



Song of Solomon

translationNotes

v8

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translationNotes

Introduction to The Song of Solomon

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of The Song of Solomon

1. The bride longs for the bridegroom to arrive (1:1–2:7)
2. The bridegroom praises the woman he loves (2:8–3:5)
3. The bridegroom arrives and praises the bride (3:6–5:1)
4. The bride longs for the bridegroom (5:2–6:9)
5. The bridegroom praises the beauty of his bride (6:1–8:4)
6. Final thoughts about love between a man and a woman (8:5–14)

What is the Song of Solomon about?

The Song of Solomon is a poem or a series of poems about the love between a man and a woman. It became traditional for Jews to interpret the book as a picture of God’s love for the people of Israel. In the same way, it became traditional for Christians to interpret it as a picture of Christ’s love for all Christian believers.

How should the title of this book be translated?

This book may also be called the “Songs of Love,” “Great Poems of Love” or “The Love Songs of Solomon.” (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Who wrote The Song of Solomon?

The idea that Solomon, king of Israel, was its author comes from the opening verse of the book (“The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s”). However, there are different ways to interpret this verse, so not everyone is persuaded that Solomon was the book’s author.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What place do the descriptions of sexual behavior have in The Song of Solomon?

The Song of Solomon shows approval of sexual behavior as an expression of love between a husband and wife.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How many characters are in The Song of Solomon?

The two main characters in this book are the man and the woman, who love each other. There is also the group of women to whom the young woman speaks, and who also themselves make comments, but that group of women might be imaginary, existing only in the young woman's mind.

Some interpreters believe there may be more characters than these, but this is not certain. The interpretation adopted by the ULB and UDB recognize only the man, the woman, and the group of women.

How should one translate *The Song of Solomon* if the readers will view certain terms as coarse, vulgar, or improper?

There are many images or forms appearing in the Song of Solomon that, when translated, may be considered improper. The translator should try to avoid offensive language if possible, by using expressions that will not cause offense. (See: [Euphemism](#))

How do I translate metaphors in this book?

There are many metaphors in this book. These metaphors are often ambiguous. If they have sexual meanings, metaphors describing feelings or emotions are often used as euphemisms in order to avoid offense by veiling their meaning. However, since their meanings are often very unclear, ambiguity in translation is encouraged. You might choose to translate the words as they are written in order to avoid committing to a specific meaning or defining the precise intended meaning.

Song of Solomon 01 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Kisses

The kisses in this chapter are a type of kiss that was only done between a husband and a wife. It is an intimate kiss. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Love and affection

This chapter is centered on the feelings of love, affection, and attraction. Different cultural standards may make translation difficult and the translator may use euphemisms to avoid offending people. (See: [Euphemism](#))

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different metaphors of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“I am dark”

In the ancient Near East, many people were more attracted to light skinned people. This is because light skinned people were typically rich and did not need to work outside in the sun.

Links:

- [Song of Solomon 01:01 Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon intro](#)

Song of Solomon 1:1-4**UDB:**

¹ This is King Solomon's most beautiful song. The young woman speaking to herself

² I wish he would kiss me on my lips, The woman speaks to her lover
because your love for me is more delightful than wine.

³ The fragrance of the perfume on your skin is very sweet.
And your honor is very great and is spreading,
like the fragrance of the special oil that you have put on your skin.

That is why the other young women are attracted to you.

⁴ Take me quickly;
take me to your home. The woman speaking to herself
He is like a king to me;
he has brought me into his bedroom. The woman speaking to her lover
I am very happy about you;
my love for you is better than wine.
It is not surprising that the other young women adore you.

ULB:

¹ The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's. The woman speaking to herself

² Oh, that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, The woman speaking to the man
for your love is better than wine.

³ Your anointing oils have a delightful fragrance;
your name is like flowing perfume,
so the young women love you.

⁴ Take me with you, and we will run. The woman speaking to herself
The king has brought me into his rooms. The woman speaking to the man
We are glad; We rejoice about you;
let us celebrate your love; it is better than wine.
It is natural for the other women to adore you.

translationNotes

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

General Information:

Part One of the book begins in [Song of Solomon 1:2](#).

The Song of Songs

“The Best Song” or “The Most Excellent Song”

which is Solomon’s

Possible meanings are “which is about Solomon” or “which Solomon composed.”

your love is better than wine

“I enjoy having you near me more than I enjoy drinking wine”

Your anointing oils

“The oils that you put on your body”

have a delightful fragrance

“smell wonderful”

your name is like flowing perfume

Perfume has a good smell that spreads as the air moves. The name is either a metonym for 1) the person’s reputation, what other people think of him. Here the speaker says that people always think that the hearer is a good person, or 2) the person himself. (See: [Simile](#) and [Metonymy](#))

Take me with you

“Bring me along with you.” The word “you” refers to the man.

Take

“Pull” or “Drag.” Here the woman described as being like a captive who is willing to follow her captor. (See: [Metaphor](#))

we will run

The word “we” refers to the young woman together with the man. (See: [Inclusive “We”](#))

We are glad ... We rejoice ... let us celebrate

The woman speaks of herself as if she were more than one person. Many versions change the pronoun to “I” as the UDB does. Other versions think these are the words of the woman’s friends speaking about either the woman or the man. (See: [Pronouns](#) and [Exclusive and Inclusive “We”](#))

about you

“because of you”

let us celebrate

“let us praise”

It is natural for the other women to adore you

“Women who adore you are doing as they should do”

translationWords

- [Solomon](#)
- [kiss](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [wine, wineskin, new wine](#)
- [anoint, anointed, anointing](#)
- [oil](#)
- [delight](#)
- [name, names, named](#)
- [king](#)
- [rejoice](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 1:5-6

UDB:

The woman speaking to the other women

⁵ You women of Jerusalem,

I am dark but beautiful;

my dark skin is like the tents in Kedar,

or like the beautiful curtains in Solomon's palace.

⁶ But do not stare at me because the sun has made my skin dark.

my brothers were angry with me,

so they forced me to work out in the sunshine in the vineyards,

so I was not able to take good care of my body.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the other women

⁵ I am dark but lovely,

you daughters of Jerusalem—

dark like the tents of Kedar,

lovely like the curtains of Solomon.

⁶ Do not stare at me because I am dark,

because the sun has scorched me.

My mother's sons were angry with me;

they made me keeper of the vineyards,

but my own vineyard I have not kept.

translationNotes

I am dark but lovely

“My skin is dark, but I am still beautiful” or “Even though my skin is dark, I am beautiful”

daughters of Jerusalem

“young women of Jerusalem.” These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

dark like the tents of Kedar

The nomadic tribes in Kedar used black goat skins to build their homes. The woman is comparing her skin to these tents. (See: [Simile](#))

lovely like the curtains of Solomon

Solomon produced beautiful curtains either for his own palace or for the Temple. She says that her skin is beautiful. (See: [Simile](#))

scorched

This exaggeration for “burned” or “made black” refers to the sun changing her skin from light to dark. (See: [Hyperbole and Generalization](#))

My mother’s sons

“My half-brothers.” These brothers probably had the same mother as the woman but not the same father.

made me keeper of the vineyards

“made me take care of the vineyards”

but my own vineyard I have not kept

The woman compares herself to a vineyard. AT: “but I have not been able to take care of myself” (See: [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [tent](#)
- [Kedar](#)
- [curtain](#)
- [Solomon](#)
- [angry, anger](#)
- [vineyard](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 1:7

UDB:

The woman speaking to her lover

⁷ You whom I love, where will you take your flock of sheep today?

Where will you allow them to rest at noontime?

I want to know because it is not right for me to wander around like a prostitute

looking for you among the flocks that belong to your friends.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the man

⁷ Tell me, you whom my soul loves,

where do you feed your flock?

Where do you rest your flock at noontime?

Why should I be like someone who wanders

beside the flocks of your companions?

translationNotes

my soul loves

The soul is a metonym for the person. AT: "I love" (See: [Metonymy](#))

feed your flock

"graze your flocks"

rest your flock

"have your flock lie down"

Why should I be like someone who wanders beside the flocks of your companions?

The woman asks this question to emphasize that she has a closer relationship to the man than other women do. This question can be translated as a statement. AT: "Tell me so that I will not need to wander around among the flocks of your companions when I am looking for you." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

wanders

“goes all around.” She does not want to have to look for the man. Perhaps she is afraid other men will think she is a prostitute looking for business. (See: [Metaphor](#))

companions

“friends” or “co-workers”

translationWords

- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [flock, herd](#)
- [companion](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 1:8

UDB:

Her lover answering her

⁸ You who are the most beautiful of all the women,
if you search for me and do not know where I will take my sheep,
follow the tracks of the sheep.
Then allow your young goats to graze near the shepherds' tents.

ULB:

The man speaking to the woman

⁸ If you do not know, most beautiful among women,
follow the tracks of my flock,
and pasture your young goats near the shepherds' tents.

translationNotes

most beautiful among women

“you who are the most beautiful of all women”

follow the tracks of my flock

“follow along behind the flock”

tracks

marks of the hooves of the flock on the ground

pasture your young goats

“graze your young goats” or “let your young goats eat”

translationWords

- know, knowledge, make known
- flock, herd
- goat, kid
- shepherd, to shepherd

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 1:9-11

UDB:

⁹ You are beautiful, my darling, like one of the young female horses
that pull the chariots belonging to the king of Egypt.

¹⁰ Your earrings are decorations for your cheeks,
and there are strings of beads around your neck.

¹¹ I will make for you some gold earrings
that are decorated with silver.

ULB:

⁹ I compare you, my love,
to a mare among Pharaoh's chariot horses.

¹⁰ Your cheeks are beautiful with ornaments,
your neck with strings of jewels.

¹¹ We will make for you gold ornaments
with silver studs.

translationNotes

General Information:

The man continues speaking to the woman.

I compare you, my love, to a mare among Pharaoh's chariot horses

The Jews of those days considered horses beautiful, and the Pharaoh's horses would have been the most beautiful he could find. The man considers the young woman beautiful. AT: "My love, you are as beautiful as any of Pharaoh's chariot horses" (See: [Simile](#))

my love

"you whom I love"

Pharaoh's chariot horses

"the horses that pull Pharaoh's chariots"

Your cheeks are beautiful with ornaments

These ornaments could be 1) jewels hanging from a band around the head or 2) earrings or 3) a metaphor for her long hair. (See: [Metaphor](#))

We will make

The man speaks as if he were many people. Some versions change this to singular “I.” Other versions take these to be the words of the woman’s friends. (See: [Pronouns](#) and [Exclusive and Inclusive “We”](#))

with silver studs

“with spots of silver”

translationWords

- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [Pharaoh, king of Egypt](#)
- [chariot](#)
- [horse](#)
- [gold](#)
- [silver](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 1:12-14

UDB:

The woman speaking to herself

¹² While the king was on his couch,
the smell of my perfume spread around the room.

¹³ The man who loves me stays between my breasts during the night like a bag of perfume tied around my neck.

¹⁴ He is like a bunch of flowers from the vineyards at En Gedi.

ULB:

The woman speaking to herself

¹² While the king lay on his couch,
my nard emitted its fragrance.

¹³ My beloved is to me like a bag of myrrh
that spends the night lying between my breasts.

¹⁴ My beloved is to me like a cluster of henna flowers
in the vineyards of En Gedi.

translationNotes

lay on his couch

“sat eating his special meal.” This probably refers to one of the couches on which people would lie around a table at a banquet. You could translate using the common word for what people do with their bodies when they eat special meals.

nard

an oil that people got from the expensive nard or spikenard (valerian plant with small pink or white flowers) and used to make their skin soft and to have a pleasant odor.

emitted its fragrance

“gave off its good smell”

My beloved is to me like a bag of myrrh ... breasts

Women would place a small bag or pouch of myrrh on a necklace so it would lie between their breasts and they could enjoy its pleasant fragrance. This woman enjoys having her beloved close to her. She adds “to me” to show that she does not expect anyone else to enjoy her beloved in this way. AT: “I enjoy my beloved as much as I enjoy having a bag of myrrh ... breasts” (See: [Simile](#))

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves.

lying between my breasts

If this phrase would offend your readers, you could use a euphemism. AT: “close to me” (See: [Euphemism](#))

My beloved is to me like a cluster of henna flowers

Henna flowers have a fragrance that people enjoy. The woman enjoys her beloved. She adds “to me” to show that she does not expect anyone else to enjoy her beloved in this way. AT: “I enjoy my beloved as much as I enjoy the smell of clusters of henna flowers” (See: [Simile](#))

henna flowers

flowers from a small desert tree that people used as a perfume

translationWords

- [king](#)
- [beloved](#)
- [like, likeness](#)
- [myrrh](#)
- [vineyard](#)
- [En Gedi](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 1:15

UDB:

Her lover speaking to her

¹⁵ You whom I love, you are beautiful;
you are very beautiful!

Your eyes are as delightful as doves.

ULB:

The man speaking to the woman

¹⁵ Listen, you are beautiful, my love;
listen, you are beautiful;
your eyes are doves.

translationNotes

Listen

“Listen carefully” or “What I am about to say is important.” You could use a word in your language that tells the hearer to listen carefully.

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:9](#)

your eyes are doves

Possible meaning are 1) the Israelites considered doves to be gentle and soft birds, and the man considers the woman’s eyes beautiful because the way the woman looks at him makes him think she is gentle. AT: “you are very gentle” or 2) the man is speaking of the woman’s white eyeballs or the shape of her eyes as being like the shape of a dove. (See: [Metonymy](#))

translationWords

- [dove, pigeon](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 1:16-17

UDB:

The woman speaking to her lover

¹⁶ You who love me, you are very delightful,
you are wonderful!

This green grass in the countryside will be like a couch where we can lie down.

¹⁷ Branches of cedar trees will shade us;
the fir branches overhead are like a roof for us.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the man

¹⁶ Listen, you are handsome, my beloved, how handsome.

The lush plants are our bed.

¹⁷ The beams of our house are cedars;
our rafters are firs.

translationNotes

Listen

“Listen carefully” or “What I am about to say is important.” You could use a word in your language that tells the hearer to listen carefully.

handsome

Use the word in your language that describes a good-looking man.

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

lush plants are our bed

This speaks of the lush plants as if they were a bed. AT: “lush plants are what we lie down on to sleep” (See: [Metaphor](#))

The lush plants

plants that are green, moist, and grow abundantly

The beams of our house are cedars; our rafters are firs

The woman describes the forest as though it were a house in which they were lying down. (See: [Metaphor](#))

beams ... rafters

Possible meanings are 1) “beams” refers to large logs used to support everything above the walls and “rafters” refers to the large pieces of wood to which the roof is attached or 2) “beams” refers to the rafters and “rafters” refers to the strips attached to the beams, onto which the builders attached the roofing materials.

cedars ... firs

Cedars were large and strong trees. The word translated “firs” is a general term for trees like cedars but smaller. If cedar and fir trees are unknown in your area, you could use general terms for the tallest and strongest trees. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

translationWords

- [cedar](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 02 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Women are compared to flowers in this chapter. This metaphor may describe a woman's beauty and delicacy. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Euphemisms

It is possible that some of the metaphors used in this chapter are actually euphemisms. These euphemisms would refer to sex or the physical love between a husband and a wife. (See: [Euphemism](#))

Links:

- [Song of Solomon 02:01 Notes](#)

Song of Solomon 2:1-2**UDB:**

The woman speaking to her lover

¹ I am like an insignificant flower in the plains,
like an insignificant lily growing in a valley. The man speaking to her

² Among all the other young women,
you, the one whom I love, are like a lily growing among thorns!

ULB:

The woman speaking to the man

¹ I am a meadow flower of Sharon,
a lily of the valleys. The man speaking to the woman

² As a lily among thorns,
so is my love among the young women.

translationNotes**General Information:**

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

I am a meadow flower of Sharon

The woman speaks as if she were one of many flowers in a land known for beautiful flowers. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Sharon

the name of a land that is flat, has no trees, and grows many different kinds of grasses and flowers

lily of the valleys

The woman speaks as if she were one of many flowers in a land known for beautiful flowers. (See: [Metaphor](#))

lily

a sweet smelling flower that grows in places where there is much water. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:1-2](#).

valleys

flat areas between mountains and near water

As a lily among thorns ... young women

A flower is much more beautiful than a thorn bush. The man thinks the woman is much more beautiful than the other women. (See: [Simile](#))

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:9](#).

the young women

“the other young women”

translationWords

- [thorn, thistle](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 2:3-4

UDB:

The woman speaking to herself

³ Among all the other men, this man is the one who loves me; he is like a tree that grows in the forest.

Under his shade I am safe from the sun.

When he is close to me, it is like eating sweet fruit.

⁴ He led me to the room where I feasted on his love,
where he made love to me as if he were covering me with his love.

ULB:

The woman speaking to herself

³ As an apricot tree among the trees of the forest,
so is my beloved among the young men.

I sit down under his shadow with great delight,
and his fruit is sweet to my taste.

⁴ He brought me to the house of wine,
and his banner over me was love.

translationNotes

As an apricot tree ... the young men

People enjoy the fruit of an apricot tree, but the trees of the forest do not bear fruit. The woman enjoys being with the man, but not with the other young men. (See: [Simile](#))

apricot tree

a tree that produces a small yellow fruit that is very sweet. If your readers will not know what this is, you could use the word for another fruit tree or the general word "fruit tree."

the forest

The Hebrew word here refers to land where trees grow for which people have no use.

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

I sit down under his shadow with great delight

The woman finds great joy and comfort in being so near to the man. (See: [Metaphor](#))

his fruit is sweet to my taste

The woman enjoys eating sweet fruit, and she enjoys being near to the man. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the house of wine

Possible meanings are 1) the very large room where the king would serve many people large meals with wine or 2) a small booth in a vineyard where the man and woman could be alone together.

his banner over me was love

Possible meanings are 1) the banner is a metonym for a military escort. And, the military escort is a metaphor that represents the man's love which gives courage to the woman who was nervous to enter the large room where the king served many people. AT: "but his loving protection guided me and gave me courage" or 2) the woman knew that the man wanted to make love to her from the way he looked at her. AT: "he looked at me lovingly" or "when he looked at me, I knew he wanted to make love to me" or 3) they made love. AT: "he lovingly covered me" (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [beloved](#)
- [shadow](#)
- [fruit, fruitful](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 2:5-6**UDB:**

The woman speaking to her lover

⁵ Refresh me and strengthen me with your lovemaking.

It is like eating raisins and other fruit,

because I want you to love me even more. The woman speaking to herself

⁶ I hope he puts his left arm under my head

and holds me close with his right arm.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the man

⁵ Revive me with raisin cakes and refresh me with apricots,

for I am weak with love. The woman speaking to herself

⁶ His left hand is under my head,

and his right hand embraces me.

translationNotes**Revive me**

“Return my strength” or “Give me energy”

with raisin cakes

“by giving me raisin cakes to eat.” Raisin cakes were cakes made of dried grapes pressed together.

refresh me with apricots

“support me by giving me apricots” or “help me by giving me apricots”

for I am weak with love

The woman speaks of feeling weak because her love is so strong as if love were a kind of sickness.

AT: “because my love is so strong that I feel feeble” (See: [Metaphor](#))

left hand ... right hand

“left arm ... right arm”

embraces me

“holds me”

translationWords

- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 2:7**UDB:**

The woman speaking to the other women

⁷ You young women of Jerusalem,

I want you to take an oath, while the does and gazelles are listening, that you will not cause us to desire love

until the right time comes.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the other women

⁷ I want you to swear, daughters of Jerusalem,

by the gazelles and the does of the fields,

that you will not awaken or arouse love

until she pleases.

translationNotes**daughters of Jerusalem**

“young women of Jerusalem.” These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

by the gazelles and the does of the fields

Although the daughters of Jerusalem could not hear her, the woman speaks to them as if they could hear saying that the gazelles and the does will punish them they break their promise. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

the gazelles

These are animals that look like deer and move quickly.

does

female deer

of the fields

“that live in the countryside.” This was land that has not been farmed.

will not awaken or arouse love until she pleases

Here “love” is spoken of as if it were a person asleep that does not want to be awakened. This is a metaphor that represents the man and woman who do not want to be disturbed until they are finished making love. AT: “will not disturb us until we have finished making love” (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

will not awaken or arouse

If your language has only one word for waking people out of sleep, you could combine these words. AT: “will not awaken” (See: [Doublet](#))

translationWords

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [deer, doe, buck, roebuck, fawn](#)
- [sleep with, have relations with, lovemaking](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 2:8-9

UDB:

The woman speaking to herself

⁸ I hear the voice of the man who loves me.

It is as though he is leaping over the mountains
and skipping over the hills

⁹ like a deer or a gazelle.

Now he is standing outside the wall of our house,
looking in the window,
and peering through the lattice.

ULB:

The woman speaking to herself

⁸ There is the sound of my beloved! Listen, here he comes,
leaping over the mountains,
jumping over the hills.

⁹ My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag;
look, he is standing behind our wall,
gazing through the window,
peering through the lattice.

translationNotes

General Information:

Here begins Part Two of the book.

General Information:

It is not clear whether the woman is speaking to herself or to the daughters of Jerusalem.

Listen

Possible meanings are 1) "Listen carefully to what I am about to say." You could use a word in your language that tells the hearer to listen carefully, or 2) "Listen so you can hear him coming."

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

leaping ... jumping ... gazing ... peering

The woman shows that she is excited to see the man come by using as few words as possible to describe what he is doing. Your language may have a different way of showing that the speaker is excited about what is happening.

leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills

“leaping on the mountains, running quickly on the hills.” The woman speaks of the man as if he were “a gazelle or a young stag” (verse 9) coming quickly toward her over rough ground. (See: [Metaphor](#))

like a gazelle or a young stag

Gazelles and young stags move quickly over rough ground. The woman imagines the man coming as fast as he can to be with her. You could translate using animals in your language that people think of as fast. (See: [Simile](#))

a gazelle

This is an animal that looks like a deer and moves quickly. Translate as the singular of “the gazelles” as in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#).

a young stag

“a young male deer”

look

“listen carefully” or “what I am about to say is important.” You could use a word in your language that tells the hearer to listen carefully.

behind our wall

“on the other side of our wall.” The woman is in a house and the man is outside the house.

our wall

The word “our” refers to the woman and the other people in the house with her. If she is speaking to herself, it is inclusive, but if she is speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem, whether she is referring to herself and her companions or to herself only in plural, as in “We are glad ... We rejoice ... let us celebrate” ([Song of Solomon 1:4](#)), it is exclusive. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive “We”](#))

gazing through the window

“he stares in through the windows”

peering through the lattice

“he peeks through the lattice”

lattice

a cover for a window or some other entrance that someone has made by weaving long strips of wood together. Lattices have holes that people can look through.

translationWords

- [beloved](#)
- [like, likeness](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 2:10-11

UDB:

¹⁰ He spoke to me and said,
"You whom I love, get up;
my beautiful one, come with me!
¹¹ Look, the winter has ended;
the rain has stopped.

ULB:

¹⁰ My beloved spoke to me and said,
"Arise, my love;
My beautiful one, come away with me.
¹¹ Look, the winter is past;
the rain is over and gone.

translationNotes

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

Arise

"Get up"

my love

"you whom I love." See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:9](#)

Look

"Listen carefully" or "What I am about to say is important." You could use a word in your language that tells the hearer to listen carefully.

the winter is past; the rain is over and gone

In winter it is too cold and wet to make love outside, but the cold, wet time has passed.

the winter is past

Winter is the cold time of year when plants do not grow and people prefer to stay inside their houses. You could use the term in your language for that time of year.

the rain is over and gone

In Israel it only rains during the winter. The rain here is cold and unpleasant, not the refreshing rain of the hot season.

translationWords

- [beloved](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 2:12-13

UDB:

¹² The flowers are blooming throughout the country.

It is now time to sing;
we hear the pigeons cooing.

¹³ There are young figs on the fig trees,
and there are blossoms on the grapevines
and their fragrance fills the air.

You whom I love, get up;
my beautiful one, come with me!

ULB:

¹² The flowers have appeared in the land;
the time for pruning and the singing of birds has come,
and the sound of the doves is heard in our land.

¹³ The fig tree ripens her green figs,
and the vines are in blossom;
they give off their fragrance.

Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

translationNotes

The flowers have appeared

“People can see flowers”

in the land

“all over this land”

pruning

cutting off branches from a plant so that it will produce more fruit or look better

the singing of birds

“for birds to sing”

the sound of the doves is heard

This can be translated in active form. AT: “people can hear the sound of doves” or “the doves are cooing” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

The fig tree ripens her green figs

The tree is spoken of as if it were actively causing its fruit to ripen. This is a collective singular and can be translated as a plural. AT: “The figs on the trees are becoming ripe” (See: [Personification](#))

vines are in blossom

“vines are flowering” or “vines have flowers”

they give off

The word “they” refers to the blossoms on the vines.

fragrance

“sweet smell”

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:9](#)

translationWords

- [time](#)
- [dove, pigeon](#)
- [fig](#)
- [vine](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 2:14

UDB:

¹⁴ You are like a dove hiding in the rocky cliff.
Show me your face,
and allow me to hear your voice,
because your voice is sounds sweet,
and your face is lovely.”

ULB:

¹⁴ My dove, in the clefts of the rock,
in the secret clefts of the mountain crags,
let me see your face.
Let me hear your voice,
for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”

translationNotes

General Information:

The man is speaking.

My dove

The Israelites considered doves beautiful birds with pleasant voices. The man thinks the woman’s face and voice are beautiful. If calling a woman a “dove” would be offensive, you could leave out the metaphor. AT: “My beautiful woman” (See: [Metaphor](#))

clefts

large cracks in the side of mountain rocks large enough for people to hide in

crag

“steep rocks”

your face

Some versions translate this as “your appearance” or “your form” or “what you look like.”

translationWords

- [dove, pigeon](#)
- [voice](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 2:15

UDB:

The woman speaking to the man

¹⁵ There are other men who ruin women as wild dogs ruin vineyards;
do not allow those men to attack me.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the man

¹⁵ Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes
that spoil vineyards,
for our vineyard is in blossom.

translationNotes

Catch

This is plural, as if the woman is speaking to more than one man, but most versions translate who she is speaking to as the man, so you could translate this as singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

the foxes

These animals look like small dogs and were often used in love poetry to represent eager young men who would spoil a young woman. (See: [Metaphor](#))

for us ... our vineyard

The words “us” and “our” could possibly be 1) exclusive, referring to the woman herself, as in [Song of Solomon 1:4](#), or 2) inclusive, referring to the woman and the man, or 3) exclusive, referring to the woman and the rest of her family. (See: [Exclusive and Inclusive “We”](#))

foxes

Another possible meaning is “jackals.” A jackal is a type of thin wild dog with long legs.

the little foxes that spoil

Foxes spoil or destroy vineyards by digging holes and eating vines and grapes. This could be a metaphor for young men who spoil young women. (See: [Metaphor](#))

in blossom

This implies that the vineyard is healthy and the grapes have appeared, but they are not ready for harvest. This could be a metaphor for a young lady ready for marriage and bearing children. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:13](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [vineyard](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 2:16-17**UDB:**

¹⁶ This man whom I love—I belong to him, and he belongs to me.

He takes great pleasure in kissing my lips,

as sheep love to graze in pastures. The woman speaking to her lover

¹⁷ You whom I love, you must go away before dawn, when the darkness disappears.

Go away quickly, like a gazelle or like a young deer running on the high hills.

ULB:

¹⁶ My beloved is mine, and I am his;

he grazes among the lilies with pleasure. The woman speaking to the man

¹⁷ Go away, my beloved,

before the soft winds of dawn blow and the shadows flee away.

Go away; be like a gazelle or a young stag

on the rugged mountains.

translationNotes**My beloved is mine**

“My beloved belongs to me”

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

I am his

“I belong to him”

he grazes

“feeds” or “eats grass.” The woman speaks of the man as if he were “a gazelle or a young stag” (verse 17) that eats plants among the lilies. Grazing is probably a metaphor for lovemaking ([Song of Solomon 2:1-2](#)). (See: [Metaphor](#))

lilies

sweet-smelling flowers that grow in places where there is much water. Translate as the plural of “lily” in [Song of Solomon 2:1](#).

dawn

the part of the day when the sun is rising

the shadows flee away

The woman describes the shadows as though they were running away from the light of the sun. AT: “the shadows disappear” (See: [Metaphor](#))

like a gazelle or a young stag

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:9](#).

gazelle

an animal that looks like a deer and moves quickly. Translate as the singular of “gazelles” as in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#).

stag

an adult male deer

rugged

“rocky” or “rough”

translationWords

- [beloved](#)
- [shadow](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 03 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Longing

This chapter describes a feeling of longing, or the waiting in anticipation of the one you love. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different metaphors of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Links:

- [Song of Solomon 03:01 Notes](#)

Song of Solomon 3:1-2**UDB:**

The woman speaking to herself

¹ During the entire night while I lay on my bed,
I was longing to see the one I love with all my heart.

I wanted him to come,
but he did not.

² So I said to myself,
"I will get up now and walk around the city,
through the streets and plazas,
to search for the one whom I love with all my heart."

So I got up and went out to look for him,
but I could not find him.

ULB:

The woman speaking to herself

¹ At night on my bed
I was longing for him whom my soul loves;
I looked for him, but I could not find him.
² I said to myself, "I will get up and go through the city,
through the streets and squares;
I will search for him whom my soul loves."
I searched for him, but I did not find him.

translationNotes**I was longing for him ... could not find him**

"I had a strong desire to be with him ... loves, but he was not there"

him whom my soul loves

The soul is a metonym for the whole person. Here it makes a stronger statement of the woman's love for the man than "my beloved" ([Song of Solomon 1:14](#)). (See: [Metonymy](#))

go through the city

“walk through the city”

through the streets and squares

The word “squares” indicates the center area of a town where streets or roads come together. It is often an area where people sell items, a market, and a place where people come together to talk.

search

“to look for”

translationWords

- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [beloved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 03 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 3:3-4**UDB:**

³ The city watchmen saw me
 while they were patrolling in the city.
 I asked them,
 “Have you seen the one whom I love with all my heart?”
⁴ As soon as I walked past them,
 I found the one whom I love with all my heart.
 I clung to him and would not let him go
 until I brought him to my mother’s house,
 to the room where my mother had conceived me.

