1859

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:15](#)

fig, figs**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 6 meters in height 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:

- [Habakkuk 03:17](#)
- [James 03:11-12](#)
- [Luke 13:6-7](#)
- [Mark 11:13-14](#)
- [Matthew 07:15-17](#)
- [Matthew 21:18-19](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1061, H1690, H6291, H8384, G3653, G4808, G4810

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:12-13](#)

fire, fires, firebrands, firepans, fireplaces, firepot, firepots

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 to experience suffering in order to be purified.”

(See also: pure)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 16:18-20
- 2 Kings 01:9-10
- 2 Thessalonians 01:6-8
- Acts 07:29-30
- John 15:5-7
- Luke 03:15-16
- Matthew 03:10-12
- Nehemiah 01:3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H215, H217, H398, H784, H800, H801, H1197, H1200, H1513, H2734, H3341, H3857, H4071, H4168, H5135, H6315, H8316, G439, G440, G1067, G2741, G4442, G4443, G4447, G4448, G4451, G5394, G5457

Uses:

- Nahum 1:6
- Nahum 1:9-11

flood, floods, flooded, flooding, floodwaters

Definition:

The term “flood” literally refers to a large amount of water that completely covers over the land.

- This term is also used figuratively to refer to an overwhelming amount of something, especially something that happens suddenly.
- In Noah’s time, people had become so evil that God caused a worldwide flood to come over the entire surface of the earth, even covering the mountaintops. Everyone who was not in the boat with Noah drowned. All other floods cover a much smaller land area.
- This term can also be an action, as in “the land was flooded by river water.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate the literal meaning of “flood” could include “an overflowing of water” or “large amounts of water.”
- The figurative comparison “like a flood” could keep the literal term, or a substitute term could be used that refers to something that has a flowing aspect to it, such as a river.
- For the expression “like a flood of water” where water is already mentioned, the word “flood” could be translated as “an overwhelming amount” or “an overflowing.”
- This term can be used as a metaphor, as in “do not let the flood sweep over me,” which means “do not let these overwhelming disasters happen to me” or “don’t let me be devastated by disasters” or “don’t let your anger devastate me.” (See: [Metaphor](#))
- The figurative expression “I flood my bed with tears” could be translated as “my tears cover my bed with water like a flood.”

(See also: ark, Noah)

Bible References:

- Daniel 11:10
- Genesis 07:6-7
- [Luke 06:46-48](#)
- [Matthew 07:24-25](#)
- [Matthew 07:26-27](#)
- [Matthew 24:37-39](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H216, H2229, H2230, H2975, H3999, H5104, H5140, H5158, H5674, H6556, H7641, H7857, H7858, H8241, G2627, G4132, G4215, G4216

Uses:

- Nahum 1:7-8

gate, gates, gate bars, gatekeeper, gatekeepers, gateposts, gateway, gateways

Definition:

A “gate” is a hinged barrier at an access point in a fence or wall that surrounds a house or city. The “gate bar” refers to a wooden or metal bar that can be moved into place to lock the gate.

- A city gate could be opened to allow people, animals, and cargo to travel in and out of the city.
- To protect the city, its walls and gates were thick and strong. Gates were closed and locked with a metal or wooden bar to prevent enemy soldiers from entering the city.
- A city gate was often the news and social center of a village. It was also where business transactions occurred and judgments were made, because city walls were thick enough to have gateways that produced cool shade from the hot sun. Citizens found it pleasant to sit in the shade to conduct their business and even to judge legal cases.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate “gate” could be “door” or “wall opening” or “barrier” or “entranceway.”
- The phrase “bars of the gate” could be translated as “gate bolts” or “wooden beams to lock the gate” or “metal locking rods of the gate.”

Bible References:

- [Acts 09:23-25](#)
- [Acts 10:17-18](#)
- Deuteronomy 21:18-19
- Genesis 19:1-3
- Genesis 24:59-60
- [Matthew 07:13-14](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1817, H5592, H6607, H8179, H8651, G2374, G4439, G4440

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:6-7](#)
- [Nahum 3:12-13](#)

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 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, false god, God the Father, Holy Spirit, false god, Son of God, [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- [1 John 01:5-7](#)
- 1 Samuel 10:7-8
- [1 Timothy 04:9-10](#)
- [Colossians 01:15-17](#)
- Deuteronomy 29:14-16
- Ezra 03:1-2

- Genesis 01:1-2
- Hosea 04:11-12
- Isaiah 36:6-7
- James 02:18-20
- Jeremiah 05:4-6
- John 01:1-3
- Joshua 03:9-11
- Lamentations 03:40-43
- Micah 04:4-5
- Philippians 02:5-8
- Proverbs 24:11-12
- Psalms 047:8-9

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.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H136, H305, H410, H426, H430, H433, H2486, H2623, H3068, H3069, H3863, H4136, H6697, G112, G516, G932, G935, G1096, G1140, G2098, G2124, G2128, G2150, G2152, G2153, G2299, G2304, G2305, G2312, G2313, G2314, G2315, G2316, G2317, G2318, G2319, G2320, G3361, G3785, G4151, G5207, G5377, G5463, G5537, G5538

Uses:

- Nahum 1:2-3

gold, golden

Definition:

Gold is a yellow, high quality metal that was used for making jewelry and religious objects. It was the most valuable metal in ancient times.

- In Bible times, many different kinds of objects were made out of solid gold or were covered with a thin layer of gold.
- These objects included earrings and other jewelry, and idols, altars, and other objects used in the tabernacle or temple, such as the ark of the covenant.
- In Old Testament times, gold was used as a means of exchange in buying and selling. It was weighed on a scale to determine its value.
- Later on, gold and other metals such as silver were used to make coins to use in buying and selling
- When referring to something that is not solid gold, but only has a thin covering of gold, the term “golden” or “gold-covered” or “gold-overlaid” could also be used.
- Sometimes an object is described as “gold-colored,” which means it has the yellow color of gold, but may not actually be made of gold.

(See also: altar, ark of the covenant, false god, [silver](#), tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- [1 Peter 01:6-7](#)
- [1 Timothy 02:8-10](#)
- 2 Chronicles 01:14-15
- [Acts 03:4-6](#)
- Daniel 02:31-33

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1220, H1222, H1722, H2091, H2742, H3800, H4062, H5458, H6884, H6885, G5552, G5553, G5554, G5557

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:8-10](#)

good news, gospel

Definition:

The term “gospel” literally means “good news” and refers to a message or announcement that tells people something that benefits them and makes them glad.

- In the Bible, this term usually refers to the message about God’s salvation for people through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.
- In most English Bibles, “good news” is usually translated as “gospel” and is also used in phrases such as, the “gospel of Jesus Christ,” the “gospel of God” and the “gospel of the kingdom.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Different ways to translate this term could include, “good message” or “good announcement” or “God’s message of salvation” or “the good things God teaches about Jesus.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate the phrase, “good news of” could include, “good news/message about” or “good message from” or “the good things God tells us about” or “what God says about how he saves people.”

(See also: [kingdom](#), sacrifice, save)

Bible References:

- [1 Thessalonians 01:4-5](#)
- [Acts 08:25](#)
- [Colossians 01:21-23](#)
- [Galatians 01:6-7](#)
- [Luke 08:1-3](#)
- [Mark 01:14-15](#)
- [Philippians 02:22-24](#)
- [Romans 01:1-3](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **23:06** The angel said, “Do not be afraid, because I have some **good news** for you. The Messiah, the Master, has been born in Bethlehem!”
- **26:03** Jesus read, “God has given me his Spirit so that I can proclaim **good news** to the poor, freedom to captives, recovery of sight for the blind, and release to the oppressed. This is the year of the Lord’s favor.”
- **45:10** Philip also used other Scriptures to tell him the **good news of Jesus**.
- **46:10** Then they sent them off to preach the **good news about Jesus** in many other places.

- **47:01** One day, Paul and his friend Silas went to the town of Philippi to proclaim the **good news about Jesus**.
- **47:13** The **good news about Jesus** kept spreading, and the Church kept growing.
- **50:01** For almost 2,000 years, more and more people around the world have been hearing the **good news about Jesus** the Messiah.
- **50:02** When Jesus was living on earth he said, "My disciples will preach the **good news** about the kingdom of God to people everywhere in the world, and then the end will come."
- **50:03** Before he returned to heaven, Jesus told Christians to proclaim the **good news** to people who have never heard it.

Word Data:

- Strong's: G2097, G2098, G4283

Uses:

- **Nahum 1:15**

grave, gravediggers, graves, tomb, tombs, burial place

Definition:

The terms “tomb” and “grave” refer to a place where people put the body of a person who has died. A “burial place” is a more general term that also refers to this.

- The Jews sometimes used natural caves as tombs, and sometimes they dug caves into rock in the side of a hill.
- In New Testament times, it was common to roll a large, heavy stone in front of the opening of a tomb in order to close it.
- If the target language the word for a tomb can only refer to a hole in which the body is placed below the ground, other ways to translate this could include “cave” or “hole in the side of a hill.”
- The phrase “the grave” is often used generally and figuratively to refer to the condition of being dead or a place where the souls of dead people are.

(See also: bury, death)

Bible References:

- [Acts 02:29-31](#)
- [Genesis 23:5-6](#)
- [Genesis 50:4-6](#)
- [John 19:40-42](#)
- [Luke 23:52-53](#)
- [Mark 05:1-2](#)
- [Matthew 27:51-53](#)
- [Romans 03:13-14](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- [32:04](#) The man lived among the **tombs** in the area.
- [37:06](#) Jesus asked them, “Where have you put Lazarus?” They told him, “In the **tomb**. Come and see.”
- [37:07](#) The **tomb** was a cave with a stone rolled in front of its opening.
- [40:09](#) Then Joseph and Nicodemus, two Jewish leaders who believed Jesus was the Messiah, asked Pilate for Jesus’ body. They wrapped his body in cloth and placed it in a **tomb** cut out of rock. Then they rolled a large stone in front the **tomb** to block the opening.
- [41:04](#) He (the angel) rolled away the stone that was covering the entrance to the **tomb** and sat on it. The soldiers guarding the **tomb** were terrified and fell to the ground like dead men.
- [41:05](#) When the women arrived at the **tomb**, the angel told them, “Do not be afraid. Jesus is not here. He has risen from the dead, just like he said he would! Look in the **tomb** and see.”

The women looked into the **tomb** and saw where Jesus' body had been laid. His body was not there!

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1164, H1430, H6900, H6913, H7585, H7845, G86, G2750, G3418, G3419, G5028

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:14](#)

heart, hearts

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “heart” is often used figuratively to refer to a person’s thoughts, emotions, desires, or will.

- To have a “hard heart” is a common expression that means a person stubbornly refuses to obey God.
- The expressions “with all my heart” or “with my whole heart” mean to do something with no holding back, with complete commitment and willingness.
- The expression “take it to heart” means to treat something seriously and apply it to one’s life.
- The term “brokenhearted” describes a person who is very sad. That person has been deeply hurt emotionally.

Translation Suggestions

- Some languages use a different body part such as “stomach” or “liver” to refer to these ideas.
- Other languages may use one word to express some of these concepts and another word to express others.
- If “heart” or other body part does not have this meaning, some languages may need to express this literally with terms such as “thoughts” or “emotions” or “desires.”
- Depending on the context, “with all my heart” or “with my whole heart” could be translated as “with all my energy” or “with complete dedication” or “completely” or “with total commitment.”
- The expression “take it to heart” could be translated as “treat it seriously” or “carefully think about it.”
- The expression “hard-hearted” could also be translated as “stubbornly rebellious” or “refusing to obey” or “continually disobeying God.”
- Ways to translate “brokenhearted” could include “very sad” or “feeling deeply hurt.”

(See also: hard)

Bible References:

- [1 John 03:16-18](#)
- [1 Thessalonians 02:3-4](#)
- [2 Thessalonians 03:13-15](#)
- [Acts 08:20-23](#)
- [Acts 15:7-9](#)
- [Luke 08:14-15](#)
- [Mark 02:5-7](#)
- [Matthew 05:5-8](#)
- [Matthew 22:37-38](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1079, H2436, H2504, H2910, H3519, H3629, H3820, H3821, H3823, H3824, H3825, H3826, H4578, H5315, H5640, H7130, H7307, H7356, H7907, G674, G1282, G1271, G2133, G2588, G2589, G4641, G4698, G5590

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:8-10](#)

heaven, sky, skies, heavens, heavenly

Definition:

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

- The term “heavens” refers to everything we see above the earth, including the sun, moon, and stars. It also includes the heavenly bodies, such as far-off planets, that we can’t directly see from the earth.
- The term “sky” refers to the blue expanse above the earth that has clouds and the air we breathe. Often the sun and moon are also said to be “up in the sky.”
- In some contexts in the Bible, the word “heaven” could refer to either the sky or the place where God lives.
- 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 also: kingdom of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 08:22-24
- [1 Thessalonians 01:8-10](#)
- [1 Thessalonians 04:16-18](#)
- Deuteronomy 09:1-2
- [Ephesians 06:9](#)
- Genesis 01:1-2
- Genesis 07:11-12
- [John 03:12-13](#)
- [John 03:27-28](#)
- [Matthew 05:17-18](#)
- [Matthew 05:46-48](#)

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.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1534, H6160, H6183, H7834, H8064, H8065, G932, G2032, G3321, G3770, G3771, G3772

Uses:

- **Nahum 3:16-17**

horse, horses, warhorse, warhorses, horseback**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, Solomon)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:3-4
- 2 Kings 02:11-12
- Exodus 14:23-25
- Ezekiel 23:5-7
- [Zechariah 06:7-8](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H47, H5483, H5484, H6571, H7409, G2462

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:1-2](#)

horseman, horsemen

Definition:

In Bible times, the term “horsemen” referred to men who rode horses into battle.

- Warriors who rode in horse-pulled chariots may also have been called “horsemen,” though this term usually refers to men who were actually riding on horses.
- The Israelites believed that using horses in battle placed too much emphasis on their own strength rather than on Yahweh, so they did not have many horsemen.
- This term could also be translated as “horse riders” or “men on horses.”

