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Formatted for Translators

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Notes: English ULB Translation Notes

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Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Matthew

The birth of Jesus Christ and the beginning of his ministry (1:1–4:25) Jesus's Sermon on the Mount (5:1–7:28) Jesus illustrates the kingdom of God through acts of healing (8:1–9:34) Jesus's teaching about mission and the kingdom (9:35–10:42) Jesus's teaching about the gospel of the kingdom of God. The beginning of opposition to Jesus. (11:1–12:50) Jesus's parables about the kingdom of God (13:1–52) Further opposition to Jesus and misunderstanding of the kingdom of God (13:53–17:57) Jesus's teaching about life in the kingdom of God (18:1–35) Jesus ministers in Judea (19:1–22:46) Jesus's teaching about the final judgment and salvation (23:1–25:46) The crucifixion of Jesus, his death and resurrection (26:1–28:19)

What is the book of Matthew about?

The Gospel of Matthew is one of four books in the New Testament that describe some of the life of Jesus Christ. The authors of the gospels wrote about different aspects of who Jesus was and what he did. Matthew showed that Jesus was the Messiah and that God would save Israel through him. Matthew often explained that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. This may indicate that he expected most of his first readers to be Jewish. (See: christ)

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "The Gospel of Matthew" or "The Gospel according to Matthew." Or they may choose a title that may be clearer, such as "The Good News about Jesus that Matthew wrote."

Who wrote the Book of Matthew?

The book does not give the name of the author. However, since early Christian times most Christians have thought that the author was the Apostle Matthew.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the "kingdom of heaven?"

Matthew spoke of the kingdom of heaven in the same way that other gospel writers spoke of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven represents God ruling over all people and all creation everywhere. Those whom God accepts into his kingdom will be blessed. They will live with God forever.

What were Jesus's teaching methods?

The people regarded Jesus as a rabbi. A rabbi is a teacher of God's law. Jesus taught in ways similar to other religious teachers in Israel. He had students who followed him wherever he went. These students were called disciples. He often told parables. Parables are stories that teach moral lessons. (See: lawofmoses and disciple and parable)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What are the Synoptic Gospels?

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because they have many similar passages. The word "synoptic" means to "see together."

The texts are considered "parallel" when they are the same or almost the same among two or three gospels. When translating parallel passages, translators should use the same wording and make them as similar as possible.

Why does Jesus refer to himself as the "Son of Man"?

In the gospels, Jesus calls himself the "Son of Man." It is a reference to Daniel 7:13-14. In this passage there is a person described as a "son of man." That means the person was someone who looked like a human being. God gave authority to the son of man to rule over the nations forever. And all the people will worship him forever.

Jews of Jesus's time did not use "Son of Man" as a title for anyone. Therefore, Jesus used it for himself to help them understand who he truly was. (See: sonofman)

Translating the title "Son of Man" can be difficult in many languages. Readers may misunderstand a literal translation. Translators can consider alternatives, such as "The Human One." It may also be helpful to include a footnote to explain the title.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Matthew?

The following verses are found in older versions of the Bible but are not included in most modern versions:

"Bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you" (5:44) "For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (6:13) "But this kind of demon does not go out except with prayer and fasting" (17:21) "For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost" (18:11) "Many are called, but few are chosen" (20:16) "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows' houses, while you make a show of long prayers. You will therefore receive greater condemnation." (23:14)

Translators are advised not to include these passages. However, if in the translators' region there are older versions of the Bible that include one or more of these passages, the translators can include them. If they are included, they should be put inside square brackets

Matthew 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set a quotation from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this for the quoted material in 1:23.

Special concepts in this chapter

Genealogy

A genealogy is a list that records a person's ancestors or descendants. Jews used genealogies to choose the right man to become king. They did this because only a son of a king could become king. Most important people had records of their genealogies.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Use of the passive voice

Matthew uses the passive voice very purposefully in this chapter to indicate that Mary did not have a sexual relationship with anyone. She became pregnant with Jesus because the Holy Spirit performed a miracle. Many languages do not have a passive voice, so translators in those languages must find other ways to present the same truths.