ULB:

³ The watchmen found me as they were making their rounds in the city.
 I asked them, “Have you seen him whom my soul loves?”
⁴ It was only a little while after I had passed them
 that I found him whom my soul loves.
 I held him and would not let him go
 until I had brought him into my mother’s house,
 into the bedroom of the one who had conceived me.

translationNotes**watchmen**

men who have the job of keeping guard of the town at night to keep the people safe

as they were making their rounds in the city

“who were walking around the city on the walls”

him whom my soul loves

The soul is a metonym for the whole person. Here it makes a stronger statement of the woman’s love for the man than “my beloved” ([Song of Solomon 1:14](#)). See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 3:1](#). (See: [Metonymy](#))

bedroom

“the room for sleeping”

the one who had conceived me

This is a metonym for her mother. (See: [Metonymy](#))

translationWords

- [watch, watchman](#)
- [soul, souls](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [conceive, conception](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 03 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 3:5

UDB:

The woman speaking to the other women

⁵ You women of Jerusalem,
solemnly promise me, while the does and gazelles are listening, that you will not
disturb us while we are making love
until we are ready to stop.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the other women

⁵ I want you to swear, daughters of Jerusalem,
by the gazelles and the does of the fields,
that you will not awaken or arouse love
until she pleases.

translationNotes

General Information:

Translate this verse as in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#).

daughters of Jerusalem

“young women of Jerusalem.” These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

by the gazelles and the does of the fields

Although the daughters of Jerusalem are not there to hear her, the woman is telling them that the gazelles and the does will punish them they break their promise. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

the gazelles

animals that look like deer and move quickly.

does

female deer

of the fields

“that live in the countryside.” This refers to land that has not been farmed.

will not awaken or arouse love until she pleases

Here “love” is spoken of as if it were a person asleep that does not want to be awakened. This is a metaphor that represents the man and woman who do not want to be disturbed until they are finished making love. AT: “will not disturb us until we have finished making love” (See: [Personification](#) and [Metaphor](#))

will not awaken or arouse

If your language has only one word for waking people out of sleep, you could combine these words. AT: “will not awaken” (See: [Doublet](#))

translationWords

- [oath, swear, swear by](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)
- [deer, doe, buck, roebuck, fawn](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 03 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 3:6-7**UDB:**

The young woman speaking to herself

⁶ What is that I see coming from the wilderness,
something that is stirring up dust like a column of smoke
like smoke from burning myrrh and incense
made from spices imported by merchants?

⁷ It is Solomon's litter carried by servants and
surrounded by sixty bodyguards
chosen from the strongest soldiers in Israel.

ULB:

The woman speaking to herself

⁶ What is that coming up from the wilderness
like a column of smoke,
perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
with all the powders sold by merchants?

⁷ Look, it is the bed of Solomon;
sixty warriors surround it,
sixty soldiers of Israel.

translationNotes**General Information:**

Here begins Part Three of the book. It begins with a description of sixty men carrying Solomon's bed up from the wilderness to Jerusalem.

What is that coming up from the wilderness

The group of people is traveling from the wilderness to Jerusalem. They must go up in order to reach Jerusalem because the wilderness is low in the Jordan valley and Jerusalem is high in the mountains.

What is that

Many versions translate this “Who is that.”

like a column of smoke

The dust looked like smoke from far away because the people raised much dust in the air as they traveled. (See: [Simile](#))

perfumed with myrrh and frankincense

“the sweet-smelling smoke of myrrh and frankincense”

with all the powders sold by merchants

You may need to supply the words omitted by the ellipsis. AT: “and the sweet-smelling smoke of all the powders that merchants sell” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

powders

a fine dust made by crushing something solid

Look

“Listen carefully” or “What I am about to say is important.” You could use a word in your language that tells the hearer to listen carefully. The speaker now discovers the answer to the question in verse 6.

it is the bed

This refers to a bed with a cover that can be carried from one place to another.

sixty warriors surround it, sixty soldiers of Israel

These two phrases refer to the same sixty people. The second phrase clarifies that the “warriors” are “soldiers of Israel.” (See: [Doublet](#))

warriors

men who fight

translationWords

- [desert, wilderness](#)
- [pillar, column](#)
- [myrrh](#)
- [frankincense](#)
- [Solomon](#)
- [warrior, soldier](#)
- [Israel, Israelites](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 03 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 3:8-9

UDB:

⁸ They all have swords
and they all are trained to use them.
Each one has his sword strapped to his side
and is prepared for dangers that can happen during the night or day.
⁹ King Solomon commanded his servants to make that litter for him;
it was made with wood from Lebanon.

ULB:

⁸ All of them are skilled with a sword and are experienced in warfare.
Every man has his sword at his side,
armed against the terrors of the night.
⁹ King Solomon made himself a sedan chair
of the wood from Lebanon.

translationNotes

General Information:

The description of sixty men carrying Solomon's bed up from the wilderness to Jerusalem, begun in [Song of Solomon 3:6](#), continues.

Connecting Statement:

A description of the bed itself begins in verse 9. You could use words in your language that show that this is background information. (See: [Background Information](#))

are skilled in warfare

“can fight battles well”

armed against

“so that he can fight against”

terrors of the night

The abstract noun “terrors” is a metonym for evil people who frighten others by attacking them. AT: “evil people who attack others at night” (See: [Abstract Nouns](#) and [Metonymy](#))

sedan chair

This is a chair or couch for important people to sit or lie on. It rests on long poles that people can use to carry it

translationWords

- [sword](#)
- [terror, terrify](#)
- [king](#)
- [Solomon](#)
- [Lebanon](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 03 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 3:10-11

UDB:

¹⁰ The canopy that covered it was held up by silver posts,
and the back of the litter was embroidered with gold.

The seat was covered with purple cloth
lovingly made by the women of Jerusalem.

¹¹ You women of Jerusalem,
come and look at King Solomon
wearing the headdress that his mother put on his head
on the day when he was married,
the happiest day of his life.

ULB:

¹⁰ Its posts were made of silver;
the back was made of gold, and the seat of purple cloth.
Its interior was decorated with love
by the daughters of Jerusalem. The woman speaking to the women of Jerusalem

¹¹ Go out, daughters of Zion, and gaze on King Solomon,
bearing the crown with which his mother crowned him
on his wedding day,
on the day of the joy of his heart.

translationNotes

Connecting Statement:

The description of the bed itself that began in [Song of Solomon 3:9](#) continues. (See: [Background Information](#))

Its posts

The word “its” refers to King Solomon’s sedan chair.

posts

The word “posts” here refers to pieces either made of silver or made of wood covered with silver that hold up the tent of cloth around his chair.

Its interior was

“The inside of it was”

with love

Possible meanings are 1) “with love,” indicating that the women made the sedan beautiful in a special way to show their love for Solomon, or 2) “with leather.”

daughters of Zion

“you young women who live in Zion”

gaze on King Solomon

“look at King Solomon.” The word “gaze” refers to look at someone or something for a long time, usually with strong emotional feeling.

bearing the crown

“wearing the crown”

the day of the joy of his heart

The word “heart” is a metonym for the person. AT: “the day on which he truly rejoiced” or “the happiest day of his life” (See: [Metonymy](#))

translationWords

- silver
- gold
- purple
- love, loves, loving, loved
- Jerusalem
- Zion, Mount Zion
- king
- Solomon
- crown, to crown

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 03 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 04 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Beauty

The woman is described as the epitome of beauty in ancient Israel. Not all cultures share the same the same standards of beauty.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different metaphors of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: [Metaphor](#))

“My sister, my bride”

The woman described is not the sister of her husband. They are not related. Instead, this is a reference to a woman who is a fellow Israelite.

Links:

- [Song of Solomon 04:01 Notes](#)

Song of Solomon 4:1

UDB:

The woman's lover speaking to her

¹ My darling, you are beautiful,
you are very beautiful!

Underneath your veil, your eyes are as gentle as doves.

Your long black hair moves from side to side like a flock of black goats
moving down the slopes of Mount Gilead.

ULB:

The man speaking to the woman

¹ Oh, you are beautiful, my love; you are beautiful.

Your eyes are doves behind your veil.

Your hair is like a flock of goats
going down from Mount Gilead.

translationNotes

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

Your eyes are doves

One possibility is that the man is speaking of the woman's white eyeballs or the shape of her eyes, the shape of a dove. Another possibility is that the Israelites considered doves to be gentle and soft birds, and the man considers the woman's eyes beautiful because the way the woman looks at him makes him think she is gentle. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:15](#). AT: "You are very gentle" (See: [Metaphor](#))

my love

"you whom I love." See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:9](#).

Your hair is like a flock of goats going down from Mount Gilead

Goats in Israel were usually dark in color. The woman's hair was probably dark. You may need to specify that the goats were dark or even use another simile that the reader will understand that refers to something dark and beautiful. People thought of Mount Gilead as beautiful and fertile. The speaker considered the woman beautiful and ready to become the mother of his children. If you remove the simile of the goats, you may have to remove the simile of the mountain as well. AT: "Your hair is as dark as storm clouds above a fertile land" (See: [Simile](#))

translationWords

- [dove, pigeon](#)
- [veil](#)
- [flock, herd](#)
- [goat, kid](#)
- [Gilead](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 4:2

UDB:

² Your teeth are very white,
 as white as sheep whose wool people have just cut,
 as white as sheep that people have just washed in a stream.
 You have all of your teeth on both sides;
 none of them is missing.

ULB:

² Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes,
 coming up from the washing place.
 Each one has a twin,
 and none among them is bereaved.

translationNotes

Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes

After sheep have their wool cut off, they are washed and their skin looks very white. The woman's teeth are white. (See: [Simile](#))

a flock of newly shorn ewes

This can be translated in active form. AT: "a flock of ewes whose wool people have cut off" (See: [Active or Passive](#))

coming up from the washing place

The ewes are coming up out of the water. AT: "that are coming up out of the water after people have washed them" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Each one has a twin

Sheep usually give birth to two lambs at one time. These twin lambs usually look like one another. Each of the woman's teeth has a matching tooth on the other side of her mouth. (See: [Metaphor](#))

none among them is bereaved

Each of the woman's teeth has a matching tooth on the other side of her mouth. She has not lost any of her teeth.

bereaved

lost a loved one who has died

translationWords

- [like, likeness](#)
- [flock, herd](#)
- [sheep, ram, ewe](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 4:3

UDB:

³ Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon,
and your mouth is lovely.
Beneath your veil,
your cheeks are round and rosy like the halves of a pomegranate.

ULB:

³ Your lips are like a thread of scarlet;
your mouth is lovely.
Your cheeks are like pomegranate halves
behind your veil.

translationNotes

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

are like a thread of scarlet

Scarlet is a beautiful red color, and scarlet thread was very expensive. The woman's lips were red. AT: "are a deep red like scarlet thread" or "are red and very beautiful" (See: [Simile](#))

scarlet

a dark red color that is very similar to the color of blood

is lovely

"is beautiful"

are like pomegranate halves

Pomegranates are smooth, round, and rich red. The man thinks the woman's cheeks are beautiful and show that she is healthy. AT: "are red and round like two halves of a pomegranate" or "are red and full and healthy" (See: [Simile](#))

behind your veil

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:1](#).

translationWords

- [pomegranate](#)
- [veil](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 4:4-5

UDB:

⁴ Your long neck is beautiful, like the tower of King David
that was built using layers of stone.

The ornaments on the necklaces around your neck are like a thousand shields hanging on the walls of a tower;

each one belongs to a warrior.

⁵ Your breasts are as delicate as two young twin deer
eating grass among lilies.

ULB:

⁴ Your neck is like the tower of David built in rows of stone,
with a thousand shields hanging on it,
all the shields of soldiers.

⁵ Your two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle,
grazing among the lilies.

translationNotes

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

Your neck is like the tower of David

No one knows if this was a real tower. A tower is a tall, slender building, and saying that David built it implies that it was beautiful. The man considered the woman's neck long and slender and so beautiful. AT: "Your neck is long and beautiful like the tower of David" (See: [Simile](#))

of David

"that David built"

built in rows of stone

Women had necklaces that covered their entire necks with rows of decorations. The man compares these rows of decorations with the rows of stone on the tower. AT: “that has many rows of stone” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

with a thousand shields

The man compares the decorations of the woman’s necklace with shields hanging on the tower. The necklace probably went around her neck many times. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a thousand shields

“1,000 shields.” (See: [Numbers](#))

all the shields of soldiers

“all of the shields belong to mighty warriors”

two breasts

If the word “two” seems unnecessary and so out of place, you could omit it.

like two fawns, twins of a gazelle

The man implies that the woman’s breasts are matching, soft, and perhaps small. (See: [Simile](#))

twins

the babies of a mother who gave birth to two babies at one time

gazelle

an animal that looks like a deer and moves quickly. Translate as the singular of “gazelles” as in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#).

grazing among the lilies

“eating plants among the lilies.” While it is clear that the man “grazing among the lilies” is a metaphor for making love ([Song of Solomon 2:16](#)), it is not clear what these words refer to. It is best to translate them literally.

lilies

sweet-smelling flowers that grow in places where there is much water. Translate as the plural of “lily” in [Song of Solomon 2:1](#).

translationWords

- [like, likeness](#)
- [watchtower, tower](#)
- [David](#)
- [shield](#)
- [warrior, soldier](#)
- [deer, doe, buck, roebuck, fawn](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 4:6-7**UDB:**

⁶ Until dawn tomorrow morning,
 when the nighttime shadows disappear,
 I will lie close to your breasts,
 because they are like two hills that smell like sweet spices.
⁷ My darling, you are completely beautiful;
 your body is perfectly formed!

ULB:

⁶ Until the dawn arrives and the shadows flee away,
 I will go to the mountain of myrrh
 and to the hill of frankincense.
⁷ You are beautiful in every way, my love
 and there is no blemish in you.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The man continues to praise the woman.

Until the dawn arrives and the shadows flee away

Translate similar wording in this line as you did the line in [Song of Solomon 2:17](#).

I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense

The “mountain of myrrh” and “hill of frankincense” are metaphors for the woman’s breasts (See: [Song of Solomon 1:13](#)). AT: “I will lie close to your breasts, which are like mountains that smell like myrrh and frankincense” or “I will lie close to your breasts, which smell very sweet” or “I will go to the sweet-smelling mountains” (See: [Metaphor](#))

the mountain of myrrh

“the mountain made of myrrh” or “the mountain that has myrrh growing on it”

the hill of frankincense

“the hill where there are clouds of smoke from burning frankincense in the air”

You are beautiful in every way

“Every part of you is beautiful” or “All of you is beautiful”

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:9](#).

there is no blemish in you

“you have no blemish”

translationWords

- [shadow](#)
- [myrrh](#)
- [frankincense](#)
- [blemish](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 4:8

UDB:

⁸ My darling, it is as though you were in Lebanon
 far away, where I cannot reach you.
 Come back to me.
 It is as though you were on the top of Mount Hermon
 or the nearby peaks, where I cannot go to you.
 Come from the mountains, where the lions have their dens
 and where the leopards live on the mountains.

ULB:

⁸ Come with me from Lebanon, my bride.
 Come with me from Lebanon;
 come from the top of Amana,
 from the top of Senir and Hermon,
 from lions' dens,
 from mountain dens of leopards.

translationNotes

General Information:

The man continues to speak to the woman. He speaks of them not being free to make love as if they were in a wild, dangerous, foreign place. (See: [Metaphor](#))

from Lebanon

“away from Lebanon”

my bride

This Hebrew word can refer to a woman who is married or to one whom a man has arranged to become his son's wife. If your language has a polite word that a man would use to his wife and that has not been used yet in this book, you could use it here. Otherwise you could use any polite term a man would use with his wife.

Amana

the name of a mountain north of Israel (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Senir

the name of a mountain near Amana and Hermon. Some people think that this refers to the same mountain as Hermon. (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

dens

places where lions and leopards live, like caves or holes in the ground

translationWords

- [Lebanon](#)
- [bride](#)
- [Mount Hermon](#)
- [lion](#)
- [leopard](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 4:9**UDB:**

⁹ You who are most dear to me, when I see you,
you force me to love you
when I see you look at me, when I see a little of the jewelry that you wear around your neck.

ULB:

⁹ You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride;
you have stolen my heart,
with just one look at me,
with just one jewel of your necklace.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The man continues to speak to the woman.

You have stolen my heart

Possible meanings of this idiom are 1) “My heart now belongs completely to you” or 2) “I strongly desire to make love to you” (See: [Idiom](#))

my sister

This is an idiom of affection. They are not actually brother and sister. AT: “my dear” or “my darling” (See: [Idiom](#))

my bride

This Hebrew word can refer to a woman who is married or to one whom a man has arranged to become his son’s wife. If your language has a polite word that a man would use to his wife and that has not been used yet in this book, you could use it here. Otherwise you could use any polite term a man would use with his wife. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:8](#).

heart, with just one look at me, with just one jewel

“heart. All you have to do is look at me once or show me just one jewel.” Both the woman’s eyes and her jewelry attract the man to her.

necklace

This necklace probably went around her neck many times (See: [Song of Solomon 4:4](#)).

translationWords

- [heart, hearts](#)
- [bride](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 4:10-11**UDB:**

¹⁰ My bride, your love for me is delightful!

It more delightful than wine!

The fragrance of your perfume

is more pleasing than any spice!

¹¹ When you kiss me, it is better than when I eat honey.

Your kisses are as sweet as milk mixed with honey.

The aroma of your clothes

is like the aroma of cedar trees in Lebanon.

ULB:

¹⁰ How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride!

How much better is your love than wine,

and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice.

¹¹ Your lips, my bride, drip honey;

honey and milk are under your tongue;

the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The man continues to praise the woman.

How beautiful is your love

“Your love is wonderful”

my sister

This is an idiom of affection. They are not actually brother and sister. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:9](#). AT: “my dear” or “my darling” (See: [Idiom](#))

my bride

This Hebrew word can refer to a woman who is married or to one whom a man has arranged to become his son's wife. If your language has a polite word that a man would use to his wife and that has not been used yet in this book, you could use it here. Otherwise you could use any polite term a man would use with his wife. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:9](#).

How much better is your love than wine

"Your love is much better than wine." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Song of Solomon 1:2](#).

the fragrance of your perfume than any spice

The verb may be supplied from the previous phrase. AT: "how much better is the fragrance of your perfume than the fragrance of any spice" (See: [Ellipsis](#))

fragrance ... perfume

See how you translated these words in [Song of Solomon 1:3](#).

spice

dried plants or seeds that have a good smell or taste

Your lips ... drip honey

Possible meanings are that honey is a metaphor for 1) the sweet taste of the woman's kisses or 2) the woman's words. (See: [Metaphor](#))

honey and milk are under your tongue

Because "milk and honey" is a common phrase in the Bible, you should translate literally. Possible meanings are that honey is a metaphor for 1) the sweet taste of the woman's kisses or 2) the woman's words. Milk is a metaphor for luxury, owning many things that help people enjoy life. When the woman kisses the man, he enjoys life. (See: [Metaphor](#))

the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon

"the smell of your clothes is like the smell of Lebanon." Many cedar trees grew in Lebanon. Cedar trees smell very good, so Lebanon would have smelled sweet and fresh.

translationWords

- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [bride](#)
- [wine, wineskin, new wine](#)
- [honey, honeycomb](#)
- [like, likeness](#)
- [Lebanon](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 4:12-14

UDB:

¹² You who are most dear to me, you are like a garden that the owner keeps locked
in order that other men cannot enter it;
you are like a spring that is covered
in order that others may not drink from it.

¹³ You are like an orchard of pomegranate trees
full of delicious fruit,
and plenty of plants that produce henna and nard spices,
¹⁴ saffron and calamus and cinnamon
and many other kinds of incense,
myrrh and aloes
and many other fine spices.

ULB:

¹² My sister, my bride is a garden locked up,
a garden locked up, a spring that is sealed.
¹³ Your branches are a grove of pomegranate trees with choice fruits,
and of henna and nard plants,
¹⁴ Nard and saffron,
calamus and cinnamon with all kinds of spices,
myrrh and aloes with all the finest spices.

translationNotes

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

My sister

This is an idiom of affection. They are not actually brother and sister. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:9](#). AT: "My dear" or "My darling" (See: [Idiom](#))

my bride

This Hebrew word can refer to a woman who is married or to one whom a man has arranged to become his son's wife. If your language has a polite word that a man would use to his wife and that has not been used yet in this book, you could use it here. Otherwise you could use any polite term a man would use with his wife. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:9](#).

is a garden locked up

"is a garden that no one can enter." The garden is a metaphor for the woman, and the lock is a metaphor for her still being a virgin. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a spring that is sealed

"a spring with a cover on it." The spring or well is a metaphor for the woman, and the cover is a metaphor for her being a virgin. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Your branches

branches or channels of rivers, a clear euphemism for the female body part. If any reference to this would be offensive, translate it as a synecdoche for the whole person. AT: "You" (See: [Euphemism](#) and [Synecdoche](#))

a grove

a place where many trees grow together

with choice fruits

"with the best kinds of fruits"

nard plants

plants that give oil that people used to make their skin soft and to have a pleasant odor. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:14](#).

henna

small desert trees that people used as a perfume. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:14](#).

saffron

a spice that comes from the dried parts from the yellow thread in the center of a certain flower

calamus

a reed with a pleasant smell that people used to make anointing oil.

cinnamon

a spice made from the bark of a tree that people used for cooking

myrrh

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

aloes

a type of large plant that had a very sweet smell

all the finest spices

“all the best spices”

translationWords

- [bride](#)
- [fountain, spring](#)
- [seal, to seal](#)
- [pomegranate](#)
- [myrrh](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 4:15-16**UDB:**

¹⁵ You are like a fountain in a garden,
like a spring of clear water
that flows down from the mountains of Lebanon. The young woman speaking to her lover

¹⁶ I want the north wind and the south wind to come,
and blow on my garden,
in order that the fragrance of the spices will spread through the air.
Similarly, I want the one who loves me to come and enjoy being close to me
like someone comes into a garden and enjoys eating the fruit that grows there.

ULB:

¹⁵ You are a garden spring,
a well of fresh water,
streams flowing down from Lebanon. The woman speaking to the man

¹⁶ Awake, north wind; come, south wind;
blow on my garden so that its spices may give off their fragrance.
May my beloved come into his garden
and eat some of its choice fruit.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The man continues to praise the woman.

You are a garden spring

“You are a spring in a garden.” A garden spring gives sweet, clean water that people enjoy drinking. The man enjoys being close to the woman. (See: [Metaphor](#))

fresh water

water that is good to drink

streams flowing down from Lebanon

Because Lebanon had mountains covered with trees, the streams from Lebanon were clean and cool.

Awake, north wind; come, south wind; blow

The woman speaks to the north wind and the south wind as though they were people. AT: “I wish the north wind and south wind would come and blow” (See: [Personification](#))

Awake

“Start moving”

blow on my garden

The garden is a metaphor for her body, which she has covered with sweet-smelling oils ([Song of Solomon 4:14](#)). (See: [Metaphor](#))

may give off their fragrance

“may send out their good smells”

May my beloved ... choice fruit

The woman is inviting the man to make love to her. (See: [Metaphor](#))

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

choice fruit

“wonderful fruit”

translationWords

- [fountain, spring](#)
- [Lebanon](#)
- [beloved](#)
- [fruit, fruitful](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 05 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verses 2-7 describe a dream the woman had.

Special concepts in this chapter

Beauty

The woman is described as the epitome of beauty in ancient Israel. Not all cultures share the same standards of beauty.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different metaphors of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

“My sister, my bride”

The woman described is not the sister of her husband. They are not related. Instead, this is a reference to a woman who is a fellow Israelite.

Links:

- [Song of Solomon 05:01 Notes](#)

Song of Solomon 5:1**UDB:**

The woman's lover speaking to her

¹ You who are most dear to me,
I have come to be next to you.

It will be as though I am gathering myrrh with my other spices,
eating my honey and honeycomb,
and drinking my wine and my milk. The woman's lover speaking to her

Friends, enjoy making love;
fully enjoy all that you do with each other.

ULB:

The man speaking to the woman

¹ I have come into my garden, my sister, my bride;
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice.

I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;

I have drunk my wine with my milk. The friends speaking to the man and the woman
Eat, friends;

drink and be drunk with love.

translationNotes**General Information:**

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

I have come

It is clearly the woman's lover who is speaking.

have come into my garden

The word "garden" is a metaphor for the woman. The man is finally able to fully enjoy the woman as they make love. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Euphemism](#))

my sister

This is an idiom of affection. They are not actually brother and sister. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:9](#). AT: “my dear” or “my darling” (See: [Idiom](#))

my bride

This Hebrew word can refer to a woman who is married or to one whom a man has arranged to become his son’s wife. If your language has a polite word that a man would use to his wife and that has not been used yet in this book, you could use it here. Otherwise you could use any polite term a man would use with his wife. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:9](#).

myrrh ... spice ... honeycomb ... honey ... wine ... milk

These are all metaphors for the man enjoying the woman’s body ([Song of Solomon 1:13](#), [Song of Solomon 2:04](#), [Song of Solomon 4:11](#), and [Song of Solomon 4:14](#)). (See: [Metaphor](#))

spice

plants that have a strong smell or taste

Eat ... drink ... be drunk with love

Eating and drinking are metaphors for making love. AT: “Make love ... make love ... make love until you are fully satisfied” (See: [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [sister](#)
- [bride](#)
- [myrrh](#)
- [honey, honeycomb](#)
- [wine, wineskin, new wine](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:2**UDB:**

The young woman speaking to herself

² I was asleep, and I had a dream.

In it I heard my lover knocking at the door.

He said, "You who are dearer to me than my sister, my darling, my dear friend, my perfect one, my dove,

open the door for me!

My hair is wet from the dew,

from the mist that has fallen during the night."

ULB:

The woman speaking to herself

² I was asleep, but my heart was awake in a dream.

There is the sound of my beloved knocking and saying,

"Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled one,

for my head is wet with dew,

my hair with the night's dampness."

translationNotes**General Information:**

Here begins Part Four of the book

General Information:

The young woman uses euphemisms to describe her dream so that it can be interpreted in two different ways: 1) the woman describes a dream about a night when the man came to visit her at her house; and 2) the woman describes a dream about starting to sleep with the man. (See: [Euphemism](#))

but my heart was awake

The heart is the center of thought and feeling. AT: "but I could think clearly" or "but I knew what I was feeling" (See: [Idiom](#))

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

Open to me

Possible meanings are 1) literal, “Open the door for me,” or 2) metaphorical, “Let me make love to you.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#) and [Metaphor](#))

my sister

This is an idiom of affection. They are not actually brother and sister. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:9](#). AT: “my dear” or “my darling” (See: [Idiom](#))

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:9](#).

my dove

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:14](#).

undefiled one

“my perfect one” or “my faithful one” or “my innocent one”

dew

drops of water or mist that form as the night becomes cool

my hair with the night's dampness

You may need to supply the words omitted by the ellipsis. AT: “my hair is wet with the night's dampness” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

translationWords

- [heart, hearts](#)
- [dream](#)
- [beloved](#)
- [sister](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [dove, pigeon](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:3-4

UDB:

³ But I had already taken off my robe;

I did not want to put it on again to open the door.

I had already washed my feet;

I did not want them to get dirty again.

⁴ The one who loves me put his hand through the opening in the door,

and I was thrilled in my inner being that he was there.

ULB:

³ "I have taken off my robe; must I put it on again?

I have washed my feet; must I get them dirty?"

⁴ My beloved put in his hand through the opening of the door latch,

and my heart was stirred up for him.

translationNotes

"I have ... dirty?"

You may need to make explicit that these words are what the woman thought to herself when she heard the man speak ([Song of Solomon 5:2](#)). Or you could turn this into an indirect quote, as the UDB does. AT: "I said to myself, 'I have ... dirty?'" (See: [Direct and Indirect Quotations](#))

robe

thin linen clothing that people wore on their skin

must I put it on again?

This can be translated as a statement. AT: "I do not want to put it on again." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

I have washed my feet

While the word "feet" can be a euphemism for private parts, this probably refers to literal feet. The woman seems more likely to want to make love than to want to refrain from lovemaking because she has just bathed. (See: [Euphemism](#))

must I get them dirty?

This can be translated as a statement. AT: "I do not want to get them dirty."

My beloved put in his hand through the opening of the door latch

Possible interpretations are 1) literal, the lover reaches into the house through a hole in the door in order to open the door or 2) euphemistic, they have begun to make love. (See: [Euphemism](#))

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

door latch

"door lock"

translationWords

- [robe](#)
- [beloved](#)
- [heart, hearts](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:5

UDB:

⁵ I got up to open the door for him,
but first I put a lot of myrrh on my hands.
It was dripping from my fingers
while I unlatched the bolt.

ULB:

⁵ I got up to open the door for my beloved;
my hands were dripping with myrrh,
my fingers with moist myrrh,
on the door handle.

translationNotes

I got up to open the door for my beloved

Possible meanings are 1) literal, the young woman got out of bed in order to let the man into the house, or 2), metaphorical. AT: "I prepared myself to make love with my beloved" (See: [Metaphor](#))

my hands ... my fingers ... door handle

While these may be euphemisms for the woman's and man's bodies, it is best to translate literally. (See: [Euphemism](#))

with moist myrrh

"with liquid myrrh"

translationWords

- [beloved](#)
- [myrrh](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:6

UDB:

⁶ I opened the door for the man who loves me,
 but he left.
 He had turned away and was gone!
 I was very disappointed.
 I searched for him, but I could not find him;
 I called him, but he did not answer.

ULB:

⁶ I opened the door for my beloved,
 but my beloved had turned and gone.
 My heart sank when he spoke. ^[1] .
 I looked for him, but I did not find him;
 I called him, but he did not answer me.

5:6 ^[1]Some versions read *sank because he had turned away*

translationNotes

General Information:

The woman continues to describe her dream.

my beloved

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

My heart sank

The heart is a metaphor for the person, and sinking, going down, is a metaphor for becoming weak or sad. AT: “I was very sad” (See: [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [beloved](#)
- [turn, turn away, turn back](#)
- [heart, hearts](#)
- [call, calls, calling, called](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:7**UDB:**

⁷ The city watchmen saw me while they were walking around the city.
They beat me and wounded me
because they thought I was a prostitute;
those men who were guarding the city walls took my robe.