(See also: [chariot](#), [horse](#))

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 01:5-6
- Daniel 11:40-41
- Exodus 14:23-25
- Genesis 50:7-9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6571, H7395, G2460

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:3-4](#)

image, images, carved image, carved images, cast metal images, figure, figures, carved figure, carved figures, cast metal figure, cast metal figures

Definition:

These terms are all used to refer to idols that have been made for worshipping a false god. In the context of worshipping 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, [God](#), false god, image of God)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 14:9-10
- [Acts 07:43](#)
- Isaiah 21:8-9
- [Matthew 22:20-22](#)
- [Romans 01:22-23](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H457, H1544, H2553, H4541, H4676, H4853, H4906, H5257, H5262, H5566, H6091, H6456, H6459, H6754, H6755, H6816, H8403, H8544, H8655, G1504, G5179, G5481

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:14](#)

innocent

Definition:

The term “innocent” means to not be guilty of a crime or other wrongdoing. It can also refer more generally to people who are not involved in evil things.

- A person accused of doing something wrong is innocent if he has not committed that wrong.
- Sometimes the term “innocent” is used to refer to people who have done nothing wrong to deserve the bad treatment they are receiving, as in an enemy army attacking “innocent people.”

Translation Suggestions:

- In most contexts, the term “innocent” can be translated as “not guilty” or “not responsible” or “not to blame” for something.
- When referring in general to innocent people, this term could be translated as “who have done nothing wrong” or “who are not involved in evil.”
- The frequently occurring expression “innocent blood” could be translated as “people who did nothing wrong to deserve being killed.”
- The expression “shed innocent blood” could be translated as “kill innocent people” or “kill people who did nothing wrong to deserve it.”
- In the context of someone being killed, “innocent of the blood of” could be translated as “not guilty for the death of.”
- When talking about people not hearing the good news about Jesus but not accepting it, “innocent of the blood of” could be translated as “not responsible for whether they remain spiritually dead or not” or “not responsible for whether they accept this message.”
- When Judas said “I have betrayed innocent blood,” he was saying “I have betrayed a man who did nothing wrong” or “I have caused the death of a man who was sinless.”
- When Pilate said about Jesus “I am innocent of the blood of this innocent man,” this could be translated as “I am not responsible for the killing of this man who has done nothing wrong to deserve it.”

(See also: guilt)

Bible References:

- [1 Corinthians 04:3-4](#)
- [1 Samuel 19:4-5](#)
- [Acts 20:25-27](#)
- [Exodus 23:6-9](#)
- [Jeremiah 22:17-19](#)
- [Job 09:21-24](#)
- [Romans 16:17-18](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **08:06** After two years, Joseph was still in prison, even though he was **innocent**.
- **40:04** One of them mocked Jesus, but the other said, "Do you have no fear of God? We are guilty, but this man is **innocent**."
- **40:08** When the soldier guarding Jesus saw everything that happened, he said, "Certainly, this man was **innocent**. He was the Son of God."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2136, H2600, H2643, H5352, H5355, H5356, G121

Uses:

- **Nahum 1:2-3**

Israel, Israelite, Israelites, Jacob

Facts:

Jacob was the younger twin son of Isaac and Rebekah.

- Jacob's name means "he grabs the heel" which is an expression meaning "he deceives." As Jacob was being born, he was holding onto the heel of his twin brother Esau.
- Many years later, God changed Jacob's name to "Israel," which means "he struggles with God."
- Jacob was clever and deceptive. He found ways to take the firstborn blessing and inheritance rights from his older brother, Esau.
- Esau was angry and planned to kill him so Jacob left his homeland. But years later Jacob returned with his wives and children to the land of Canaan where Esau was living, and their families lived peacefully near each other.
- Jacob had twelve sons. Their descendants became the twelve tribes of Israel.
- A different man named Jacob is listed as being Joseph's father in Matthew's genealogy.

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

(See also: Canaan, deceive, Esau, Isaac, [Israel](#), Rebekah, twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- [Acts 07:11-13](#)
- [Acts 07:44-46](#)
- Genesis 25:24-26
- Genesis 29:1-3
- Genesis 32:1-2
- [John 04:4-5](#)
- [Matthew 08:11-13](#)
- [Matthew 22:31-33](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **07:01** As the boys grew up, Rebekah loved **Jacob**, but Isaac loved Esau. **Jacob** loved to stay at home, but Esau loved to hunt.
- **07:07** **Jacob** lived there for many years, and during that time he married and had twelve sons and a daughter. God made him very wealthy.
- **07:08** After twenty years away from his home in Canaan, **Jacob** returned there with his family, his servants, and all his herds of animals.
- **07:10** The covenant promises God had promised to Abraham and then to Isaac now passed on to **Jacob**.
- **08:01** Many years later, when **Jacob** was an old man, he sent his favorite son, Joseph, to check on his brothers who were taking care of the herds.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3290, G2384

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:1-2](#)

Israel, Israelites

Facts:

The term “Israel” is the name that God gave to Jacob. It means “he struggles with God.”

- The descendants of Jacob became known as the “people of Israel” or the “nation of Israel” or the “Israelites.”
- God formed his covenant with the people of Israel. They were his chosen people.
- The nation of Israel consisted of twelve tribes.
- Soon after King Solomon died, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the southern kingdom, called “Judah,” and the northern kingdom, called “Israel.”
- Often the term “Israel” can be translated as “the people of Israel” or “the nation of Israel,” depending on the context.

(See also: [Jacob](#), kingdom of Israel, Judah, [nation](#), twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 10:1-3
- 1 Kings 08:1-2
- [Acts 02:34-36](#)
- [Acts 07:22-25](#)
- [Acts 13:23-25](#)
- [John 01:49-51](#)
- [Luke 24:21](#)
- [Mark 12:28-31](#)
- [Matthew 02:4-6](#)
- [Matthew 27:9-10](#)
- [Philippians 03:4-5](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **08:15** The descendants of the twelve sons became the twelve tribes of **Israel**.
- **09:03** The Egyptians forced the **Israelites** to build many buildings and even whole cities.
- **09:05** A certain **Israelite** woman gave birth to a baby boy.
- **10:01** They said, “This is what the God of **Israel** says, ‘Let my people go!’”
- **14:12** But despite all this, the people of **Israel** complained and grumbled against God and against Moses.
- **15:09** God fought for **Israel** that day. He caused the Amorites to be confused and he sent large hailstones that killed many of the Amorites.
- **15:12** After this battle, God gave each tribe of **Israel** its own section of the Promised Land. Then God gave **Israel** peace along all its borders.
- **16:16** So God punished **Israel** again for worshipping idols.

- **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."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3478, H3479, H3481, H3482, G935, G2474, G2475

Uses:

- **Nahum 2:1-2**

jealous, jealousy

Definition:

The terms “jealous” and “jealousy” refer to a strong desire to protect the purity of a relationship. They can also refer to a strong desire to keep possession of something or someone.

- These terms are often used to describe the angry feeling that a person has toward a spouse who has been unfaithful in their marriage.
- When used in the Bible, these terms often refer to God’s strong desire for his people to remain pure and unstained by sin.
- God is also “jealous” for his name, desiring that it be treated with honor and reverence.
- Another meaning of jealous involves being angry that someone else is successful or more popular. This is close in meaning to the word “envious.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “jealous” could include “strong protective desire” or “possessive desire.”
- The term “jealousy” could be translated as “strong protective feeling” or “possessive feeling.”
- When talking about God, make sure the translation of these terms does not give a negative meaning of being resentful of someone else.
- In the context of people’s wrong feelings of anger toward toward other people who are more successful, the terms “envious” and “envy” could be used. But these terms should not be used for God.

(See also: envy)

Bible References:

- [2 Corinthians 12:20-21](#)
- Deuteronomy 05:9-10
- Exodus 20:4-6
- Ezekiel 36:4-6
- Joshua 24:19-20
- [Nahum 01:2-3](#)
- [Romans 13:13-14](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7065, H7067, H7068, H7072, G2205, G3863

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:2-3](#)

joy, joyful, joyfully, joyfulness, enjoy, enjoys, enjoyed, enjoying, enjoyment, rejoice, rejoices, rejoiced, rejoicing

Definition:

Joy is a feeling of delight or deep satisfaction that comes from God. The related term “joyful” describes a person who feels very glad and is full of deep happiness.

- A person feels joy when he has a deep sense that what he is experiencing is very good.
- God is the one who gives true joy to people.
- Having joy does not depend on pleasant circumstances. God can give people joy even when very difficult things are happening in their lives.
- Sometimes places are described as joyful, such as houses or cities. This means that the people who live there are joyful.

The term “rejoice” means to be full of joy and gladness.

- This term often refers to being very happy about the good things that God has done.
- It could be translated as “be very happy” or “be very glad” or “be full of joy.”
- When Mary said “my soul rejoices in God my Savior,” she meant “God my Savior has made me very happy” or “I feel so joyful because of what God my Savior has done for me.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “joy” could also be translated as “gladness” or “delight” or “great happiness.”
- The phrase, “be joyful” could be translated as “rejoice” or “be very glad” or it could be translated “be very happy in God’s goodness.”
- A person who is joyful could be described as “very happy” or “delighted” or “deeply glad.”
- A phrase such as “make a joyful shout” could be translated as “shout in a way that shows you are very happy.”
- A “joyful city” or “joyful house” could be translated as “city where joyful people live” or “house full of joyful people” or “city whose people are very happy.” (See: [metonymy](#))

Bible References:

- Nehemiah 08:9-10
- Psalm 048:1-3
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- [Matthew 02:9-10](#)
- [Luke 15:6-7](#)
- [Luke 19:37-38](#)
- [John 03:29-30](#)
- [Acts 16:32-34](#)

joy, joyful, joyfully, joyfulness, enjoy, enjoys, enjoyed, enjoying, enjoyment, rejoice, rejoices, rejoiced, rejoicing

- Romans 05:1-2
- Romans 15:30-32
- Galatians 05:22-24
- Philippians 04:10-13
- 1 Thessalonians 01:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 05:15-18
- Philemon 01:4-7
- James 01:1-3
- 3 John 01:1-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **33:07** "The rocky ground is a person who hears God's word and accepts it with **joy**."
- **34:04** "The kingdom of God is also like hidden treasure that someone hid in a field.. Another man found the treasure and then buried it again. He was so filled with **joy**, that he went and sold everything he had and used the money to buy that field."
- **41:07** The women were full of fear and great **joy**. They ran to tell the disciples the good news.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1523, H1524, H1525, H1750, H2302, H2304, H2305, H2654, H2898, H4885, H5937, H5938, H5947, H5965, H5970, H6342, H6670, H7440, H7442, H7444, H7445, H7797, H7832, H8055, H8056, H8057, H8342, H8643, G20, G21, G2165, G2167, G2620, G2744, G2745, G3685, G4640, G4796, G4913, G5463, G5479

Uses:

- Nahum 3:18-19

Judah

Facts:

Judah was one of Jacob's older sons. His mother was Leah. His descendants were called the "tribe of Judah."

- It was Judah who told his brothers to sell their younger brother Joseph as a slave instead of leaving him to die in a deep pit.
- King David and all the kings after him were descendants of Judah. Jesus, too, was a descendant of Judah.
- When Solomon's reign ended and the nation of Israel divided, the kingdom of Judah was the southern kingdom.
- In the New Testament book of Revelation, Jesus is called the "Lion of Judah."
- The words "Jew" and "Judea" come from the name "Judah."

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

(See also: [Jacob](#), Jew, Judah, Judea, twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 02:1-2
- 1 Kings 01:9-10
- Genesis 29:35
- Genesis 38:1-2
- [Luke 03:33-35](#)
- Ruth 01:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3063

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:12-13](#)
- [Nahum 1:15](#)

king, kings, kingdom, kingdoms, kingship, kingly

Definition:

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

- A king was usually chosen to rule because of his family relation to previous kings.
- When a king died, it was usually his oldest son who became the next king.
- In ancient times, the king had absolute authority over the people in his kingdom.
- Rarely the term “king” was used to refer to someone who was 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)

Bible References:

- [1 Timothy 06:15-16](#)
- [2 Kings 05:17-19](#)
- [2 Samuel 05:3-5](#)
- [Acts 07:9-10](#)
- [Acts 13:21-22](#)
- [John 01:49-51](#)
- [Luke 01:5-7](#)
- [Luke 22:24-25](#)
- [Matthew 05:33-35](#)
- [Matthew 14:8-9](#)

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!

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4427, H4428, H4430, G935, G936

Uses:

- **Nahum 3:18-19**

kingdom, kingdoms

Definition:

A kingdom is a group of people ruled by a king. It also refers to the realm or political regions over which a king or other ruler has control and authority.

- A kingdom can be of any geographical size. A king might govern a nation or country or only one city.
- The term “kingdom” can also refer to a spiritual reign or authority, as in the term “kingdom of God.”
- God is the ruler of all creation, but the term “kingdom of God” especially refers to his reign and authority over the people who have believed in Jesus and who have submitted to his authority.
- The Bible also talks about Satan having a “kingdom” in which he temporarily rules over many things on this earth. His kingdom is evil and is referred to as “darkness.”

Translation Suggestions:

- When referring to a physical region that is ruled over by a king, the term “kingdom” could be translated as “country (ruled by a king)” or “king’s territory” or “region ruled by a king.”
- In a spiritual sense, “kingdom” could be translated as “ruling” or “reigning” or “controlling” or “governing.”
- One way to translate “kingdom of priests” might be “spiritual priests who are ruled by God.”
- The phrase “kingdom of light” could be translated as “God’s reign that is good like light” or “when God, who is light, rules people” or “the light and goodness of God’s kingdom.” It is best to keep the word “light” in this expression since that is a very important term in the Bible.
- Note that the term “kingdom” is different from an empire, in which an emperor rules over several countries.