Links:

Matthew 1:1 [Matthew intro](#)

Matthew Commentary

1:1-17

Why did Matthew write about Jesus' ancestors?

[1:1]

Matthew wrote about Jesus' ancestors so people would know that he rule Israel because he was a descendant of King David.

See: Covenant with David; Messiah (Christ); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Son of David

What does the name, "Jesus," mean?

[1:1]

"Jesus" was the Greek form of the Hebrew name "Joshua." The name "Joshua" meant "God saves." Other men of the Israelites also had this name, but Jesus was unlike them because he was also the "son of David." The title "son of David" was also a name for the messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Son of David

1:18-25

What did it mean "to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit"?

[1:18, 1:20]

Scholars think that "to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit" meant that the Holy Spirit caused Mary to become pregnant. It was a miracle.

See: Holy Spirit; Miracle; Incarnation; Virgin

What did it mean that Joseph was a "righteous man"?

[1:19]

When Matthew wrote that Joseph was a "righteous man" it meant that he was a man that obeyed the Law of Moses. Joseph thought that Mary must have committed adultery in order for her to become pregnant. Joseph thought he should end his engagement with Mary because this was taught in the Law of Moses. Other scholars think Matthew wanted people to know that Joseph was a righteous man because he wanted to end his engagement with Mary in a quiet way, so as not to dishonor Mary.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Adultery; Law of Moses

What did the words, "disgrace her publicly" mean in Joseph's day.

[1:19]

In ancient Israel, when a woman was disgraced publicly, she was brought to court because she did something wrong. This would have caused great shame and embarrassment for Mary. Perhaps she would also have been punished.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit); Punish (Punishment)

What did Matthew mean with the words, "fulfill what was spoken"?

[1:22]

When Matthew wrote the words, "fulfill what was spoken," he was speaking about prophecies being fulfilled. It was prophesied that Mary would become pregnant, and Jesus would be born.

See: Isaiah 7:14 See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy)

What was meant by "he took her as his wife" when Matthew spoke about Joseph and Mary?

[1:24]

That Joseph took Mary as his wife meant that Mary became Joseph's wife and he took her into his home. This showed everyone that Joseph accepted Mary as his wife.

Matthew 1:1

General Information:

The author begins with Jesus's genealogy in order to show that he is a descendant of King David and of Abraham. The genealogy continues through Matthew 1:16.

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ

You could translate this as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "This is the list of the ancestors of Jesus Christ"

Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham

There were many generations between Jesus, David, and Abraham. Here "son" means "descendant." Alternate translation: "Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, who was a descendant of Abraham"

son of David

Sometimes the phrase "son of David" is used as a title, but here it seems to be used only to identify Jesus's ancestry.

Matthew 1:2

Abraham was the father of Isaac

"Abraham became the father of Isaac" or "Abraham had a son Isaac" or "Abraham had a son named Isaac." There are different ways you could translate this. Whichever way you translate it here, it would be best to translate it the same way throughout the list of Jesus's ancestors.

Isaac the father ... Jacob the father

Here the word "was" is understood. Alternate translation: "Isaac was the father ... Jacob was the father"

Matthew 1:3

Perez ... Zerah ... Hezron ... Ram

These are names of men.

Perez the father ... Hezron the father

Here the word "was" is understood. Alternate translation: "Perez was the father ... Hezron was the father"

Matthew 1:4

Connecting Statement:

This continues the genealogy of Jesus.

Amminadab the father ... Nahshon the father

Here the word "was" is understood. Alternate translation: "Amminadab was the father ... Nahshon was the father"

Matthew 1:5

Salmon was the father of Boaz by Rahab

"Salmon was the father of Boaz, and Boaz's mother was Rahab" or "Salmon and Rahab were the parents of Boaz"

Boaz the father ... Obed the father

Here the word "was" is understood. Alternate translation: "Boaz was the father ... Obed was the father"

Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth

"Boaz was the father of Obed, and Obed's mother was Ruth" or "Boaz and Ruth were the parents of Obed"

Matthew 1:6

David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah

"David was the father of Solomon, and Solomon's mother was Uriah's wife" or "David and the wife of Uriah were the parents of Solomon"

the wife of Uriah

"the widow of Uriah." Solomon was born after Uriah died.