ULB:

⁷ The watchmen found me as they were making their rounds in the city.
They struck me and wounded me;
the guards on the walls took away my cloak from me.

translationNotes**The watchmen**

men who have the job of keeping guard of the town at night to keep the people safe. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 3:3](#).

as they were making their rounds in the city

“who were walking around the city on the walls.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 3:3](#).

found me

found the woman

struck me

“beat me” or “hit me”

wounded me

“injured me”

the guards on the walls

“the men who guard the walls”

cloak

a garment that people wore over the other clothing on their upper body when they went outdoors in public

translationWords

- [watch, watchman](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:8

UDB:

The young woman speaking to the women of the city

⁸ You young women of Jerusalem,
 I want you to take an oath
 that if you see the man who loves me,
 you will tell him that I want him so much that I feel sick.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the women of the city

⁸ I want you to swear, daughters of Jerusalem,
 that if you find my beloved—
 What will you make known to him?—
 that I am sick from love.

translationNotes

I want you to swear

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#).

daughters of Jerusalem

“young women of Jerusalem.” These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#). (See: [Apostrophe](#))

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

my beloved—What will you make known to him?—that I am

The woman uses a question to introduce what she wants the daughters of Jerusalem to tell her beloved. AT: “my love, this is what I want you to say to him: tell him that” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

sick from love

She loves the man so strongly that she feels sick. (See: [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [Jerusalem](#)
- [beloved](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:9**UDB:**

The women of the city speaking to the young woman

- ⁹ You who are the fairest among women,
 why do you think that the one who loves you is better than other men?
 In what way is he better than other men?
 Why do you want us to swear that we will tell him that?

ULB:

The women of the city speaking to the woman

- ⁹ How is your beloved better than another beloved man,
 most beautiful among women?
 Why is your beloved better than another beloved,
 that you ask us to take an oath like this?

translationNotes**most beautiful among women**

“you who are the most beautiful of all women.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:8](#).

Why is your beloved better

“What makes your beloved better”

that you ask us to take an oath like this

“and causes you to have us take this oath”

an oath like this

the oath in [Song of Solomon 5:8](#)

translationWords

- [beloved](#)
- [oath, swear, swear by](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:10-11**UDB:**

The young woman speaking to the women of the city

¹⁰ It is because the man who loves me is handsome and healthy,
outstanding among other men.

¹¹ His head is beautiful, like purest gold;
his hair is wavy
and as black as a raven.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the women of the city

¹⁰ My beloved is radiant and ruddy,
outstanding among ten thousand.

¹¹ His head is the purest gold;
his hair is curly and as black as a raven.

translationNotes**beloved**

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

is radiant and ruddy

This phrase refers to his complexion. AT: “has radiant and ruddy skin” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

radiant

“is completely healthy” or “is pure.” The man has skin that does not have any problems.

ruddy

a healthy color of the skin that is brownish red

outstanding among ten thousand

“the best of 10,000.” AT: “better than anyone else” or “no one else is like him.” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Numbers](#))

His head is the purest gold

The man’s head is as precious to the woman as the purest gold. (See: [Metaphor](#))

a raven

a bird with very black feathers (See: [Simile](#))

translationWords

- [beloved](#)
- [pure, purify, purification](#)
- [gold](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:12

UDB:

¹² His eyes as gentle as doves
 along the streams;
 the white parts of his eyes are as white as milk,
 with what resembles jewels inlaid in them.

ULB:

¹² His eyes are like doves beside streams of water,
 bathed in milk, mounted like jewels.

translationNotes

General Information:

The young woman continues to describe the man.

His eyes are like doves

Translate “eyes are like doves” as in [Song of Solomon 1:15](#). Possible meanings are 1) the Israelites considered doves to be gentle and soft birds, and the woman considers the man’s eyes beautiful because the way the man looks at her makes her think he is gentle. AT: “He is very gentle” or 2) the woman is speaking of the man’s white eyeballs or the shape of his eyes, the shape of a dove. (See: [Metonymy](#))

doves beside streams of water

Birds that the Israelites considered gentle sitting beside a gently flowing stream are a metaphor for a gentle person. (See: [Metaphor](#))

streams of water

“gently flowing water”

bathed in milk

Doves are a metaphor for the man’s pupils, and milk is a metaphor for the whites of the man’s eyes. You may need to supply the words omitted by the ellipsis. AT: “his pupils are washing themselves in milk” or “his pupils are surrounded by milk” (See: [Metaphor](#))

mounted like jewels

His eyes are beautiful. Jewels that a craftsman has carefully put in place are beautiful. (See: [Simile](#))

translationWords

- [like, likeness](#)
- [dove, pigeon](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:13

UDB:

¹³ His cheeks are like a garden full of spice trees
that produce sweet-smelling perfume.
His lips are like lilies
that have myrrh dripping from them.

ULB:

¹³ His cheeks are like beds of spices,
yielding aromatic scents. ^[1] .
His lips are lilies, dripping liquid myrrh.

5:13 ^[1]Some versions read *towers of aromatic scents*

translationNotes

General Information:

The young woman continues to describe the man.

His cheeks ... aromatic scents

This explains that his cheeks are like beds of spices because they both give off wonderful smells. (See: [Simile](#))

beds of spices

gardens or parts of gardens where people grow spices. Spices give people pleasure. The man's body gives the woman pleasure. (See: [Metaphor](#))

yielding aromatic scents

“that give off wonderful smells.”

His lips are lilies

The woman probably compares his lips with lilies because they are beautiful and smell wonderful. (See: [Metaphor](#))

lilies

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:16](#).

dripping liquid myrrh

“that drip with the best myrrh.” His lips are moist and have a wonderful smell like myrrh. (See: [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [like, likeness](#)
- [myrrh](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:14

UDB:

¹⁴ His arms are like gold rods that have rounded ends,
and that are decorated with precious stones.

His body is like ivory
that is decorated with sapphires.

ULB:

¹⁴ His arms are rounded gold set with jewels;
his abdomen is ivory covered with sapphires.

translationNotes

General Information:

The young woman continues to describe the man.

His arms are rounded gold set with jewels

“His arms are cylinders of gold that have jewels all over them.” The woman uses this image to say that his arms are beautiful and precious. The first readers would have understood this as a metaphor for the male body part (See: [Song of Solomon 5:3](#)), but this would be difficult to bring out in translation. (See: [Metaphor](#))

his abdomen is ivory covered with sapphires

“his belly is smooth ivory that has sapphires all over it.” The woman uses this image to say that his belly is beautiful and precious. (See: [Metaphor](#))

ivory

the white tusk or tooth of an animal that is similar to bone. People use ivory to make smooth and shiny pieces of art.

sapphires

valuable stones that are either 1) blue or 2) clear and either blue or golden

translationWords

- [gold](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:15

UDB:

¹⁵ His legs are like marble columns
that are set in bases made of pure gold.
He is majestic, like the mountains of Lebanon,
like delightful cedar trees.

ULB:

¹⁵ His legs are pillars of marble, set on bases of pure gold;
his appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars.

translationNotes

General Information:

The woman continues to describe the man.

His legs are pillars of marble, set on bases of pure gold

Marble and gold are strong and beautiful. (See: [Metaphor](#))

marble

a very strong stone that has many different colors and that people polish to make very smooth

his appearance is like Lebanon

“he looks like Lebanon.” Lebanon was a very beautiful area with many mountains and cedar trees.
(See: [Simile](#))

translationWords

- [pillar, column](#)
- [gold](#)
- [like, likeness](#)
- [Lebanon](#)
- [cedar](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 5:16

UDB:

¹⁶ His kisses are very sweet;
he is completely attractive.
You young women of Jerusalem,
this is why the man who loves me is better than all other men.

ULB:

¹⁶ His mouth is most sweet;
he is completely lovely.
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
daughters of Jerusalem.

translationNotes

General Information:

The young woman continues to describe the man.

His mouth is most sweet

The mouth is a metonym for either 1) the man's sweet kisses or 2) the sweet words that he says.
(See: [Metonymy](#))

he is completely lovely

“every part of him is lovely” or “all of him is lovely”

This is my beloved, and this is my friend

The word “This” refers to the man that the woman has just finished describing. AT: “That is what the one I love is like, and that is what my friend is like”

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

daughters of Jerusalem

“young women of Jerusalem.” These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#). (See: [Apostrophe](#))

translationWords

- [beloved](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 05 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 06 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Beauty

The woman is described as the epitome of beauty in ancient Israel. Not all cultures share the same standards of beauty.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different metaphors of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Links:

- [Song of Solomon 06:01 Notes](#)

Song of Solomon 6:1

UDB:

The women of Jerusalem speaking to the young woman

¹ You who are the most beautiful of the women,
where has the one who loves you gone?

If you tell us which direction he went,
we will go with you to search for him.

ULB:

The women of Jerusalem speaking to the young woman

¹ Where has your beloved gone,
most beautiful among women?

In what direction has your beloved gone,
so that we may seek him with you?

translationNotes

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

In what direction has your beloved gone

“Which way did your beloved go”

your beloved

“the man you love”

most beautiful among women

“you who are the most beautiful of all women.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:8](#).

gone, so that we may seek him with you?

You may need to supply the words omitted by the ellipsis. AT: “gone? Tell us, so that we can look for him with you.” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

translationWords

- [beloved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 06 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 6:2-3

UDB:

The young woman speaking to herself

² The one who loves me has come to me, I, who am like his garden,

He has come to enjoy my charms,

to enjoy cuddling embracing me

and kissing my lips, which are like lilies.

³ I belong to the one who loves me, and the one who loves me belongs to me.

He has pleasure in kissing my lips,

like sheep enjoy grazing.

ULB:

The woman speaking to herself

² My beloved has gone down to his garden,

to the beds of spices,

to graze in the garden and to gather lilies.

³ I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine;

he grazes among the lilies with pleasure.

translationNotes

My beloved has gone down to his garden

The word “garden” is a metaphor for the woman. The man is finally able to fully enjoy the woman as they make love. See the explanation of this metaphor in [Song of Solomon 5:1](#). (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Euphemism](#))

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

beds of spices

gardens or parts of gardens where people grow spices. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 5:13](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

to graze in the garden and to gather lilies

These words are metaphors for the man enjoying her body. (See: [Metaphor](#))

graze

“feeds” or “eats grass.” The woman speaks of the man as if he were “a gazelle or a young stag” ([Song of Solomon 2:17](#)) that eats plants among the lilies. Grazing is probably a metaphor for love-making ([Song of Solomon 2:1-2](#)). See how you translated “he grazes” in [Song of Solomon 2:16](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

to gather lilies

“to pick lilies”

lilies

sweet-smelling flowers that grow in places where there is much water. Translate as the plural of “lily” in [Song of Solomon 2:1](#).

I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine

See how you translated the similar phrase “My beloved is mine, and I am his” in [Song of Solomon 2:16](#).

he grazes among the lilies with pleasure

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:16](#).

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 06 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 6:4

UDB:

The woman's lover speaking to her

⁴ My darling, you are beautiful,
as Tirzah the capital city of Israel and Jerusalem the capital city of Judah are beautiful;
you make me tremble, just as if I had seen a great army approach.

ULB:

The man speaking to the woman

⁴ You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my love,
as lovely as Jerusalem,
as awe-inspiring as an army with its banners.

translationNotes

General Information:

Here begins Part Five of the book

as beautiful as Tirzah, my love, as lovely as Jerusalem

These cities were famous for being beautiful and pleasant to be in. The man thinks the woman is beautiful, and he takes pleasure in being with her. (See: [Simile](#))

my love

“you whom I love.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:9](#).

lovely

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:5](#).

as awe-inspiring as an army with its banners

The beauty of the woman is so powerful that it makes the man feel helpless, as if an army were approaching him.

translationWords

- [Tirzah](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 06 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 6:5

UDB:

⁵ Stop looking at me like that,
because your eyes excite me very much.
Your long black hair moves from side to side like a flock of black goats
moving down the slopes of Mount Gilead.

ULB:

⁵ Turn your eyes away from me,
for they overwhelm me.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
going down from the slopes of Gilead.

translationNotes

General Information:

The man continues to praise the woman.

overwhelm me

“terrify me.” The eyes of the woman are so beautiful that it makes the man feel weak and afraid because he cannot resist their power.

Your hair ... from the slopes of Gilead

Translate “Your hair ... from Mount Gilead” as in [Song of Solomon 4:1](#).

translationWords

- [flock, herd](#)
- [goat, kid](#)
- [Gilead](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 06 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 6:6-7**UDB:**

⁶ Your teeth are very white
like a flock of sheep whose wool has just been shorn
and have come up from being washed in a stream.
You have all of your teeth on both sides;
none of them is missing.

⁷ Beneath your veil,
your cheeks are like the halves of a pomegranate.

ULB:

⁶ Your teeth are like a flock of ewes
coming up from the washing place.
Each one has a twin,
and none among them is bereaved.

⁷ Your cheeks are like pomegranate halves
behind your veil.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The man continues to praise the woman.

Your teeth are like a flock of ewes

After sheep have their wool cut off, they are washed and their skin looks very white. The woman's teeth are white. See how "Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes" is translated in [Song of Solomon 4:2](#). (See: [Simile](#))

coming up from the washing place

The ewes are coming up out of the water. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:2](#). AT: "that are coming up out of the water after people have washed them" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Each one has a twin

Sheep usually give birth to two lambs at one time. These twin lamb usually look like one another. Each of the woman's teeth has a matching tooth on the other side of her mouth. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:2](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

none among them is bereaved

Each of the woman's teeth has a matching tooth on the other side of her mouth. She has not lost any of her teeth. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:2](#).

bereaved

lost a loved one who has died. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:2](#).

are like pomegranate halves

Pomegranates are smooth, round, and rich red. The man thinks the woman's cheeks are beautiful and show that she is healthy. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:3](#). AT: "are red and round like two halves of a pomegranate" or "are red and full and healthy" (See: [Simile](#))

behind your veil

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:1](#).

translationWords

- [flock, herd](#)
- [sheep, ram, ewe](#)
- [pomegranate](#)
- [veil](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 06 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 6:8-9

UDB:

The woman's lover speaking to himself

⁸ Even if a king had 60 queens and 80 concubines
and more young women than anyone can count,
⁹ none of them would be like my dove, who is perfect,
you who are your mother's only daughter,
whom your mother considers to be very precious.

Other young women who see you say that you are fortunate,
and the queens and concubines recognize that you are very beautiful.

ULB:

The man speaking to himself

⁸ There are sixty queens, eighty concubines,
and young women without number.
⁹ My dove, my undefiled, is the only one;
she is the only daughter of her mother;
she is the favorite one of the woman who bore her.

The young women saw her and called her blessed;
the queens and the concubines saw her also, and they praised her:

translationNotes

There are sixty queens, eighty concubines ... young women without number

These numbers are to be large, then larger, and then beyond counting. AT: "There are 60 queens, 80 concubines ... more young women than anyone could count" or "There are many queens, even more concubines, and more young women than anyone could count" (See: [Numbers](#) and [Idiom](#))

My dove

The Israelites considered doves beautiful birds with pleasant voices. The man thinks the woman's face and voice are beautiful. If calling a woman a "dove" would be offensive, you could leave out the metaphor. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:14](#). AT: "You beautiful woman" (See: [Metaphor](#))

my undefiled

“my perfect one” or “my faithful one” or “my innocent one.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 5:2](#).

the only daughter of her mother

This is an exaggeration. AT: “her mother’s special daughter” or “completely different from her mother’s other daughters” (See: [Hyperbole and Generalization](#))

the woman who bore her

“the woman who gave birth to her.” This phrase refers to her mother.

young women ... queens ... concubines

the women spoken of in verse 8

called her blessed

“said that things had gone especially well for her”

translationWords

- [queen](#)
- [concubine](#)
- [dove, pigeon](#)
- [call, calls, calling, called](#)
- [bless, blessed, blessing](#)
- [praise](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 06 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 6:10

UDB:

What the queens and the concubines said

¹⁰ Who is this who looks like the dawn,
 who is as beautiful to look at as the moon,
 who is an endless mystery?

ULB:

What the queens and the concubines said

¹⁰ "Who is this who appears like the dawn,
 as beautiful as the moon,
 as bright as the sun,
 as awe-inspiring as an army with its banners?"

translationNotes

General Information:

The ULB understands this to be what the queens and the concubines said about the woman. However, some versions understand these to be the words of the man.

Who is this who appears like the dawn ... banners?

They are using this question to say that they think the young woman is amazing. AT: "This is an amazing woman! She comes into view like the dawn ... banners!" (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

who appears like the dawn

The dawn is beautiful. The woman is beautiful. AT: "who comes into view like the dawn" (See: [Simile](#))

as awe-inspiring as an army with its banners

The beauty of the woman is so powerful that it makes the other women feel helpless, as if an army were approaching them. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 6:4](#). (See: [Simile](#))

translationWords

- [like, likeness](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 06 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 6:11-12**UDB:**

The woman's lover speaking to himself

¹¹ I went down to some walnut trees
to look at the new plants that were growing in the valley.

I wanted to see if the grapevines had budded
and if the pomegranate trees were blooming.

¹² I was as happy as if
I were riding in a chariot belonging to a prince.

ULB:

The man speaking to himself

¹¹ I went down into the grove of nut trees
to see the young growth in the valley,
to see whether the vines had budded,
and whether the pomegranates were in bloom.

¹² I was so happy that I felt
I was riding in the chariot of a prince.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The man finishes speaking to himself. Looking to see if plants had matured is probably a metaphor for enjoying the sight of the woman's body. (See: [Metaphor](#))

grove

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:13](#).

young growth

“young plants” or “new shoots”

had budded

“had grown their buds.” Buds are the small round parts of plants which open up into flowers.

were in bloom

“were opening their flowers”

I was so happy that I felt I was riding in the chariot of a prince

The man uses this image to express how happy he is. (See: [Simile](#))

translationWords

- [vine](#)
- [pomegranate](#)
- [chariot](#)
- [prince, princess](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 06 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 6:13

UDB:

The woman's lover speaking to her

¹³ You who are the perfect one,
 come back to us, in order that I may see you! The young woman speaking to her lover
 Why do you want to look at me, the one who is perfect,
 dancing between two rows of dancers?

ULB:

The friends speaking to the woman

¹³ Turn back, turn back, you perfect woman; ^[1] .
 turn back, turn back so that we may gaze on you. The woman speaking to the friends
 Why do you gaze on the perfect woman, ^[2] .
 as if on the dance between two armies? ^[3] .

6:13 ^[1]Some versions read, *you woman from Shulam*

6:13 ^[2]Some versions read, *on the woman from Shulam*

6:13 ^[3]Some versions read, *on the dance of Mahanaim*

translationNotes

General Information:

This is 7:1, the first verse of chapter seven, in some versions. The ULB understands this to be the friends and the woman talking to each other. Some versions understand this to be the man speaking to the woman.

Turn back ... gaze on you

Possible interpretations are 1) the friends are speaking to the woman or 2) the man is referring to himself in plural. (See: [Pronouns](#))

Turn back, turn back

“Come back, come back.” This is repeated for emphasis.

we may gaze

Some versions understand the plural to refer to the man speaking of himself. AT: “I may gaze” (See: [Pronouns](#))

gaze

look intently for a long time

Why do you gaze on the perfect woman ... armies

Possible interpretations are 1) the woman refers to herself as another person and is speaking to the friends or 2) the woman is speaking to the man as if he were many men. (See: [Pronouns](#))

as if on the dance between two armies

“as if she were dancing between two armies”

translationWords

- [perfect](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 06 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 07 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Beauty

The woman is described as the epitome of beauty in ancient Israel. Not all cultures share the same the same standards of beauty.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Similes

There are many similes in this chapter. Their purpose is to describe the beauty of the woman. (See: [Simile](#))

Links:

- [Song of Solomon 07:01 Notes](#)

Song of Solomon 7:1

UDB:

The woman's lover speaking to her

¹ You, the daughter of a prince,
have lovely feet in your sandals.

Your curved hips are like jewels
that have been made by a skilled craftsman.

ULB:

The man speaking to the woman

¹ How beautiful your feet appear in your sandals, prince's daughter!
The curves of your thighs are like jewels,
the work of the hands of a master craftsman.

translationNotes

General Information:

This is 7:2, the second verse of chapter seven, in some versions.

How beautiful your feet appear in your sandals

It may be that the woman is dancing ([Song of Solomon 6:13](#)). AT: "Your feet are so very beautiful in your sandals as you dance" (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

prince's daughter

Another possible interpretation is "you who have a noble character."

The curves of your thighs are like jewels

The shape of the woman's thighs remind the speaker of a beautiful precious stone that a skilled workman has carved. AT: "The curves of your thighs are beautiful like the beautiful curves of jewel that a skilled craftsman has made" (See: [Simile](#))

your thighs

The word "thighs" refers to the hips of a woman and the part of her legs that is above her knee.

the work of the hands of a master craftsman

The hands are a synecdoche for the person. AT: “the work of a master craftsman” or “something that a master craftsman has made” (See: [Synecdoche](#))

translationWords

- [sandal](#)
- [prince, princess](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 07 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 7:2

UDB:

² Your navel is like a round bowl
 that I hope will always be full of wine mixed with spices.
 Your waist is like a pile of wheat
 with lilies growing around it.

ULB:

² Your navel is like a round bowl;
 may it never lack mixed wine.
 Your belly is like a mound of wheat
 encircled with lilies.

translationNotes

General Information:

The young woman's lover continues describing the one he loves.

Your navel is like a round bowl

A bowl is round. The woman's navel is round. (See: [Simile](#))

navel

the spot on the stomach left from the cord that attaches a baby to its mother

may it never lack mixed wine

People used large bowls to mix wine with water or spices at feasts. Drinking wine is a metaphor for enjoying beauty. The litotes can be translated as a positive. AT: "may it always contain mixed wine" or "may I always enjoy its beauty" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Litotes](#))

Your belly is like a mound of wheat encircled with lilies

The Israelites thought mounds of wheat and lilies were pleasant to look at. Much wheat was a sign that there would be much food to eat. They threshed wheat in high, dry places, and lilies grow in low, wet places, so this simile combines beautiful sights that people would not usually see at the same time. (See: [Simile](#))

Your belly is like a mound of wheat

People thought that the color of wheat was the most beautiful color of skin and that round piles of wheat were beautiful. AT: “Your belly has a beautiful color and is round like a pile of wheat” (See: [Simile](#))

a mound of wheat

This is a pile of the grains of wheat after people remove the parts of it that they do not use.

encircled with lilies

“with lilies all around it”

lilies

sweet-smelling flowers that grow in places where there is much water. Translate as the plural of “lily” in [Song of Solomon 2:1](#).

translationWords

- [like, likeness](#)
- [wine, wineskin, new wine](#)
- [wheat](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 07 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 7:3-4**UDB:**

³ Your breasts are as delicate as two young twin deer.

⁴ Your neck is like a tower made of ivory.

Your eyes sparkle the pools in the city of Heshbon,
near the Bath Rabbim Gate.

Your nose is long, like the tower in Lebanon
that faces Damascus.

ULB:

³ Your two breasts are like two fawns,
twins of a gazelle.

⁴ Your neck is like a tower of ivory;
your eyes are the pools in Heshbon
by the gate of Bath Rabbim.

Your nose is like the tower in Lebanon
that looks toward Damascus.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The man continues describing the woman.

two breasts

If the word “two” seems unnecessary and so out of place, you could omit it. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:5](#).

like two fawns, twins of a gazelle

The man implies that the woman’s breasts are matching, soft, and perhaps small. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:5](#). (See: [Simile](#))

twins

the babies of a mother who gave birth to two babies at one time. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 4:5](#).

gazelle

an animal that looks like a deer and moves quickly. Translate as the singular of “gazelles” as in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#).

Your neck is like a tower of ivory

A tower is long and straight. Ivory is white. The woman’s neck is long and straight, and her skin is light in color. (See: [Simile](#))

a tower of ivory

“a tower that people have decorated with ivory”

ivory

the white tusk or tooth of an animal that is similar to bone. People use ivory to make art and to make things look beautiful.

your eyes are the pools in Heshbon

The woman’s eyes are spoken of as if they are clear pools of water. Pools of water are clear and sparkle in the sunlight and so are pleasant to look at. The woman’s eyes are clear and sparkle and so are pleasant to look at. This can be stated as a simile. AT: “your eyes are as clear as the pools in Heshbon” (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

Heshbon

the name of a city east of the Jordan River (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

Bath Rabbim

the name of a city (See: [How to Translate Names](#))

nose is like the tower in Lebanon

A tower is tall and straight, and her nose is tall and straight. (See: [Simile](#))

that looks toward Damascus

The tower looking is a metonym for people on the tower looking. AT: “that allows people to look toward Damascus” (See: [Metonymy](#))

translationWords

- [watchtower, tower](#)
- [Lebanon](#)
- [Damascus](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 07 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 7:5-6

UDB:

⁵ Your head is majestic like Mount Carmel.

Your long hair is shiny and black;

it is as though I, your king, am captured by your tresses.

⁶ You whom I love, you who have many charming features that attract me,

you are very beautiful and pleasant.

ULB:

⁵ Your head is on you like Carmel;

the hair on your head is dark purple.

The king is held captive by its tresses.

⁶ How beautiful and lovely you are,

love, with your delights! ^[1] .

7:6 ^[1]Some versions read *are, loved one, with*

translationNotes

General Information:

The man continues to describe the woman.

Your head is on you like Carmel

Mount Carmel is higher than everything else around it. The man wants to look at the woman's head more than at anything else. AT: "Your head is on you like a crown, higher than anything else" (See: [Simile](#))

dark purple

Other possible translations are 1) "dark black" or 2) "dark red."

The king is held captive by its tresses

This can be translated in active form. AT: "Your hair that hangs down is so beautiful that the king is not able to stop admiring it" (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

tresses

the clusters of hair that hang down from a woman's head.

love

“you whom I love” or “you who are loved”

translationWords

- [Carmel, Mount Carmel](#)
- [purple](#)
- [king](#)
- [captive, captivity](#)
- [beloved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 07 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 7:7-8

UDB:

⁷ You are stately like a palm tree,
and your breasts are like grape clusters.

⁸ I said to myself, "I will climb that palm tree
and take hold of those clusters of dates."

I want your breasts to be also like clusters of grapes that I can feel;

I want your breath to be like the sweet fragrance of apricots.

ULB:

⁷ Your height is like that of a date palm tree,
and your breasts like clusters of fruit.

⁸ I said, "I want to climb that palm tree;
I will take hold of its branches."

May your breasts be like clusters of grapes,
and may the fragrance of your nose be like apricots.

translationNotes

General Information:

The man describes what he would like to do with the woman .

Your height is like that of a date palm tree

"You stand up like a date palm tree." Date palm trees are tall and straight, and their branches are only at the top, with the fruit under the branches. (See: [Simile](#))

date palm tree

a tall, straight tree that produces a sweet, brown, and sticky fruit that grows in groups

your breasts like clusters of fruit

The dates on a palm tree grow soft and round in large bunches that hang from the tree just below the branches, which are all at the top. The woman's breasts are soft and round and are just lower than her arms. (See: [Simile](#))

I said

“I thought” or “I said to myself.” The man said this silently.

I want to climb ... its branches

The man wants to embrace the woman. (See: [Metaphor](#))

May your breasts be like clusters of grapes

The man wants to touch her breasts. Clusters of grapes are round and soft. (See: [Simile](#))

may the fragrance of your nose be like apricots

The word “nose” is a metonym for the breath coming out of the nose. AT: “may the breath coming from your nose smell sweet like apricots” (See: [Simile](#))

apricots

sweet yellow fruit

translationWords

- [palm](#)
- [fruit, fruitful](#)
- [grape](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 07 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 7:9

UDB:

⁹ I want your kisses to be like very good wine.

When I kiss you, the woman who loves me,

I want it to be as if it was wine flowing over our mouths and teeth.

ULB:

⁹ May your palate be like the best wine,

flowing smoothly for my beloved,

gliding over the lips of those who sleep. ^[1] .

7:9 ^[1]Some versions read *over my lips and teeth*

translationNotes

General Information:

The man continues describing what he would like to do with the woman.

May your palate be like the best wine

The palate is a metonym for the lips. Wine tastes good. The man wants to kiss the woman's lips. (See: [Metonymy](#) and [Simile](#))

flowing smoothly for my beloved

“that flows smoothly for the one I love.” The man enjoys the smooth kisses of the woman.

gliding over the lips of those who sleep

“that flows over our lips as we sleep”

translationWords

- wine, wineskin, new wine
- beloved

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 07 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 7:10-11**UDB:**

The young woman speaking to her lover

¹⁰ I belong to the man who loves me,
and he desires me.

¹¹ You who love me, let us go to the countryside,
and sleep in a village somewhere.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the man

¹⁰ I am my beloved's,
and he desires me.

¹¹ Come, my beloved, let us go out into the countryside;
let us spend the night in the villages. ^[1] .

7:11 ^[1]Some versions read *night among the henna plants*

translationNotes**I am my beloved's**

Translate "My beloved is mine, and I am his" as in [Song of Solomon 2:16](#).

my beloved's

Some versions such as the UDB understand the word "beloved" to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

he desires me

"he wants to make love to me" or "he wants me"

spend the night in the villages

Though the words here translated “spend the night” and “villages” appear together in [Song of Solomon 1:13-14](#) as “spends the night” and “henna flowers,” and the context both here and there is lovemaking, the ULB chooses this reading because the immediate metaphor is of the man and woman sleeping in the village, rising in the morning, and going out into the vineyards. The word for “henna plants” and the word for “villages” sound exactly the same.

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 07 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 7:12

UDB:

¹² And let us go early to the vineyards
to see if the grapevines have budded
and if there are blossoms on them that have opened,
and see if the pomegranate trees are blooming,
and there I will allow you to make love to me.

ULB:

¹² Let us rise early to go to the vineyards;
let us see whether the vines have budded,
whether their blossoms have opened,
and whether the pomegranates are in flower.
There I will give you my love.

translationNotes

General Information:

The woman continues to speak to the man.

rise early

“get up early” or “wake up early”

have budded

“have begun to bloom”

blossoms

flowers when they are open

are in flower

“have flowers open on the plant”

I will give you my love

“I will make love with you”

translationWords

- [vineyard](#)
- [vine](#)
- [pomegranate](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 07 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 7:13**UDB:**

¹³ The mandrake plants are producing a fragrant odor,
and we are surrounded by delightful pleasures,
new ones and old ones,
pleasures that I have been saving to give to you, the man who loves me.