(See also: authority, [king](#), kingdom of God, kingdom of Israel, [Judah](#), Judah, priest)

Bible References:

- [1 Thessalonians 02:10-12](#)
- [2 Timothy 04:17-18](#)
- [Colossians 01:13-14](#)
- [John 18:36-37](#)
- [Mark 03:23-25](#)
- [Matthew 04:7-9](#)
- [Matthew 13:18-19](#)
- [Matthew 16:27-28](#)
- [Revelation 01:9-11](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **13:02** God said to Moses and the people of Israel, "If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my prized possession, a **kingdom** of priests, and a holy nation."
- **18:04** God was angry with Solomon and, as a punishment for Solomon's unfaithfulness, he promised to divide the nation of Israel in two **kingdoms** after Solomon's death.
- **18:07** Ten of the tribes of the nation of Israel rebelled against Rehoboam. Only two tribes remained faithful to him. These two tribes became the **kingdom** of Judah.
- **18:08** The other ten tribes of the nation of Israel that rebelled against Rehoboam appointed a man named Jeroboam to be their king. They set up their **kingdom** in the northern part of the land and were called the **kingdom** of Israel.
- **21:08** A king is someone who rules over a **kingdom** and judges the people.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4410, H4437, H4438, H4467, H4468, H4474, H4475, G932

Uses:

- **Nahum 3:5-7**

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 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:

- 1 Kings 04:32-34
- 2 Chronicles 02:8-10
- Deuteronomy 01:7-8
- Psalms 029:3-5
- [Zechariah 10:8-10](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3844

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:4-5](#)

lions, lion, lioness, lionesses**Definition:**

A lion is a large, cat-like, that has animal, with powerful teeth and claws for killing and tearing apart its prey.

- Lions have powerful bodies and great speed to catch their prey. Their fur is short and golden-brown.
- Male lions have a mane of hair that encircles their heads.
- Lions kill other animals to eat them and can be dangerous to human beings.
- When King David was a boy, he killed lions that tried to attack the sheep he was caring for.
- Samson also killed a lion, with his bare hands.

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

(See also: David, leopard, Samson, sheep)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:22-23
- 1 Kings 07:27-29
- Proverbs 19:11-12
- Psalms 017:11-12
- [Revelation 05:3-5](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H738, H739, H744, H3715, H3833, H3918, H7826, H7830, G3023

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:11-12](#)
- [Nahum 2:13](#)

lots, casting lots

Definition:

A “lot” is a marked object that is chosen from among other similar objects as a way of deciding something. “Casting lots” referred to tossing marked objects onto the ground or other surface.

- Often the lots were small marked stones or pieces of broken pottery.
- Some cultures “draw” or “pull out” lots using a bunch of straws. Someone holds the straws so that no one can see how long they are. Each person pulls out a straw and the one who picks the longest (or shortest) straw is the one who is chosen.
- The practice of casting lots was used by the Israelites to find out what God wanted them to do.
- As in the time of Zechariah and Elizabeth, it was also used to choose which priest would perform a specific duty in the temple at a specific time.
- The soldiers who crucified Jesus cast lots to decide who would get to keep Jesus’ robe.
- The phrase “casting lots” can be translated as “tossing lots” or “drawing lots” or “rolling lots.” Make sure the translation of “cast” does not sound like the lots were being thrown a long distance.
- Depending on the context, the term “lot” could also be translated as “marked stone” or “pottery piece” or “stick” or “piece of straw.”
- If a decision is made “by lot” this could be translated as, “by drawing (or throwing) lots.”

(See also: Elizabeth, priest, Zechariah (OT), Zechariah (NT))

Bible References:

- Jonah 01:6-7
- [Luke 01:8-10](#)
- [Luke 23:33-34](#)
- [Mark 15:22-24](#)
- [Matthew 27:35-37](#)
- Psalms 022:18-19

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1486, H2256, H5307, G2624, G2819, G2975, G3091

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:10-11](#)

lust, lusts, lusted, lusting, lustful

Definition:

Lust is a very strong desire, usually in the context of wanting something sinful or immoral. To lust is to have lust.

- In the Bible, “lust” usually referred to sexual desire for someone other than one’s own spouse.
- Sometimes this term was used in a figurative sense to refer to worshiping idols.
- Depending on the context, “lust” could be translated as “wrong desire” or “strong desire” or “wrongful sexual desire” or “strong immoral desire” or to “strongly desire to sin.”
- The phrase to “lust after” could be translated as to “wrongly desire” or to “think immorally about” or to “immorally desire.”

(See also: adultery, false god)

Bible References:

- [1 John 02:15-17](#)
- [2 Timothy 02:22-23](#)
- [Galatians 05:16-18](#)
- [Galatians 05:19-21](#)
- [Genesis 39:7-9](#)
- [Matthew 05:27-28](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H183, H185, H310, H1730, H2181, H2183, H2530, H5178, H5375, H5689, H5691, H5869, H7843, H8307, H8378, G766, G1937, G1938, G1939, G1971, G2237, G3715, G3806

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:3-4](#)

majesty

Definition:

The term “majesty” refers to greatness and splendor, often in relation to the qualities of a king.

- In the Bible, “majesty” frequently refers to the greatness of God, who is the supreme King over the universe.
- “Your Majesty” is a way of addressing a king.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “kingly greatness” or “royal splendor.”
- “Your Majesty” could be translated as something like “your Highness” or “your Excellency” or using a natural way of addressing a ruler in the target language.

(See also: [king](#))

Bible References:

- [2 Peter 01:16-18](#)
- Daniel 04:36-37
- Isaiah 02:9-11
- [Jude 01:24-25](#)
- Micah 05:4-5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1347, H1348, H1420, H1923, H1926, H1935, H7238, G3168, G3172

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:1-2](#)

Manasseh

Facts:

There were five men by the name of Manasseh in the Old Testament:

- Manasseh was the name of Joseph's firstborn son.
- Both Manasseh and his younger brother Ephraim were adopted by Joseph's father, Jacob which gave their descendants the privilege of being among the twelve tribes of Israel.
- The descendants of Manasseh formed one of the tribes of Israel.
- The tribe of Manasseh was often called the "half-tribe of Manasseh" because only part of the tribe settled in the land of Canaan, on the west side of the Jordan River. The other part of the tribe settled on the east side of the Jordan.
- One of the kings of Judah was also named Manasseh.
- King Manasseh was an evil king who sacrificed his own children as burnt offerings to false gods.
- God punished King Manasseh by allowing him to be captured by an enemy army. Manasseh turned back to God and destroyed the altars where idols were worshiped.
- Two men named Manasseh lived during the time of Ezra. These men were required to divorce their pagan wives, who had influenced them to worship false gods.
- One other Manasseh was the grandfather of some Danites who were priests for false gods.

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

(See also: altar, Dan, Ephraim, Ezra, false god, [Jacob](#), [Judah](#), pagan, twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 15:8-9
- Deuteronomy 03:12-13
- Genesis 41:50-52
- Genesis 48:1-2
- Judges 01:27-28

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4519, H4520, G3128

might, mighty, mightier, mightily

Definition:

The terms “mighty” and “might” refer to having great strength or power.

- Often the word “might” is another word for “strength.” When talking about God, it can mean “power.”
- The phrase “mighty men” often refers to men who are courageous and victorious in battle. David’s band of faithful men who helped protect and defend him were often called “mighty men.”
- God is also referred to as the “mighty one.”
- The phrase “mighty works” usually refers to the amazing things God does, especially miracles.
- This term is related to the term “almighty,” which is a common description for God, meaning that he has complete power.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “mighty” could be translated as “powerful” or “amazing” or “very strong.”
- The phrase “his might” could be translated as “his strength” or “his power.”
- In Acts 7, Moses is described as a man who was “mighty in word and deed.” This could be translated as “Moses spoke powerful words from God and did miraculous things” or “Moses spoke God’s word powerfully and did many amazing things.”
- Depending on the context, “mighty works” could be translated as “amazing things that God does” or “miracles” or “God doing things with power.”
- The term “might” could also be translated as “power” or “great strength.”
- Do not confuse this term with the English word that is used to express a possibility, as in “It might rain.”

(See also: Almighty, miracle, **power**, strength)

Bible References:

- [Acts 07:22-25](#)
- Genesis 06:4
- [Mark 09:38-39](#)
- [Matthew 11:23-24](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H46, H47, H117, H193, H202, H352, H386, H410, H430, H533, H650, H1219, H1368, H1369, H1370, H1396, H1397, H1401, H1419, H2220, H2389, H2394, H2428, H3201, H3524,

H3581, H3966, H4101, H5794, H5797, H5807, H5868, H6099, H6105, H6108, H6184, H6697, H6743, H7227, H7580, H7989, H8623, H8624, H8632, G972, G1411, G1413, G1414, G1415, G1498, G1752, G1754, G2159, G2478, G2479, G2900, G2904, G3168, G3173, G5082

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:3-4](#)

Nahum

Facts:

Nahum was a prophet who preached during the time when the evil King Manasseh was ruling over Judah.

- Nahum was from the town of Elkosh, which was about 20 miles from Jerusalem.
- The Old Testament book of Nahum records his prophecies about the destruction of the Assyrian city of Nineveh.

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

(See also: [Assyria](#), [Manasseh](#), [prophet](#), [Nineveh](#))

Bible References:

- [Nahum 01:1](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5151, G3486

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:1](#)

name, names, named

Definition:

In the Bible, the word “name” was used in several figurative ways.

- In some contexts, “name” could refer to a person’s reputation, as in “let us make a name for ourselves.”
- The term “name” could also refer to the memory of something. For example, “cut off the names of the idols” means to destroy those idols so that they are no longer remembered or worshiped.
- Speaking “in the name of God” meant speaking with his power and authority, or as his representative.
- The “name” of someone could refer to the entire person, as in “there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.” (See: [metonymy](#))

Translation Suggestions:

- An expression like “his good name” could be translated as “his good reputation.”
- Doing something “in the name of” could be translated as “with the authority of” or “with the permission of” or “as the representative of” that person.
- The expression “make a name for ourselves” could be translated “cause many people to know about us” or “make people think we are very important.”
- The expression “call his name” could be translated as “name him” or “give him the name.”
- The expression “those who love your name” could be translated as “those who love you.”
- The expression “cut off the names of idols” could be translated as “get rid of pagan idols so that they are not even remembered” or “cause people to stop worshiping false gods” or “completely destroy all idols so that people no longer even think about them.”

(See also: call)

Bible References:

- [1 John 02:12-14](#)
- [2 Timothy 02:19-21](#)
- [Acts 04:5-7](#)
- [Acts 04:11-12](#)
- [Acts 09:26-27](#)
- [Genesis 12:1-3](#)
- [Genesis 35:9-10](#)
- [Matthew 18:4-6](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5344, H7121, H7761, H8034, H8036, G2564, G3686, G3687, G5122

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:14](#)

nation, nations

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.

- A “nation” usually has a well-defined culture and territorial boundaries.
- In the Bible, a “nation” could 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” was used figuratively to refer to the ancestor of a certain people group, as when Rebekah was told by God that her unborn sons were “nations” that would fight against each other. This could be translated as “the founders of two nations” or the “ancestors of two people groups.”
- The word translated as “nation” was 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](#), Babylon, Canaan, Gentile, Greek, [people group](#), Philistines, Rome)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 14:15-17
- 2 Chronicles 15:6-7
- 2 Kings 17:11-12
- [Acts 02:5-7](#)
- [Acts 13:19-20](#)
- [Acts 17:26-27](#)
- [Acts 26:4-5](#)
- Daniel 03:3-5
- Genesis 10:2-5
- Genesis 27:29

- Genesis 35:11-13
- Genesis 49:10
- Luke 07:2-5
- Mark 13:7-8
- Matthew 21:43-44
- Romans 04:16-17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H249, H523, H524, H776, H1471, H3816, H4940, H5971, G246, G1074, G1085, G1484

Uses:

- Nahum 3:5-7

Nile River, River of Egypt, the Nile

Facts:

The Nile is a very long and wide river in northeastern Africa. It is especially well known as the main river of Egypt.

- The Nile River flows north through Egypt and into the Mediterranean Sea.
- Crops grow well in the fertile land on either side of the Nile River.
- Most Egyptians live near the Nile River since it is an important source of water for food crops.
- The Israelites lived in the land of Goshen, which was very fertile because it was located along the Nile River.
- When Moses was a baby, his parents placed him in a basket among the reeds of the Nile to hide him from Pharaoh's men.

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

(See also: [Egypt](#), Goshen, Moses)

Bible References:

- Amos 08:7-8
- Genesis 41:1-3
- Jeremiah 46:7-9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **08:04** Egypt was a large, powerful country located along the **Nile River**.
- **09:04** Pharaoh saw that the Israelites were having many babies, so he ordered his people to kill all Israelite baby boys by throwing them into the **Nile River**.
- **09:06** When the boy's parents could no longer hide him, they put him in a floating basket among the reeds along the edge of the **Nile River** in order to save him from being killed.
- **10:03** God turned the **Nile River** into blood, but Pharaoh still would not let the Israelites go.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2975, H4714, H5104

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:8-9](#)

Nineveh, Ninevite

Facts:

Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria. A “Ninevite” was a person who lived in Nineveh.

- God sent the prophet Jonah to warn the Ninevites to turn from their wicked ways. The people repented and God did not destroy them.
- The Assyrians later stopped serving God. They conquered the kingdom of Israel and carried the people away to Nineveh.

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

(See also: [Assyria](#), [Jonah](#), [repent](#), [turn](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 10:11-14
- Jonah 01:1-3
- Jonah 03:1-3
- [Luke 11:32](#)
- [Matthew 12:41](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5210, G3535, G3536

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:1](#)
- [Nahum 1:9-11](#)
- [Nahum 1:14](#)
- [Nahum 2:8-10](#)
- [Nahum 3:5-7](#)
- [Nahum 3:8-9](#)

peace, peaceful, peacefully, peaceable, peacemakers

Definition:

The term “peace” refers to a state of being or a feeling of having no conflict, anxiety, or fearfulness. A person who is “peaceful” feels calm and assured of being safe and secure.

- “Peace” can also refer to a time when people groups or countries are not at war with each other. These people are said to have “peaceful relations.”
- To “make peace” with a person or a group of people means to take actions to cause fighting to stop.
- A “peacemaker” is someone who does and says things to influence people to live at peace with each other.
- To be “at peace” with other people means being in a state of not fighting against those people.
- A good or right relationship between God and people happens when God saves people from their sin. This is called having “peace with God.”
- The greeting “grace and peace” was used by the apostles in their letters to their fellow believers as a blessing.
- The term “peace” can also refer to being in a good relationship with other people or with God.

Bible References:

- [1 Thessalonians 05:1-3](#)
- [Acts 07:26-28](#)
- [Colossians 01:18-20](#)
- [Colossians 03:15-17](#)
- [Galatians 05:22-24](#)
- [Luke 07:48-50](#)
- [Luke 12:51-53](#)
- [Mark 04:38-39](#)
- [Matthew 05:9-10](#)
- [Matthew 10:11-13](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **15:06** God had commanded the Israelites not to make a **peace** treaty with any of the people groups in Canaan.
- **15:12** Then God gave Israel **peace** along all its borders.
- **16:03** Then God provided a deliverer who rescued them from their enemies and brought **peace** to the land.
- **21:13** He (Messiah) would die to receive the punishment for other people’s sin. His punishment would bring **peace** between God and people.