Matthew 1:7

Connecting Statement:

This continues the genealogy of Jesus.

Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa

The word "was" is understood in both of these phrases.

Alternate translation: "Rehoboam was the father of Abijah, and Abijah was the father of Asa"

Matthew 1:8

Joram

This man was called both Joram and Jehoram in the Old Testament.

Matthew 1:9

Connecting Statement:

This continues the genealogy of Jesus.

Matthew 1:10

Amon

Sometimes this is translated "Amos."

Matthew 1:11

Josiah was an ancestor of Jechoniah

A more specific term for "ancestor" can also be used, particularly if the word "ancestor" would only be used for someone who lived before one's grandparents. Alternate translation: "Josiah was a grandfather of Jechoniah"

at the time of the deportation to Babylon

"when they were forced to move to Babylon" or "when the Babylonians conquered them and made them go live in Babylon." If your language needs to specify who went to Babylon, you could say "the Israelites" or "the Israelites who lived in Judah."

Babylon

Here this means the country of Babylon, not just the city of Babylon.

Matthew 1:12

Connecting Statement:

This continues the genealogy of Jesus.

After the deportation to Babylon

Use the same wording you used in Matthew 1:11.

Shealtiel was an ancestor of Zerubbabel

Shealtiel was Zerubbabel's grandfather.

Matthew 1:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 1:14

General Information:

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Matthew 1:15

Connecting Statement:

This continues the genealogy of Jesus.

Matthew 1:16

Connecting Statement:

The author concludes Jesus's genealogy, which began in Matthew 1:1.

Mary, by whom Jesus was born

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Mary, who gave birth to Jesus"

who is called Christ

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom people call Christ"

Matthew 1:17

fourteen

"14"

deportation to Babylon

Use the same wording you used in Matthew 1:11.

Matthew 1:18

General Information:

This begins a new part of the story in which the author describes the events leading up to the birth of Jesus.

His mother, Mary, was engaged to marry Joseph

"His mother, Mary, was going to marry Joseph." Parents normally arranged the marriages of their children.

Alternate translation: "The parents of Mary, the mother of Jesus, had promised her in marriage to Joseph"

His mother, Mary, was engaged

Translate in a way that makes it clear that Jesus was not already born when Mary was engaged to Joseph. Alternate translation: "Mary, who would be the mother of Jesus, was engaged"

before they came together

"before they got married." This may refer to Mary and Joseph sleeping together. Alternate translation: "before they had slept together"

she was found to be pregnant

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they realized that she was pregnant" or "it happened that she was pregnant"

to be pregnant

"to be carrying a child"

by the Holy Spirit

The power of the Holy Spirit had enabled Mary to have a baby before she had slept with a man.

Matthew 1:19

Joseph, her husband

Joseph had not married Mary yet, but when a man and woman promised to marry each other, Jews considered them husband and wife though they did not live together. Alternate translation: "Joseph, who was supposed to marry Mary"

to divorce her quietly

"to quietly cancel their plans to get married"

Matthew 1:20

As he thought

"As Joseph thought"

appeared to him in a dream

"came to him while Joseph was dreaming"

son of David

Here "son" means "descendant."

the one who is conceived in her is conceived by the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit caused Mary to become pregnant with this child"

Matthew 1:21

She will bear a son

Because God sent the angel, the angel knew the baby was a boy.

you will call his name

"you must name him" or "you must give him the name."

This is a command.

for he will save

Translator may add a footnote that says "The name 'Jesus' means 'the Lord saves.'"

his people

This refers to the Jews.

Matthew 1:22

General Information:

The author quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus's birth was according to scripture.

all this happened

The angel is no longer speaking. Matthew is now explaining the importance of what the angel said.

what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"what the Lord told the prophet to write long ago"

the prophet

There were many prophets. Matthew was speaking of Isaiah. Alternate translation: "the prophet Isaiah"

Matthew 1:23

Behold ... Immanuel

Here Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah.

Behold, the virgin

"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: the virgin"

Immanuel

This is a male name.

Immanuel"—which being translated is "God with us."