ULB:

¹³ The mandrakes give off their fragrance;
at the door where we are staying are all sorts of choice fruits, new and old,
that I have stored up for you, my beloved.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The woman continues to speak to the man.

mandrakes

This is the name of plants that give off a strong but pleasant scent. The scent is slightly intoxicating and stimulating, which increases the desire to make love. (See: [Translate Unknowns](#))

give off their fragrance

“produce their scent” or “smell very nice”

at the door

The doors belong to their house. AT: “above the entrances of our house” or “by the doors of our house” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

are all sorts of choice fruits, new and old

“is every kind of the best fruit, both old fruit and new fruit”

stored up for you

“saved so I can give to you”

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

translationWords

- [beloved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 07 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 08 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Kisses

The kisses in this chapter are a type of kiss that was only done between a husband and a wife. It is an intimate kiss. (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

Passion

The chapter describes the passion that can exist between a husband and a wife. This is the feeling of strong or uncontrollable desire for another person.

Links:

- [Song of Solomon 08:01 Notes](#)

Song of Solomon 8:1

UDB:

The young woman speaking to her lover

¹ I wish that everyone knew that we love each other, just as they all know that I have a brother,
my own brother, who nursed at my mother's breasts.

Then whenever I met you outside, I could kiss you,
and no one would criticize me.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the man

¹ I wish that you were like my brother,
who nursed at my mother's breasts.

Then whenever I met you outside, I could kiss you,
and no one would despise me.

translationNotes

General Information:

See: [Poetry](#) and [Parallelism](#)

you were like my brother

A woman could show affection for her brother in public. This woman wanted to be able to show affection for the man in public. (See: [Simile](#))

you outside

“you in public”

I could kiss you

A woman would probably kiss her brother on his cheek order to greet him.

would despise me

“would think that I am a bad person”

translationWords

- [kiss](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:2-3**UDB:**

² No one would object if I led you to our mother's house,
to where our mother, who taught me so many things, lives.

I would like to take you to our mother's house so I could make love to you there.

That would be as delightful as juice squeezed from pomegranates, as wine mixed with spices.
The young woman speaking to herself

³ Oh yes! He will put his left arm under my head,
and he will hold me close with his right arm.

ULB:

² I would lead you and bring you into my mother's house—
she who taught me.

I would give you spiced wine to drink
and some of the juice of my pomegranates. The woman speaking to herself

³ His left hand is under my head
and his right hand embraces me.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The young woman continues to speak to the man.

I would lead you and bring you into my mother's house

If the man were her brother, she could bring him to the family home. This was normal in that culture and is still today in some.

she who taught me

taught her how to make love (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

I would give you spiced wine to drink and some of the juice of my pomegranates

The woman uses these images to say that she will give herself to the man and make love with him.
(See: [Metaphor](#))

spiced wine

“wine with spices” or “wine that has spices in it.” This represents the intoxicating power of love-making. (See: [Metaphor](#))

His left hand ... embraces me

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:6](#).

left hand ... right hand

“left arm ... right arm”

embraces me

“holds me”

translationWords

- [teach, teaching, teaches, taught](#)
- [wine, wineskin, new wine](#)
- [pomegranate](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:4

UDB:

The woman speaking to the other women

⁴ I want you to promise me, you women of Jerusalem,
that you will not disturb us while we are making love
until we are ready to stop.”

ULB:

The woman speaking to the other women

⁴ I want you to swear, daughters of Jerusalem,
that you will not interrupt our lovemaking
until it is over.

translationNotes

I want you to swear

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#)

daughters of Jerusalem

“young women of Jerusalem.” These young women could not hear her and were not present, but the woman speaks as if they were present and could hear her. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#). (See: [Apostrophe](#))

that you will ... until it is over

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:7](#).

translationWords

- [oath, swear, swear by](#)
- [Jerusalem](#)
- [sleep with, have relations with, lovemaking](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:5

UDB:

The women of Jerusalem speaking

⁵ Who is that woman who is coming up from the wilderness,

the woman who is leaning on the man who loves her? The young woman speaking to her lover

I woke you up when you were under the apricot tree

at the place where your mother conceived you,

the place where she gave birth to you.

ULB:

The women of Jerusalem speaking

⁵ Who is this who is coming up from the wilderness,

leaning on her beloved? The woman speaking to the man

I awakened you under the apricot tree;

there your mother conceived you;

there she gave birth to you, she delivered you.

translationNotes

General Information:

Here begins Part Six of the book, the final part

Who is this who is coming up

They are using this question to say that they think the young woman is amazing. A similar phrase was translated in in [Song of Solomon 6:10](#). AT: "Look at this amazing woman as she comes up." (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

I awakened you

"I woke you up" or "I aroused you"

the apricot tree

a tree that produces a small yellow fruit that is very sweet. If your readers will not know what this is, you could use the word for another fruit tree or the general word “fruit tree.” See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:3](#).

there

under the apricot tree

she delivered you

“she bore you”

translationWords

- [desert, wilderness](#)
- [beloved](#)
- [conceive, conception](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:6**UDB:**

⁶ Keep me close to you,
 like a seal on your heart,
 or like a bracelet on your arm.
 Our love for each other is as powerful as death;
 it is as strong as the grave.
 It is as though our love for each other bursts into flames
 and burns like a hot fire.

ULB:

⁶ Set me as a seal over your heart,
 like a seal on your arm,
 for love is as strong as death.
 Passionate devotion is as unrelenting as Sheol;
 its flames burst out; it is a blazing flame,
 a flame hotter than any other fire.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The young woman continues to speak to the man.

Set me as a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm

Possible meanings are 1) because seals were very important, people always kept them around their neck or on their hand. The woman wants to be with the man constantly like a seal, or 2) a seal shows who owns the thing that has the seal on it, and the woman wants herself as the seal on the man's heart and arm to show that all of his thoughts, emotions, and actions belong to her. (See: [Metaphor](#) and [Simile](#))

for love is as strong as death

Death is very strong because it overcomes even the most powerful people of the world. (See: [Simile](#))

as unrelenting as Sheol

“as tough as Sheol.” Sheol never allows people to come back to life after they have already died. Love is as persistent as Sheol because it never changes. (See: [Simile](#))

its flames burst out ... any other fire

Love is very powerful like fire. (See: [Metaphor](#))

burst out

“burn suddenly”

translationWords

- [seal, to seal](#)
- [heart, hearts](#)
- [like, likeness](#)
- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [death, die, dead](#)
- [Hades, Sheol](#)
- [fire](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:7

UDB:

⁷ Nothing can stop us from loving each other,
not even a flood.

If a man tried to cause a woman to love him by saying he would give her everything that is in his house,

she would refuse.

ULB:

⁷ Surging waters cannot quench love,
nor can floods sweep it away.

If a man gave all the possessions in his house for love,
the offer would utterly be despised.

translationNotes

General Information:

The young woman continues to speak to the man.

Surging waters cannot quench love

Love is so strong that it is like a fire that is so hot that it cannot be put out even with an ocean full of water. (See: [Metaphor](#))

Surging waters

“Oceans of water” or “Huge amounts of water”

cannot quench

“cannot extinguish” or “cannot put out”

nor can floods sweep it away

Love never changes and always stays the same so it is like something that not even a powerful flood can move. (See: [Metaphor](#))

floods

In Israel, water from the rain flows into deep and narrow valleys. This creates a flood of water so powerful that it can move huge boulders and trees.

sweep it away

“carry it away” or “wash it away”

If a man gave ... the offer would utterly be despised

This is something that could possibly happen. AT: “Even if a man ... he would be utterly despised.” (See: [Hypothetical Situations](#))

gave

offered to give

all the possessions in his house

“everything he owns”

for love

“in order to get love” or “in order to buy love”

the offer would utterly be despised

This can be translated in active form. AT: “people would completely despise him” or “people would harshly ridicule him” (See: [Active or Passive](#))

translationWords

- [love, loves, loving, loved](#)
- [flood](#)
- [possess, possession](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:8**UDB:**

The young woman's brothers speaking among themselves

⁸ We have a younger sister,
and her breasts are not large yet.

So this is what we should do for her on the day that we promise some young man that he can marry her:

ULB:

The woman's brothers speaking among themselves

⁸ We have a little sister,
and her breasts have not yet grown.

What can we do for our sister
on the day when she will be promised in marriage?

translationNotes**little sister**

“young sister”

What can we do ... in marriage?

The speaker uses this question to introduce what he wants to say. AT: “This is what we will do ... in marriage.” (See: [Rhetorical Question](#))

she will be promised in marriage

This can be translated in active form. AT: “a man comes and wants to marry her” (See: [Idiom](#) and [Active or Passive](#))

translationWords

- [promise, promises, promised](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:9**UDB:**

⁹ If her chest is as flat as a wall,
 we will decorate it by putting silver jewels that are like towers on her.
 If she is as flat as a door,
 we will decorate her with bits of cedar wood.

ULB:

⁹ If she is a wall,
 we will build on her a tower of silver.
 If she is a door,
 we will adorn her with boards of cedar.

translationNotes**General Information:**

The young woman's brothers continue to speak among themselves.

If she is a wall ... If she is a door

The little sister ([Song of Solomon 8:8](#)) has very small breasts that either have not grown or are very small. (See: [Metaphor](#))

we will build on her a tower of silver ... we will adorn her with boards of cedar

The brothers decide to decorate the little sister with silver and cedar, symbols of riches, so that she will be more likely to attract a good husband. (See: [Metaphor](#))

will adorn her

“will decorate her”

translationWords

- [watchtower, tower](#)
- [silver](#)
- [cedar](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:10**UDB:**

The young woman speaking to herself

¹⁰ My chest was previously flat like a wall,
but now my breasts are big like towers.
So I am delightful to my beloved.

ULB:

The woman speaking to herself

¹⁰ I was a wall, but my breasts are now like fortress towers; ^[1] .
so I am in his eyes as one who brings peace. ^[2] .

8:10 ^[1]Some versions read *I am a wall, and my breasts are like fortress towers*

8:10 ^[2]Some versions read *so I have found favor in his eyes*

translationNotes**I was a wall**

The wall is a metaphor for a woman with small breasts. (See: [Metaphor](#))

my breasts are now like fortress towers

Fortress towers are tall. (See: [Simile](#))

I am in his eyes as one

Here eyes are a metonym for judgment or value. AT: “I am in his judgment as one” or “he thinks of me as one” (See: [Metonymy](#))

brings peace

You may need to make explicit to whom the woman brings peace. AT: “brings him peace” (See: [Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information](#))

peace

“well-being”

translationWords

- [like, likeness](#)
- [stronghold, fortress, fortified](#)
- [watchtower, tower](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:11-12

UDB:

The young woman speaking to himself

¹¹ King Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon,
and he rented it to people for them to farm it.

He required each one to pay him one thousand pieces of silver each year for the grapes that they harvested.

¹² But my body is like my own vineyard,
and you, my lover whom I call "Solomon," I am giving it to you.
You do not need to pay me a thousand pieces of silver to enjoy my body,
but I will give two hundred pieces of silver to those who take care of me.

ULB:

The woman speaking to herself

¹¹ Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon.
He gave the vineyard to those who would maintain it.
Each one was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit.
¹² My vineyard, my very own, is before me;
the thousand shekels are for you, Solomon,
and the two hundred shekels are for those who maintain its fruit.

translationNotes

General Information:

Possible interpretations: 1) The woman contrasts the way she wants to give herself to the man, who will give her his love, to the way Solomon leases out his vineyard to those who will give him money. 2) The man contrasts the woman, whom he will not give to another man, to Solomon's vineyard, which he gave to other men.

Baal Hamon

This is the name of a town in the northern part of Israel. (See: [How to Translate Names](#)).

gave the vineyard

leased, agreed to let other people pay him so they could grow grapes in the vineyard

to those who would maintain it

“to people who would take care of it”

Each one was to bring a thousand shekels of silver for its fruit

It may be helpful to state that this payment was for the fruit of the vineyard. AT: “Each man was supposed to give Solomon a thousand shekels as payment for the fruit of the vineyard” (See: [Ellipsis](#))

to bring a thousand shekels of silver

“to bring 1,000 shekels of silver.” (See: [Biblical Money](#) and [Numbers](#))

My vineyard, my very own

The woman refers to herself as a vineyard, as in [Song of Solomon 1:6](#). Here she emphasizes that she and no one else will decide what she does with the “vineyard.” (See: [Metaphor](#))

is before me

This is an idiom that means the a person has the right to do what they want with something. AT: “is at my disposal” or “is mine to do with as I desire” (See: [Idiom](#))

the thousand shekels are for you, Solomon

The woman knows that Solomon has leased out the vineyard so he can get money, but she does not want money.

shekels

“coins”

Solomon

Some versions understand the woman to be speaking directly to Solomon. Others understand her to be speaking in an apostrophe to her friends, to the man, or to herself. (See: [Apostrophe](#))

the two hundred shekels

The speaker has not mentioned these before, but the hearer would understand that she is speaking of the money that those who worked the vineyard would have left for their own after they paid Solomon.

translationWords

- [Solomon](#)
- [vineyard](#)
- [silver](#)
- [fruit, fruitful](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:13

UDB:

The woman's lover speaking to her

¹³ You are staying in the gardens,
my friends are listening to your voice;
so allow me to hear it, too!

ULB:

The man speaking to the woman

¹³ You who live in the gardens,
my companions are listening for your voice;
let me hear it.

translationNotes

You who live

The man is speaking to the woman, so “you” and “live” are feminine singular. (See: [Forms of You](#))

listening for your voice

The voice is a metonym for what the person says. If your language has a word for thinking only of what one is listening for, you could use it here. AT: “waiting to hear you start speaking” or “waiting to hear what you have to say.” (See: [Metonymy](#))

let me hear it

“let me hear your voice.”

translationWords

- [companion](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

Song of Solomon 8:14

UDB:

The young woman speaking to her lover

¹⁴ You who love me, come to me quickly;
run to me like a gazelle or young deer,
because I am as delightful as hills of spices.

ULB:

The woman speaking to the man

¹⁴ Hurry, my beloved,
and be like a gazelle or a young stag
on the mountains of spices.

translationNotes

beloved

Some versions such as the UDB understand this word to refer to the one who loves the woman, but the ULB understands it to refer to the one whom the woman loves. See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 1:13](#).

like a gazelle or a young stag

See how you translated this in [Song of Solomon 2:9](#).

gazelle

a type of slender deer-like animal with long curved horns

stag

an adult male deer

the mountains of spices

“the mountains that have spices all over them.” The woman uses this metaphor to invite the man to make love to her. See how the man uses the metaphor of a mountain of myrrh and a hill of frankincense in [Song of Solomon 4:6](#). (See: [Metaphor](#))

translationWords

- [beloved](#)

Links:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8 translationQuestions](#)

translationQuestions

Song of Solomon 1

Who is the writer of Song of Songs?

Solomon is the writer of Song of Songs. [1:1]

For what does the young woman ask her lover to do?

The young woman asks her lover to kiss her with the kisses of his mouth. [1:2]

What does the young woman say is better than wine?

The young woman says her lover's love is better than wine. [1:2]

What does the young woman say her lover's name is like?

The young woman says his name is like flowing perfume. [1:3]

Where has the king brought the young woman?

The king has brought the young woman into his rooms. [1:4]

How does the young woman describe her skin?

The young woman describes her skin as dark but lovely like tents of Kedar, like curtains of Solomon. [1:5]

Why does she not want the other women to stare at her?

She does not want the other women to stare at her because her skin is scorched. [1:6]

What did the young woman's brothers do when they were angry with her?

The young woman's brothers made her a keeper of the vineyards. [1:6]

What does the woman ask her lover?

She asks him where he feeds his flock and where he rests his flock at noontime. [1:7]

How does her lover say the young woman can find him?

He tells her to follow the tracks of his flock to the shepherds' tents. [1:8]

To what does the young woman's lover compare her?

He compares her to a mare among Pharaoh's chariots. [1:9]

What does her lover say is on her cheeks and neck?

He says ornaments are on her cheeks and strings of jewels are on her neck. [1:10]

What does her lover say he will make for her?

He says he will make for her gold ornaments with silver studs. [1:11]

Where was the king lying while the woman was speaking to herself?

The king was lying on his couch while the woman was speaking to herself. [1:12]

Where does her beloved spend the night?

Her beloved spends the night lying between her breasts. [1:13]

To what does the young woman liken her beloved?

Her beloved is like a cluster of henna flowers in the vineyards of En Gedi. [1:14]

How does her lover describe her eyes?

He says her eyes are like doves. [1:15]

What does the woman say serves as their bed?

Lush plants serve as their bed. [1:16]

Of what does the woman say the beams and rafters are made?

The beams and rafters are made of cedar tree branches and fir branches. [1:17]

Song of Solomon 2

How did the woman describe herself?

She described herself as just a flower of in a plain, just a lily in a valley. [2:1]

What does the man say she was like among the daughters of his countrymen?

He said she was like a lily among thorns. [2:2]

How did the woman describe her beloved among the young men?

The woman described her young man as the apricot tree among the trees of the forest. [2:3]

Where did the woman sit?

She sat down under his shadow with great delight. [2:3]

What was sweet to her taste?

His fruit was sweet to her taste. [2:3]

Where did her young man bring her?

Her young man brought her to the banqueting hall. [2:4]

What was his banner over her?

His banner over her was love. [2:4]

What did the young woman want to revive and refresh herself?

The young woman wanted raisin cakes to revive her and apricots to refresh her. [2:5]

Where were the young man's left and right hands?

His left hand was under her head and his right hand embraced her. [2:6]

What did the young woman want the daughters of Jerusalem's men to swear?

The young woman wanted the young women to swear that they would not interrupt the young woman and her beloved's lovemaking until it was over. [2:7]

What sound did the young woman hear?

The young woman heard the sound of her beloved. [2:8]

What did she say her beloved was doing?

He was leaping over the mountains and jumping over the hills. [2:8]

What did she say her beloved was like?

She said her beloved was like a gazelle or a young stag. [2:9]

What did her beloved want her to do with him?

He wanted her to get up and go away with him. [2:10]

What did he say was past and what was over and gone?

He said he winter was past and the rain was over and gone. [2:11]

What had appeared in the land?

Flowers had appeared in the land. [2:12]

For what was it time?

It was time for pruning and the singing of birds. [2:12]

What ripened and was in blossom?

The green figs ripened and the vines were in blossom. [2:13]

What did her beloved want his beautiful one to do?

He wanted her to arise and come away. [2:13]

What does her beloved call her?

Her beloved calls her his dove. [2:14]

What does her beloved want to see and hear?

Her beloved wanted to see her lovely face and hear her sweet voice. [2:14]

What did the woman want him to catch?

The woman wanted him to catch the jackals. [2:15]

To whom did the woman's beloved belong?

Her beloved belonged to her. [2:16]

To whom did the woman belong?

She belonged to her beloved. [2:16]

What did her beloved do among the lilies?

He grazed among the lilies with pleasure. [2:16]

What did she want her beloved to do?

She wanted her beloved to go away. [2:17]

When did she want her beloved to go away?

She wanted her beloved to go away before the soft winds of dawn blew and the shadows fled away. [2:17]

What did she want him to be like?

She wanted him to be like a gazelle or a young stag on the rugged mountains. [2:17]

Song of Solomon 3

For whom was the woman longing but could not find?

The woman was longing for the one whom she loved but could not find him. [3:1]

For whom was the woman searching through the streets and squares but could not find?

The woman was searching through the streets and squares but could not find her beloved. [3:2]

What did the woman ask the watchmen when they found her?

She asked them, "Have you seen my beloved?" [3:3]

When did she find the one whom her soul loved?

She found the one whom her soul loved a little while after she passed the watchmen in the city. [3:4]

What did she do with her beloved?

She held him and would not let him go until she had brought him into her mother's house. [3:4]

What did the woman want the daughters of Jerusalem's men to promise?

The woman wanted the daughters of Jerusalem's men to promise they would not interrupt their lovemaking until they were finished. [3:5]

What did the young woman see coming from the wilderness that was perfumed with myrrh and frankincense and powders?

She saw the portable litter of Solomon with 60 warriors around it. [3:6]

What did the young woman see coming from the wilderness that was perfumed with myrrh and frankincense and powders?

She saw the portable litter of Solomon with 60 warriors around it. [3:7]

At what were the warriors good?

The warriors were good with the sword and in warfare. [3:8]

What did King Solomon make for himself?

King Solomon made a sedan chair from wood from Lebanon. [3:9]

What did King Solomon's sedan chair look like?

The chair had posts of silver, a back of gold, a seat of purple cloth, and was decorated with love. [3:10]

At what did the young woman want the women of Jerusalem to look?

She wanted them to look at King Solomon. [3:11]

What was King Solomon wearing on his marriage day?

He wore a crown with which his mother crowned him on his marriage day. [3:11]

Song of Solomon 4

How did the woman's lover describe her eyes?

Her eyes were as doves behind her veil. [4:1]

How did the woman's lover describe her hair?

Her hair was like a flock of goats going down Mount Gilead. [4:1]

How did her lover describe her teeth.

Her teeth were like newly shorn and washed female sheep. [4:2]

What did the woman's beloved say about her lips and mouth.

He said her lips were like a thread of scarlet and that her mouth was lovely. [4:3]

How did the woman's beloved describe her cheeks.

He described her cheeks like pomegranate halves behind her veil. [4:3]

How did the woman's beloved describe her neck?

He described her neck as the tower of David built in rows of stone with a thousand soldiers' shields hanging on it. [4:4]

How did the woman's beloved describe her two breasts?

He described her two breasts as two fawns, twins of a gazelle, grazing among the lilies. [4:5]

Where would her lover go until dawn comes and the shadows flee?

He said he would go to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense. [4:6]

In what way was his love beautiful?

His love was beautiful in every way. [4:7]

What did his beautiful love not have?

His beautiful love did not have any blemish. [4:7]

What did Solomon call his bride?

Solomon called her his sister. [4:9]

What did Solomon tell his bride she had stolen from him?

He said she had stolen his heart. [4:9]

What did Solomon say was beautiful and what was it better than?

Solomon said her love was beautiful and better than wine. [4:9]

What was the smell of her perfume better than?

The smell of her perfume better than any spice. [4:10]

With what did he say his bride's lips dripped and what was under her tongue?

He said his bride's lips dripped with honey and she had honey and milk under her tongue. [4:11]

What did the woman's clothes smell like?

Her clothes smelled like the fragrance of Lebanon. [4:11]

What kind of garden and what kind of spring did Solomon say his sister, his bride, was like?

Solomon said she was like a garden locked up and a spring that was sealed. [4:12]

To what did he liken the woman's branches?

He likened her branches to a grove of pomegranate trees with choice fruit and plants and all the finest spices. [4:13]

To what did he liken the woman's branches?

He likened her branches to a grove of pomegranate trees with choice fruit and plants and all the finest spices. [4:14]

With what kinds of water does Solomon describe his lover?

He described her as a garden spring, a well of fresh water, and streams flowing down from Lebanon. [4:15]

On what does the young woman want the north and south winds to blow and why?

She wanted the north and south winds to blow on her garden so that its spices would give off their fragrance. [4:16]

What did she want her beloved to do and to eat?

She wanted her beloved to come into his garden and to eat some of its choice fruit. [4:16]

Song of Solomon 5

Where had Solomon come?

Solomon had come into his garden. [5:1]

Of what was Solomon's bride dreaming?

She was dreaming of her beloved's knocking and talking. [5:2]

What had Solomon's love already done?

She had already taken off her robe and washed her feet. [5:3]

Where had Solomon put his hand?

Solomon had put his hand through the opening of the door latch. [5:4]

With what were the bride's hands dipping when she opened the door?

Her hands were dripping with moist myrrh. [5:5]

What did the bride find when she opened the door and how did she feel?

She found that her beloved had turned and gone, so her heart sank and she became sad. [5:6]

What did the watchmen do when they found Solomon's bride?

They struck and wounded her and took away her cloak. [5:7]

What did the bride ask the women of Jerusalem to promise?

She asked the women of Jerusalem to promise that they would tell her if they found her beloved. [5:8]

How did the young woman's beloved make her feel?

The young woman's beloved made her feel sick with love. [5:8]

What did the young women ask of the bride?

They asked her how and why her beloved is better than another. [5:9]

How did the young woman describe her beloved?

She described him as radiant, ruddy, and outstanding. [5:10]

How did the woman describe her beloved's head and hair?

She described his head as pure gold and his hair as curly and black. [5:11]

How did the woman describe her beloved's eyes?

She described his eyes like doves washed in milk. [5:12]

How did Solomon's bride describe his cheeks and lips?

She described his cheeks like spice gardens and his lips as myrrh soaked lilies. [5:13]

How did the woman describe her beloved's arms and abdomen?

She described his arms as gold with jewels and his abdomen as ivory covered with sapphires. [5:14]

How did the woman describe her beloved's legs and his appearance?

She described his legs as marble pillars with gold bases and his appearance like Lebanon, as special as the cedars. [5:15]

How did Solomon's bride describe her beloved's mouth and Solomon to Jerusalem's daughters?

She described his mouth as most sweet and that Solomon was completely lovely. [5:16]

Song of Solomon 6

What questions do the women of Jerusalem ask of the young woman?

They ask her where her beloved has gone and in what direction has he gone? [6:1]

For what did the young women want to seek?

The young women wanted to seek for the young woman's beloved. [6:1]

What does the young woman say her beloved was doing?

The young woman said he was in his spice gardens to graze in the garden and gather lilies? [6:2]

To whom did the young woman and her lover belong?

The young woman and her lover belonged to each other. [6:3]

Where did the young woman's lover graze?

The young woman's lover grazed among the lilies. [6:3]

What two cities did the woman's lover use to describe her?

He described her as two cities, Tirzah and Jerusalem. [6:4]

How did her beloved feel about her?

He felt that she was completely fascinating. [6:4]

Why did the woman's lover want her to turn her eyes away from him?

The woman's lover wanted her to turn her eyes away from him because her eyes overwhelmed him. [6:5]

How did the woman's lover describe her hair?

He described her hair as a flock of goats on the slopes of Mount Gilead. [6:5]

How did her lover describe her teeth?

He described her teeth as a flock of ewes coming up from the washing place. [6:6]

How did her lover describe her cheeks?

Her lover described her cheeks as pomegranate halves behind her veil. [6:7]

How many other women did the woman's lover say there were?

He said there were 60 queens, 80 concubines, and young women without number. [6:8]

How did the woman's lover describe his dove?

The woman's lover described her as his undefiled, the only one, and the special and favorite daughter of her mother. [6:9]

What did the queens and the concubines say about her when they saw her?

The queens and concubines praised her. [6:9]

How did the woman's lover describe her?

The woman's lover described her like the dawn, the moon, the sun, and completely fascinating. [6:10]

Why did the woman's lover go into the grove of nut trees?

The woman's lover went into the grove of nut trees to see if the vines had budded and the pomegranates were in bloom. [6:11]

How did the woman's lover feel.

The woman's lover felt as though he were riding in the chariot of a prince. [6:12]

What did the woman's lover want her to do?

The woman's lover wanted her to turn back to him. [6:13]

Why did the woman's lover want her to turn to him?

The woman's lover wanted her to turn to him so that he may gaze on her. [6:13]

What did the young woman say about herself?

The young woman described herself as the perfect woman who seemed to be dancing between two rows of dancers. [6:13]

Song of Solomon 7

How did Solomon describe his lover's feet in her sandals and the curves of her thighs?

He described her feet in her sandals as beautiful and the curves of her thighs like jewels. [7:1]

How did Solomon describe his love's navel and belly?

Solomon described his love's navel as a round bowl which never lacks mixed wine and her belly as mound of wheat surrounded with lilies. [7:2]

How did Solomon describe his lover's two breasts?

Solomon described her two breasts like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. [7:3]

How did Solomon describe his lover's neck, eyes, and nose?

Solomon described her neck as an ivory tower, her eyes like a pool, and her nose like the tower in Lebanon. [7:4]

How did Solomon describe his lover's head and hair?

Solomon described her head like Mount Carmel and her hair as dark. [7:5]

How did Solomon describe his lover and her breasts?

He described her as a date palm tree and her breasts as clusters of fruit. [7:7]

What did he also want his lover's breasts and breath to be like?

He also wanted his lover's breasts to be like grape clusters and her breath to be sweet like the smell of apricot fruit. [7:8]

What did he want his lover's mouth to be like?

He wanted her mouth to be like the best wine. [7:9]

To whom did the young woman belong and whom did he desire?

The young woman belonged to her beloved and her beloved desired her. [7:10]

Where did the young woman want her beloved to go with her?

She wanted him to go into the countryside to spend the night in the villages. [7:11]

Why did she want her beloved to rise early?

She wanted him to rise early to see if the vines in the vineyards and the pomegranates had budded. [7:12]

What did she say she would give her beloved when they got to the vineyards?

She said she would give him her love. [7:12]

What did she say the mandrakes would do?

She said the mandrakes would give off their fragrance. [7:13]

What did she say was at the door where she and her lover were staying?

She said that at the door where they were staying there were all sorts of choice fruits, new and old, that she had stored up for him. [7:13]

Song of Solomon 8

What did the woman wish that her lover was like and why?

She wished he were like her brother so that she could kiss her lover at any time and no one would despise her. [8:1]

Where would the woman have liked to bring her lover?

She would have liked to bring him to her mother's house so he could teach her. [8:2]

What were her lover's left and right hands doing?

His left hand was holding his head and his right hand is hugging her. [8:3]

What did the woman want Jerusalem's women to promise?

The woman wanted Jerusalem's women to promise that they would not interrupt her and her lover's lovemaking until they were finished. [8:4]

What did the women of Jerusalem ask?

They asked who was coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved. [8:5]

What did the young woman tell her lover when she woke him under the apricot tree?

She told him that his mother had conceived and given birth to him under the apricot tree. [8:5]

What did the young woman want her lover to do and why?

She wanted him to set her as a seal over his heart because love is as strong as death and a hot flame. [8:6]

What couldn't stop love?

Huge amounts of moving water could not stop love. [8:7]

What did the woman's brothers say about their little sister?

They said that her breasts had not yet grown and that they wondered what they would do for her when she was promised in marriage. [8:8]

What would the woman's brothers do if she were a wall?