- **48:14** David was the king of Israel, but Jesus is the king of the entire universe! He will come again and rule his kingdom with justice and **peace**, forever.
- **50:17** Jesus will rule his kingdom with **peace** and justice, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5117, H7961, H7962, H7965, H7999, H8001, H8002, H8003, H8252, G269, G31514, G1515, G1516, G1517, G1518, G2272

Uses:

- **Nahum 1:15**

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](#), [nation](#), tribe, world)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 08:51-53
- 1 Samuel 08:6-7
- Deuteronomy 28:9-10

- Genesis 49:16-18
- Ruth 01:16-18

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!"

Word Data:

- Strong's: H249, H523, H524, H776, H1121, H1471, H3816, H5712, H5971, H5972, H6153, G246, G1074, G1085, G1218, G1484, G2560, G2992, G3793

Uses:

- Nahum 1:9-11
- Nahum 2:8-10

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, Jesus, miracle)

Bible References:

- [1 Thessalonians 01:4-5](#)
- [Colossians 01:11-12](#)
- [Genesis 31:29-30](#)
- [Jeremiah 18:21-23](#)
- [Jude 01:24-25](#)
- [Judges 02:18-19](#)
- [Luke 01:16-17](#)
- [Luke 04:14-15](#)
- [Matthew 26:62-64](#)
- [Philippians 03:20-21](#)
- [Psalm 080:1-3](#)

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."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H410, H1369, H2220, H2428, H2429, H2632, H3027, H3028, H3581, H4475, H4910, H5794, H5797, H5808, H6184, H7786, H7980, H7981, H7983, H7989, H8280, H8592, H8633, G1411, G1415, G1756, G1849, G1850, G2478, G2479, G2904, G3168

Uses:

- **Nahum 1:2-3**

prince, princes, princess, princesses

Definition:

A “prince” is the son of a king. A “princess” is a daughter of a king.

- The term “prince” is often used figuratively to refer to a leader, ruler, or other powerful person.
- Because of Abraham’s wealth and importance, he was referred to as a “prince” by the Hittites he was living among.
- In the book of Daniel, the term “prince” is used in the expressions “prince of Persia” and “prince of Greece,” which in those contexts probably refer to powerful evil spirits who had authority over those regions.
- The archangel Michael is also referred to as a “prince” in the book of Daniel.
- Sometimes in the Bible Satan is referred to as “the prince of this world.”
- Jesus is called the “Prince of Peace” and the “Prince of Life.”
- In Acts 2:36, Jesus is referred to as “Lord and Christ” and in Acts 5:31 he is referred to as “Prince and Savior,” showing the parallel meaning of “Lord” and “Prince.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “prince” could include, “king’s son” or “ruler” or “leader” or “chieftain” or “captain.”
- When referring to angels, this could also be translated as, “spirit ruler” or “leading angel.”
- When referring to Satan or other evil spirits, this term could also be translated as, “evil spirit ruler” or “powerful spirit leader” or “ruling spirit,” depending on the context.

(See also: angel, authority, Christ, demon, lord, [power](#), ruler, Satan, Savior, spirit)

Bible References:

- [Acts 05:29-32](#)
- Genesis 12:14-16
- Genesis 49:26
- [Luke 01:52-53](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1, H117, H324, H2831, H3548, H4502, H5057, H5081, H5139, H5257, H5387, H5633, H5993, H6579, H7101, H7261, H7333, H7336, H7786, H7991, H8269, H8282, H8323, G747, G758, G1413, G2232, G3175

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:16-17](#)

prophet, prophets, prophecy, prophesy, seer, prophetess

Definition:

A “prophet” is a man who speaks God’s messages to people. A woman who does this is called a “prophetess.”

- Often prophets warned people to turn away from their sins and obey God.
- A “prophecy” is the message that the prophet speaks. To “prophesy” means to speak God’s messages.
- Often the message of a prophecy was about something that would happen in the future.
- Many prophecies in the Old Testament have already been fulfilled.
- In the Bible the collection of books written by prophets are sometimes referred to as “the prophets.”
- For example the phrase, “the law and the prophets” is a way of referring to all the Hebrew scriptures, which are also known as the “Old Testament.”
- An older term for a prophet was “seer” or “someone who sees.”
- Sometimes the term “seer” refers to a false prophet or to someone who practices divination.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “prophet” could be translated as “God’s spokesman” or “man who speaks for God” or “man who speaks God’s messages.”
- A “seer” could be translated as, “person who sees visions” or “man who sees the future from God.”
- The term “prophetess” could be translated as, “spokeswoman for God” or “woman who speaks for God” or “woman who speaks God’s messages.”
- Ways to translate “prophecy” could include, “message from God” or “prophet message.”
- The term “prophesy” could be translated as “speak words from God” or “tell God’s message.”
- The figurative expression, “law and the prophets” could also be translated as, “the books of the law and of the prophets” or “everything written about God and his people, including God’s laws and what his prophets preached.” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- When referring to a prophet (or seer) of a false god, it may be necessary to translate this as “false prophet (seer)” or “prophet (seer) of a false god” or “prophet of Baal,” for example.

(See also: Baal, divination, false god, false prophet, fulfill, law, [vision](#))

Bible References:

- [1 Thessalonians 02:14-16](#)
- [Acts 03:24-26](#)
- [John 01:43-45](#)
- [Malachi 04:4-6](#)
- [Matthew 01:22-23](#)

- [Matthew 02:17-18](#)
- [Matthew 05:17-18](#)
- [Psalm 051:1-2](#)

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.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2372, H2374, H4853, H5012, H5013, H5016, H5017, H5029, H5030, H5031, H5197, G2495, G4394, G4395, G4396, G4397, G4398, G5578

Uses:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 02 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)

prostitute, prostituted, prostitutes, harlot, whored**Definition:**

The terms “prostitute” and “harlot” both refer to a person who performs sexual acts for money or for religious rites. Prostitutes or harlots were usually female, but some were male.

- In the Bible, the word “prostitute” is sometimes used figuratively to refer to a person who worships false gods or who practices witchcraft.
- The expression “play the harlot” means to act like a harlot by being sexually immoral. This expression is also used in the Bible to refer to a person who worships idols.
- To “prostitute oneself” to something means to be sexually immoral or when used figuratively, to be unfaithful to God by worshiping false gods.
- In ancient times, some pagan temples used male and female prostitutes as part of their rituals.
- This term could be translated by the word or phrase that is used in the project language to refer to a prostitute. Some languages may have a euphemistic term that is used for this. (See: euphemism)

(See also: adultery, false god, sexual immorality, false god)

Bible References:

- Genesis 34:30-31
- Genesis 38:21-23
- [Luke 15:28-30](#)
- [Matthew 21:31-32](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2154, H2181, H2183, H2185, H6945, H6948, H8457, G4204

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:3-4](#)

queen, queens

Definition:

A queen is either the female ruler of a country or the wife of a king.

- Esther became the queen of the Persian empire when she married King Ahasuerus.
- Queen Jezebel was the evil wife of King Ahab.
- The Queen of Sheba was a famous ruler who came to visit King Solomon.
- A term such as “queen mother” usually referred to the mother or grandmother of a ruling king or the widow of the previous king. A queen mother had much influence; Athaliah, for example, influenced the people to worship idols.

(See also: Ahasuerus, Athaliah, Esther, [king](#). Persia ruler, Sheba)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 10:10
- 1 Kings 11:18-19
- 2 Kings 10:12-14
- [Acts 08:26-28](#)
- Esther 01:16-18
- [Luke 11:31](#)
- [Matthew 12:42](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1404, H1377, H4410, H4427, H4433, H4436, H4438, H4446, H7694, H8282, G938

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:6-7](#)

raise, raises, raised, 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” express 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” could be translated as “lift up” or “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 to “appoint” or to “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, exalt)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 06:40-42

- 2 Samuel 07:12-14
- Acts 10:39-41
- Colossians 03:1-4
- Deuteronomy 13:1-3
- Jeremiah 06:1-3
- Judges 02:18-19
- Luke 07:21-23
- Matthew 20:17-19

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.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2210, H2224, H5549, H5782, H5927, H5975, H6209, H6965, H6966, H6974, H7613, H7721, G305, G386, G393, G450, G1096, G1326, G1453, G1525, G1817, G1825, G1892, G1999, G4891

Uses:

- Nahum 1:9-11

rebuke, rebukes, rebuked

Definition:

To rebuke is to give someone a stern verbal correction, often in order to help that person turn away from sin. Such a correction is a rebuke.

- The New Testament commands Christians to rebuke other believers when they are clearly disobeying God.
- The book of Proverbs instructs parents to rebuke their children when they are disobedient.
- A rebuke is typically given to prevent those who committed a wrong from further involving themselves in sin.
- This could be translated by “sternly correct” or “admonish.”
- The phrase “a rebuke” could be translated by “a stern correction” or “a strong criticism.”
- “Without rebuke” could be translated as “without admonishing” or “without criticism.”

(See also admonish, disobey)

Bible References:

- [Mark 01:23-26](#)
- [Mark 16:14-16](#)
- [Matthew 08:26-27](#)
- [Matthew 17:17-18](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1605, H1606, H2778, H2781, H3198, H4045, H4148, H8156, H8433, G298, G299, G1649, G1651, G1969, G2008, G3679

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:4-5](#)

refuge, refugee, refugees, shelter, shelters, sheltered, sheltering

Definition:

The term “refuge” refers to a place or condition of safety and protection. A “refugee” is someone who is seeking a safe place. A “shelter” refers to a place that can protect from weather or danger.

- In the Bible, God is often referred to as a refuge where his people can be safe, protected, and cared for.
- The term “city of refuge” in the Old Testament referred to one of several cities where a person who accidentally killed someone could go for protection from people who would attack them in revenge.
- A “shelter” is often a physical structure such as a building or roof that can provide protection to people or animals.
- Sometimes “shelter” means “protection,” as when Lot said that his guests were “under the shelter” of his roof. He was saying that they should be safe because he was taking responsibility to protect them as members of his household.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “refuge” could be translated as “safe place” or “place of protection.”
- “Refugees” are people leaving their home to escape from a dangerous situation, and could be translated as “aliens,” “homeless people,” or “exiles.”
- Depending on the context, the term “shelter” could be translated as “something that protects” or “protection” or “protected place.”
- If it refers to a physical structure, “shelter” could also be translated as “protective building” or “house of safety.”
- The phrase “into safe shelter” could be translated as “into a safe place” or “into a place that will protect.”
- To “find shelter” or to “take shelter” or to “take refuge” could be translated as to “find a place of safety” or to “put oneself in a protected place.”

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 22:3-4
- Deuteronomy 32:37-38
- Isaiah 23:13-14
- Jeremiah 16:19-21
- Numbers 35:24-25
- Psalm 046:1-3
- Psalms 028:6-8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2620, H4268, H4498, H4585, H4733, H4869

Uses:

- Nahum 1:7-8
- Nahum 3:10-11

restore, restores, restored, restoration

Definition:

The terms “restore” and “restoration” refer to causing something to return to its original and better condition.

- When a diseased body part is restored, this means it has been “healed.”
- A broken relationship that is restored has been “reconciled.” God restores sinful people and brings them back to himself.
- If people have been restored to their home country, they have been “brought back” or “returned” to that country.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “restore” could include “renew” or “repay” or “return” or “heal” or “bring back.”
- Other expressions for this term could be “make new” or “make like new again.”
- When property is “restored,” it has been “repaired” or “replaced” or “given back” to its owner.
- Depending on the context, “restoration” could be translated as “renewal” or “healing” or “reconciliation.”

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 05:8-10
- [Acts 03:21-23](#)
- [Acts 15:15-18](#)
- Isaiah 49:5-6
- Jeremiah 15:19-21
- Lamentations 05:19-22
- Leviticus 06:5-7
- [Luke 19:8-10](#)
- [Matthew 12:13-14](#)
- Psalm 080:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7725, H7999, H8421, G600, G2675

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:1-2](#)

ruin, ruins, ruined

Definition:

To “ruin” something means to spoil, destroy, or cause to be useless. The term “ruin” or “ruins” refers to the rubble and spoiled remains of something that has been destroyed.

- The prophet Zephaniah spoke about the day of God’s wrath as a “day of ruin” when the world will be judged and punished.
- The book of Proverbs says that ruin and destruction await those who are ungodly.
- Depending on the context, to “ruin” could be translated as to “destroy” or to “spoil” or to “make useless” or to “break.”
- The term “ruin” or “ruins” could be translated as “rubble” or “broken-down buildings” or “destroyed city” or “devastation” or “brokenness” or “destruction,” depending on the context.

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 12:7-8
- 2 Kings 19:25-26
- [Acts 15:15-18](#)
- Isaiah 23:13-14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6, H1197, H1530, H1820, H1942, H2034, H2040, H2717, H2719, H2720, H2723, H2930, H3510, H3765, H3782, H3832, H4072, H4288, H4383, H4384, H4654, H4658, H4876, H4889, H5221, H5557, H5754, H5856, H6365, H7451, H7489, H7582, H7591, H7612, H7701, H7703, H7843, H8047, H8074, H8077, H8414, H8510, G2679, G2692, G3639, G4485

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:6-7](#)
- [Nahum 2:8-10](#)

shepherd, shepherds, shepherded, shepherding

Definition:

A shepherd is a person who takes care of sheep. The verb to “shepherd” means to protect the sheep and provide them with food and water. Shepherds watch over the sheep, leading them to places with good food and water. Shepherds also keep the sheep from getting lost and protect them from wild animals.

- This term is often used metaphorically in the Bible to refer to taking care of people’s spiritual needs. This includes teaching them what God has told them in the Bible and guiding them in the way they should live.
- In the Old Testament, God was called the “shepherd” of his people because he took care of all their needs and protected them. He also led and guided them. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- Moses was a shepherd for the Israelites as he guided them spiritually in their worship of Yahweh and led them physically on their journey to the land of Canaan.
- In the New Testament, Jesus called himself the “good shepherd.” The apostle Paul also referred to him as the “great shepherd” over the Church.
- Also, in the New Testament, the term “shepherd” was used to refer to a person who was a spiritual leader over other believers. The word translated as “pastor” is the same word that is translated as “shepherd.” The elders and overseers were also called shepherds.