This is not in the book of Isaiah. Matthew is explaining the meaning of the name "Immanuel." You could translate it as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "Immanuel."

This name means 'God with us.'"

Matthew 1:24

Connecting Statement:

The author concludes his description of the events leading up to the birth of Jesus.

as the angel of the Lord commanded

The angel had told Joseph to take Mary as his wife and to name the child Jesus.

he took her as his wife

"he married Mary"

Matthew 1:25

he did not know her

This is a euphemism. Alternate translation: "he did not have sexual relations with her"

to a son

"to a male baby" or "to her son." Make sure it is clear that Joseph is not portrayed as the actual father.

Then he called his name Jesus

"Joseph named the child Jesus"

Matthew 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 6 and 18, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

"His star"

These words probably refer to a star that the learned men believed to be the sign of a new king of Israel. (See: sign)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Learned men"

English translations use many different words to translate this phrase. These words include "magi" and "wise men." These men could have been scientists or astrologers. If you can, you should translate this with the general words "learned men."

Links:

[Matthew 2:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 2

2:1-12

Where was Bethlehem?

[2:1]

See Map: Bethlehem

What were the days of Herod?

[2:1]

The days of Herod was the time when Herod the Great ruled the Jewish people. Herod ruled as a Jewish king when Jesus was born.

See: King Herod

Who were the learned men from the east?

[2:1]

The learned men were most likely scholars from Babylon who studied how the stars moved. In ancient times, people in the Middle East were often guided by how the stars appeared in the sky. Matthew wrote about the visit of these men so that people would be amazed. The birth of Jesus was more than just good news for the people in Israel. It was good news for the entire world. God guided Gentile scholars to see Jesus.

See: Babylon

See Map: Babylon

Who was "the king of the Jews"?

[2:2]

The term "king of the Jews" is a title which the Gentiles often used to speak about the messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ)

What was the "star in the east"?

[2:2]

Matthew wrote about a "star in the east." This was a star people could see in the sky. The scholars lived west of Israel. These men studied the stars in the sky. Therefore, they saw the light to the east of them. They followed the star in some way. It took them to Bethlehem. The believed star would bring them to something they wanted to see. Why was all Jerusalem troubled? Matthew wrote that Herod was disturbed because of the news he heard. These scholars reported that the messiah had been born. Herod was afraid of this because the messiah was the king of the Jews. Herod believed there could only be one "King of the Jews" (See: Matthew 2:1). Herod was afraid that the people would no longer want him to be king. The people of Jerusalem were afraid that Herod would become angry and hurt them.

See: King Herod; Messiah (Christ)

What is a chief priest?

[2:4]

See: Chief Priest

What is a scribe?

[2:4]

See: Scribe

What is the Christ?

[2:4]

See: Messiah (Christ)

Why did Matthew write the same thing Micah wrote?

[2:5]

Matthew wrote the same thing Micah wrote (see: Micah 5:2). Micah said that the messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

See: Messiah (Christ)

How was Bethlehem least among the rulers of Judah?

[2:6]

Matthew and Micah wrote that Bethlehem were least among the rulers of Judah. Many cities were greater than Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a small town. People did not think the messiah would come from a place like Bethlehem.

See Map: Bethlehem; Judah

How old was Jesus when the learned men came to visit him?

[2:7]

Matthew does not say how old Jesus was when the learned men came. When Herod learned about the birth of Jesus he ordered the killing of all male children under two years of age living near Bethlehem. Jesus was younger than this.

Did Herod want to worship the young child?

[2:8]

Herod directed the learned men to go to Bethlehem to “search thoroughly” for the young child. He wanted them to talk to people in Bethlehem. However, Herod did not want to worship Jesus. Instead, he wanted these men to find Jesus for him.

He wanted to kill Jesus so he could continue to rule Israel.

See: King Herod

What were the gifts the learned men brought to Jesus?

[2:11]

In ancient times, someone gave a gift to a person that was greater than them in order to honor the other person (see: Genesis 14:17-20 and Hebrews 7:1-7). The gifts which the learned men gave to Jesus were gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The gifts were very valuable and honored Jesus who they believed was a king. These gifts were very expensive.

Why did the learned men return to their country another way?