If she were a wall, they would build a tower of silver on her. [8:9]

What would the woman's brothers do if she were a door?

If she were a door, they would adorn her with boards of cedar. [8:9]

How did the young woman describe herself?

She described herself as a wall with breasts like fortress towers and completely mature. [8:10]

What did the young woman say that Solomon did with his vineyard at Baal Hamon?

Solomon leased his vineyard to those who would take care of it. [8:11]

What does the young woman say about her own vineyard and those who maintained it?

She said the 1000 shekels that it brought belonged to Solomon and that those who maintained it would get 200 shekels. [8:12]

What did the woman's lover say to her who lived in the gardens about what his friends, as well as he, wanted to hear?

He said that his friends, as well as he, wanted to be the ones to hear her voice. [8:13]

What did the young woman want her beloved to do and be like?

She wanted her beloved to hurry and to be like a deer. [8:14]

translationWords

angry, anger

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:

- [Song of Solomon 1:5-6](#)

anoint, anointed, anointing

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

(See also: Christ, consecrate, high priest, King of the Jews, priest, prophet)

Bible References:

- [1 John 02:20-21](#)
- [1 John 02:27-29](#)
- [1 Samuel 16:2-3](#)
- [Acts 04:27-28](#)
- [Amos 06:5-6](#)
- [Exodus 29:5-7](#)
- [James 05:13-15](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H47, H430, H4397, H4398, H8136, G32, G743, H1101, H1878, H3323, H4473, H4886, H4888, H4899, H5480, G218, G1472, G2025, G3462, G5545, G5548

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)

beloved

Definition:

The term “beloved” is an expression of affection that describes someone who is loved and dear to someone else.

- The term “beloved” literally means “loved (one)” or “(who is) loved.”
- God refers to Jesus as his “beloved Son.”
- In their letters to Christian churches, the apostles frequently address their fellow believers as “beloved.”

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could also be translated as “loved” or “loved one” or “well-loved,” or “very dear.”
- In the context of talking about a close friend, this could be translated as “my dear friend” or “my close friend.” In English it is natural to say “my dear friend, Paul” or “Paul, who is my dear friend.” Other languages may find it more natural to order this in a different way.
- Note that the word “beloved” comes from the word for God’s love, which is unconditional, unselfish, and sacrificial.

(See also: [love](#))

Bible References:

- [1 Corinthians 04:14-16](#)
- [1 John 03:1-3](#)
- [1 John 04:7-8](#)
- [Mark 01:9-11](#)
- [Mark 12:6-7](#)
- [Revelation 20:9-10](#)
- [Romans 16:6-8](#)
- [Song of Solomon 01:12-14](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H157, H1730, H2532, H3033, H3039, H4261, G25, G27, G5207

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:8-9](#)

- Song of Solomon 2:10-11
- Song of Solomon 2:16-17
- Song of Solomon 3:1-2
- Song of Solomon 4:15-16
- Song of Solomon 5:2
- Song of Solomon 5:3-4
- Song of Solomon 5:5
- Song of Solomon 5:6
- Song of Solomon 5:8
- Song of Solomon 5:9
- Song of Solomon 5:10-11
- Song of Solomon 5:16
- Song of Solomon 6:1
- Song of Solomon 7:5-6
- Song of Solomon 7:9
- Song of Solomon 7:13
- Song of Solomon 8:5
- Song of Solomon 8:14

blemish

Facts:

The term “blemish” refers to a physical defect or imperfection on an animal or person. It can also refer to spiritual imperfections and faults in people.

- For certain sacrifices, God instructed the Israelites to offer an animal with no blemishes or defects.
- This is a picture of how Jesus Christ was the perfect sacrifice, without any sin.
- Believers in Christ have been cleansed from their sin by his blood and are considered to be without blemish.
- Ways to translate this term could include “defect” or “imperfection” or “sin,” depending on the context.

(See also: believer, clean, sacrifice, sin)

Bible References:

- [1 Peter 01:18-19](#)
- [2 Peter 02:12-14](#)
- Deuteronomy 15:19-21
- Numbers 06:13-15
- [Song of Solomon 04:6-7](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3971, H8400, H8549, G3470

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:6-7](#)

bless, blessed, blessing

Definition:

To “bless” someone or something means to cause good and beneficial things to happen to the person or thing that is being blessed.

- Blessing someone also means expressing a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to that person.
- In Bible times, a father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children.
- When people “bless” God or express a desire that God be blessed, this means they are praising him.
- The term “bless” is sometimes used for consecrating food before it is eaten, or for thanking and praising God for the food.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “bless” could also be translated as “to provide abundantly for” or “to be very kind and favorable toward.”
- “God has brought great blessing to” could be translated as “God has given many good things to” or “God has provided abundantly for” or “God has caused many good things to happen to”.
- “He is blessed” could be translated as “he will greatly benefit” or “he will experience good things” or “God will cause him to flourish.”
- “Blessed is the person who” could be translated as “How good it is for the person who.”
- Expressions like “blessed be the Lord” could be translated as “May the Lord be praised” or “Praise the Lord” or “I praise the Lord.”
- In the context of blessing food, this could be translated as “thanked God for the food” or “praised God for giving them food” or “consecrated the food by praising God for it.”

(See also: [praise](#))

Bible References:

- [1 Corinthians 10:14-17](#)
- [Acts 13:32-34](#)
- [Ephesians 01:3-4](#)
- [Genesis 14:19-20](#)
- [Isaiah 44:3-4](#)
- [James 01:22-25](#)
- [Luke 06:20-21](#)
- [Matthew 26:26](#)
- [Nehemiah 09:5-6](#)
- [Romans 04:9-10](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **01:07** God saw that it was good and he **blessed** them.
- **01:15** God made Adam and Eve in his own image. He **blessed** them and told them, “Have many children and grandchildren and fill the earth.”
- **01:16** So God rested from all he had been doing. He **blessed** the seventh day and made it holy, because on this day he rested from his work.
- **04:04** “I will make your name great. I will **bless** those who **bless** you and curse those who curse you. All families on earth will be **blessed** because of you.”
- **04:07** Melchizedek **blessed** Abram and said, “May God Most High who owns heaven and earth **bless** Abram.”
- **07:03** Isaac wanted to give his **blessing** to Esau.
- **08:05** Even in prison, Joseph remained faithful to God, and God **blessed** him.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H833, H835, H1288, H1289, H1293, G1757, G2127, G2128, G2129, G3106, G3107, G3108, G6050

Uses:

- **Song of Solomon 6:8-9**

bride

Definition:

A bride is the woman in a wedding ceremony who is getting married to her husband, the bridegroom.

- The term “bride” is used as a metaphor for believers in Jesus, the Church.
- Jesus is metaphorically called the “bridegroom” for the Church. (See: [Metaphor](#))

(See also: bridegroom, church)

Bible References:

- Exodus 22:16-17
- [Isaiah 62:5](#)
- [Joel 02:15-16](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3618, G3565

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:8](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:1](#)

call, calls, calling, called

Definition:

The terms “call” and “call out” literally means to say something loudly to someone who is not nearby. There are also several figurative meanings.

- To “call out” to someone means to shout or speak loudly to someone far away. It can also mean to ask someone for help, especially God.
- Often in the Bible, “call” has a meaning of “summon” or “command to come” or “request to come.”
- God calls people to come to him and be his people. This is their “calling.”
- The term “called” is used in the Bible to mean that God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to be his servants and proclaimers of his message of salvation through Jesus.
- This term is also used in the context of calling someone a name. For example, “He is called John,” means, “He is named John” or “His name is John.”
- To be “called by the name of” means that someone is given the name of someone else. God says that he has called his people by his name.
- A different expression, “I have called you by name” means that God knows a person’s name personally and has specifically chosen him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “call” could be translated by a word that means “summon,” which includes the idea of being intentional or purposeful in calling.
- The expression “call out to you” could be translated as “ask you for help” or “pray to you urgently.”
- When the Bible says that God has “called” us to be his servants, this could be translated as, “specially chose us” or “appointed us” to be his servants.
- “You must call his name” can also be translated as, “you must name him.”
- “His name is called” could also be translated as, “his name is” or “he is named.”
- To “call out” could be translated as, “say loudly” or “shout” or “say with a loud voice.” Make sure the translation of this does not sound like the person is angry.
- The expression “your calling” could be translated as “your purpose” or “God’s purpose for you” or “God’s special work for you.”
- To “call on the name of the Lord” could be translated as “seek the Lord and depend on him” or “trust in the Lord and obey him.”
- To “call for” something could be translated by “demand” or “ask for” or “command.”
- The expression “you are called by my name” could be translated as, “I have given you my name, showing that you belong to me.”
- When God says, “I have called you by name,” this could be translated as, “I know your name and have chosen you.”

(See also: pray)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 18:22-24
- 1 Thessalonians 04:7-8
- 2 Timothy 01:8-11
- Ephesians 04:1-3
- Galatians 01:15-17
- Matthew 02:13-15
- Philippians 03:12-14

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Word Data:

- Strong's: H559, H2199, H4744, H6817, H7121, H7123, G154, G363, G1458, G1528, G1941, G1951, G2028, G2046, G2564, G2821, G2822, G2840, G2919, G3004, G3106, G3333, G3343, G3603, G3686, G3687, G4316, G4341, G4377, G4779, G4867, G5455, G5537, G5581

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 5:6
- Song of Solomon 6:8-9

captive, captivity

Definition:

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

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

Translation Suggestions

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

(See also: Babylon, 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, H7870, G161, G162, G163, G164, G2221

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 7:5-6](#)

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:

- [Song of Solomon 7:5-6](#)

cedar

Definition:

The term “cedar” refers to a large fir tree which normally has reddish-brown wood. Like other firs, it has cones and needle-like leaves.

- The Old Testament often mentions cedar trees in connection with Lebanon, where they grew plentifully.
- Cedar wood was used in the construction of the Jerusalem temple.
- It was also used for sacrifices and purification offerings.

(See also: fir, [pure](#), sacrifice, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 14:1-2
- 1 Kings 07:1-2
- [Isaiah 02:12-13](#)
- [Zechariah 11:1-3](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H730

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:16-17](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:15](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:9](#)

chariot

Definition:

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

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

(See 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:

- [Song of Solomon 1:9-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:11-12](#)

companion

Facts:

The term “companion” refers to a person who goes with someone else or who is associated with someone else, such as in a friendship or marriage.

- Companions go through experiences together, share meals together, and support and encourage each other.
- Depending on the context, this term could also be translated with a word or phrase that means, “friend” or “fellow traveler” or “supporting-person who goes with.”

Bible References:

- [Ezekiel 37:15-17](#)
- [Hebrews 01:8-9](#)
- [Proverbs 02:16-17](#)
- [Psalms 038:11-12](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H251, H441, H2269, H2270, H2271, H2273, H2278, H3674, H3675, H4828, H7453, H7462, H7464, G2844, G3353, G4791, G4898, G4904

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:13](#)

conceive, conception

Definition:

The terms “conceive” and “conception” usually refer to becoming pregnant with a child. It can also be used for animals that become pregnant.

- The phrase “conceive a child” could be translated as, “become pregnant” or some other term that is an acceptable way of referring to this.
- The related term “conception” could be translated as, “beginning of a pregnancy” or “moment of becoming pregnant.”
- These terms can also refer to creating something or thinking of something, such as an idea, a plan, or a task. Ways to translate this could include, “think of” or “plan” or “create,” depending on the context.
- Sometimes this term can be used figuratively as in, “when sin is conceived” which means “when sin is first thought of” or “at the very start of a sin” or “when a sin first begins.”

(See also: create, womb)

Bible References:

- Genesis 21:1-4
- [Hosea 02:4-5](#)
- Job 15:34-35
- [Luke 01:24-25](#)
- [Luke 02:21](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2029, H2030, H2032, H2232, H2254, H2803, H3179, G1080, G1722, G2602, G2845, G4815

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:5](#)

concubine

Definition:

A concubine is a woman who is a secondary wife for a man who already has a wife. Usually a concubine is not legally married to the man.

- In the Old Testament, concubines were often female slaves.
- A concubine could be acquired by purchase, through military conquest, or in payment of a debt.
- For a king, having many concubines was a sign of power.
- The New Testament teaches that the practice of having a concubine is against God's will.

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 03:6-7
- Genesis 22:23-24
- Genesis 25:5-6
- Genesis 35:21-22
- Genesis 36:9-12
- Judges 19:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3904, H6370

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 6:8-9](#)

crown, to crown**Definition:**

A crown is a decorative, circular headpiece worn on the head of rulers such as kings and queens. The term “to crown” means to put a crown on someone’s head; figuratively it means, “to honor.”

- Crowns are usually made of gold or silver, and are embedded with precious gems such as emeralds and rubies.
- A crown was intended to be a symbol of a king’s power and wealth.
- By contrast, the crown made of thorn branches that the Roman soldiers placed on Jesus’ head was meant to mock him and hurt him.
- In ancient times, winners of athletic contests would be awarded a crown made out of olive branches. The apostle Paul mentions this crown in his second letter to Timothy.
- Used figuratively, “to crown” means to honor someone. We honor God by obeying him and praising him to others. This is like putting a crown on him and acknowledging that he is King.
- Pauls calls fellow believers his “joy and crown.” In this expression, “crown” is used figuratively to mean that Paul has been greatly blessed and honored by how these believers have remained faithful in serving God.
- When used figuratively, “crown” could be translated as “prize” or “honor” or “reward.”
- The figurative use of “to crown” could be translated as “to honor” or “to decorate.”
- If a person is “crowned” this could be translated as “a crown was put on his head.”
- The expression, “he was crowned with glory and honor” could be translated as, “glory and honor were bestowed on him” or “he was given glory and honor” or “he was endowed with glory and honor.”

(See also: glory, [king](#), olive)

Bible References:

- [John 19:1-3](#)
- [Lamentations 05:15-16](#)
- [Matthew 27:27-29](#)
- [Philippians 04:1-3](#)
- [Psalms 021:3-4](#)
- [Revelation 03:9-11](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2213, H3803, H3804, H4502, H5145, H5849, H5850, H6936, G1238, G4735, G4737

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:10-11](#)

curtain

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “curtain” refers to a very thick, heavy piece of material used in the making of the tabernacle and the temple.

- The tabernacle was built using four layers of curtains for the top and sides. These curtain coverings were made of cloth or animal skins.
- Cloth curtains were also used to form a wall surrounding the tabernacle courtyard. These curtains were made out of “linen” which was a kind of cloth made out of the flax plant.
- In both the tabernacle and temple building, a thick cloth curtain hung between the holy place and the most holy place. It was this curtain that was miraculously torn into two parts when Jesus died.

Translation Suggestions:

- Since modern-day curtains are very different from the curtains used in the Bible, it may be more clear to use a different word or to add words that describe the curtains.
- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include, “curtain covering” or “covering” or “piece of thick cloth” or “animal skin covering” or “hanging piece of cloth.”

(See also: holy place, tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- [Hebrews 10:19-22](#)
- [Leviticus 04:16-17](#)
- [Luke 23:44-45](#)
- [Matthew 27:51-53](#)
- [Numbers 04:5-6](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1852, H3407, H4539, H6532, H7050, G2665

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:5-6](#)

Damascus

Facts:

Damascus is the capital city of the country of Syria. It is still in the same location as it was in Bible times.

- Damascus is one of the oldest, continuously inhabited cities in the world.
- During the time of Abraham, Damascus was the capital of the Aram kingdom (located in what is now Syria).
- Throughout the Old Testament, there are many references to the interactions between the inhabitants of Damascus and the people of Israel.
- Several biblical prophecies predict the destruction of Damascus. These prophecies may have been fulfilled when Assyria destroyed the city during Old Testament times, or there may be also be a future, more complete destruction of this city.
- In the New Testament, the Pharisee Saul (later known as Paul) was on his way to arrest Christians in the city of Damascus when Jesus confronted him and caused him to become a believer.

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

(See also: Aram, Assyria, believer, Syria)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 24:23-24
- [Acts 09:1-2](#)
- [Acts 09:3-4](#)
- [Acts 26:12-14](#)
- [Galatians 01:15-17](#)
- Genesis 14:15-16

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1833, H1834, G1154

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 7:3-4](#)

David

Facts:

David was the second king of Israel and he loved and served God. He was the main writer of the book of Psalms.

- When David was still a young boy caring for his family's sheep, God chose him to become the next king of Israel.
- David became a great fighter and led the Israelite army in battles against their enemies. His defeat of Goliath the Philistine is well known.
- King Saul tried to kill David, but God protected him, and made him king after Saul's death.
- David committed a terrible sin, but he repented and God forgave him.
- Jesus, the Messiah, is called the "Son of David" because he is a descendant of King David.

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

(See also: Goliath, Philistines, Saul (OT))

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 17:12-13
- 1 Samuel 20:32-34
- 2 Samuel 05:1-2
- [2 Timothy 02:8-10](#)
- [Acts 02:25-26](#)
- [Acts 13:21-22](#)
- [Luke 01:30-33](#)
- [Mark 02:25-26](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

***17:02** God chose a young Israelite named **David** to be king after Saul. **David** was a shepherd from the town of Bethlehem. ... **David** was a humble and righteous man who trusted and obeyed God. ***17:03** **David** was also a great soldier and leader. When **David** was still a young man, he fought against a giant named Goliath. ***17:04** Saul became jealous of the people's love for **David**. Saul tried many times to kill him, so **David** hid from Saul. ***17:05** God blessed **David** and made him successful. **David** fought many battles and God helped him defeat Israel's enemies.

***17:06** **David** wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices. ***17:09** **David** ruled with justice and faithfulness for many years, and God blessed him. However, toward the end of his life he sinned terribly against 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.

David repented of his sin and God forgave him. For the rest of his life, **David** followed and obeyed God, even in difficult times.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1732, G1138

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:4-5](#)

death, die, dead

Definition:

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

1. Physical death

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

2. Spiritual death

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

Translation Suggestions:

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

- The expression “put to death” could also be translated as “kill” or “murder” or “execute.”

(See also: believe, faith, life, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 15:20-21
- 1 Thessalonians 04:16-18
- Acts 10:42-43
- Acts 14:19-20
- Colossians 02:13-15
- Colossians 02:20-23
- Genesis 02:15-17
- Genesis 34:27-29
- Matthew 16:27-28
- Romans 05:10-11
- Romans 05:12-13
- Romans 06:10-11

Examples from the Bible stories:

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

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1478, H4191, H4191, H4192, H4193, H4194, H4194, H4463, H5038, H5315, H6297, H6757, H7496, H7523, H8546, G336, G337, G520, G581, G599, G599, G615, G684, G1935, G2079, G2253, G2286, G2287, G2288, G2289, G2348, G2837, G3498, G3499, G3500, G4430, G4880, G5053, G5054

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 8:6

deer, doe, buck, roebuck, fawn

Definition:

A deer is a large, graceful, four-legged animal that lives in forests or on mountains. The male animal has large horns or antlers on its head.

- The term “doe” refers to a female deer and a “fawn” is the name of a baby deer.
- The term “buck” refers to a male deer.
- A “roebuck” is the male of the specific variety called “roedeer.”
- Deer have strong, thin legs that help them jump high and run fast.
- Their feet have split hooves which help them walk or climb easily on most any terrain.

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

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 22:34-35
- Genesis 49:19-21
- Job 39:1-2
- Psalms 018:33-34
- [Song of Solomon 02:7](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H354, H355, H365, H3180, H3280, H6643, H6646

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 2:7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:4-5](#)

delight

Definition:

A “delight” is something that pleases someone greatly or causes much joy.

- To “delight in” something means to “take joy in” or “be happy about” it.
- When something is very agreeable or pleasing it is called “delightful.”
- If a person's delight is in something it means that he enjoys it very much.
- The expression “my delight is in the law of Yahweh” could be translated as “the law of Yahweh gives me great joy” or “I love to obey the laws of Yahweh” or “I am happy when I obey Yahweh's commands.”
- The phrases “take no delight in” and “have no delight in” could be translated as “not at all pleased by” or “not happy about.”
- The phrase “delight himself in” means “he enjoys doing” something or “he is very happy about” something or someone.
- The term “delights” refers to things that a person enjoys. This could be translated as “pleasures” or “things that give joy.”
- An expression such as “I delight to do your will” could also be translated as “I enjoy doing your will” or “I am very happy when I obey you.”

Bible References:

- Proverbs 08:30-31
- Psalm 001:1-2
- Psalms 119:69-70
- [Song of Solomon 01:1-4](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1523, H2530, H2531, H2532, H2654, H2655, H2656, H2836, H4574, H5276, H5727, H5730, H6026, H6027, H7306, H7381, H7521, H7522, H8057, H8173, H8191, H8588, H8597

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)

desert, wilderness

Definition:

A desert, or wilderness, is a dry, barren place where very few plants and trees can grow.

- A desert is a land area with a dry climate and few plants or animals.
- Because of the harsh conditions, very few people can live in the desert, so it is also referred to as “wilderness.”
- “Wilderness” conveys the meaning of being remote, desolate and isolated from people.
- This word can also be translated as “deserted place” or “remote place” or “uninhabited place.”

Bible References:

- [Acts 13:16-18](#)
- [Acts 21:37-38](#)
- Exodus 04:27-28
- Genesis 37:21-22
- [John 03:14-15](#)
- [Luke 01:80](#)
- [Luke 09:12-14](#)
- [Mark 01:1-3](#)
- [Matthew 04:1-4](#)
- [Matthew 11:7-8](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H776, H2723, H3293, H3452, H4057, H6160, H6723, H6728, H6921, H8047, H8414, G2047, G2048

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:6-7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:5](#)

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:

- [Song of Solomon 1:15](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:12-13](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:12](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:8-9](#)

dream

Definition:

A dream is something that people see or experience in their minds while they are sleeping.

- Dreams often seem like they are really happening, but they are not.
- Sometimes God causes people to dream about something so they can learn from it. He may also speak directly to people in their dreams.
- In the Bible, God gave special dreams to certain people to give them a message, often about something that would happen in the future.
- A dream is different from a vision. Dreams happen while a person is asleep, but visions usually happen when a person is awake.

(See also: vision)

Bible References:

- [Acts 02:16-17](#)
- [Daniel 01:17-18](#)
- [Daniel 02:1-2](#)
- [Genesis 37:5-6](#)
- [Genesis 40:4-5](#)
- [Matthew 02:13-15](#)
- [Matthew 02:19-21](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

***08:02** Joseph's brothers hated him because their father loved him most and because Joseph had **dreamed** that he would be their ruler. ***08:06** One night, the Pharaoh, which is what the Egyptians called their kings, had two **dreams** that disturbed him greatly. None of his advisors could tell him the meaning of the **dreams**. ***08:07** God had given Joseph the ability to interpret **dreams**, so Pharaoh had Joseph brought to him from the prison. Joseph interpreted the **dreams** for him and said, "God is going to send seven years of plentiful harvests followed by seven years of famine." ***16:11** So that night, Gideon went down to the camp and heard a Midianite soldier telling his friend about something he had **dreamed**. The man's friend said, "This **dream** means that Gideon's army will defeat the Midianite army!" ***23:01** He (Joseph) did not want to shame her (Mary), so he planned to quietly divorce her. Before he could do that, an angel came and spoke to him in a **dream**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1957, H2472, H2492, H2493, G1797, G1798, G3677

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 5:2](#)

En Gedi

Definition:

En Gedi was the name of a city in the wilderness of Judah southeast of Jerusalem.

- En Gedi was located on the western bank of the Salt Sea.
- Part of its name means “fountain,” referring to a spring of water that flows down from the city into the sea.
- En Gedi was known for having beautiful vineyards and other fertile land, probably due to the continual watering by the fountain of water.
- There were strongholds in En Gedi which David fled to when he was being chased by King Saul.

(See also: [David](#), [desert](#), [fountain](#), Judah, rest, Salt Sea, Saul (OT), [stronghold](#), [vineyard](#))

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 20:1-2
- [Song of Solomon 01:12-14](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5872

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:12-14](#)

fig**Definition:**

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

- Fig trees can grow 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:

- [Song of Solomon 2:12-13](#)

fire

Definition:

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

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

- [Song of Solomon 8:6](#)

flock, herd

Definition:

In the Bible, “flock” refers to a group of sheep or goats and “herd” refers to a group of cattle, oxen, or pigs.

- Different languages may have different ways of naming groups of animals or birds.
- For example, in English the term “herd” can also be used for sheep or goats, but in the Bible text it is not used this way.
- The term “flock” in English is also used for a group of birds, but it can not be used for pigs, oxen, or cattle.
- Consider what terms are used in your language to refer to different groups of animals.
- For verses that refer to “flocks and herds” it may be better to add “of sheep” or “of cattle” for example, if the language does not have different words to refer to different kinds of animal groups.

(See also: [goat](#), ox, pig, [sheep](#),)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 10:28-29
- 2 Chronicles 17:10-11
- Deuteronomy 14:22-23
- [Luke 02:8-9](#)
- [Matthew 08:30-32](#)
- [Matthew 26:30-32](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H951, H1241, H2835, H4029, H4735, H4830, H5349, H5739, H6251, H6629, H7399, H7462, G34, G4167, G4168

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:8](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:6-7](#)

flood

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:

- [Song of Solomon 8:7](#)

fountain, spring

Definition:

The terms “fountain” and “spring” usually refer to a large amount of water that flows out naturally from the ground.

- These words are also used figuratively in the Bible to refer to blessings flowing from God or to refer to something that cleanses and purifies.
- In modern times, a fountain is often a manmade object that has water flowing out of it, such as a drinking fountain. Make sure that the translation of this term refers to a natural source of flowing water.
- Compare the translation of this term with how the term “flood” is translated.

(See also: [flood](#))

Bible References:

- [2 Peter 02:17-19](#)
- [Genesis 07:11-12](#)
- [Genesis 08:1-3](#)
- [Genesis 24:12-14](#)
- [Genesis 24:42-44](#)
- [James 03:11-12](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H794, H953, H1530, H1543, H1876, H3222, H4002, H4161, H4456, H4599, H4726, H5033, H5869, H5927, H6524, H6779, H6780, H7823, H8444, H8666, G242, G305, G393, G985, G1530, G1816, G4077, G4855, G5453

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:15-16](#)

frankincense

Definition:

Frankincense is a fragrant spice made from tree resin. It is used to make perfumes and incense.

- In Bible times, frankincense was an important spice used to prepare dead bodies for burial.
- This spice is also valuable for its healing and calming qualities.
- When learned men came from an eastern country to visit baby Jesus in Bethlehem, frankincense was one of the three gifts they brought him.

(See also: Bethlehem, learned men)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 09:28-29
- Exodus 30:34-36
- [Matthew 02:11-12](#)
- Numbers 05:15

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3828, G3030

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:6-7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:6-7](#)

fruit, fruitful

Definition:

The term “fruit” literally refers to the part of a plant that can be eaten. Something that is “fruitful” has a lot of fruit. These terms are also used figuratively in the Bible.

- The Bible often uses “fruit” to refer to a person’s actions. Just as fruit on a tree shows what kind of tree it is, in the same way a person’s words and actions reveal what his character is like.
- A person can produce good or bad spiritual fruit, but the term “fruitful” always has the positive meaning of producing much good fruit.
- The term “fruitful” is also used figuratively to mean “prosperous.” This often refers to having many children and descendants, as well as having plenty of food and other wealth.
- In general, the expression “fruit of” refers to anything that comes from or that is produced by something else. For example, the “fruit of wisdom” refers to the good things that come from being wise.
- The expression “fruit of the land” refers generally to everything that the land produces for people to eat. This includes not only fruits such as grapes or dates, but also vegetables, nuts, and grains.
- The figurative expression “fruit of the Spirit” refers to godly qualities that the Holy Spirit produces in the lives of people who obey him.
- The expression “fruit of the womb” refers to “what the womb produces—”that is children.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term using the general word for “fruit” that is commonly used in the project language to refer to the edible fruit of a fruit tree. In many languages it may be more natural to use the plural, “fruits” whenever it refers to more than one fruit.
- Depending on the context, the term “fruitful” could be translated as “producing much spiritual fruit” or “having many children” or “prosperous.”
- The expression “fruit of the land” could also be translated as “food that the land produces” or “food crops that are growing in that region.”
- When God created animals and people, he commanded them to “be fruitful and multiply,” which refers to having many offspring. This could also be translated as “have many offspring” or “have many children and descendants” or “have many children so that you will have many descendants.”
- The expression “fruit of the womb” could be translated as “what the womb produces” or “children a woman gives birth to” or just “children.” When Elizabeth says to Mary “blessed is the fruit of your womb,” she means “blessed is the child you will give birth to.” The project language may also have a different expression for this.
- Another expression “fruit of the vine,” could be translated as “vine fruit” or “grapes.”
- Depending on the context, the expression “will be more fruitful” could also be translated as “will produce more fruit” or “will have more children” or “will be prosperous.”

- The apostle Paul’s expression “fruitful labor” could be translated as “work that brings very good results” or “efforts that result in many people believing in Jesus.”
- The “fruit of the Spirit” could also be translated as “works that the Holy Spirit produces” or “words and actions that show that the Holy Spirit is working in someone.”

(See also: descendant, grain, *grape*, Holy Spirit, *vine*, womb)

Bible References:

- *Galatians 05:22-24*
- *Genesis 01:11-13*
- *Luke 08:14-15*
- *Matthew 03:7-9*
- *Matthew 07:15-17*

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3, H4, H1061, H1063, H1069, H2173, H2233, H2981, H3206, H3581, H3759, H3899, H3978, H4022, H4395, H5108, H5208, H6500, H6509, H6529, H7019, H8256, H8393, H8570, G1081, G2590, G2592, G2593, G3703, G5052, G5352, G6013

Uses:

- *Song of Solomon 2:3-4*
- *Song of Solomon 4:15-16*
- *Song of Solomon 7:7-8*
- *Song of Solomon 8:11-12*

Gilead

Definition:

Gilead was the name of a mountainous region east of the Jordan river where the Israelite tribes of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh lived.

- This region was also referred to as the “hill country of Gilead” or “Mount Gilead.”
- “Gilead” was also the name of several men in the Old Testament. One of these men was the grandson of Manasseh. Another Gilead was the father of Jephthah.