Translation Suggestions

- When used literally, the action “shepherd” could be translated as “take care of sheep” or “watch over sheep.”
- The person “shepherd” could be translated as “person who takes care of sheep” or “sheep tender” or “sheep caregiver.”
- When used as a metaphor, different ways to translate this term could include “spiritual shepherd” or “spiritual leader” or “one who is like a shepherd” or “one who cares for his people like a shepherd cares for his sheep” or “one who leads his people like a shepherd guides his sheep” or “one who takes care of God’s sheep.”
- In some contexts, “shepherd” could be translated as “leader” or “guide” or “caregiver.”
- The spiritual expression to “shepherd” could be translated as to “take care of” or to “spiritually nourish” or to “guide and teach” or to “lead and take care of (like a shepherd cares for sheep).”
- In figurative uses, it is best to use or include the literal word for “shepherd” in the translation of this term.

(See also: believe, Canaan, church, Moses, pastor, sheep, spirit)

Bible References:

- Genesis 49:24

- Luke 02:8-9
- Mark 06:33-34
- Mark 14:26-27
- Matthew 02:4-6
- Matthew 09:35-36
- Matthew 25:31-33
- Matthew 26:30-32

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **09:11** Moses became a **shepherd** in the wilderness far away from Egypt.
- **17:02** David was a **shepherd** from the town of Bethlehem. At different times while he was watching his father's sheep, David had killed both a lion and a bear that had attacked the sheep.
- **23:06** That night, there were some **shepherds** in a nearby field guarding their flocks.
- **23:08** The **shepherds** soon arrived at the place where Jesus was and they found him lying in a feeding trough, just as the angel had told them.
- **30:03** To Jesus, these people were like sheep without a **shepherd**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6629, H7462, H7469, H7473, G750, G4165, G4166

Uses:

- Nahum 3:18-19

siege, besiege, besieged, besiegers, besieging, siegeworks

Definition:

A “siege” occurs when an attacking army surrounds a city and keeps it from receiving any supplies of food and water. To “besiege” a city or to put it “under siege” means to attack it by means of a siege.

- When the Babylonians came to attack Israel, they used the tactic of a siege against Jerusalem to weaken the people inside the city.
- Often during a siege, ramps of dirt are gradually constructed to enable the attacking army to cross over the city walls and invade the city.
- To “besiege” a city can also be expressed as to “lay siege” to it or to “perform a siege” on it.
- The term “besieged” has the same meaning as the expression “under siege.” Both these expressions describe a city that an enemy army is surrounding and besieging.

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 20:1
- 1 Kings 20:1-3
- 1 Samuel 11:1-2
- Jeremiah 33:4-5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4692, H4693, H5341, H5437, H5564, H6693, H6696, H6887

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:14-15](#)

silver

Definition:

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

- The various containers that are made include silver cups and bowls, and other things used for cooking, eating, or serving.
- Silver and gold were used in the building of the tabernacle and the temple. The temple in Jerusalem had containers made of silver.
- In Bible times, a shekel was a unit of weight, and a purchase was often priced at a certain number of shekels of silver. By New Testament times there were silver coins of various weights that were measured in shekels.
- Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave for twenty shekels of silver.
- Judas was paid thirty silver coins for betraying Jesus.

(See also: tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:9-11
- 1 Samuel 02:36
- 2 Kings 25:13-15
- [Acts 03:4-6](#)
- [Matthew 26:14-16](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3701, H3702, H7192, G693, G694, G695, G696, G1406

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:8-10](#)

sin, sins, sinned, sinful, sinner, sinning

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “sin” could be translated with a word or phrase that means “disobedience to God” or “going against God’s will” or “evil behavior and thoughts” or “wrongdoing.”
- To “sin” could also be translated as to “disobey God” or to “do wrong.”
- Depending on the context “sinful” could be translated as “full of wrongdoing” or “wicked” or “immoral” or “evil” or “rebellious against God.”
- Depending on the context the term “sinner” could be translated with a word or phrase that means, “person who sins” or “person who does wrong things” or “person who disobeys God” or “person who disobeys the law.”
- The term “sinners” could be translated by a word or phrase that means “very sinful people” or “people considered to be very sinful” or “immoral people.”
- Ways to translate “tax collectors and sinners” could include “people who collect money for the government, and other very sinful people” or “very sinful people, including (even) tax collectors.”
- 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, [evil](#), flesh, tax collector)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 09:1-3

- 1 John 01:8-10
- 1 John 02:1-3
- 2 Samuel 07:12-14
- Acts 03:19-20
- Daniel 09:24-25
- Genesis 04:6-7
- Hebrews 12:1-3
- Isaiah 53:10-11
- Jeremiah 18:21-23
- Leviticus 04:13-15
- Luke 15:17-19
- Matthew 12:31-32
- Romans 06:22-23
- Romans 08:3-5

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**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H817, H819, H2398, H2399, H2400, H2401, H2402, H2403, H2408, H2409, H5771, H6588, H7683, H7686, G264, G265, G266, G268, G361, G3781, G3900, G4258

Uses:

- [Nahum 01 General Notes](#)

sorcerer, sorcerers, sorceress, sorcery, sorceries, witchcraft**Definition:**

“Sorcery” or “witchcraft” refers to using magic, which involves doing powerful things through the help of evil spirits. A “sorcerer” is someone who does these powerful, magical things.

- The use of magic and sorcery can involve both beneficial things (such as healing someone) and harmful things (such as putting a curse on someone). But all kinds of sorcery are wrong, because they use the power of evil spirits.
- In the Bible, God says that the use of sorcery is as evil as other terrible sins (such as adultery, worshiping idols, and child sacrifice).
- The terms “sorcery” and “witchcraft” could also be translated as “evil spirit power” or “casting spells.”
- Possible ways to translated “sorcerer” could include “worker of magic” or “person who casts spells” or “person who does miracles using evil spirit power.”
- Note that “sorcery” has a different meaning than the term “divination,” which refers to attempting to contact the spirit world.

(See also: adultery, demon, divination, false god, magic, sacrifice, worship)

Bible References:

- [Acts 08:9-11](#)
- [Exodus 07:11-13](#)
- [Galatians 05:19-21](#)
- [Revelation 09:20-21](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3784, H3785, H3786, H6049, G3095, G3096, G3097, G5331, G5332, G5333

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:3-4](#)

spear, spears, spearmen

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, Rome, [sword](#), warrior)

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 13:19-21
- 2 Samuel 21:18-19
- Nehemiah 04:12-14
- Psalm 035:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1265, H2595, H3591, H6767, H7013, H7420, G3057

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:3-4](#)

stronghold, strongholds, fortifications, fortified, fortress, fortresses

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 were manmade structures with defensive walls. They could also have been places with natural protective barriers such as rocky cliffs or high mountains.
- People fortified strongholds by building thick walls or other structures that made 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 was 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” referred to something that someone wrongly trusted in for security, such as a false god or other thing that was 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, false god, [refuge](#), [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- [2 Corinthians 10:3-4](#)
- [2 Kings 08:10-12](#)
- [2 Samuel 05:8-10](#)
- [Acts 21:34-36](#)
- [Habakkuk 01:10-11](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H490, H553, H759, H1001, H1002, H1003, H1219, H1225, H2388, H4013, H4026, H4581, H4526, H4679, H4685, H4686, H4692, H4693, H4694, H4869, H5794, H5797, H5800, H6438, H6696, H6877, H7682, G3794, G3925

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:7-8](#)

stumble, stumbles, stumbled, stumbling

Definition:

The term “stumble” means “almost fall” when walking or running. Usually it involves tripping over something.

- Figuratively, to “stumble” can mean to “sin” or to “falter” in believing.
- This term can also refer to faltering or showing weakness when fighting a battle or when being persecuted or punished.

Translation Suggestions

- In contexts where the term “stumble” means to physically trip over something, it should be translated with a term that means “almost fall” or “trip over.”
- This literal meaning could also be used in a figurative context, if it communicates the correct meaning in that context.
- For figurative uses where the literal meaning would not make sense in the project language, “stumble” could be translated as, “sin” or “falter” or “stop believing” or “become weak,” depending on the context.
- Another way to translate this term could be, “stumble by sinning” or “stumble by not believing.”
- The phrase “made to stumble” could be translated as “caused to become weak” or “caused to falter.”

(See also: believe, persecute, [sin](#), stumbling block)

Bible References:

- [1 Peter 02:7-8](#)
- Hosea 04:4-5
- Isaiah 31:3
- [Matthew 11:4-6](#)
- [Matthew 18:7-8](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1762, H3782, H4383, H4384, H5062, H5063, H5307, H6328, H6761, H8058, G679, G4348, G4350, G4417, G4624, G4625

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:5](#)

sword, swords, swordsmen

Definition:

A sword is a flat-bladed metal weapon used to cut or stab. It has a handle and a long, pointed blade with a very sharp cutting edge.

- In ancient times the length of a sword's blade was about 60 to 91 centimeters.
- Some swords have two sharp edges and are called "double-edged" or "two-edged" swords.
- Jesus' disciples had swords for self defense. With his sword, Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.
- Both John the Baptist and the apostle James were beheaded with swords.

Translation Suggestions

- A sword is used as a metaphor for God's word. God's teachings in the Bible exposed people's innermost thoughts and convicted them of their sin. In a similar way, a sword cuts deeply, causing pain. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- One way to translate this figurative use would be, "God's word is like a sword, which cuts deeply and exposes sin."
- Another figurative use of this term occurred in the book of Psalms, where the tongue or speech of a person was compared to a sword, which can injure people. This could be translated as "the tongue is like a sword that can badly injure someone."
- If swords are not known in your culture, this word could be translated with the name of another long-bladed weapon that is used to cut or stab.
- A sword could also be described as a "sharp weapon" or "long knife." Some translations could include a picture of a sword.

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

(See also: James (brother of Jesus), John (the Baptist), tongue, word of God)

Bible References:

- [Acts 12:1-2](#)
- [Genesis 27:39-40](#)
- [Genesis 34:24-26](#)
- [Luke 02:33-35](#)
- [Luke 21:23-24](#)
- [Matthew 10:34-36](#)
- [Matthew 26:55-56](#)
- [Revelation 01:14-16](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H19, H1300, H2719, H4380, H6609, H7524, H7973, G3162, G4501

Uses:

- Nahum 2:13
- Nahum 3:3-4
- Nahum 3:14-15

vine, vines

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:

- Genesis 40:9-11
- Genesis 49:11-12
- [John 15:1-2](#)
- [Luke 22:17-18](#)
- [Mark 12:1-3](#)
- [Matthew 21:35-37](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5139, H1612, H8321, G288, G290, G1009, G1092

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:1-2](#)

vision, visions, envision

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:

- [Acts 09:10-12](#)
- [Acts 10:3-6](#)
- [Acts 10:9-12](#)
- [Acts 12:9-10](#)
- [Luke 01:21-23](#)
- [Luke 24:22-24](#)
- [Matthew 17:9-10](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2376, H2377, H2378, H2380, H2384, H4236, H4758, H4759, H7203, H7723, H8602, G3701, G3705, G3706

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:1](#)

voice, voices

Definition:

The term “voice” is often used figuratively to refer to speaking or communicating something.

- God is said to use his voice, even though he doesn’t have a voice in the same way a human being does.
- This term can be used to refer to the whole person, as in the statement “A voice is heard in the desert saying, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord.’” This could be translated as “A person is heard calling out in the desert...” (See: [synecdoche](#))
- To “hear someone’s voice” could also be translated as “hear someone speaking.”
- Sometimes the word “voice” may be used for objects that cannot literally speak, such as when David exclaims in the psalms that the “voice” of the heavens proclaims God’s mighty works. This could also be translated as “their splendor shows clearly how great God is.”

(See also: call, proclaim, splendor)

Bible References:

- [John 05:36-38](#)
- [Luke 01:42-45](#)
- [Luke 09:34-36](#)
- [Matthew 03:16-17](#)
- [Matthew 12:19-21](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6963, H7032, H7445, H8193, G2906, G5456, G5586

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:13](#)

vow, vows, vowed**Definition:**

A vow is a promise that a person makes to God. The person promises to do a certain thing in order to specially honor God or to show devotion to him.

- After a person makes a vow, he is obligated to fulfill that vow.
- The Bible teaches that a person may be judged by God if he doesn't keep his vow.
- Sometimes a person may ask God to protect him or provide for him in exchange for making the vow.
- But God is not required to fulfill a request that a person asks for in his vow.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, "vow" could be translated as "solemn promise" or "promise made to God."
- A vow is a special kind of oath that is made to God.

(See also: promise, oath)

Bible References:

- [1 Corinthians 07:27-28](#)
- [Acts 21:22-24](#)
- Genesis 28:20-22
- Genesis 31:12-13
- Jonah 01:14-16
- Jonah 02:9-10
- Proverbs 07:13-15

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5087, H5088, G2171

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:15](#)

water, waters, watered, watering

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, spirit, Holy Spirit, [power](#))

Bible References:

- [Acts 08:36-38](#)
- Exodus 14:21-22
- [John 04:9-10](#)
- [John 04:13-14](#)
- [John 04:15-16](#)
- [Matthew 14:28-30](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2222, H4325, H4529, H4857, H7301, H7783, H8248, G504, G4215, G4222, G5202, G5204

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:8-10](#)

woe**Definition:**

The term “woe” refers to a feeling of great distress. It also gives a warning that someone will experience severe trouble.

- The expression “woe to” is followed by a warning to people that they will experience suffering as punishment for their sins.
- In several places in the Bible, the word “woe” is repeated, to emphasize an especially terrible judgment.
- A person who says “woe is me” or “woe to me” is expressing sorrow about severe suffering.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, the term “woe” could also be translated as “great sorrow” or “sadness” or “calamity” or “disaster.”
- Other ways to translate the expression “Woe to (name of city)” could include, “How terrible it will be for (name of city)” or “The people in (that city) will be severely punished” or “Those people will suffer greatly.”
- The expression, “Woe is me!” or “Woe to me!” could be translated as “How sad I am!” or “I am so sad!” or “How terrible this is for me!”
- The expression “Woe to you” could also be translated as “You will suffer terribly” or “You will experience terrible troubles.”