[2:12]

The learned men returned to their country in a different way than they came to Israel. They did not want Herod to be angry and kill them. God warned them by giving them a dream.

2:13-15

What is an angel of the Lord?

[2:13]

See: Angel

Would a Jew go to Egypt?

[2:13]

Egypt was about 100 kilometers south of Bethlehem. During this period, Egypt was not ruled by Herod. However, Egypt and Israel were part of the Roman Empire. At this time, Jews would often travel to Egypt. Many Jews lived in Egypt. Because there were so many Jews in Egypt, a Jewish temple had been built for them in Egypt. Because Herod did not rule Egypt, it was safe for Mary and Joseph to stay there.

See Map: Bethlehem; Egypt; Israel; Roman Empire

Why did Matthew write the same thing Hosea wrote?

[2:15]

Matthew wrote the same thing Hosea wrote (see: Hosea 11:1). Jesus fulfilled the prophecy Hosea made about the messiah.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Messiah (Christ)

2:16-23

What are the land of Israel and the land of Judea?

[2:20, 2:21, 2:22]

When Matthew wrote about the land of Judea and the land of Israel, he was talking about the same place.

Why was Joseph afraid of Herod Archelaus?

[2:22]

Herod Archelaus was the son of Herod the Great. He put many people into prison and killed many people. This is why Joseph was afraid of him.

See: King Herod

How was Jesus a Nazarene?

[2:23]

Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the town of Nazareth to live. Jesus was a Nazarene.

Matthew 2:1

General Information:

A new part of the story begins here and continues through the end of the chapter. Matthew tells about Herod's attempt

to kill the new King of the Jews.

Bethlehem of Judea

"the town of Bethlehem in the province of Judea"

in the days of Herod the king

"when Herod was king there"

Herod

This refers to Herod the Great.

learned men from the east

"men from the east who studied the stars"

from the east

"from a country far east of Judea"

Matthew 2:2

Where is he who was born King of the Jews?

The men knew from studying the stars that the one who would become king had been born. They were trying to learn where he was. Alternate translation: "A baby who will become the king of the Jews has been born. Where is he?"

his star

They were not saying that the baby was the rightful owner of the star. Alternate translation: "the star that tells about him" or "the star that is associated with his birth"

in the east

"as it came up in the east" or "while we were in our country"

worship

Possible meanings are 1) they intended to worship the baby as divine, or 2) they wanted to honor him as a human king. If your language has a word that includes both meanings, you should consider using it here.

Matthew 2:3

he was troubled

"he was worried." Herod was worried that this baby would replace him as king.

all Jerusalem

Here "Jerusalem" refers to the people. Also, "all" means "many." Matthew is exaggerating to emphasize how many people were worried. Alternate translation: "many of the people in Jerusalem"

Matthew 2:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 2:5

In Bethlehem of Judea

"In the town of Bethlehem in the province of Judea"

this is what was written by the prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"this is what the prophet wrote long ago"

Matthew 2:6

General Information:

The chief priests and scribes of the people quote the prophet Micah to show that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem.

you, Bethlehem, ... are not the least among the rulers of Judah

Micah was speaking to the people of Bethlehem as if they were with him but they were not. Also, "are not the least" can be translated with a positive phrase. Alternate translation: "you, people of Bethlehem, ... your town is among the most important towns in Judah"

who will shepherd my people Israel

Micah speaks of this ruler as a shepherd. This means he will lead and care for the people. Alternate translation: "who will lead my people Israel as a shepherd leads his sheep"

Matthew 2:7

Herod secretly called the learned men

This means that Herod talked to the learned men without other people knowing.

men to ask them exactly what time the star had appeared.

This can be translated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "men, and he asked them, 'When exactly did this star appear?'"

what time the star had appeared

It is implied that the learned men told him when the star appeared. Alternate translation: "what time the star had appeared. The learned men told Herod when the star first appeared"

Matthew 2:8

young child

This refers to Jesus.

bring me a report

"report back to me" or "let me know"

worship him

See how you translated this in Matthew 2:2.