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

(See also: Gad, Jephthah, Manasseh, Reuben, twelve tribes of Israel)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 02:21-22
- 1 Samuel 11:1-2
- [Amos 01:3-4](#)
- Deuteronomy 02:36-37
- Genesis 31:19-21
- Genesis 37:25-26

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:5](#)

goat, kid

Definition:

A goat is a medium-sized, four-legged animal which is similar to a sheep and is raised primarily for its milk and meat. A baby goat is called a “kid.”

- Like sheep, goats were important animals of sacrifice, especially at Passover.
- Although goats and sheep can be very similar, these are some ways that they are different:
- Goats have coarse hair; sheep have wool.
- The tail of a goat stands up; the tail of a sheep hangs down.
- Sheep usually like to stay with their herd, but goats are more independent and tend to wander away from their herd.
- In Bible times, goats were often the main source of milk in Israel.
- Goat skins were used for tent coverings and to make bags for holding wine.
- In both the Old and New Testaments, the goat was used as a symbol for unrighteous people, perhaps because of its tendency to wander away from the one taking care of it.
- The Israelites also used goats as symbolic sin bearers. When one goat was sacrificed, the priest would lay his hands on a second, live goat, and send it into the desert as a symbol that the animal was bearing the people’s sins.

(See also: [flock](#), [sacrifice](#), [sheep](#), [unrighteous](#), [wine](#))

Bible References:

- Exodus 12:3-4
- Genesis 30:31-32
- Genesis 31:10-11
- Genesis 37:31-33
- Leviticus 03:12-14
- [Matthew 25:31-33](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:8](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:5](#)

gold

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:

- [Song of Solomon 1:9-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:15](#)

grape

Definition:

A grape is a small, round, smooth-skinned berry fruit that grows in clusters on vines. The juice of grapes is used in making wine.

- There are different colors of grapes, such as light green, purple, or red.
- Individual grapes can be around one to three centimeters in size.
- People grow grapes in gardens called vineyards. These normally consist of long rows of vines.
- Grapes were a very important food during Bible times and having vineyards was a sign of wealth.
- In order to keep grapes from rotting, people would often dry them. Dried grapes are called “raisins” and they were used to make raisin cakes.
- Jesus told a parable about a grape vineyard to teach his disciples about God’s kingdom.

(See also: [vine](#), [vineyard](#), [wine](#))

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 23:24-25
- [Hosea 09:10](#)
- Job 15:31-33
- [Luke 06:43-44](#)
- [Matthew 07:15-17](#)
- [Matthew 21:33-34](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 7:7-8](#)

Hades, Sheol

Definition:

The terms “Hades” and “Sheol” are used in the Bible to refer to death and the place where the souls of people go when they die. Their meanings are similar.

- The Hebrew term “Sheol” is often used in the Old Testament to refer generally to the place of death.
- In the New Testament, the Greek term “Hades” refers to a place for the souls of people who rebelled against God. These souls are referred to as going “down” to Hades. This is sometimes contrasted to going “up” to heaven, where the souls of people who believe in Jesus live.
- The term “Hades” is coupled with the term “death” in the book of Revelation. In the end times, both death and Hades will be thrown into the Lake of Fire, which is hell.

Translation Suggestions

- The Old Testament term “Sheol” could be translated as “place of the dead” or “place for dead souls.” Some translations translate this as “the pit” or “death,” depending on the context.
- The New Testament term “Hades” could also be translated as “place for unbelieving dead souls” or “place of torment for the dead” or “place for the souls of unbelieving dead people.”
- Some translations keep the words “Sheol” and “Hades,” spelling them to fit the sound patterns of the language of translation. (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#)).
- A phrase could also be added to each term to explain it, examples of doing this are, “Sheol, place where dead people are” and “Hades, place of death.”

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

(See also: [death](#), heaven, hell, tomb)

Bible References:

- [Acts 02:29-31](#)
- [Genesis 44:27-29](#)
- [Jonah 02:1-2](#)
- [Luke 10:13-15](#)
- [Luke 16:22-23](#)
- [Matthew 11:23-24](#)
- [Matthew 16:17-18](#)
- [Revelation 01:17-18](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 8:6](#)

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:

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 4:9
- Song of Solomon 5:2
- Song of Solomon 5:3-4
- Song of Solomon 5:6
- Song of Solomon 8:6

honey, honeycomb

Definition:

“Honey” is the sweet, sticky, edible substance that honeybees make out of flower nectar. Honeycomb is the waxy frame where the bees store honey.

- Depending on the kind, honey can be yellowish or brownish in color.
- Honey can be found in the wild, such as in the hollow of a tree, or wherever bees make a nest. People also raise bees in hives in order to produce honey to eat or sell, but probably the honey mentioned in the Bible was wild honey.
- Three people that the Bible specifically mentions as eating wild honey were Jonathan, Samson, and John the Baptist.
- This term is often used figuratively to describe something that is sweet or very pleasurable. For example, God’s words and decrees are said to be “sweeter than honey.” (See also: [Simile](#), [Metaphor](#))
- Sometimes a person’s words are described as seeming sweet like honey, but instead result in deceiving and harming others.

(See also: John (the Baptist), Jonathan, Philistines, Samson)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 14:1-3
- Deuteronomy 06:3
- Exodus 13:3-5
- Joshua 05:6-7
- Proverbs 05:3-4

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:1](#)

horse

Definition:

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

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

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

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:9-11](#)

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 worshiping 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:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:6-7](#)

Jerusalem

Facts:

Jerusalem was originally an ancient Canaanite city that later became the most important city in Israel. It is located about 34 kilometers west of the Salt Sea and just north of Bethlehem. It is still the capital city of Israel today.

- The name “Jerusalem” is first mentioned in the book of Joshua. Other Old Testament names for this city include “Salem” “city of Jebus,” and “Zion.” Both “Jerusalem” and “Salem,” have the root meaning of “peace.”
- Jerusalem was originally a Jebusite fortress called “Zion” which King David captured and made into his capital city.
- It was in Jerusalem that David’s son Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, which was the mountain where Abraham had offered his son Isaac to God. The temple was rebuilt there after it was destroyed by the Babylonians.
- Because the temple was in Jerusalem, the major Jewish festivals were celebrated there.
- People normally referred to going “up” to Jerusalem since it is located in the mountains.

(See also: Babylon, Christ, [David](#), Jebusites, Jesus, [Solomon](#), temple, [Zion](#))

Bible References:

- [Galatians 04:26-27](#)
- [John 02:13-14](#)
- [Luke 04:9-11](#)
- [Luke 13:4-5](#)
- [Mark 03:7-8](#)
- [Mark 03:20-22](#)
- [Matthew 03:4-6](#)
- [Matthew 04:23-25](#)
- [Matthew 20:17-19](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:05** David conquered **Jerusalem** and made it his capital city.
- **18:02** In **Jerusalem**, Solomon built the Temple for which his father David had planned and gathered materials.
- **20:07** They (Babylonians) captured the city of **Jerusalem**, destroyed the Temple, and took away all the treasures of the city and the Temple.
- **20:12** So, after seventy years in exile, a small group of Jews returned to the city of **Jerusalem** in Judah.

- **38:01** About three years after Jesus first began preaching and teaching publicly, Jesus told his disciples that he wanted to celebrate this Passover with them in **Jerusalem**, and that he would be killed there.
- **38:02** After Jesus and the disciples arrived in **Jerusalem**, Judas went to the Jewish leaders and offered to betray Jesus to them in exchange for money.
- **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."
- **42:11** Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he told his disciples, "Stay in **Jerusalem** until you receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you."

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 1:5-6
- Song of Solomon 2:7
- Song of Solomon 3:5
- Song of Solomon 3:10-11
- Song of Solomon 5:8
- Song of Solomon 5:16
- Song of Solomon 6:4
- Song of Solomon 8:4

Kedar

Facts:

Kedar was Ishmael's second son. It was also an important city, which was probably named after the man.

- The city of Kedar is located in the northern part of Arabia near the southern border of Palestine. In Bible times, it was known for its greatness and beauty.
- The descendants of Kedar formed a large people group that is also called "Kedar."
- The phrase "dark tents of Kedar" refers to the black goathair tents the people of Kedar lived in.
- These people raised sheep and goats. They also used camels for transporting things.
- In the Bible, the phrase "the glory of Kedar" refers to the greatness of that city and its people.

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

(See also: Arabia, [goat](#), Ishmael, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- [Song of Solomon 01:5-6](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:5-6](#)

king

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:

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 1:1-4
- Song of Solomon 1:12-14
- Song of Solomon 3:8-9
- Song of Solomon 3:10-11
- Song of Solomon 7:5-6

kiss

Definition:

A kiss is an action in which one person puts his lips to another person's lips or face. This term can also be used figuratively.

- Some cultures kiss each other on the cheek as a form of greeting or to say goodbye.
- A kiss can communicate deep love between two people, such as a husband and wife.
- The expression “to kiss someone farewell” means to say goodbye with a kiss.
- Sometimes the word “kiss” is used to mean “say goodbye to.” When Elisha said to Elijah, “Let me first go and kiss my father and mother,” he wanted to say goodbye to his parents before leaving them to follow Elijah.

Bible References:

- [1 Thessalonians 05:25-28](#)
- Genesis 27:26-27
- Genesis 29:11-12
- Genesis 31:26-28
- Genesis 45:14-15
- Genesis 48:8-10
- [Luke 22:47-48](#)
- [Mark 14:43-46](#)
- [Matthew 26:47-48](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:1](#)

know, knowledge, make known

Definition:

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

- The term “knowledge” refers to information that people know. It can apply to knowing things in both the physical and spiritual worlds.
- To “know about” God means to understand facts about him because of what he has revealed to us.
- To “know” God means to have a relationship with him. This also applies to knowing people.
- To know God’s will means to be aware of what he has commanded, or to understand what he wants a person to do.
- To “know the Law” means to be aware of what God has commanded or to understand what God has instructed in the laws he gave to Moses.
- Sometimes “knowledge” is used as a synonym for “wisdom,” which includes living in a way that is pleasing to God.
- The “knowledge of God” is sometimes used as a synonym for the “fear of Yahweh.”

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “know” could include “understand” or “be familiar with” or “be aware of” or “be acquainted with” or “be in relationship with.”
- Some languages have two different words for “know,” one for knowing facts and one for knowing a person and having a relationship with him.
- The term “make known” could be translated as “cause people to know” or “reveal” or “tell about” or “explain.”
- To “know about” something could be translated as “be aware of” or “be familiar with.”
- The expression “know how to” means to understand the process or method of getting something done. It could also be translated as “be able to” or “have the skill to.”
- The term “knowledge” could also be translated as “what is known” or “wisdom” or “understanding,” depending on the context.

(See also: law, reveal, understand, wise)

Bible References:

- [1 Corinthians 02:12-13](#)
- [1 Samuel 17:46-47](#)
- [2 Corinthians 02:14-15](#)
- [2 Peter 01:3-4](#)
- [Deuteronomy 04:39-40](#)
- [Genesis 19:4-5](#)

- [Luke 01:76-77](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:8](#)

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:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:8-9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:8](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:15-16](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:15](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:3-4](#)

leopard

Facts:

A leopard is a large, cat-like, wild animal that is brown with black spots.

- A leopard is a kind of animal which catches other animals and eats them.
- In the Bible, the suddenness of disaster is compared to a leopard, which pounces suddenly on its prey.
- The prophet Daniel and the apostle John tell about visions in which they saw a beast that looked like a leopard.

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

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

(See also: [beast](#), [Daniel](#), [prey](#), [vision](#))

Bible References:

- [Daniel 07:6-7](#)
- [Hosea 13:7-8](#)
- [Revelation 13:1-2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04:8](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:8](#)

like, likeness

Definition:

The terms “like” and “likeness” refer to something being the same as, or similar to, something else.

- The word “like” is also often used in a figurative expressions called a “simile” in which something is compared to something else, usually highlighting a shared characteristic. For example, “his clothes shined like the sun” and “the voice boomed like thunder.” (See: [Simile](#))
- To “be like” or “sound like” or “look like” something or someone means to have qualities that are similar to the thing or person being compared to.
- People were created in God’s “likeness,” that is, in his “image.” It means that they have qualities or characteristics that are “like” or “similar to” qualities that God has, such as the ability to think, feel, and communicate.
- To have “the likeness of” something or someone means to have characteristics that look like that thing or person.

Translation Suggestions

- In some contexts, the expression “the likeness of” could be translated as “what looked like” or “what appeared to be.”
- The expression “in the likeness of his death” could be translated as “sharing in the experience of his death” or “as if experiencing his death with him.”
- The expression “in the likeness of sinful flesh” could be translated as “being like a sinful human being” or “to be a human being.” Make sure the translation of this expression does not sound like Jesus was sinful.
- “In his own likeness” could also be translated as “to be like him” or “having many of the same qualities that he has.”
- The expression “the likeness of an image of perishable man, of birds, of four-footed beasts and of creeping things” could be translated as “idols made to look like perishable humans, or animals, such as birds, beasts, and small, crawling things.”

(See also: [beast](#), [flesh](#), [image of God](#), [image](#), [perish](#))

Bible References:

- [Ezekiel 01:4-6](#)
- [Mark 08:24-26](#)
- [Matthew 17:1-2](#)
- [Matthew 18:1-3](#)
- [Psalms 073:4-5](#)
- [Revelation 01:12-13](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 1:12-14
- Song of Solomon 2:8-9
- Song of Solomon 4:2
- Song of Solomon 4:4-5
- Song of Solomon 4:10-11
- Song of Solomon 5:12
- Song of Solomon 5:13
- Song of Solomon 5:15
- Song of Solomon 6:10
- Song of Solomon 7:2
- Song of Solomon 8:6
- Song of Solomon 8:10

lion

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:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:8](#)

love, loves, loving, loved

Definition:

To love another person is to care for that person and do things that will benefit him. There are different meanings for “love” some languages may express using different words:

1. The kind of love that comes from God is focused on the good of others even when it doesn't benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do. God himself is love and is the source of true love.
2. Jesus showed this kind of love by sacrificing his life in order to rescue us from sin and death. He also taught his followers to love others sacrificially.
3. When people love others with this kind of love, they act in ways that show they are thinking of what will cause the others to thrive. This kind of love especially includes forgiving others.
4. In the ULB, the word “love” refers to this kind of sacrificial love, unless a Translation Note indicates a different meaning.
5. Another word in the New Testament refers to brotherly love, or love for a friend or family member.
6. This term refers to natural human love between friends or relatives.
7. The term can also be used in such contexts as, “They love to sit in the most important seats at a banquet.” This means that they “like very much” or “greatly desire” to do that.
8. The word “love” can also refer to romantic love between a man and a woman.
9. In the figurative expression “Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated,” the term “loved” refers to God's choosing of Jacob to be in a covenant relationship with him. This could also be translated as “chosen.” Although Esau was also blessed by God, he wasn't given the privilege of being in the covenant. The term “hated” is used figuratively here to mean “rejected” or “not chosen.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Unless indicated otherwise in a Translation Note, the word “love” in the ULB refers to the kind of sacrificial love that comes from God.
- Some languages may have a special word for the kind of unselfish, sacrificial love that God has. Ways to translate this might include, “devoted, faithful caring” or “care for unselfishly” or “love from God.” Make sure that the word used to translate God's love can include giving up one's own interests to benefit others and loving others no matter what they do.
- Sometimes the English word “love” describes the deep caring that people have for friends and family members. Some languages might translate this with a word or phrase that means, “like very much” or “care for” or “have strong affection for.”
- In contexts where the word “love” is used to express a strong preference for something, this could be translated by “strongly prefer” or “like very much” or “greatly desire.”
- Some languages may also have a separate word that refers to romantic or sexual love between a husband and wife.

- Many languages must express “love” as an action. So for example, they might translate “love is patient, love is kind” as, “when a person loves someone, he is patient with him and kind to him.”

(See also: covenant, **death**, sacrifice, save, sin)

Bible References:

- **1 Corinthians 13:4-7**
- **1 John 03:1-3**
- **1 Thessalonians 04:9-12**
- **Galatians 05:22-24**
- **Genesis 29:15-18**
- **Isaiah 56:6-7**
- **Jeremiah 02:1-3**
- **John 03:16-18**
- **Matthew 10:37-39**
- **Nehemiah 09:32-34**
- **Philippians 01:9-11**
- **Song of Solomon 01:1-4**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:02** The law expert replied that God’s law says, “**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And **love** your neighbor as yourself.”
- **33:08** “The thorny ground is a person who hears God’s word, but, as time passes, the cares, riches, and pleasures of life choke out his **love** for God.”
- **36:05** As Peter was talking, a bright cloud came down on top of them and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son whom I **love**.”
- **39:10** “Everyone who **loves** the truth listens to me.”
- **47:01** She (Lydia) **loved** and worshiped God.
- **48:01** When God created the world, everything was perfect. There was no sin. Adam and Eve **loved** each other, and they **loved** God.
- **49:03** He (Jesus) taught that you need to **love** other people the same way you love yourself.
- **49:04** He (Jesus) also taught that you need to **love** God more than you **love** anything else, including your wealth.
- **49:07** Jesus taught that God **loves** sinners very much.
- **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.
- **49:13** God **loves** you and wants you to believe in Jesus so he can have a close relationship with you.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H157, H158, H159, H160, H2245, H2617, H2836, H3039, H4261, H5689, H5690, H5691, H7355, H7356, H7453, H7474, G25, G26, G5360, G5361, G5362, G5363, G5365, G5367, G5368, G5369, G5377, G5381, G5382, G5383, G5388

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 1:1-4
- Song of Solomon 1:7
- Song of Solomon 1:9-11
- Song of Solomon 2:1-2
- Song of Solomon 2:3-4
- Song of Solomon 2:5-6
- Song of Solomon 2:10-11
- Song of Solomon 3:1-2
- Song of Solomon 3:3-4
- Song of Solomon 3:10-11
- Song of Solomon 4:10-11
- Song of Solomon 5:1
- Song of Solomon 5:2
- Song of Solomon 5:8
- Song of Solomon 6:4
- Song of Solomon 7:12
- Song of Solomon 8:6
- Song of Solomon 8:7

Mount Hermon

Facts:

Mount Hermon is the name of the tallest mountain in Israel at the southern tip of the Lebanon mountain range.

- It is located north of the Sea of Galilee, at the northern border between Israel and Syria.
- Other names given to Mount Hermon by other people groups were “Mount Sirion” and “Mount Senir.”
- Mount Hermon has three major peaks. The tallest peak is around 2,800 meters high.

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

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

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 05:23-24
- [Ezekiel 27:4-5](#)
- Joshua 11:16-17
- Psalms 042:5-6
- [Song of Solomon 04:8](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:8](#)

myrrh

Definition:

Myrrh is an oil or spice that is made from the resin of a myrrh tree that grows in Africa and Asia. It is related to frankincense.

- Myrrh was also used to make incense, perfume, and medicine, and to prepare dead bodies for burial.
- Myrrh was one of the gifts that the learned men gave to Jesus when he was born.
- Jesus was offered wine mixed with myrrh in order to ease the pain when he was crucified.

(See also: [frankincense](#), learned men)

Bible References:

- Exodus 30:22-25
- Genesis 37:25-26
- [John 11:1-2](#)
- [Mark 15:22-24](#)
- [Matthew 02:11-12](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:6-7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:6-7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:13](#)

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:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)

oath, swear, swear by

Definition:

In the Bible, an oath is a formal promise to do something. The person making the oath is required to fulfill that promise. An oath involves a commitment to being faithful and truthful.

- In a court of law, a witness often gives an oath to promise that whatever he says will be true and factual.
- In the Bible, the term “swear” means to speak an oath.
- The term “swear by” means to use the name of something or someone as the basis or power on which the oath is made.
- Sometimes these terms are used together, as in “swear an oath.”
- Abraham and Abimelech swore an oath when they made a covenant together concerning the use of a well.
- Abraham told his servant to swear (formally promise) that he would find Isaac a wife from among Abraham’s relatives.
- God also made oaths in which he made promises to his people.
- A modern-day meaning of the word “swear” means is “use foul language.” This is not its meaning in the Bible.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “an oath” could also be translated as “a pledge” or “a solemn promise.”
- “To swear” could be translated as “to formally promise” or “to pledge” or “to commit to do something.”
- Other ways to translate “swear by my name” could include “make a promise using my name to confirm it.”
- To “swear by heaven and earth” could be translated as to, “promise to do something, stating that heaven and earth will confirm it.”
- Make sure the translation of “swear” or “oath” does not refer to cursing. In the Bible it does not have that meaning.

(See also: Abimelech, covenant, vow)

Bible References:

- Genesis 21:22-24
- Genesis 24:1-4
- Genesis 31:51-53
- Genesis 47:29-31
- [Luke 01:72-75](#)
- [Mark 06:26-29](#)

- [Matthew 05:36-37](#)
- [Matthew 14:6-7](#)
- [Matthew 26:71-72](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:4](#)

oil

Definition:

Oil is a thick, clear liquid that can be taken from certain plants. In Bible times, oil usually came from olives.

- Olive oil was used for cooking, anointing, sacrifice, lamps, and medicine.
- In ancient times, olive oil was highly prized, and the possession of oil was considered a measurement of wealth.
- Make sure the translation of this term refers to the kind of oil that can be used in cooking, not motor oil. Some languages have different words for these different kinds of oil.

(See also: olive, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 01:21-22
- Exodus 29:1-2
- Leviticus 05:11
- Leviticus 08:1-3
- [Mark 06:12-13](#)
- [Matthew 25:7-9](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)

palm

Definition:

The term “palm” refers to a type of tall tree with long, flexible, leafy branches extending from the top in a fan-like pattern.

- The palm tree in the Bible usually refers to a type of palm tree that produces a fruit called a “date.” The leaves have a feather-like pattern.
- Palm trees typically grow in places that have a hot, humid climate. Their leaves stay green all year long.
- As Jesus was entering Jerusalem riding on a donkey, the people laid palm branches on the ground in front of him.
- Palm branches signified peace and the celebration of a victory.

(See also: donkey, [Jerusalem](#), peace)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 06:29-30
- [Ezekiel 40:14-16](#)
- [John 12:12-13](#)
- Numbers 33:8-10

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 7:7-8](#)

perfect

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “perfect” means to be mature in our Christian life. To perfect something means to work at it until it is excellent and without flaws.

- Being perfect and mature means that a Christian is obedient, not sinless.
- The term “perfect” also has the meaning of being “complete” or “whole.”
- The New Testament Book of James states that persevering through trials will produce completeness and maturity in the believer.
- When Christians study the Bible and obey it, they will become more spiritually perfect and mature because they will be more like Christ in their character.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “without flaw” or “without error” or “flawless” or “without fault” or “not having any faults.”

Bible References:

- [Hebrews 12:1-3](#)
- [James 03:1-2](#)
- [Matthew 05:46-48](#)
- [Psalms 019:7-8](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H724, H998, H1584, H1585, H3632, H3634, H4357, H4359, H4512, H8003, H8502, H8503, H8535, H8537, H8549, H8552, G195, G197, G199, G739, G1295, G2005, G2675, G2676, G2677, G3647, G5046, G5047, G5048, G5050, G5052

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 6:13](#)

Pharaoh, king of Egypt

Facts:

In ancient times, the kings who ruled over the country of Egypt were called pharaohs.

- Altogether, over 300 pharaohs ruled Egypt for more than 2,000 years.
- These Egyptians kings were very powerful and wealthy.
- Several of these pharaohs are mentioned in the Bible.
- Often this title is used as a name rather than as a title. In these cases, it is capitalized and written as “Pharaoh.”

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

(See also: egypt, [king](#))

Bible References:

- [Acts 07:9-10](#)
- [Acts 07:11-13](#)
- [Acts 07:20-21](#)
- Genesis 12:14-16
- Genesis 40:6-8
- Genesis 41:25-26

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.
- **08:08 Pharaoh** was so impressed with Joseph that he appointed him to be the second most powerful man in all of Egypt!
- **09:02** So the **Pharaoh** who was ruling over Egypt at that time made the Israelites slaves to the Egyptians.
- **09:13** “I will send you to **Pharaoh** so that you can bring the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt.”
- **10:02** Through these plagues, God showed **Pharaoh** that he is more powerful than **Pharaoh** and all of Egypt’s gods.

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:9-11](#)

pillar, column

Definition:

The term “pillar” usually refers to a large vertical structure that is used to hold up a roof or other part of a building. Another word for “pillar” is “column.”

- In Bible times, pillars used as support in buildings were normally carved from a single piece of stone.
- When Samson in the Old Testament was captured by the Philistines, he destroyed their pagan temple by pushing the supporting pillars and causing the temple to collapse.
- The word “pillar” sometimes refers to a large stone or boulder that is set up as a memorial to mark a grave or to mark the place where an important event happened.
- It can also refer to an idol that was made to worship a false god. It is another name for a “carved image” and could be translated as “statue.”
- The term “pillar” is used to refer to something that is shaped like a pillar, such as the “pillar of fire” that led the Israelites at night through the desert or the “pillar of salt” that Lot’s wife became after she looked back at the city.
- As a structure supporting a building, the term “pillar” or “column” could be translated as “upright stone support beam” or “supporting stone structure.”
- Other uses of “pillar” could be translated as “statue” or “pile” or “mound” or “monument” or “tall mass,” depending on the context.

(See also: foundation, idol, image)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 18:4-5
- Exodus 13:19-22
- Exodus 33:7-9
- Genesis 31:45-47
- Proverbs 09:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:6-7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:15](#)

pomegranate

Facts:

A pomegranate is a kind of fruit that has a thick, tough skin filled with many seeds that are covered with edible red pulp.

- The outer rind is reddish in color and the pulp surrounding the seeds is shiny and red.
- Pomegranates are very commonly grown in countries with a hot, dry climate, such as Egypt and Israel.
- Yahweh promised the Israelites that Canaan was a land with abundant water and fertile soil so that food was plentiful there, including pomegranates.
- The construction of Solomon's temple included bronze decorations in the shape of pomegranates.

(See also: bronze, Canaan, Egypt, [Solomon](#), temple)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 25:16-17
- Deuteronomy 08:7-8
- [Jeremiah 52:22-23](#)
- Numbers 13:23-24 Egypt

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:3](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:6-7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:11-12](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:12](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:2-3](#)

possess, possession

Facts:

The terms “possess” and “possession” usually refer to owning something. They can also mean to gain control over something or occupy an area of land.

- In the Old Testament, this term is often used in the context of “possessing” or “taking possession of” an area of land.
- When Yahweh commanded the Israelites to “possess” the land of Canaan, it meant that they should go into the land and live there. This involved first conquering the Canaanite peoples who were living on that land.
- Yahweh told the Israelites that he had given them the land of Canaan as “their possession.” This could also be translated as “their rightful place to live.”
- The people of Israel were also called Yahweh’s “special possession.” This means that they belonged to him as his people whom he had specifically called to worship and serve him.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “possess” could also be translated as “own” or “have” or “have charge over.”
- The phrase “take possession of” could be translated as “take control of” or “occupy” or “live on,” depending on the context.
- When referring to things that people own, “possessions” could be translated as “belongings” or “property” or “owned things” or “things they owned.”
- When Yahweh calls the Israelites, “my special possession” this could also be translated as “my special people” or “people who belong to me” or “my people whom I love and rule.”
- The sentence, “they will become their possession” when referring to land, means “they will occupy the land” or “the land will belong to them.”
- The expression, “found in his possession” could be translated as, “that he was holding” or “that he had with him.”
- The phrase “as your possession” could also be translated as, “as something that belongs to you” or “as a place where your people will live.”
- The phrase, “in his possession” could be translated as “that he owned” or “which belonged to him.”

(See also: Canaan, worship)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 06:70
- 1 Kings 09:17-19
- [Acts 02:43-45](#)
- Deuteronomy 04:5-6
- Genesis 31:36-37

- [Matthew 13:44-46](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 8:7](#)

praise

Definition:

To praise someone is to express admiration and honor for that person.

- People praise God because of how great he is and because of all the amazing things he has done as the Creator and Savior of the world.
- Praise for God often includes being thankful for what he has done.
- Music and singing is often used as a way to praise God.
- Praising God is part of what it means to worship him.
- The term “to praise” could also be translated as “to speak well of” or “to highly honor with words” or “to say good things about.”
- The noun “praise” could be translated as “spoken honor” or “speech that honors” or “speaking good things about.”

(See also: worship)

Bible References:

- [2 Corinthians 01:3-4](#)
- [Acts 02:46-47](#)
- [Acts 13:48-49](#)
- [Daniel 03:28](#)
- [Ephesians 01:3-4](#)
- [Genesis 49:8](#)
- [James 03:9-10](#)
- [John 05:41-42](#)
- [Luke 01:46-47](#)
- [Luke 01:64-66](#)
- [Luke 19:37-38](#)
- [Matthew 11:25-27](#)
- [Matthew 15:29-31](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

***12:13** The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to **praise** God because he saved them from the Egyptian army. ***17:08** When David heard these words, he immediately thanked and **praised** God because he had promised David this great honor and many blessings. ***22:07** Zechariah said, “**Praise** God, because he has remembered his people! ***43:13** They (disciples) enjoyed **praising** God together and they shared everything they had with each other. ***47:08** They put Paul and Silas in the most secure part of the prison and even locked up their feet. Yet in the middle of the night, they were singing songs of **praise** to God.

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 6:8-9

prince, princess

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:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 6:11-12](#)

- [Song of Solomon 7:1](#)

promise, promises, promised

Definition:

A promise is a pledge to do a certain thing. When someone promises something, it means he is committing to do something.

- The Bible records many promises that God has made for his people.
- Promises are an important part of formal agreements such as covenants.
- A promise is often accompanied by an oath to confirm that it will be done.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “promise” could be translated as “commitment” or “assurance” or “guarantee.”
- To “promise to do something” could be translated as “assure someone that you will do something” or “commit to doing something.”