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 13:17-18
- [Habakkuk 02:12-14](#)
- Isaiah 31:1-2
- Jeremiah 45:1-3
- [Jude 01:9-11](#)
- [Luke 06:24-25](#)
- [Luke 17:1-2](#)
- [Matthew 23:23-24](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H188, H190, H337, H480, H1929, H1945, H1958, G3759

Uses:

- [Nahum 3:1-2](#)

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 also: judge, sin)

Bible References:

- [1 Thessalonians 01:8-10](#)
- [1 Timothy 02:8-10](#)
- [Luke 03:7](#)
- [Luke 21:23-24](#)
- [Matthew 03:7-9](#)
- [Revelation 14:9-10](#)
- [Romans 01:18-19](#)
- [Romans 05:8-9](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H639, H2197, H2528, H2534, H2740, H3707, H3708, H5678, H7107, H7109, H7110, H7265, H7267, G2372, G3709, G3949, G3950

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:2-3](#)
- [Nahum 1:6](#)

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 translates 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.
- In the Old Testament, when God spoke about himself, he would often use his name instead of a pronoun.
- By adding the pronoun “I” or “me,” the ULB indicates to the reader that God is the speaker.

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.
- It is best if possible to keep the name Yahweh where it literally occurs in the text, but some translations may decide to use only a pronoun in some places, to make the text more natural and clear.
- Introduce the quote with something like, “This is what Yahweh says.”

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

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

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 21:19-20
- 1 Samuel 16:6-7
- Daniel 09:3-4
- Ezekiel 17:24
- Genesis 02:4-6
- Genesis 04:3-5
- Genesis 28:12-13
- Hosea 11:12
- Isaiah 10:3-4
- Isaiah 38:7-8
- Job 12:9-10
- Joshua 01:8-9
- Lamentations 01:4-5
- Leviticus 25:35-38
- **Malachi 03:4-5**
- Micah 02:3-5
- Micah 06:3-5
- Numbers 08:9-11
- Psalm 124:1-3
- Ruth 01:19-21
- **Zechariah 14:5**

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."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3050, H3068, H3069

Uses:

- **Nahum 1:2-3**

- Nahum 1:7-8
- Nahum 1:9-11
- Nahum 1:12-13
- Nahum 1:14
- Nahum 2:1-2

Yahweh of hosts, God of hosts, host of heaven, host of the heavens, Lord of hosts

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, authority, [God](#), lord, Lord, Lord Yahweh [Yahweh](#))

Bible References:

- [Zechariah 13:1-2](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H430, H3068, H6635

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:13](#)
- [Nahum 3:5-7](#)

yoke, yokes, yoked

Definition:

A yoke is a piece of wood or metal attached to two or more animals to connect them for the purpose of pulling a plow or a cart. There are also several figurative meanings for this term.

- The term “yoke” is used figuratively to refer to something that joins people for the purpose of working together, such as in serving Jesus.
- Paul used the term “yokefellow” to refer to someone who was serving Christ as he was. This could also be translated as “fellow worker” or “fellow servant” or “coworker.”
- The term “yoke” is also often used figuratively to refer to a heavy load that someone has to carry, such as when being oppressed by slavery or persecution.
- In most contexts, it is best to translate this term literally, using the local term for a yoke that is used for farming.
- Other ways to translate the figurative use of this term could be, “oppressive burden” or “heavy load” or “bond,” depending on the context.

(See also: bind, burden, oppress, persecute, [servant](#))

Bible References:

- [Acts 15:10-11](#)
- [Galatians 05:1-2](#)
- [Genesis 27:39-40](#)
- [Isaiah 09:4-5](#)
- [Jeremiah 27:1-4](#)
- [Matthew 11:28-30](#)
- [Philippians 04:1-3](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3627, H4132, H4133, H5674, H5923, H6776, G2086, G2201, G2218, G4805

Uses:

- [Nahum 1:12-13](#)

translationAcademy

Abstract Nouns

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

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 the nouns that refer to ideas. These can be attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even 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.

Using abstract nouns allows people to express thoughts about ideas in fewer words than if they did not have those nouns. It is a way of giving names to actions or qualities so that people can talk about them as though they were things. It is like a short-cut in language. For example, in languages that use abstract nouns, people can say, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin." But if the language did not have the two abstract nouns "forgiveness" and "sin," then they would have to make a longer sentence to express the same meaning. They would have to say, for example, "I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned," using verb phrases instead of nouns for those ideas.

Reason this is a translation issue

The Bible that you translate from may use abstract nouns to express certain ideas. Your language might not use abstract nouns for some of those ideas; instead, it might use phrases to express those ideas. Those phrases will use other kinds of words such as adjectives, verbs, or adverbs to express the meaning of the abstract noun.

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. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun..

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun.
2. ... **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.
3. **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.
4. **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...

5. **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.

6. **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.

Uses:

- Nahum 2:5
- Nahum 3:18-19

Active or Passive

This page answers the question: *What do active and passive mean, and how do I translate passive sentences?*

Some languages have both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences, the subject is the one that receives the action. Here are some examples with their subjects underlined:

- **ACTIVE:** My father built the house in 2010.
- **PASSIVE:** The house was built in 2010.

Translators whose languages do not have passive sentences will need to know how they can translate passive sentences that they find in the Bible. Other translators will need to decide when to use a passive sentence and when to use the active form.

Description

Some languages have both active and passive forms of sentences.

- In the **ACTIVE** form, the subject does the action and is always mentioned.
- In the **PASSIVE** form, the action is done to the subject, and the one who does the action is *not always* mentioned.

In the examples of active and passive sentences below, we have underlined the subject.

- **ACTIVE:** My father built the house in 2010.
- **PASSIVE:** The house was built by my father in 2010.
- **PASSIVE:** The house was built in 2010. (This does not tell who did the action.)

Reasons this is a translation issue

All languages have active forms. Some languages have passive forms, and some do not. The passive form is not used for the same purposes in all of the languages that have it.

Purposes for the passive

- The speaker is talking about the person or thing the action was done to, not about the person who did the action.
- The speaker does not want to tell who did the action.
- The speaker does not know who did the action.

Translation Principles Regarding the Passive

- Translators whose language does not use passive forms will need to find another way to express the idea.

- Translators whose language has passive forms will need to understand why the passive is used in a particular sentence in the Bible and decide whether or not to use a passive form for that purpose in his translation of the sentence.

Examples from the Bible

And their shooters shot at your soldiers from off the wall, and some of the king's servants were killed, and your servant Uriah the Hittite was killed too. (2 Samuel 11:24 ULB)

This means that the enemy's shooters shot and killed some of the king's servants, including Uriah. The point is what happened to the king's servants and Uriah, not who shot them. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on the king's servants and Uriah.

In the morning when the men of the town got up, the altar of Baal was broken down ... (Judges 6:28 ULB)

The men of the town saw what had happened to the altar of Baal, but they did not know who broke it down. The purpose of the passive form here is to communicate this event from the perspective of the men of the town.

It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea (Luke 17:2 ULB)

This describes a situation in which a person ends up in the sea with a millstone around his neck. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on what happens to this person. Who does these things to the person is not important.

Translation Strategies

If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies you might consider.

1. Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who or what did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.
2. Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who or what did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like "they" or "people" or "someone."
3. Use a different verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.
2. **A loaf of bread was given him every day from the street of the bakers.** (Jeremiah 37:21 ULB)

- The king's servants gave Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

3. Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like “they” or “people” or “someone.”
4. **It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.** (Luke 17:2 ULB)
 - It would be better for him if they were to put a millstone around his neck and throw him into the sea.
 - It would be better for him if someone were to put a heavy stone around his neck and throw him into the sea.
5. Use a different verb in an active sentence.
6. **A loaf of bread was given him every day from the street of the bakers.** (Jeremiah 37:21 ULB)
 - He received a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Uses:

- Nahum 1:6
- Nahum 1:9-11
- Nahum 1:12-13
- Nahum 1:15
- Nahum 2:3-4
- Nahum 2:3-4
- Nahum 2:5
- Nahum 2:6-7
- Nahum 2:6-7
- Nahum 2:13
- Nahum 3:10-11
- Nahum 3:10-11
- Nahum 3:10-11
- Nahum 3:12-13
- Nahum 3:12-13

Apostrophe

This page answers the question: *What is the figure of speech called apostrophe?*

Definition

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him.

Description

He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

Reason this is a translation issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

Examples from the Bible

Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you (2 Samuel 1:21 ULB)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling these mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34 ULB)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "Altar, altar! This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.' " (1 Kings 13:2 ULB)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option.

1. If this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells them his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells them his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him.
2. **He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "Altar, altar! This is what Yahweh says, 'See, ... on you they will burn human bones.'"** (1 Kings 13:2 ULB)
 - He said this about the altar: "This is what Yahweh says about this altar. 'See, ... they will burn people's bones on it.'"
3. **Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you** (2 Samuel 1:21 ULB)
 - As for these mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on them

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:8-10](#)

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

This page answers the question: *How can I be sure that my translation communicates the assumed knowledge and implicit information along with the explicit information of the original message?*

- **Assumed knowledge** is whatever a speaker assumes his audience knows before he speaks and gives them some kind of information. The speaker gives the audience information in two ways:
- **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 or do or think about. He normally states this directly. This is **explicit information**.

The speaker assumes that his audience already knows certain things that they will need to think about in order to understand this information. Normally he does not tell people these things, because they already know them. This is called **assumed knowledge**.

The speaker does not always directly state everything that he expects his audience to learn from what he says. Information that he expects people to learn from what he says even though he does not state it directly is **implicit information**.

Often, the audience understands this **implicit information** by combining what they already know (**assumed knowledge**) with the **explicit information** that the speaker tells them directly.

Reasons this is a translation issue

All three kinds of information are part of the speaker's message. If one of these kinds of information is missing, then the audience will not understand the message. Because the target translation is in a language that is very different than the biblical languages and made for an audience that lives in a very different time and place than the people in the Bible, many times the **assumed knowledge** or the **implicit information** is missing from the message. In other words, modern readers do not know everything that the original speakers and hearers in the Bible knew. When these things are important for understanding the message, you can include this information in the text or in a footnote.

Examples from the Bible

Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20 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. Also, Jesus did not state explicitly that he travelled a lot and did not have a house that he slept in every night. That is **implicit information** that the scribe could learn when Jesus said that he had nowhere to lay his head.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the mighty deeds had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But 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. By saying this, they were accusing his disciples of not following the traditions, and thus not being righteous. This is **implicit information** that they wanted him to understand from what they said.

Translation Strategies

If readers have enough assumed knowledge to be able to understand the message, along with any important implicit information that goes with the explicit information, then it is good to leave that knowledge unstated and leave the implicit information implicit. If the readers do not understand the message because one of these is missing for them, then follow these strategies:

1. If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.
2. If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.
 - **Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."** (Matthew 8:20 ULB) - Assumed knowledge was that the foxes slept in their holes and birds slept in their nests.
 - Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes to live in, and the birds of the sky have nests to live in, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head and sleep."
 - **it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you** (Matthew 11:22 ULB) - Assumed knowledge was that the people of Tyre and Sidon were very, very wicked. This can be stated explicitly.
 - ... it will be more tolerable for those cities Tyre and Sidon, whose people were very wicked, at the day of judgment than for you
 - ◇ Or:
 - ... it will be more tolerable for those wicked cities Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you
 - **Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat.** (Matthew 15:2 ULB) - Assumed knowledge was that one of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating, which they must do to be righteous. It was not to remove germs from their hands to avoid sickness, as a modern reader might think.
 - Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For they do not go through the ceremonial handwashing ritual of righteousness when they eat.
2. If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.
 - **Then a scribe came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."** (Matthew 8:19, 20 ULB) - Implicit information is that Jesus himself is the Son of Man. Other implicit information is that if the scribe wanted to follow Jesus, he would have to live like Jesus without a house.
 - Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have no home to rest in. If you want to follow me, you will live as I live."
 - **it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you** (Matthew 11:22 ULB) - Implicit information is that God would not only judge the people; he would punish them. This can be made explicit.
 - At the day of judgment, God will punish Tyre and Sidon, cities whose people were very wicked, less severely than he will punish you

- At the day of judgment, God will punish you more severely than Tyre and Sidon, cities whose people were very wicked.

Modern readers may not know some of the things that the people in the Bible and the people who first read it knew. This can make it hard for them to understand what a speaker or writer says, and to learn things that the speaker left implicit. Translators may need to state some things explicitly in the translation that the original speaker or writer left unstated or implicit.

Uses:

- Nahum 1:1
- Nahum 1:2-3
- Nahum 1:4-5
- Nahum 1:14
- Nahum 2:1-2
- Nahum 2:6-7
- Nahum 2:11-12
- Nahum 3:3-4
- Nahum 3:12-13
- Nahum 3:12-13

Ellipsis

This page answers the question: *What is ellipsis?*

Description

Ellipsis is what happens when a speaker or writer leaves one or more words out of a sentence because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and fill in the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. The information that is omitted has usually already been stated in a preceding sentence or phrase.

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

This is ellipsis because “sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause.

Reason this is a translation issue

Readers who see incomplete sentences or phrases may not know what the missing information is if they do not use ellipsis in their language.

Examples from the Bible

... when the blind man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, that I might receive my sight.” (Luke 18:40-41 ULB)

The man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite and not directly ask Jesus for healing. He knew that Jesus would understand that the only way he could receive his sight would be for Jesus to heal him.

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young ox. (Psalm 29:6 ULB)

The writer wants his words to be few and to make good poetry. He did not say that Yahweh makes Sirion skip like a young ox because he knew that his readers could fill in the information themselves.

Translation Strategies

If ellipsis would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

1. Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.
2. ... **the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.** (Psalm 1:5)
 - ... the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and sinners will not stand in the assembly of the righteous
3. ... **when the blind man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, that I might receive my sight.”** (Luke 18:40-41)
 - ... when the blind man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said, “Lord, I want you to heal me that I might receive my sight.”
4. **He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and Sirion like a young ox.** (Psalm 29:6)
 - He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and he makes Sirion skip like a young ox.

Uses:

- Nahum 1:4-5
- Nahum 2:8-10
- Nahum 2:11-12
- Nahum 3:5-7

How to Translate Names

This page answers the question: *How can I translate names that are new to my culture?*

Description

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.

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to. But sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

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 7:1 ULB)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

His name “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, because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see Borrow Words.
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples from the Bible

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 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 instead of copying the name.
4. If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
5. Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

- **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 instead of copying 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 Living One who sees me;
4. If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called "Saul" before Acts 13 and "Paul" after Acts 13. You could translate his name as "Paul" all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.
5. **... a young man named Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULB)
- ... a young man named Paul¹
 - The footnote would look like:
 - ^[1]Most versions say Saul here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called Paul.
6. **But Saul, who is also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit;** (Acts 13:9)
- But Saul, who is also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit;
7. Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write "Saul" where the source text has "Saul" and "Paul" where the source text has "Paul."
8. **a young man named Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULB)

- a young man named Saul
- The footnote would look like:
 - ^[1]This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

9. But Saul, who is also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)

- But Saul, who is also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

10. It came about in Iconium that Paul and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULB)

- It came about in Iconium that Paul¹ and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue
- The footnote would look like:
 - ^[1]This is the man that was called Saul before Acts 13.

Uses:

- [Introduction to Nahum](#)
- [Nahum 1:1](#)
- [Nahum 3:8-9](#)
- [Nahum 3:8-9](#)

Hyperbole and Generalization

This page answers the question: *What are hyperboles? What are generalizations?*

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something he means as completely true, as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement.

- It rains here every night.
- The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.
- The speaker means this as a generalization if he means that it rains here most nights.
- The speaker means this as a hyperbole if he wants to say it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy.

Hyperbole: This is a figure of speech that uses **exaggeration**. A speaker deliberately describes something by an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

They will not leave one stone upon another (Luke 19:44 ULB)

- This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

Generalization: This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame, but honor will come to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

- These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction.

And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7)

- This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles may have done this.

Even though a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” it does not necessarily mean **exactly** “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never.” It simply means “most,” “most of the time,” “hardly any” or “rarely.”

Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians (Acts 7:22 ULB)

- This generalization means that he had learned much of what the Egyptians knew and taught.

Reason this is a translation issue

1. Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is completely true.
2. If readers realize that a statement is not completely true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples from the Bible**Examples of 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.

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, not about everything that is possible to know.

Caution

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

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

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

Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”

Yahweh is righteous in all his ways and gracious in all he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULB)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the exaggeration or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

1. Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
2. For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
3. For a generalization, add a word like “most” or “almost” to show that the generalization is not exact.
4. For a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
2. **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.
3. For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
4. **The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame ...** (Proverbs 13:18 ULB)
 - In general, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame
5. **And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.** (Matthew 6:7)
 - “And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles generally do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.”
6. For a generalization, add a word like “most” or “almost” to show that the generalization is not exact.
7. **The whole country of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him.** (Mark 1:5 ULB)
 - Almost all the country of Judea and almost all the people of Jerusalem went out to him.”

- Most of the country of Judea and most of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.”
8. For a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.
9. **The whole country of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him.** (Mark 1:5 ULB)
- The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:8-10](#)
- [Nahum 03 General Notes](#)
- [Nahum 3:3-4](#)
- [Nahum 3:8-9](#)
- [Nahum 3:10-11](#)
- [Nahum 3:12-13](#)
- [Nahum 3:16-17](#)

Idiom

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

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

- You are pulling my leg (This means, “You are 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 who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

he 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 phrase “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. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

Examples from the Bible

Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your flesh and bone."
(1 Chronicles 11:1 ULB)

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

the children of Israel went out with a high hand. (Exodus 14:8 ASV)

This means, "The Israelites went out defiantly."

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.
2. **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.
3. **he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem.** (Luke 9:51 ULB)
 - He started to travel to Jerusalem, determined to reach it.
4. **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.
5. Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.
6. **Let these words go deeply into your ears** (Luke 9:44 ULB)
 - Be all ears when I say these words to you.
7. **"My eyes grow dim from grief** (Psalm 6:7 ULB)
 - I am crying my eyes out

Uses:

- Nahum 1:7-8
- Nahum 1:9-11
- Nahum 2:1-2
- Nahum 2:1-2

Irony

This page answers the question: *What is irony and how can I translate it?*

Description

Irony is a figure of speech in which the sense that the speaker intends to communicate is actually the opposite of the literal meaning of the words. Sometimes a person does this by using someone else's words, but in a way that communicates that he does not agree with them. People do this to emphasize how different something is from what it should be, or how someone else's belief about something is wrong or foolish. It is often humorous.

Jesus answered them, "People who are in good health do not need a physician, only people who are sick need one. I did not come to call righteous people to repentance, but to call sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:31-32 ULB)

When Jesus spoke of "righteous people," he was not referring to people who were truly righteous, but to people who wrongly believed that they were righteous. By using irony, Jesus communicated that they were wrong to think that they were better than others and did not need to repent.

Reason this is a translation issue

- If someone does not realize that a speaker is using irony, he will think that the speaker actually believes what he is saying. He will understand the passage to mean the opposite of what it was intended to mean.

Examples from the Bible

How well you reject the commandment of God so you may keep your tradition! (Mark 7:9 ULB)

Here Jesus praises the Pharisees for doing something that is obviously wrong. Through irony, he communicates the opposite of praise: He communicates that the Pharisees, who take great pride in keeping the commandments, are so far from God that they do not even recognize that their traditions are breaking God's commandments. The use of irony makes the Pharisee's sin more obvious and startling.

"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. "Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled." (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULB)

People worshiped idols as if their idols had knowledge or power, and Yahweh was angry at them for doing that. So he used irony and challenged their idols to tell what would happen in the future. He knew that the idols could not do this, but by speaking as if they could, he mocked the idols, making their inability more obvious, and rebuked the people for worshiping them.

Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then; "the number of your days is so large!" (Job 38:20, 21 ULB)

Job thought that he was wise. Yahweh used irony to show Job that he was not so wise. The two underlined phrases above are irony. They emphasize the opposite of what they say, because they are so obviously false. They emphasize that Job could not possibly answer God's questions about the creation of light because Job was not born until many, many years later.

Already you have all you could want! Already you have become rich! You began to reign—and that quite apart from us! (1 Corinthians 4:8 ULB)

The Corinthians considered themselves to be very wise, self-sufficient, and not in need of any instruction from the Apostle Paul. Paul used irony, speaking as if he agreed with them, to show how proudly they were acting and how far from being wise they really were.

Translation Strategies

If the irony would be understood correctly in your language, translate it as it is stated. If not, here are some other strategies.

1. Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.
2. Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony. The actual meaning of the irony is not found in the literal words of the speaker, but instead the true meaning is found in the opposite of the literal meaning of the speaker's words.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Translate it in a way that shows that the speaker is saying what someone else believes.
2. **How well you reject the commandment of God so you may keep your tradition!** (Mark 7:9 ULB)
3. You think that you are doing well when you reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!
4. You act like it is good to reject God's commandment so you may keep your tradition!
5. **I did not come to call righteous people to repentance, but to call sinners to repentance.** (Luke 5:32 ULB)
6. I did not come to call people who think that they are righteous to repentance, but to call sinners to repentance.
7. Translate the actual, intended meaning of the statement of irony.
8. **How well you reject the commandment of God so you may keep your tradition!** (Mark 7:9 ULB)
9. You are doing a terrible thing when you reject the commandment of God so you may keep your tradition!
10. **"Present your case," says Yahweh; "present your best arguments for your idols," says the King of Jacob. "Let them bring us their own arguments; have them come forward**

and declare to us what will happen, so we may know these things well. Have them tell us of earlier predictive declarations, so we can reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.” (Isaiah 41:21-22 ULB)

11. ‘Present your case,’ says Yahweh; ‘present your best arguments for your idols,’ says the King of Jacob. Your idols cannot bring us their own arguments or come forward to declare to us what will happen so we may know these things well. We cannot hear them because they cannot speak to tell us their earlier predictive declarations, so we cannot reflect on them and know how they were fulfilled.
12. **Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work?**

Can you find the way back to their houses for them? Undoubtedly you know, for you were born then; the number of your days is so large!” (Job 38:20, 21 ULB)

- Can you lead light and darkness to their places of work? Can you find the way back to their houses for them? You act like you know how light and darkness were created, as if you were there; as if you are as old as creation, but you are not!

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:1-2](#)
- [Nahum 3:14-15](#)

Litotes

This page answers the question: *What is litotes?*

Description

Litotes is a figure of speech in which the speaker expresses a strong positive meaning by using two negative words or a negative word with a word that means the opposite of the meaning he intends. A few examples of negative words are “no,” “not,” “none,” and “never.” The opposite of “good” is “bad.” Someone could say that something is “not bad” to mean that it is extremely good.

Reason this is a translation issue

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

Examples from the Bible

For you yourselves know, brothers, our coming to you was not useless, (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULB)

By using litotes, Paul emphasized that his visit with them was very useful.

Now when it became day, there was no small excitement among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter. (Acts 12:18 ULB)

By using litotes, Luke emphasized that there was a lot of excitement or anxiety among the soldiers about what happened to Peter. (Peter had been in prison, and even though there were soldiers guarding him, he escaped when an angel let him out. So they were very agitated.)

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the leaders of Judah, for from you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. (Matthew 2:6 ULB)

By using litotes, the prophet emphasized that Bethlehem would be a very important city.

Translation Strategies

If the litotes would be understood correctly, consider using it.

1. If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the positive meaning in a strong way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If the meaning with the negative would not be clear, give the positive meaning in a strong way.
2. **For you yourselves know, brothers, our coming to you was not useless.** (1 Thessalonians 2:1 ULB)
 - "For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you did much good."
3. **Now when it became day, there was no small excitement among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter.** (Acts 12:18 ULB)
 - "Now when it became day, there was great excitement among the soldiers, regarding what had happened to Peter."
 - "Now when it became day, the soldiers were very concerned because of what had happened to Peter."

Uses:

- Nahum 1:2-3

Metaphor

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

Description

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which one concept (the “image”) stands for another concept (the “topic”). That is, the topic is spoken of as if it were the image. For example, someone might say,

- The girl I love is a red rose.

Here the topic is “the girl I love,” and the image is “a red rose.” The girl is spoken of as if she were a red rose.

Anything in a language can serve as a metaphor. For example, verb forms can be used in unusual ways, as in,

- The Apostle Paul tells us that Christians will rise to life again.

In this case, the English present tense form “tells” is a metaphor for the past tense form “told,” because the Apostle Paul lived long ago.

Sometimes speakers use metaphors that are very common in their language. However, sometimes speakers use metaphors that are uncommon, and even some metaphors that are unique.

Speakers most often use metaphors in order to strengthen their message, to express their feelings better, to say something that is hard to say in any other way, or to help people remember their message.

Kinds of Metaphors

There are several kinds of metaphors: “live” metaphors, “dead” metaphors, and patterned metaphors.

Live Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept. People also easily recognize them as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. 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 in order to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. He also speaks of the sun’s rays as if they were wings. Also, he speaks of these wings as if they were bringing medicine that would heal his people.

Here is another example: Jesus said, ‘Go and tell that fox...,’” where “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was referring to Herod either as a very evil, cunning person or as a king who was only pretending to be great.

Dead Metaphors

A dead metaphor is a metaphor that has been used so much in the language that its speakers no longer regard it as one concept standing for another. Examples in English are “table leg,” “family tree,” “leaf” meaning a page in a book, and “crane” meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads. English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples in Biblical Hebrew are probably “heal” meaning “repair,” and “sick” meaning “spiritually powerless because of sin.”

Patterned Pairs of Concepts acting as Metaphors

Many ways of metaphorical speaking depend on pairs of concepts, where one underlying concept frequently stands for a different underlying concept. For example, in English, the direction UP often stands for the concept of MORE. Because of this pair of underlying concepts, we can make sentences such as “The price of gasoline is going *up*,” “A *highly* intelligent man,” and also the opposite kind of idea: “The heat is going *down*,” and “The stock market *took a tumble*.”

Patterned pairs of concepts are constantly used for metaphorical purposes in the world’s languages, because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, people like to speak of abstract qualities, such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities, as if they were objects that could be seen or held, as if they were body parts, or as if they were events that could be watched as they happened.

When these metaphors are used in normal ways, it is rare that the speaker and audience regard them as figurative speech. Examples of metaphors in English that go unrecognized are:

- “Turn the heat *up*.” MORE is spoken of as UP.
- “Let us *go ahead* with our debate.” DOING WHAT WAS PLANNED is spoken of as WALKING or ADVANCING.
- “You *defend* your theory well.” ARGUMENT is spoken of as WAR.
- “A *flow* of words” WORDS are spoken of as LIQUIDS.

English speakers do not view them as unusual expressions, so it would be wrong to translate them into other languages in a way that would lead people to pay special attention to them as figurative speech.

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

Parts of a Metaphor

When talking about metaphors, it can be helpful to talk about their parts. A metaphor has three parts.

1. **Topic** - The thing someone speaks of is called the topic.

2. **Image** - The thing he calls it is the image.
3. **Points of Comparison** - The ways in which the author claims that the topic and image are similar in some manner are their points of comparison.

In the metaphor below, the speaker describes the woman he loves as a red rose. The woman (his “love”) is the **topic**, and “red rose” is the **image**. Beauty and delicacy are the points of comparison that the speaker sees as similarities between both the topic and image. Note, however, that a rose’s beauty is not identical to a woman’s beauty. Neither are the two kinds of delicacy the same. So these points of comparison are not built upon identical characteristics, but rather upon characteristics that are seen by the writer as similar in some way.

- My love is a red, red rose.

Often, as in the metaphor above, the speaker explicitly states the **topic** and the **image**, but he does not state the points of comparison. The speaker leaves it to the hearer to think of those points of comparison. Because the hearers must do that, the speaker’s message tends to be more powerful.

Also in the Bible, normally the **topic** and the **image** are stated clearly, but not the points of comparison. The writer hopes that the audience will understand the points of comparison that are implied.

Jesus said to them. “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 6:35 ULB)

In this metaphor, 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. The point of comparison between bread and Jesus is that people needed bread every day for nourishment. In a similar way, people need Jesus every day in order to live spiritually.

Note that this metaphor is really several metaphors. The first metaphor is that bread is used to represent Jesus. The second metaphor, which is inside the first one, is that physical life represents the spiritual life, which consists of living with God forever. The third metaphor is that eating bread represents benefitting from Jesus, who enables us to live with God forever.