(See also: covenant, [oath](#), vow)

Bible References:

- [Galatians 03:15-16](#)
- [Genesis 25:31-34](#)
- [Hebrews 11:8-10](#)
- [James 01:12-13](#)
- [Numbers 30:1-2](#)

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.”¹
- **03:16** God then made the first rainbow as a sign of his **promise**. Every time the rainbow appeared in the sky, God would remember what he **promised** and so would his people.
- **04:08** God spoke to Abram and **promised** again that he would have a son and as many descendants as the stars in the sky. Abram believed God’s **promise**.
- **05:04** “Your wife, Sarai, will have a son” he will be the son of **promise**.”
- **08:15** The covenant **promises** that God gave to Abraham were passed on to Isaac, then to Jacob, and then to Jacob’s twelve sons and their families.
- **17:14** Though David had been unfaithful to God, God was still faithful to his **promises**.
- **50:01** Jesus **promised** he would return at the end of the world. Though he has not yet come back, he will keep his **promise**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H559, H562, H1696, H8569, G1843, G1860, G1861, G1862, G3670, G4279

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 8:8](#)

pure, purify, purification

Definition:

To be “pure” means to have no flaw or to have nothing mixed in that is not supposed to be there. To purify something is to cleanse it and remove anything that contaminates or pollutes it.

- In regard to Old Testament laws, “purify” and “purification” refer mainly to the cleansing from things that make an object or a person ritually unclean, such as disease, body fluids, or childbirth.
- The Old Testament also had laws telling people how to be purified from sin, usually by the sacrifice of an animal. This was only temporary and the sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again.
- In the New Testament, to be purified often refers to being cleansed from sin.
- The only way that people can be completely and permanently purified from sin is through repenting and receiving God’s forgiveness, through trusting in Jesus and his sacrifice.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “purify” could be translated as “make pure” or “cleanse” or “cleanse from all contamination” or “get rid of all sin.”
- A phrase such as “when the time for their purification was over” could be translated as “when they had purified themselves by waiting the required number of days.”
- The phrase “provided purification for sins” could be translated as “provided a way for people to be completely cleansed from their sin.”
- Other ways to translate “purification” could include “cleansing” or “spiritual washing” or “becoming ritually clean.”

(See also: atonement, clean, spirit)

Bible References:

- [1 Timothy 01:5-8](#)
- [Exodus 31:6-9](#)
- [Hebrews 09:13-15](#)
- [James 04:8-10](#)
- [Luke 02:22-24](#)
- [Revelation 14:3-5](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1249, H1252, H1253, H1305, H1865, H2134, H2135, H2141, H2212, H2398, H2403, H2561, H2889, H2890, H2891, H2892, H2893, H3795, H3800, H4795, H5343, H5462, H6337, H6884, H6942, H8562, G48, G49, G53, G54, G1506, G2511, G2512, G2513, G2514

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 5:10-11](#)

purple

Facts:

The term “purple” is the name of a color that is a mixture of blue and red.

- In ancient times, purple was a rare and highly valuable color of dye that was used to dye the clothing of kings and other high officials.
- Because it was costly and time-consuming to produce this dye, purple clothing was considered a sign of wealth, distinction, and royalty.
- Purple was also one of the colors used for the curtains in the tabernacle and temple, and for the ephod worn by the priests.
- Purple dye was extracted from a kind of sea snail by either crushing or boiling the snails or by causing them to release the dye while still alive. This was an expensive process.
- Roman soldiers put a purple royal robe on Jesus before his crucifixion, to mock him for his claim to be King of the Jews.
- Lydia from the town of Philippi was a woman who made her living by selling purple cloth.

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

(See also: ephod, Philippi, royal, tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 02:13-14
- [Daniel 05:7](#)
- [Daniel 05:29-31](#)
- Proverbs 31:22-23

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:5-6](#)

queen

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:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 6:8-9](#)

rejoice

Definition:

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

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

(See also: joy)

Bible References:

- [1 Thessalonians 05:15-18](#)
- [Acts 16:32-34](#)
- [John 03:29-30](#)
- [Luke 15:6-7](#)
- [Luke 19:37-38](#)
- [Matthew 02:9-10](#)
- [Philippians 04:10-13](#)
- [Romans 05:1-2](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)

robe**Definition:**

A robe is an outer garment with long sleeves that can be worn by a man or a woman. It is similar to a coat.

- Robes are open in the front and are tied shut with a sash or belt.
- They can be long or short.
- Purple robes were worn by kings as a sign of royalty, wealth, and prestige.

(See also: royal, tunic)

Bible References:

- Exodus 28:4-5
- Genesis 49:11-12
- [Luke 15:22-24](#)
- [Luke 20:45-47](#)
- [Matthew 27:27-29](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 5:3-4](#)

sandal

Definition:

A sandal is a simple flat-soled shoe held onto the foot by straps that go around the foot or ankle. Sandals are worn by both men and women.

- A sandal was sometimes used to confirm a legal transaction, such as the selling of property: one man would take off a sandal and give it to the other.
- Removing one's shoes or sandals was also a sign of respect and reverence, especially in God's presence.
- John said that he was not worthy to even untie Jesus' sandals, which would have been the task of a lowly servant or slave.

Bible References:

- [Acts 07:33-34](#)
- Deuteronomy 25:9-10
- [John 01:26-28](#)
- Joshua 05:14-15
- [Mark 06:7-9](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 7:1](#)

seal, to seal

Definition:

To seal an object means to keep it closed with something that makes it impossible to open without breaking the seal.

- Often a seal is marked with a design to show who it belongs to.
- Melted wax was used to seal letters or other documents that needed to be protected. When the wax cooled and hardened, the letter could not be opened without breaking the wax seal.
- A seal was put on the stone in front of Jesus' grave in order to keep anyone from moving the stone.
- Paul figuratively refers to the Holy Spirit as a "seal" showing that our salvation is secure.

(See also: Holy Spirit, tomb)

Bible References:

- Exodus 02:3-4
- [Isaiah 29:11-12](#)
- [John 06:26-27](#)
- [Matthew 27:65-66](#)
- [Revelation 05:1-2](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:6](#)

shadow

Definition:

The word “shadow” literally refers to the darkness that is caused by an object blocking the light. It also has several figurative meanings.

- The “shadow of death” means that death is present or near, just as a shadow indicates the presence of its object.
- Many times in the Bible, the life of a human being is compared to a shadow, which does not last very long and has no substance.
- Sometimes “shadow” is used as another word for “darkness.”
- The Bible talks about being hidden or protected in the shadow of God’s wings or hands. This is a picture of being protected and hidden from danger. Other ways to translate “shadow” in these contexts could include “shade” or “safety” or “protection.”
- It is best to translate “shadow” literally using the local term that is used to refer to an actual shadow.

(See also: darkness, light)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 20:8-9
- Genesis 19:6-8
- [Isaiah 30:1-2](#)
- [Jeremiah 06:4-5](#)
- Psalms 017:8-10

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 2:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:16-17](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:6-7](#)

sheep, ram, ewe

Definition:

A “sheep” is a medium-sized animal with four legs that has wool all over its body. A male sheep is called a “ram.” A female sheep is called a “ewe.” The plural of “sheep” is also “sheep.”

- A baby sheep is called a “lamb.”
- The Israelites often used sheep for sacrifices, especially male sheep and young sheep.
- People eat meat from sheep and use their wool to make clothing and other things.
- Sheep are very trusting, weak, and timid. They are easily influenced to wander away. They need a shepherd to lead them, protect them, and provide them with food, water, and shelter.
- In the Bible, people are compared to sheep who have God as their shepherd.

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

(See also: [Israel](#), lamb, sacrifice, [shepherd](#))

Bible References:

- [Acts 08:32-33](#)
- [Genesis 30:31-32](#)
- [John 02:13-14](#)
- [Luke 15:3-5](#)
- [Mark 06:33-34](#)
- [Matthew 09:35-36](#)
- [Matthew 10:5-7](#)
- [Matthew 12:11-12](#)
- [Matthew 25:31-33](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **09:12** One day while Moses was taking care of his **sheep**, he saw a bush that was on fire.
- **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**.
- **30:03** To Jesus, these people were like **sheep** without a shepherd.
- **38:08** Jesus said, “All of you will all abandon me tonight. It is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd and all the **sheep** will be scattered.’”

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:6-7](#)

shepherd, to shepherd

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: [believer](#), [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:

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 1:8

shield

Definition:

A shield was an object held by a soldier in battle to protect himself from being injured by the enemy's weapons. "To shield" someone means to protect that person from harm.

- Shields were often circular or oval, were made of materials such as leather, wood, or metal, and were sturdy and thick enough to keep a sword or arrow from piercing them.
- Using this term as a metaphor, the Bible refers to God as a protective shield for his people. (See: Metaphor)
- Paul talked about the "shield of faith," which is a figurative way of saying that having faith in Jesus and living out that faith in obedience to God will protect believers from the spiritual attacks of Satan.

(See also: faith, obey, Satan, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 14:25-26
- 2 Chronicles 23:8-9
- 2 Samuel 22:36-37
- Deuteronomy 33:29
- Psalms 18:35-36

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:4-5](#)

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:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:9-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:11-12](#)

sister

Definition:

A sister is a female person who shares at least one biological parent with another person. She is said to be that other person's sister or the sister of that other person.

- In the New Testament, "sister" is also used figuratively to refer to a woman who is a fellow believer in Jesus Christ.
- Sometimes the phrase "brothers and sisters" is used to refer to all believers in Christ, both men and women.
- In the Old Testament book Song of Songs, "sister" refers to a female lover or spouse.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term with the literal word that is used in the target language to refer to a natural or biological sister, unless this would give wrong meaning.
- Other ways to translate this could include "sister in Christ" or "spiritual sister" or "woman who believes in Jesus" or "fellow woman believer."
- If possible, it is best to use a family term.
- If the language has a feminine form for "believer," this may be a possible way to translate this term.
- When referring to a lover or wife, this could be translated using a feminine form of "loved one" or "dear one."

(See also: brother in Christ, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 02:16-17
- Deuteronomy 27:22-23
- [Philemon 01:1-3](#)
- [Romans 16:1-2](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 5:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:2](#)

sleep with, have relations with, lovemaking

Definition:

In the Bible, these terms are euphemisms that refer to having sexual intercourse. (See: [Euphemism](#))

- The expression “sleep with” someone commonly refers to having sexual relations with that person. The past tense is “slept with.”
- In the Old Testament book “Song of Solomon,” the ULB uses the term “lovemaking” to translate the word “love,” which in that context refers to sexual relations. This term is related to the expression “make love to.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Some languages may use different expressions for these terms in different contexts, depending on whether those involved are a married couple or whether they have some other relationship. It is important to make sure that the translation of this term has the correct meaning in each context.
- Depending on the context, expressions like these could be used to translate “sleep with”: “lie with” or “make love to” or “be intimate with.”
- Other ways to translate “have relations with” could include “have sexual relations with” or “have marital relations with.”
- The term “lovemaking” could also be translated as “loving” or “intimacy.” Or there may be an expression that is a natural way to translate this in the project language.
- It is important to check that the terms used to translate this concept are acceptable to the people who will be using the Bible translation.

(See also: sexual immorality)

Bible References:

- [1 Corinthians 05:1-2](#)
- 1 Samuel 01:19-20
- Deuteronomy 21:13-14
- Genesis 19:4-5
- [Matthew 01:24-25](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 2:7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:4](#)

Solomon

Facts:

Solomon was one of King David's sons. His mother was Bathsheba.

- When Solomon became king, God told him to ask for anything he wanted. So Solomon asked for wisdom to rule the people justly and well. God was pleased with Solomon's request and gave him both wisdom and much wealth.
- Solomon is also well known for having a magnificent temple built in Jerusalem.
- Although Solomon ruled wisely in the first years of his reign, later on he foolishly married many foreign women and started worshiping their gods.
- Because of Solomon's unfaithfulness, after his death God divided the Israelites into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. These kingdoms often fought against each other.

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

(See also: Bathsheba, [David](#), [Israel](#), Judah, kingdom of Israel, temple)

Bible References:

- [Acts 07:47-50](#)
- [Luke 12:27-28](#)
- [Matthew 01:7-8](#)
- [Matthew 06:27-29](#)
- [Matthew 12:42](#)

Examples from the Bible stories:

***17:14** Later, David and Bathsheba had another son, and they named him **Solomon**. ***18:01** After many years, David died, and his son **Solomon** began to rule. God spoke to **Solomon** and asked him what he wanted most. When **Solomon** asked for wisdom, God was pleased and made him the wisest man in the world. **Solomon** learned many things and was a very wise judge. God also made him very wealthy. ***18:02** In Jerusalem, **Solomon** built the Temple for which his father David had planned and gathered materials. ***18:03** But **Solomon** loved women from other countries. ... When **Solomon** was old, he also worshiped their gods. ***18:04** God was angry with **Solomon** and, as a punishment for **Solomon's** unfaithfulness, he promised to divide the nation of Israel into two kingdoms after **Solomon's** death.

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 1:1-4
- Song of Solomon 1:5-6
- Song of Solomon 3:6-7
- Song of Solomon 3:8-9
- Song of Solomon 3:10-11
- Song of Solomon 8:11-12

soul, souls

Definition:

The soul is the inner, invisible, and eternal part of a person. It refers to the non-physical part of a person.

- The terms “soul” and “spirit” may be two different concepts, or they may be two terms that refer to the same concept.
- When a person dies, his soul leaves his body.
- The word “soul” is sometimes used figuratively to refer to the whole person. For example, “the soul who sins” means “the person who sins” and “my soul is tired” means, “I am tired.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “soul” could also be translated as “inner self” or “inner person.”
- In some contexts, “my soul” could be translated as “I” or “me.”
- Usually the phrase “the soul” can be translated as “the person” or “he” or “him,” depending on the context.
- Some languages might only have one word for the concepts “soul” and “spirit.”
- In Hebrews 4:12, the figurative phrase “dividing soul and spirit” could mean “deeply discerning or exposing the inner person.”

(See also: spirit)

Bible References:

- [2 Peter 02:7-9](#)
- [Acts 02:27-28](#)
- [Acts 02:40-42](#)
- [Genesis 49:5-6](#)
- [Isaiah 53:10-11](#)
- [James 01:19-21](#)
- [Jeremiah 06:16-19](#)
- [Jonah 02:7-8](#)
- [Luke 01:46-47](#)
- [Matthew 22:37-38](#)
- [Psalms 019:7-8](#)
- [Revelation 20:4](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5082, H5315, H5397, G5590

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:3-4](#)

stronghold, fortress, fortified

Definition:

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

- Often, strongholds and fortresses 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, idol, 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:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 8:10](#)

sword

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:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:8-9](#)

teach, teaching, teaches, taught

Definition:

To “teach” someone is to tell him something he doesn’t already know. It can also mean “to provide information” in general, with no reference to the person who is learning. Usually the information is given in a formal or systematic way. A person’s “teaching” is or his “teachings” are what he has taught.

- A “teacher” is someone who teaches. The past action of “teach” is “taught.”
- When Jesus was teaching, he was explaining things about God and his kingdom.
- Jesus’ disciples called him “Teacher” as a respectful form of address for someone who taught people about God.
- The information that is being taught can be shown or spoken.
- The term “doctrine” refers to a set of teachings from God about himself as well as God’s instructions about how to live. This could also be translated as “teachings from God” or “what God teaches us.”
- The phrase “what you have been taught” could also be translated as, “what these people have taught you” or “what God has taught you,” depending on the context.
- Other ways to translate “teach” could include “tell” or “explain” or “instruct.”
- Often this term can be translated as “teaching people about God.”

(See also: instruct, teacher, word of God)

Bible References:

- [1 Timothy 01:3-4](#)
- [Acts 02:40-42](#)
- [John 07:14-16](#)
- [Luke 04:31-32](#)
- [Matthew 04:23-25](#)
- [Psalms 032:7-8](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 8:2-3](#)

tent

Definition:

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

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

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

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 05:10
- [Daniel 11:44-45](#)
- Exodus 16:16-18
- Genesis 12:8-9

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:5-6](#)

terror, terrify

Definition:

The term “terror” refers to a feeling of extreme fear. To “terrify” someone means to cause that person to feel very afraid.

- A “terror” is something or someone that causes great fear or dread. An example of a terror could be an attacking enemy army or a plague or disease that is widespread, killing many people.
- These terrors can be described as “terrifying.” This term could be translated as, “fear-causing” or “terror-producing.”
- The judgment of God will someday cause terror in unrepentant people who reject his grace.
- The “terror of Yahweh” could be translated as “the terrifying presence of Yahweh” or “the dreaded judgment of Yahweh” or “when Yahweh causes great fear.”
- Ways to translate “terror” could also include “extreme fear” or “deep dread.”

(See also: adversary, fear, judge, plague, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- Deuteronomy 02:24-25
- Exodus 14:10-12
- [Luke 21:7-9](#)
- [Mark 06:48-50](#)
- [Matthew 28:5-7](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:8-9](#)

thorn, thistle

Facts:

Thorn bushes and thistles are plants that have prickly branches or flowers. These plants do not produce fruit or anything else that is useful.

- A “thorn” is a hard, sharp growth on the branch or stem of a plant. A “thornbush” is a type of small tree or shrub that has many thorns on its branches.
- A “thistle” is a plant with prickly stems and leaves. Often the flowers are purple.
- Thorn and thistle plants multiply quickly and can cause nearby plants or crops to not be able to grow. This is a picture of how sin keeps a person from producing good spiritual fruit.
- A crown made of twisted thorn branches was placed on Jesus’ head before he was crucified.
- If possible, these terms should be translated by the names of two different plants or bushes that are known in the language area.

(See also: [crown](#), [fruit](#), [spirit](#))

Bible References:

- [Hebrews 06:7-8](#)
- [Matthew 13:7-9](#)
- [Matthew 13:22-23](#)
- [Numbers 33:55-56](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 2:1-2](#)

time

Facts:

In the Bible the term “time” was often used figuratively to refer to a specific season or period of time when certain events took place. It has a meaning similar to “age” or “epoch” or “season.”

- In both Daniel and Revelation speak of a “time” of great trouble or tribulation that will come upon the earth.
- In the phrase “time, times, and half a time” the term “time” means “year.” This phrase refers to a three-and-a-half-year period of time during the great tribulation at the end of this present age.
- “Time” can mean “occasion” in a phrase like “third time.” The phrase “many times” can mean “on many occasions.”
- To be “on time” means to arrive when expected, not late.
- Depending on the context, the term “time” could be translated as, “season” or “time period” or “moment” or “event” or “occurrence.”
- The phrase “times and seasons” is a figurative expression which states the same idea twice. This could also be translated as “certain events happening in certain time periods.” (See: [doublet](#))

(See also: [age](#), [tribulation](#))

Bible References:

- [Acts 01:6-8](#)
- [Daniel 12:1-2](#)
- [Mark 11:11-12](#)
- [Matthew 08:28-29](#)
- [Psalms 068:28-29](#)
- [Revelation 14:14-16](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 2:12-13](#)

Tirzah

Facts:

Tirzah was an important Canaanite city that was conquered by the Israelites. It was also the name of a daughter of Gilead, a descendant of Manasseh.

- The city Tirzah was located in the region occupied by the tribe of Manasseh. It is thought that the city was about 10 miles north of the city of Shechem.
- Years later, Tirzah became a temporary capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel, during the reigns of four kings of Israel.
- Tirzah was also the name of one of Manasseh's granddaughters. They asked to be given a portion of the land since their father had died and he had no sons to inherit it as would normally be the custom.

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

(See also: Canaan, inherit, kingdom of Israel, Manasseh, Shechem)

Bible References:

- Numbers 27:1
- Numbers 36:10-12
- [Song of Solomon 06:4](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 6:4](#)

turn, turn away, turn back

Definition:

To “turn” means to physically change direction or to cause something else to change direction.

- The term “turn” can also mean “turn around” to look behind or to face a different direction.
- To “turn back” or “turn away” means to “go back” or “go away” or “cause to go away.”
- To “turn away from” can mean to “stop” doing something or to reject someone.
- To “turn toward” someone means to look directly at that person.
- To “turn and leave” or “turn his back to leave” means to “go away.”
- To “turn back to” means to “start doing something again.”
- To “turn away from” means to “stop doing something.”

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “turn” can be translated as “change direction” or “go” or “move.”
- In some contexts, “turn” could be translated as “cause” (someone) to do something. To “turn (someone) away from” could be translated as “cause (someone) to go away” or “cause (someone) to stop.”
- The phrase “turn away from God” could be translated as “stop worshiping God.”
- The phrase “turn back to God” could be translated as “start worshiping God again.”
- When enemies “turn back,” it means they “retreat.” To “turn back the enemy” means to “cause the enemy to retreat.”
- Used figuratively, when Israel “turned to” false gods, they “started to worship” them. When they “turned away” from idols, they “stopped worshiping” them.
- When God “turned away from” his rebellious people, he “stopped protecting” or “stopped helping” them.
- The phrase “turn the hearts of the fathers to their children” could be translated as “cause fathers to care for their children again.”
- The expression “turn my honor into shame” could be translated as “cause my honor to become shame” or “dishonor me so that I am shamed” or “shame me (by doing what is evil) so that people no longer honor me.”
- “I will turn your cities into ruin” could be translated as “I will cause your cities to be destroyed” or “I will cause enemies to destroy your cities.”
- The phrase “turn into” could be translated as “become.” When Moses’ rod “turned into” a snake, it “became” a snake.” It could also be translated as “changed into.”

(See also: idol, leprosy, worship)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 11:1-2
- [Acts 07:41-42](#)

- Acts 11:19-21
- Jeremiah 36:1-3
- Luke 01:16-17
- Malachi 04:4-6
- Revelation 11:6-7

Word Data:

- Strong's: H541, H1750, H2015, H2015, H2017, H2186, H2559, H3399, H3943, H3943, H4142, H4672, H4740, H4878, H4878, H5186, H5186, H5253, H5414, H5437, H5437, H5472, H5472, H5493, H5493, H5528, H5627, H5753, H5844, H6437, H6437, H6801, H7227, H7725, H7725, H7734, H7750, H7760, H7847, H8159, H8447, H8447, G344, G387, G387, G402, G576, G654, G654, G665, G868, G1294, G1294, G1578, G1612, G1624, G1624, G1994, G1994, G2827, G3179, G3179, G3313, G3329, G3344, G3344, G3346, G3346, G4762, G4762, G5077, G5157, G5290, G6060

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 5:6

veil

Definition:

The term “veil” usually refers to a thin piece of cloth that is used as a head covering, to cover the head or face so that it cannot be seen.

- Moses covered his face with a veil after he had been in the presence of Yahweh, so that the brightness of his face would be hidden from the people.
- In the Bible, women wore a veil to cover their head, and often their face as well, when they were in public or in the presence of men.
- The verb “to veil” means to cover something with a veil.
- In some English versions, the word “veil” is used to refer to the thick curtain that covered the entrance into the most holy place. But “curtain” is a better term in that context, since it refers to a heavy, thick piece of cloth.

Translation Suggestions

- The term “veil” could also be translated as “thin cloth covering” or “cloth covering” or “head covering.”
- In some cultures, there may already be a term for a veil for women. It may be necessary to find a different word when it is used for Moses.

(See also: Moses)

Bible References:

- [2 Corinthians 03:12-13](#)
- [2 Corinthians 03:14-16](#)
- [Ezekiel 13:17-18](#)
- [Isaiah 47:1-2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04:3](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7289, G2665

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:3](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:6-7](#)

vine

Definition:

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

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

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

Bible References:

- 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:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 2:12-13](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:11-12](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:12](#)

vineyard

Definition:

A vineyard is a large garden area where grapevines are grown and grapes are cultivated.

- A vineyard often has a wall around it to protect the fruit from thieves and animals.
- God compared the people of Israel to a vineyard that did not bear good fruit. (See: [Metaphor](#))
- Vineyard could be also translated as “grapevine garden” or “grape plantation.”

(See also: [grape](#), [Israel](#), [vine](#))

Bible References:

- Genesis 09:20-21
- [Luke 13:6-7](#)
- [Luke 20:15-16](#)
- [Matthew 20:1-2](#)
- [Matthew 21:40-41](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:5-6](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:15](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:12](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:11-12](#)

voice

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:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 2:14](#)

warrior, soldier

Facts:

The terms “warrior” and “soldier” both can refer to someone who fights in an army. But there are also some differences.

- Usually the term “warrior” is a general, broad term to refer to a man who is gifted and courageous in battle.
- Yahweh is figuratively described as a “warrior.”
- The term “soldier” more specifically refers to someone who belongs to a certain army or who is fighting in a certain battle.
- Roman soldiers in Jerusalem were there to keep order and to carry out duties such as executing prisoners. They guarded Jesus before crucifying him and some were ordered to stand guard at his tomb.
- The translator should consider whether there are two words in the project language for “warrior” and “soldier” that also differ in meaning and use.

(See also: courage, crucify, Rome, tomb)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 21:4-5
- [Acts 21:32-33](#)
- [Luke 03:14](#)
- [Luke 23:11-12](#)
- [Matthew 08:8-10](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:6-7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:4-5](#)

watch, watchman

Definition:

The term “watch” means to look at something very closely and carefully. It also has several figurative meanings. A “watchman” was someone whose job was to guard a city by looking carefully all around him for any danger or threat to the people in the city.

- The command to “watch your life and doctrine closely” means to be careful to live wisely and to not believe false teachings.
- To “watch out” is a warning to be careful to avoid a danger or harmful influence.
- To “watch” or “keep watch” means to always be alert and on guard against sin and evil. It can also mean to “be ready.”
- To “keep watch over” or “keep close watch” can mean to guard, protect or take care of someone or something.
- Other ways of translating “watch” could include “pay close attention to” or “be diligent” or “be very careful” or “be on guard.”
- Other words for “watchman” are “sentry” or “guard.”

Bible References:

- [1 Thessalonians 05:4-7](#)
- [Hebrews 13:15-17](#)
- [Jeremiah 31:4-6](#)
- [Mark 08:14-15](#)
- [Mark 13:33-34](#)
- [Matthew 25:10-13](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:7](#)

watchtower, tower

Definition:

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

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

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

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 27:25-27
- [Ezekiel 26:3-4](#)
- [Mark 12:1-3](#)
- [Matthew 21:33-34](#)
- Psalm 062:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:4-5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:10](#)

wheat

Definition:

Wheat is a type of grain that people grow for food. When the Bible mentions “grain” or “seeds,” it is often talking about wheat grain or seeds.

- The wheat seeds or grains grow at the top of the wheat plant.
- After harvesting the wheat, the grain is separated from the stalk of the plant by threshing it. The stalk of the wheat plant is also called “straw” and is often placed on the ground for animals to sleep on.
- After threshing, the chaff surrounding the grain seed is separated from the grain by winnowing and is thrown away.
- People grind the wheat grain into flour, and use this for making bread.

(See also: barley, chaff, grain, seed, thresh, winnow)

Bible References:

- [Acts 27:36-38](#)
- [Exodus 34:21-22](#)
- [John 12:23-24](#)
- [Luke 03:17](#)
- [Matthew 03:10-12](#)
- [Matthew 13:24-26](#)

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 7:2](#)

wine, wineskin, new wine

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “wine” refers to a kind of fermented drink made from the juice of a fruit called grapes. Wine was stored in “wineskins,” which were containers made out of animal skin.

- The term “new wine” referred to grape juice that had just been taken from the grape and was not fermented yet. Sometimes the term “wine” also referred to unfermented grape juice.
- To make wine, grapes are crushed in a winepress so that the juice comes out. The juice eventually ferments and alcohol forms in it.
- In Bible times, wine was the normal drink with meals. It did not have as much alcohol as present-day wine has.
- Before wine was served for a meal, it was often mixed with water.
- A wineskin that was old and brittle would get cracks in it, which allowed the wine to leak out. New wineskins were soft and flexible, which meant they did not tear easily and could store the wine safely.
- If wine is unknown in your culture, it could be translated as “fermented grape juice” or “fermented drink made from a fruit called grapes” or “fermented fruit juice.” (See: [How to Translate Unknowns](#))
- Ways to translate “wineskin” could include “bag for wine” or “animal skin wine bag” or “animal skin container for wine.”

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

Bible References:

- [1 Timothy 05:23-25](#)
- Genesis 09:20-21
- Genesis 49:11-12
- [John 02:3-5](#)
- [John 02:9-10](#)
- [Matthew 09:17](#)
- [Matthew 11:18-19](#)

smashed

Word Data:

- Strong's:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)

- Song of Solomon 4:10-11
- Song of Solomon 5:1
- Song of Solomon 7:2
- Song of Solomon 7:9
- Song of Solomon 8:2-3

Zion, Mount Zion

Definition:

Originally, the term “Zion” or “Mount Zion” referred to a stronghold or fortress that King David captured from the Jebusites. Both these terms became other ways of referring to Jerusalem.

- Mount Zion and Mount Moriah were two of the hills that the city of Jerusalem was located on. Later, “Zion” and “Mount Zion” became used as general terms to refer to both of these mountains and to the city of Jerusalem. Sometimes they also referred to the temple that was located in Jerusalem. (See: [metonymy](#))
- David named Zion, or Jerusalem, the “City of David.” This is different from David’s hometown, Bethlehem, which was also called the City of David.
- The term “Zion” is used in other figurative ways, to refer to Israel or to God’s spiritual kingdom or to the new, heavenly Jerusalem that God will create.

(See also: Abraham, [David](#), [Jerusalem](#), Bethlehem, Jebusites)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:4-6
- [Amos 01:1-2](#)
- [Jeremiah 51:34-35](#)
- Psalm 076:1-3
- [Romans 11:26-27](#)

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:10-11](#)

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.
 - **... from childhood you have known the sacred writings ...** (2 Timothy 3:15 ULB)
 - Ever since you were a child you have known the sacred writings.
 - **But godliness with contentment is great gain.** (1 Timothy 6:6 ULB)
 - But being godly and content is very beneficial.
 - But we benefit greatly when we are godly and content.
 - But we benefit greatly when we honor and obey God and when we are happy with what we have.
 - **Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham.** (Luke 19:9 ULB)
 - Today the people in this house have been saved...
 - Today God has saved the people in this house...
 - **The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider slowness to be.** (2 Peter 3:9 ULB)

- The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider moving slowly to be.
- **He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the purposes of the heart.** (1 Corinthians 4:5 ULB)
 - He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the things that people want to do and the reasons they want to do them.

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:8-9](#)

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.