Purposes of Metaphor

- One purpose of metaphor is to teach people about something that they do not know (the **topic**) by showing that it is like something that they already do know (the **image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something 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 about the other.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- People may not recognize that something is a metaphor. In other words, they may mistake a metaphor for a literal statement, and thus misunderstand it.

- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image, and so not be able to understand the metaphor.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know the points of comparison that the speaker is thinking of and wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of a metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning of a metaphor more clear to the target audience than you think it was to the original audience.

Examples from the Bible

Listen to this word, you cows of Bashan, (Amos 4:1 ULB)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria (the topic is “you”) with as if they were cows (the image). Amos does not say what points of comparison between these women and the cows he has mind, but from the context it seems that he means that both the women and the cows are fat and interested only in eating.

Note, however, that Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows, for he speaks to them as human beings.

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 related metaphors. The topics are “we” and “you,” and the images are “clay and ”potter.” The intended point of comparison between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish: the potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people Israel. The point of comparison between the potter’s clay and “us” is that both the clay and the people of Israel are made into something different from what they were before.

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 here, but his disciples did not realize it. When he said “yeast,” they thought he was talking about bread, but “yeast” was the image in his metaphor, and the topic was the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples (the original audience) did not understand what Jesus meant, it would not be good to state clearly here what Jesus meant.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the metaphor in the same way that the original readers probably understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it.

If people do not or would not understand it, here are some other strategies.

1. If the metaphor is a common expression of a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language, express the main idea in the simplest way preferred by your language. (See Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns for lists of some of these patterned pairs of concepts.)
2. If the metaphor seems to be a “live” metaphor, you can translate it literally if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.
3. If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.” See [Simile](#).
4. If the target audience would not know the image, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.
5. If the target audience would not use that image for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
6. If the target audience would not know what the topic is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)
7. If the target audience will not know the intended points of comparison between the image and topic, then state them clearly.
8. If none of these strategies is satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If the metaphor is a common expression of a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language, express the main idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.
2. **Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, fell at his feet.** (Mark 5:22 ULB)
 - Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, immediately bowed down in front of him.
3. If the metaphor seems to be a “live” metaphor, you can translate it literally if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.
4. **It was because of your hard hearts that he wrote you this law,** (Mark 10:5 ULB)
 - It was because of your hard hearts that he wrote you this law,

There is no change to this one - but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.

1. If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.”
2. **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.
4. **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.
5. If the target audience would not use that **image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
6. **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.”
7. 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.)
8. **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.
9. If the target audience will not know the intended points of comparison between the image and the topic, then state them clearly.
10. **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 he is the rock under which I can hide from my enemies. May the God of my salvation be exalted.
11. **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.
12. If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.
13. **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.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see [Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns](#).

Uses:

- Nahum 1:2-3
- Nahum 1:4-5
- Nahum 1:6
- Nahum 1:7-8
- Nahum 1:7-8
- Nahum 1:7-8
- Nahum 1:9-11
- Nahum 1:9-11
- Nahum 1:9-11
- Nahum 1:9-11
- Nahum 1:12-13
- Nahum 1:12-13
- Nahum 1:14
- Nahum 1:15
- Nahum 2:1-2
- Nahum 2:1-2
- Nahum 2:5
- Nahum 2:8-10
- Nahum 2:11-12
- Nahum 2:13
- Nahum 2:13
- Nahum 3:3-4
- Nahum 3:3-4
- Nahum 3:5-7
- Nahum 3:8-9
- Nahum 3:10-11
- Nahum 3:10-11
- Nahum 3:12-13
- Nahum 3:12-13
- Nahum 3:12-13
- Nahum 3:12-13
- Nahum 3:14-15
- Nahum 3:18-19
- Nahum 3:18-19
- Nahum 3:18-19

Metonymy

This page answers the question: *What is a metonymy?*

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

- to a shorter way of referring to something
- to make an abstract idea more meaningful by referring to it with the name of a physical object associated with it

Reason this is a translation issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not used to metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples from the Bible

The Lord God will give 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 that would 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 are some options.

1. Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
2. Use only the name of the thing the metonym represents.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.
2. **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."
3. Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.
4. **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."
5. **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, see Biblical Imagery - Common Metonymies.

Uses:

- Nahum 1:7-8
- Nahum 1:9-11
- Nahum 1:14
- Nahum 2:1-2
- Nahum 2:13
- Nahum 2:13
- Nahum 3:1-2
- Nahum 3:1-2
- Nahum 3:8-9
- Nahum 3:10-11
- Nahum 3:10-11
- Nahum 3:10-11
- Nahum 3:12-13
- Nahum 3:14-15
- Nahum 3:14-15
- Nahum 3:16-17

Parallelism

This page answers the question: *What is parallelism?*

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. This is also called synonymous parallelism.
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, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

Synonymous parallelism (the kind in which the two phrases mean the same thing) in the poetry of the original languages has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason this is a translation issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it is confusing, rather than beautiful.

Note: We use the term “synonymous parallelism” for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term Doublet for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

Examples from the Bible

The second clause or phrase means the same as the first.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULB)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live.

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.

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.

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.

The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

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

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

1. Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
2. If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”
3. If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
2. **Until now you have deceived me and told me lies.** (Judges 16:13, ULB) - Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.
 - “Until now you have deceived me with your lies.”
3. **Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes.** (Proverbs 5:21 ULB) - The phrase “all the paths he takes” is a metaphor for “all he does.”

- “Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.”
4. **For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel.** (Micah 6:2 ULB) - This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:
 - “For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.”
 5. If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”
 6. **Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes.** (Proverbs 5:21 ULB)
 - “Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.”
 7. If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”
 8. **you have deceived me and told me lies.** (Judges 16:13 ULB)
 - “All you have done is lie to me.”
 9. **Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes.** (Proverbs 5:21 ULB)
 - “Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.”

Uses:

- Nahum 1:1
- Nahum 1:2-3
- Nahum 1:6
- Nahum 2:1-2
- Nahum 2:1-2
- Nahum 2:11-12
- Nahum 3:1-2
- Nahum 3:3-4
- Nahum 3:8-9
- Nahum 3:18-19

Personification

This page answers the question: *What is personification?*

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1 ULB)

Or sin:

sin crouches at the door (Genesis 4:7 ULB)

People also do this because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things, such as wealth, as if they were like relationships between people.

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24 ULB)

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples from the Bible

You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24 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. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

1. Add words or phrases to make it clear.
2. Use words such as "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.
2. ... **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
3. Use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentences is not to be understood literally.
4. ... **sin crouches at the door** (Genesis 4:7 ULB) - This can be translated with the word “as.”
 - ... sin is crouching at the door, just as a wild animal does waiting to attack a person.
5. Find a way to translate it without the personification.
6. ... **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 non-human things as if they had human characteristics.)

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:13](#)
- [Nahum 3:14-15](#)

Poetry

This page answers the question: *What is poetry and how do I translate it into my language?*

Description

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

Some things commonly found in poetry

- Many figures of speech such as **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
- Dramatic imagery
- Different use of grammar - including:
 - incomplete sentences
 - lack of connective words

Some places to look for poetry in your language

1. Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games
2. Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors
3. Prayers, blessings, and curses
4. Old legends

Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as much as poetry does. Popular

speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

Reasons this is a translation issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language you may need to write it without the poetry.
- 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

1) 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.

1) 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.

Uses:

- Nahum 2:1-2
- Nahum 3:1-2

Rhetorical Question

This page answers the question: *What are rhetorical questions and how can I translate them?*

A rhetorical question is a question that a speaker asks when he is more interested in expressing his attitude about something than in getting information about it. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express surprise, to rebuke or scold the hearer, or to teach. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other purposes as well.

Description

A rhetorical question is a question that strongly expresses the speaker's attitude toward something. Often the speaker is not looking for information at all, but if he is asking for information, it is not usually the information that the question appears to ask for. The speaker is more interested in expressing his attitude than in getting information.

Those who stood by said, "Is this how you insult God's high priest?" (Acts 23:4 ULB)

The people who asked Paul this question were not asking about his way of insulting God's high priest. Rather they used this question to accuse Paul of insulting the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. Some of the purposes of these rhetorical questions are to express attitudes or feelings, to rebuke people, to teach something by reminding people of something they know and encouraging them to apply it to something new, and to introduce something they want to talk about.

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Some languages do not use rhetorical questions; for them a question is always a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions, but for purposes that are more limited or different than in the Bible.
- Because of these differences between languages, some readers might misunderstand the purpose of a rhetorical question in the Bible.

Examples from the Bible

Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7 ULB)

Jezebel used the question above to remind King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. The rhetorical question made her point more strongly than if she had merely stated it, because it forced Ahab to admit the point himself. She did this in order to rebuke him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that since he was the king of Israel, he had the power to take the man's property.

Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULB)

God used the question above to remind his people of something they already knew: a young woman would never forget her jewelry or a bride forget her veils. He then rebuked his people for forgetting him, who is so much greater than those things.

Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11 ULB)

Job used the question above to show deep emotion. This rhetorical question expresses how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

And 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. By introducing this point, Jesus could go on to teach them about God with his next rhetorical question:

Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father 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 that 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

In order to translate a rhetorical question accurately, first be sure that the question you are translating truly is a rhetorical question and is not an information question. Ask yourself, "Does the person asking the question already know the answer to the question?" If so, it is a rhetorical question. Or, if no one answers the question, is the one who asked it bothered that he did not get an answer? If not, it is a rhetorical question.

When you are sure that the question is rhetorical, then be sure that 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?

When you know the purpose of the rhetorical question, then think of the most natural way to express that purpose in the target language. It might be as a question, or a statement, or an exclamation.

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

1. Add the answer after the question.
2. Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
3. Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
4. Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Add the answer after the question.
2. **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!
3. **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!
4. Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
5. **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..."
6. **Is this how you insult God's high priest?** (Acts 23:4 ULB)
 - You should not insult God's high priest!
7. **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!
8. **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!
9. Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
10. **Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel?** (1 Kings 21:7 ULB)
 - You still rule the kingdom of Israel, do you not?

11. Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.
12. **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)
 - If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, would you give him a stone?
13. **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!** (Jeremiah 2:32 ULB)
 - What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number

Uses:

- Nahum 1:6
- Nahum 1:9-11
- Nahum 2:11-12
- Nahum 3:5-7
- Nahum 3:5-7
- Nahum 3:8-9
- Nahum 3:18-19

Simile

This page answers the question: *What is a simile?*

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)

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.
2. **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.
3. **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
4. 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.
5. **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,
6. **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!
 7. **If you have faith even as small as a grain of mustard,** (Matthew 17:20)
 - If you have faith even as small as a tiny seed,
 8. Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.
 9. **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.
 10. **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!

Uses:

- Nahum 2:3-4
- Nahum 2:3-4
- Nahum 2:8-10
- Nahum 3:12-13
- Nahum 3:14-15
- Nahum 3:16-17
- Nahum 3:16-17

Symbolic Action

This page answers the question: *What is a symbolic action and how do I translate it?*

Description

A symbolic action is something that someone does in order to express a certain idea. For example, in some cultures people nod their head up and down to mean “Yes” or turn their head from side to side to mean “No.” Symbolic actions do not mean the same things in all cultures. In the Bible, sometimes people perform symbolic actions and sometimes they only refer to the symbolic action.

Examples of symbolic actions

- In some cultures people shake hands when they meet to show that they are willing to be friendly.
- In some cultures people bow when they meet to show respect to each other.

Reason this is a translation issue

An action may have a meaning in one culture, and a different meaning or no meaning at all in another culture. For example, in some cultures raising the eyebrows means “I am surprised” or “What did you say?” In others cultures it means “Yes.”

In the Bible people did things that had certain meanings in their culture. When we read the Bible we might not understand what someone meant if we interpret the action based on what it means in our own culture.

Translators need to understand what people in the Bible meant when they used symbolic actions. If an action does not mean the same thing in their own culture, they need to figure out how to translate what the action meant.

Examples from the Bible

Jairus fell down at Jesus’ feet. (Luke 8:41 ULB)

Meaning of symbolic action: He did this to show great respect to Jesus.

Look, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to his home, and have a meal with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20 ULB)

Meaning of symbolic action: When people wanted someone to welcome them into their home, they stood at the door and knocked on it.

Translation Strategies

If people would correctly understand what a symbolic action meant to the people in the Bible, consider using it. If not, here are some strategies for translating it.

1. Tell what the person did and why he did it.
2. Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.
3. Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning. Do this only in poetry, parables, and sermons. Do not do this when there actually was a person who did a specific action.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Tell what the person did and why he did it.
2. **Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet.** (Luke 8:41 ULB)
 - Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet in order to show that he greatly respected him.
3. **Look, I stand at the door and knock.** (Revelation 3:20 ULB)
 - Look, I stand at the door and knock on it, asking you to let me in.
4. Do not tell what the person did, but tell what he meant.
5. **Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet.** (Luke 8:41)
 - Jairus showed Jesus great respect.
6. **Look, I stand at the door and knock.** (Revelation 3:20)
 - Look, I stand at the door and ask you to let me in.
7. Use an action from your own culture that has the same meaning.
8. **Jairus fell down at Jesus' feet.** (Luke 8:41 ULB) - Since Jairus actually did this, we would not substitute an action from our own culture.
9. **Look, I stand at the door and knock.** (Revelation 3:20 ULB) - Jesus was not standing at a real door. Rather he was speaking about wanting to have a relationship with people. So in cultures where it is polite to clear one's throat when wanting to be let into a house, you could use that.
 - Look, I stand at the door and clear my throat.

Uses:

- [Nahum 2:6-7](#)
- [Nahum 3:5-7](#)

Synecdoche

This page answers the question: *What does the word synecdoche mean?*

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,” which means the inner, emotional part of herself, 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 arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person’s accomplishments.

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.
2. **“My soul exalts the Lord.”** (Luke 1:46 ULB)
 - “I exalt the Lord.”
3. **...the Pharisees said to him** (Mark 2:24 ULB)

- ...a representative of the Pharisees said to him ...
4. ... **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

Uses:

- Nahum 1:15
- Nahum 2:1-2

Translate Unknowns

This page answers the question: *How can I translate ideas that my readers are not familiar with?*

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 136:7 ULB)

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 what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
2. Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
3. Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
4. Use a word that is more general in meaning.
5. Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
2. **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.

“Ravenous wolves” is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See [Translating Metaphors](#).)

- **We have 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
- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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

Uses:

- Nahum 2:3-4
- Nahum 2:6-7