- **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.
2. Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like “they” or “people” or “someone.”
- **It would be better for him if a millstone were put around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.** (Luke 17:2 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.
3. Use a different verb in an active sentence.
- **A loaf of bread was given him every day from the street of the bakers.** (Jeremiah 37:21 ULB)
 - He received a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 2:12-13
- Song of Solomon 4:2
- Song of Solomon 4:4-5
- Song of Solomon 7:5-6
- Song of Solomon 8:7
- Song of Solomon 8:8

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.
 - **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.' "
 - **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:

- Song of Solomon 1:5-6
- Song of Solomon 2:7
- Song of Solomon 2:7
- Song of Solomon 3:5
- Song of Solomon 3:5
- Song of Solomon 5:8
- Song of Solomon 5:16
- Song of Solomon 8:4
- Song of Solomon 8:11-12

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:

- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 03 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:6-7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:13](#)
- [Song of Solomon 08 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:2-3](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:10](#)

Background Information

This page answers the question: *What is background information, and how can I show that some information is background information?*

Description

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. This sequence of events makes up the storyline. The storyline is full of action verbs that move the story along in time. But sometimes a writer may take a break from the storyline and give some information to help his listeners understand the story better. This type of information is called **background information**. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story.

Example - The underlined sentences in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because their village was going to have a a feast the next day. Peter was the best hunter in the village. He once killed three wild pigs in one day! They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope they had brought with them, and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a feast the next day" and "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," "that they had brought with them," and "Peter had mistakenly killed his cousins's pig."

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were", rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "Peter was the best hunter in the village" and "it was his own pig."

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are "because," "once," and "had."

A writer may use background information

- To help their listeners be interested in the story
- To help their listeners understand something in the story
- To help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- To tell the setting of a story
- Setting includes:
 - where the story takes place
 - when the story takes place
 - who is present when the story begins
 - what is happening when the story begins

Reasons this is a translation issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- Translators need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- Translators will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that their own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

Examples from the Bible

Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULB)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

Now Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age. He was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULB)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces background information about Jesus' age and ancestors. The story starts up again in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

Now it happened on a Sabbath that Jesus was going through the grain fields and his disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them between their hands, and eating the grain. But some of the Pharisees said... (Luke 6:1-2a ULB)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the sentence, "But some of the Pharisees said."

Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kind of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

1. Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.
2. Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULB English translations.

- **Now Jesus himself, when he began to teach, was about thirty years of age. He was the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli.** (Luke 3:23 ULB) English uses the word "now" to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb "was" shows that it is background information.
- **With many other exhortations also, he preached good news to the people. John also rebuked Herod the tetrarch for marrying his brother's wife, Herodias, and for all the other evil things that Herod had done. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison.** (Luke 3:18-20 ULB) The underlined phrases happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb "had" in "had done" shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

- **Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.** (Genesis 16:16 ULB)
 - "When Abram was eighty-six years old, Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael."
- **John also rebuked Herod the tetrarch for marrying his brother's wife, Herodias, and for all the other evil things that Herod had done. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison.** (Luke 3:18-20) - The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.
 - "Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and he did many other evil things, so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 3:8-9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:10-11](#)

Biblical Money

This page answers the question: *How can I translate the values of money in the Bible?*

Description:

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals such as silver and gold and would give a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight	daric	gold coin	8.4 grams	shekel
various metals		11 grams	talent	various metals	33 kilograms	

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage	denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day	mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days	talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see Biblical Weight. The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament

1. Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (see Copy or Borrow Words)
2. Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
3. Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
4. Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a note.
5. Use the Bible term and explain it in a note.

Translation Strategies

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

- **The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other owed fifty denarii.** (Luke 7:41 ULB)
- Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (see Copy or Borrow Words)
 - "The one owed five hundred denali, and the other owed fifty denali." (Luke 7:41 ULB)
- Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.
 - "The one owed five hundred silver coins, and the other owed fifty silver coins." (Luke 7:41 ULB)
- Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
 - "The one owed five hundred days' wages, and the other owed fifty days' wages."
- Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.
 - "The one owed five hundred denarii¹, and the other owed fifty denarii.²" (Luke 7:41 ULB) The footnotes would look like:
 - ◇ ^[1] five hundred days's wages
 - ◇ ^[2] fifty day's wages
- Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.
 - "The one owed five hundred denarii¹, and the other owed fifty denarii." (Luke 7:41 ULB)
 - ◇ ^[1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Uses:

- **Song of Solomon 8:11-12**

Direct and Indirect Quotations

This page answers the question: *What are direct and indirect quotations?*

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotation and indirect quotation.

A **direct quotation** occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: ""

- John said, "I do not know at what time I will arrive."

An **indirect quotation** occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead of from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually features changes in pronouns, and it often features changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would," to replace the future tense indicated by "will."

- John said that he did not know at what time he would arrive.

Why this is a translation issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one rather than the other, or there is a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or an indirect quotation.

Examples from the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have underlined the quotations.

He instructed him to tell no one, but told him, "Go on your way, and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." (Luke 5:14 ULB)

- Indirect quote: He instructed him to tell no one,
- Direct quote: but told him, "Go on your way, and show yourself to the priest..."

Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not something that can be observed. Neither will they say, 'Look here!' or, 'Look there!' because the kingdom of God is among you." (Luke 17:20-21 ULB)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come,
- Direct quote: Jesus answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not something that can be observed. Neither will they say, 'Look here!' or, 'Look there!' because the kingdom of God is among you."
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, 'Look here; or, 'Look there!'

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

1. If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
2. If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
 - **He instructed him to tell no one, but told him, "Go on your way, and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."** (Luke 5:14 ULB)
 - He instructed him to tell no one, but to go on his way, and to show himself to the priest and to offer a sacrifice for his cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
2. If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.
 - **He instructed him, to tell no one, but told him, "Go on your way, and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."** (Luke 5:14 ULB)
 - He instructed him, "Tell no one. Just go on your way, and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/figs_quotations.## Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 5:3-4](#)

Doublet

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

Description

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

Reason this is a translation issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but only in certain situations, so a doublet might not make sense in their language in some verses. In either case, translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning expressed by the doublet.

Examples from the Bible

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Translation Strategies

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

1. Translate only one of the words.
2. If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”
3. If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

1. Translate only one of the words.
 - **You have decided to prepare false and deceptive words** (Daniel 2:9 ULB)
 - "You have decided to prepare false things to say."
2. If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as "very" or "great" or "many."
 - **King David was old and advanced in years.** (1 Kings 1:1 ULB)
 - "King David was very old."
3. If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.
 - **... a lamb without blemish and without spot...** (1 Peter 1:19 ULB) - English can emphasize this with "any" and "at all."
 - " ... a lamb without any blemish at all ..."

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 2:7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:6-7](#)

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.

- **... 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
- **... 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.”
- **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:

- Song of Solomon 3:6-7
- Song of Solomon 4:10-11
- Song of Solomon 5:2
- Song of Solomon 8:11-12

Euphemism

This page answers the question: *What is a Euphemism?*

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

Definition

... they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8 ULB)

This means that Saul and his sons “were dead”. It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

Reason this is a translation issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples from the Bible

... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to relieve himself ... (1 Samuel 24:3 ULB)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

Mary said to the angel, “How will this happen, since I have not slept with any man?”
(Luke 1:34 ULB)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

1. Use a euphemism from your own culture.
2. State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

- **... where there was a cave. Saul went inside to relieve himself.** (1 Samuel 24:3 ULB) - Some languages might use euphemisms like these:
 - "...where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to dig a hole"
 - "...where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to have some time alone"
- **Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen, since I have not slept with any man?"** (Luke 1:34 ULB)
 - Mary said to the angel, "How will this happen, since I do not know a man?" - (This is the euphemism used in the original Greek)

2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

- **they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa.** (1 Chronicles 10:8 ULB)
 - "they found Saul and his sons dead on Mount Gilboa."

Uses:

- [Introduction to The Song of Solomon](#)
- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:2-3](#)

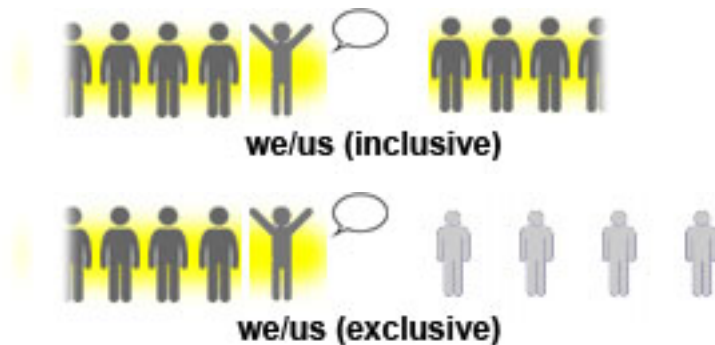
Exclusive and Inclusive “We”

This page answers the question: *What is exclusive and inclusive “we”?*

Description

Some languages have more than one form of “we:” an **inclusive** form that means “I and you” and an **exclusive** form that means “I and someone else but not you.” The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for “us,” “our,” “ours,” and “ourselves.” Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these. Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for these words will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form to use.

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive “we” and the exclusive “we” refer to.



Reason this is a translation issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for “we.” Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of “we” will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form of “we” to use.

Examples from the Bible

They said, “We have no more than five loaves of bread and two fish, unless we went and bought food for all this crowd of people.” (Luke 9:13 ULB)

In the first clause, the disciples are telling Jesus how much food they have among them, so this “we” could be the inclusive form or the exclusive form. In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food, so that “we” would be the exclusive form, since Jesus would not go to buy food.

we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us (1 John 1:2 ULB)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the exclusive forms in this verse.

... the shepherds said one to each other, "Let us now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." (Luke 2:15 ULB)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us," they were including the people they were speaking to - one another.

Now it happened on one of those days that Jesus and his disciples entered into a boat, and he said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." Then they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULB)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so this would be the inclusive form.

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:9-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:8-9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:15](#)

Forms of You

This page answers the question: *What are the different forms of you?*

Singular, Dual, and Plural

Some languages have more than one word for “you” based on how many people the word “you” refers to. The **singular** form refers to one person, and the **plural** form refers to more than one person. Some languages also have a **dual** form which refers to two people, and some have other forms that refer to three or four people.

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/figs_younum.

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses a singular form of “you” even though he is speaking to a crowd.

- Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups

Formal and Informal

Some languages have more than one form of “you” based on the relationship between the speaker and the person he is talking to. People use the **formal** form of “you” when speaking to someone who is older, or has higher authority, or is someone they do not know very well. People use the **informal** form when speaking to someone who is not older, or does not have higher authority, or is a family member or close friend.

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/figs_youform.

For help with translating these, we suggest you read:

- Forms of “You” - Formal or Informal

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 2:15](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:13](#)

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.
- **... 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.
 - **But Saul, who is also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit;** (Acts 13:9)
 - But Saul, who is also called Paul, was filled with the Holy Spirit;
5. Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write "Saul" where the source text has "Saul" and "Paul" where the source text has "Paul."
- **a young man named Saul** (Acts 7:58 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.
- **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;
- **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 The Song of Solomon
- Song of Solomon 4:8
- Song of Solomon 4:8
- Song of Solomon 7:3-4
- Song of Solomon 7:3-4
- Song of Solomon 8:11-12

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.
 - **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.
2. For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
 - **The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame ...** (Proverbs 13:18 ULB)
 - In general, the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame
 - **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.”
3. For a generalization, add a word like “most” or “almost” to show that the generalization is not exact.
 - **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.”
4. For a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.
- **The whole country of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him.** (Mark 1:5 ULB)
 - The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:5-6](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:8-9](#)

Hypothetical Situations

This page answers the question: *What is a hypothetical situation?*

“If the sun stopped shining...”, “What if the sun stopped shining...”, “Suppose the sun stopped shining...”, “If only the sun had not stopped shining.” We use such expressions to set up hypothetical situations, imagining what might have happened or what could happen in the future but probably will not. We also use them to express regret or wishes. These occur often in the Bible. We need to translate them in a way that people will know that the event did not actually happen, and that they will understand why the event was imagined.

Description

Hypothetical situations are situations that are not real. They can be in the past, present, or future. Hypothetical situations in the past and present have not happened, and ones in the future are not expected to happen.

People sometimes tell about conditions and what would happen if those conditions were met, but they know that these things have not happened or probably will not happen. (The conditions are the phrase that start with “if.”)

- If he had known about the party, he would have come to it. (But he did not come.)
- If he knew about the party, he would be here. (But he is not here.)
- If he knew about the party, he would come to it. (But he probably will not come.)

People sometimes express wishes about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- I wish he had come.
- I wish he were here.
- I wish he would come.

People sometimes express regrets about things that have not happened or that are not expected to happen.

- If only he had come.
- If only he were here.
- If only he would come.

Reason this is a translation issue

- Translators need to recognize the different kinds of hypothetical situations in the Bible.
- Translators need to know their own language’s ways of talking about different kinds of hypothetical situations.

Examples from the Bible

1. Hypothetical situations in the past

“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.” (Matthew 11:21 ULB)

Here in Matthew 11:21 Jesus said that if the people living in the ancient cities of Tyre and Sidon had been able to see the miracles that he performed, they would have repented long ago. The people of Tyre and Sidon did not actually see his miracles and repent. He said this to rebuke the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida who had seen his miracles yet did not repent.

Martha then said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” (John 11:21 ULB)

Martha said this to express her wish that Jesus had come sooner. But Jesus did not come sooner, and her brother did die.

1. Hypothetical situations in the present

Also, no man puts new wine into old wineskins. If he did that, the new wine would burst the skins, and the wine would be spilled, and the wineskins would be destroyed. (Luke 5:37 ULB)

Jesus told about what would happen if a person were to put new wine into old wineskins. But no one would do that. He used this imaginary situation as an example to show that there are times when it is unwise to mix new things with old things. He did this so that people could understand why his disciples were not fasting as people traditionally did.

Jesus said to them, “What man would there be among you, who, if he had just one sheep, and if this sheep fell into a deep hole on the Sabbath, would not grasp hold of it and lift it out? (Matthew 12:11 ULB)

Jesus asked the religious leaders what they would do on the Sabbath if one of their sheep fell into a hole. He was not saying that their sheep would fall into a hole. He used this imaginary situation to show them that they were wrong to judge him for healing people on the Sabbath.

1. Hypothetical situation in the future

Unless those days are shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, those days will be shortened. (Matthew 24:22 ULB)

Jesus was talking about a future time when very bad things would happen. He told what would happen if those days of trouble were to last a long time. He did this to show about how bad those days will be - so bad that if they lasted a long time, no one would be saved. But then he clarified that God will shorten those days of trouble, so that the elect (those he has chosen) will be saved.

1. Expressing emotion about a hypothetical situation

Regrets and wishes are very similar.

The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by Yahweh's hand in the land of Egypt when we were sitting by the pots of meat and were eating bread to the full. For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill our whole community with hunger."
(Exodus 16:3 ULB)

Here the Israelites were afraid they would have to suffer and die of hunger in the wilderness, and so they wished that they had stayed in Egypt and died there with full stomachs. They were complaining, expressing regret that this had not happened.

I know what you have done, and that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish that you were either cold or hot! (Revelation 3:15 ULB)

Jesus wished that the people were either hot or cold, but they are neither. He was rebuking them, expressing anger at this.

Translation Strategies

Know how people speaking your language show:

- that something could have happened, but did not.
- that something could be true now, but is not.
- that something could happen in the future, but will not unless something changes.
- that they wish for something, but it does not happen.
- that they regret that something did not happen.

Use your language's ways of showing these kinds of things.

You may also want to watch the video at http://ufw.io/figs_hypo.

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 8:7](#)

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.
 - **Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Look, we are your flesh and bone."** (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULB)
 - ...Look, we all belong to the same nation.
 - **he resolutely set his face to go to Jerusalem.** (Luke 9:51 ULB)
 - He started to travel to Jerusalem, determined to reach it.
 - **I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof.** (Luke 7:6 ULB)
 - I am not worthy that you should enter my house.
2. Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.
 - **Let these words go deeply into your ears** (Luke 9:44 ULB)
 - Be all ears when I say these words to you.
 - **"My eyes grow dim from grief** (Psalm 6:7 ULB)
 - I am crying my eyes out

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:9](#)

- Song of Solomon 4:10-11
- Song of Solomon 4:12-14
- Song of Solomon 5:1
- Song of Solomon 5:2
- Song of Solomon 5:2
- Song of Solomon 6:8-9
- Song of Solomon 8:8
- Song of Solomon 8:11-12

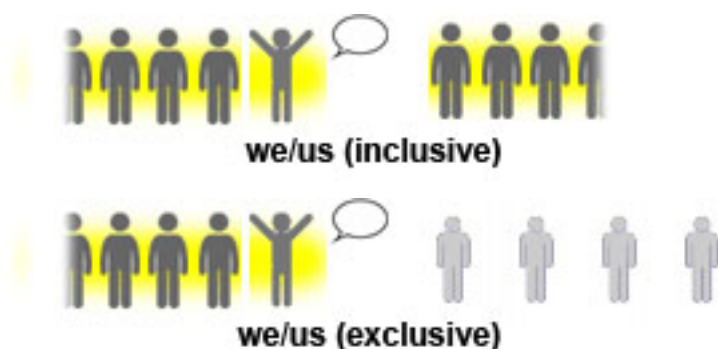
Inclusive “We”

This page answers the question: *What is inclusive “we”?*

Description

Some languages have more than one form of “we”: an **inclusive** form that means “I and you” and an **exclusive** form that means “I and someone else but not you.” The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for “us,” “our,” “ours,” and “ourselves.” Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these.

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive “we” and the exclusive “we” refer to.



Reason this is a translation issue - The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for “we.” Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of “we” will need to understand what the speaker meant so they can decide which form of “we” to use.

Examples from the Bible

... the shepherds said one to each other, “Let us now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” (Luke 2:15 ULB)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said “us,” they were including the people they were speaking to - one another.

Now it happened on one of those days that Jesus and his disciples entered into a boat, and he said to them, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” Then they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULB)

When Jesus said “us,” he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to.

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)

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.

- **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."
- **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:

- **Song of Solomon 7:2**

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 in 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.
 - **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.
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.
 - **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.”
 - **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.
2. If the target audience would not know the **image**, see [Translate Unknowns](#) for ideas on how to translate that image.
 - **Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick a goad.** (Acts 26:14 ULB)
 - Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against a pointed stick.
3. If the target audience would not use that **image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
 - **And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the clay. You are our potter; and we all are the work of your hand.** (Isaiah 64:8 ULB)
 - “And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the wood. You are our carver; and we all are the work of your hand.”
 - “And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the string. You are the weaver; and we all are the work of your hand.”
4. If the target audience would not know what the **topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)
 - **Yahweh lives; may my rock be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.** (Psalm 18:46 ULB)
 - Yahweh lives; He is my rock. May he be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.
5. If the target audience will not know the intended points of comparison between the image and the topic, then state them clearly.
 - **Yahweh lives; may my rock be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted.** (Psalm 18:46 ULB)
 - Yahweh lives; may he be praised because he is the rock under which I can hide from my enemies. May the God of my salvation be exalted.
 - **Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick 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.
6. If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

- **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 read:

- Biblical Imagery - Common Patterns

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 01 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:5-6](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:9-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:16-17](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:16-17](#)
- [Song of Solomon 02 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:1-2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:1-2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:5-6](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:8-9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:15](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:15](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:15](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:16-17](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:16-17](#)
- [Song of Solomon 03 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 04 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:4-5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:4-5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:6-7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:8](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:12-14](#)

- Song of Solomon 4:12-14
- Song of Solomon 4:15-16
- Song of Solomon 4:15-16
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- Song of Solomon 7:7-8
- Song of Solomon 8:2-3
- Song of Solomon 8:2-3
- Song of Solomon 8:6
- Song of Solomon 8:6
- Song of Solomon 8:7
- Song of Solomon 8:7
- Song of Solomon 8:9
- Song of Solomon 8:9
- Song of Solomon 8:10

- [Song of Solomon 8:11-12](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:14](#)

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.
 - **He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.** (Luke 22:20 ULB)
 - "He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying, "The wine in this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."
2. Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.
 - **The Lord God will give him the throne of his father, David.** (Luke 1:32 ULB)
 - "The Lord God will give him the kingly authority of his father, David."
 - "The Lord God will make him king like his ancestor, King David."
 - **who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?** (Luke 3:7 ULB)
 - "who warned you to flee from God's coming punishment?"

To learn about some common metonymies, see [Biblical Imagery - Common Metonymies](#).### Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:15](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:1-2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:8-9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:12](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:16](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:10](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:13](#)

Numbers

This page answers the question: *How do I translate numbers?*

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words, such as “five” or as numerals, such as “5.” Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000.) Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULB)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

That day about three thousand men out of the people died. (Exodus 32:28 ULB)

Here the number three thousand is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason this is a translation issue: Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples from the Bible

When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived 962 years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULB)

The numbers 162, eight hundred, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

Our sister, may you be the mother of thousands of ten thousands (Genesis 24:60 ULB)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

1. Write numbers using numerals.
2. Write numbers using your language's words or the gateway language words for those numbers.
3. Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.
4. Combine words for large numbers.
5. Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house 100,000 talents of gold, one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14 ULB)

1. Write numbers using numerals.
 - I have prepared for Yahweh's house 100,000 talents of gold, 1,000,000 talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.
2. Write numbers using your language's words or the gateway language words for those numbers.
 - I have prepared for Yahweh's house one hundred thousand talents of gold, one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.
3. Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.
 - I have prepared for Yahweh's house one hundred thousand (100,000) talents of gold, one million (1,000,000) talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.
4. Combine words for large numbers.
 - I have prepared for Yahweh's house one hundred thousand talents of gold, a thousand thousand talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.
5. Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.
 - I have prepared for Yahweh's house a great amount of gold (100,000 talents), ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents), and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULB and UDB

The *Unlocked Literal Bible* (ULB) and the *Unlocked Dynamic Bible* (UDB) use words for numbers that have only one or two words (nine, sixteen, three hundred). They use numerals for numbers that have more than two words (the numerals “130” instead of “one hundred thirty”).

When Adam had lived 130 years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived eight hundred years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived 930 years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:3-5 ULB)### Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:4-5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:10-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:8-9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:11-12](#)

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.
 - **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.”

- **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.”
 - **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.”
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.”
- **Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes.** (Proverbs 5:21 ULB)
 - “Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.”
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.”
- **you have deceived me and told me lies.** (Judges 16:13 ULB)
 - “All you have done is lie to me.”
 - **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:

- Song of Solomon 1:1-4
- Song of Solomon 2:1-2
- Song of Solomon 4:1
- Song of Solomon 5:1
- Song of Solomon 6:1
- Song of Solomon 8:1

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.

- ... **sin crouches at the door** (Genesis 4:7 ULB) - God speaks of sin as a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.
 - ... sin is at your door, waiting to attack you

2. Use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentences is not to be understood literally.

- ... **sin crouches at the door** (Genesis 4:7 ULB) - This can be translated with the word “as.”
 - ... sin is crouching at the door, just as a wild animal does waiting to attack a person.

3. Find a way to translate it without the personification.

- ... **even the winds and the sea obey him** (Matthew 8:27 ULB) - The men speak of the “wind and the sea as if they are able to hear” and obey Jesus as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.
 - He even controls the winds and the sea.

Note: We have broadened our definition of “personification” to include “zoomorphism” (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and “anthropomorphism” (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics.)### Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 2:7](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:12-13](#)
- [Song of Solomon 3:5](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:15-16](#)

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

2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

- This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people, or stop along the road to speak with sinners, or join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather he takes great joy in Yahweh's law, and he meditates on it day and night.

3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

- The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or with those who do not respect God. They love to obey Yahweh's law, and they think about it all the time.

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 2:1-2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 4:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 5:1](#)

- Song of Solomon 6:1
- Song of Solomon 8:1

Pronouns

This page answers the question: *What are pronouns and what kinds of pronouns are in some languages?*

Description

Pronouns are words that people use in place of a noun to refer to someone or something. Some examples are I, you, he, it, this, that, himself, someone. The most common type of pronoun is personal.

Personal Pronouns

Personal pronouns refer to people or things and show if the speaker is referring to himself, the person he is speaking to, or someone or something else. The following are kinds of information that personal pronouns may give. Other types of pronouns may give some of this information, as well.

Person

- First Person - The speaker and possibly others (I, we)
 - Exclusive and Inclusive “We”
- Second Person - The person or people that the speaker is talking to and possibly others (you)
 - Forms of You
- Third Person - Someone or something other than the speaker and those he is talking to (he, she, it, they)

Number

- Singular - one (I, you, he, she, it)
- Plural - more than one (we, you, they)
 - Singular Pronouns that Refer to Groups
- Dual - two (Some languages have pronouns for specifically two people or two things.)

Gender

- Masculine - he
- Feminine - she
- Neuter - it

Relationship to other words in the sentence

- Subject of the verb: I, you, he, she, it, we, they
- Object of the verb or preposition: me, you, him, her, it, us, them
- Possessor with a noun: my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- Possessor without a noun: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs

Other Types of pronouns

Reflexive Pronouns refer to another noun or pronoun in the same sentence: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves.

- **John saw himself in the mirror.** - The word “himself” refers to John.

Interrogative Pronouns are used to make a question that needs more than just a yes or no for an answer: who, whom, whose, what, where, when, why, how

- **Who built the house?**

Relative Pronouns mark a relative clause. They tell more about a noun in the main part of the sentence: that, which, who, whom, where, when

- **I saw the house that John built.** The clause “that John built” tells which house I saw.
- **I saw the man who built the house.** The clause “who built the house” tells which man I saw.

Demonstrative Pronouns are used to draw attention to someone or something and to show distance from the speaker or something else: this, these, that, those.

- **Have you seen this here?**
- **Who is that over there?**

Indefinite pronouns are used when no particular noun is being referred to: any, anyone, someone, anything, something, some. Sometimes a personal pronoun is used in a generic way to do this: you, they, he or it.

- **He does not want to talk to anyone.**
- **Someone fixed it, but I do not know who.**
- **They say that you should not wake a sleeping dog.**

In the last example, “they” and “you” just refer to people in general.

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 1:1-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 1:9-11](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:13](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:13](#)
- [Song of Solomon 6:13](#)

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 their 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.
 - **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!** (Jeremiah 2:32 ULB)
 - Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? Of course not! Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!
 - **Or what man among you is there who, if his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone?** (Matthew 7:9 ULB)
 - Or what man among you is there who, if his son asks him for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone? None of you would do that!
2. Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
 - **What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed...** (Luke 13:18-19 ULB)
 - This is what the kingdom of God is like. It is like a mustard seed..."
 - **Is this how you insult God's high priest?** (Acts 23:4 ULB)
 - You should not insult God's high priest!
 - **Why did I not die when I came out from the womb?** (Job 3:11 ULB)
 - I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!
 - **And why has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?** (Luke 1:43 ULB)
 - How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!
3. Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
 - **Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel?** (1 Kings 21:7 ULB)
 - You still rule the kingdom of Israel, do you not?
4. Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

- **Or what man 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?
- **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:

- Song of Solomon 1:7
- Song of Solomon 5:3-4
- Song of Solomon 5:8
- Song of Solomon 6:10
- Song of Solomon 8:5
- Song of Solomon 8:8

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 lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

1. If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.
2. If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible.
3. Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

1. If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.
 - **See, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves** (Matthew 10:16 ULB) - This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.
 - See, I send you out among wicked people and you will be in danger from them as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves.
 - **For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword.** (Hebrews 4:12 ULB)
 - For the word of God is living and active and more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword
2. If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible.
 - **See, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves,** (Matthew 10:16 ULB) - If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.

- See, I send you out as chickens in the midst of wild dogs,
 - **How often did I long to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you did not agree!** (Matthew 23:37 ULB)
 - How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a mother closely watches over her infants, but you refused!
 - **If you have faith even as small as a grain of mustard,** (Matthew 17:20)
 - If you have faith even as small as a tiny seed,
3. Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.
- **See, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves,** (Matthew 10:16 ULB)
 - See, I send you out and people will want to harm you.
 - **How often did I long to gather your children together, just as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but you did not agree!** (Matthew 23:37 ULB)
 - How often I wanted to protect you, but you refused!

Uses:

- Song of Solomon 1:1-4
- Song of Solomon 1:5-6
- Song of Solomon 1:5-6
- Song of Solomon 1:9-11
- Song of Solomon 1:12-14
- Song of Solomon 1:12-14
- Song of Solomon 2:1-2
- Song of Solomon 2:3-4
- Song of Solomon 2:8-9
- Song of Solomon 3:6-7
- Song of Solomon 4:1
- Song of Solomon 4:2
- Song of Solomon 4:3
- Song of Solomon 4:3
- Song of Solomon 4:4-5
- Song of Solomon 4:4-5
- Song of Solomon 5:10-11
- Song of Solomon 5:12
- Song of Solomon 5:13
- Song of Solomon 5:15
- Song of Solomon 6:4
- Song of Solomon 6:6-7
- Song of Solomon 6:6-7
- Song of Solomon 6:10
- Song of Solomon 6:10

- [Song of Solomon 6:11-12](#)
- [Song of Solomon 07 General Notes](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:2](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:3-4](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:3-4](#)
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- [Song of Solomon 7:5-6](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:7-8](#)
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- [Song of Solomon 7:7-8](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:9](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:1](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:6](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:6](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:6](#)
- [Song of Solomon 8:10](#)

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.
 - **”My soul exalts the Lord.”** (Luke 1:46 ULB)
 - ”I exalt the Lord.”
 - **...the Pharisees said to him** (Mark 2:24 ULB)

- ...a representative of the Pharisees said to him ...
- **... I looked on all the deeds that my hands had accomplished ...** (Ecclesiastes 2:11 ULB)
 - I looked on all the deeds that I had accomplished

Uses:

- [Song of Solomon 4:12-14](#)
- [Song of Solomon 7:1](#)

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.

- **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

2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

- **your sins ... will be white like snow** (Isaiah 1:18 ULB) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.

- your sins ... will be white like milk
- your sins ... will be white like the moon

3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

- **Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with myrrh. But he refused to drink it.** (Mark 15:23 ULB) - People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word “medicine.”
 - Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with a medicine called myrrh. But he refused to drink it.
- **We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish** (Matthew 14:17 ULB) - People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).
 - We have here only five loaves of baked crushed seed bread and two fish

4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

- **I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11 ULB)
 - I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for wild dogs
- **We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish** (Matthew 14:17 ULB)
 - We have here only five loaves of baked food and two fish

5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

- **to him who made great lights** (Psalm 136:7 ULB)
 - to him who made the sun and the moon

Uses:

- **Song of Solomon 1:16-17**
- **Song of Solomon 7:13**