Matthew 2:9

After they

"After the learned men"

they had seen in the east

"they had seen come up in the east" or "they had seen in their country"

went before them

"guided them" or "led them"

stood still over

"stopped over"

where the young child was

"the place where the young child was staying"

Matthew 2:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 2:11

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to the house where Mary, Joseph, and the young Jesus were living.

They went

"The learned men went"

They fell down and worshiped him

"They knelt down and put their faces close to the ground."

They did this to honor Jesus.

their treasures

Here "treasures" refers to the boxes or bags they used to carry their treasures. Alternate translation: "the containers that held their treasures"

Matthew 2:12

God warned them

"Afterwards, God warned the learned men." God knew that Herod wanted to harm the child.

dream not to return to Herod, so

This can be translated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "dream, saying, 'Do not go back to King Herod,'"

so"

Matthew 2:13

they had departed

"the learned men had departed"

appeared to Joseph in a dream

"came to Joseph while he was dreaming"

Get up, take ... flee ... Remain ... you

God is speaking to Joseph, so these should all be singular forms.

until I tell you

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "until I tell you it is safe to come back"

I tell you

Here "I" refers to God. The angel is speaking for God.

Matthew 2:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 2:15

General Information:

Matthew quotes the prophet Hosea to show that the Christ would spend time in Egypt.

He remained

It is implied that Joseph, Mary, and Jesus remained in Egypt. Alternate translation: "They remained"

until the death of Herod

Herod does not die until Matthew 2:19. This statement describes the length of their stay in Egypt, and it does not say that Herod died at this time.

what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "what the Lord had said through the prophet; he had said" or "what the Lord had told the prophet to tell the people; he had said"

Out of Egypt I have called my Son

"I have called my Son out of Egypt"

my Son

In Hosea this refers to the people of Israel. Matthew quoted it to say that this was true of God's Son, Jesus. Translate it using a word for son that could refer to the only son or the first son.

Matthew 2:16

General Information:

These events happen before Herod's death, which Matthew mentioned in [Matthew 2:15]

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts back to Herod and tells what he did when he learned that the learned men had deceived him. he had been mocked by the learned men

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the learned men had embarrassed him by tricking him"

He sent and killed all the male children

Herod did not kill the children himself. Alternate translation: "He gave orders for his soldiers to kill all the boys" or "He sent soldiers there to kill all the boy babies"

two years old and under

"2 years old and younger"

according to the time

"based on the time"

Matthew 2:17

General Information:

Matthew quotes the prophet Jeremiah to show that the death of all of the male children in the region of Bethlehem was according to scripture.

Then was fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"This fulfilled" or "Herod's actions fulfilled"

what had been spoken through Jeremiah the prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"what the Lord spoke long ago through the prophet Jeremiah"

Matthew 2:18

A voice was heard ... they were no more

Matthew is quoting the prophet Jeremiah.

A voice was heard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"People heard a voice" or "There was a loud sound"

Rachel weeping for her children

Rachel lived many years before this time. This prophecy shows Rachel, who has died, weeping for her descendants.

she refused to be comforted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one could comfort her"

because they were no more

"because the children were gone and would never return."

Here "were no more" is a mild way of saying they are dead.

Alternate translation: "because they were dead"

Matthew 2:19

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to Egypt, where Joseph, Mary, and the young Jesus are living.

behold

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.

Matthew 2:20

those who sought the child's life

Here "sought the child's life" is a way of saying they wanted to kill the child. "Alternate translation: "those who were looking for the child in order to kill him"

those who sought

This refers to King Herod and his advisors.

Matthew 2:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 2:22

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in

Matthew 2:1 about Herod's attempt to kill the new King of the Jews.

But when he heard

"But when Joseph heard"

Archelaus

This is the name of Herod's son.

he was afraid

"Joseph was afraid"

Matthew 2:23

what had been spoken through the prophets

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"what the Lord spoke long ago through the prophets"
he would be called a Nazarene
Here "he" refers to Jesus. The prophets before the time of

Jesus would have referred to him as the Messiah or the
Christ. Alternate translation: "people would say that the
Christ is a Nazarene"

Chapter 3

Matthew 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in verse 3.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Bear fruit worthy of repentance"

Fruit is a common picture word in the scriptures. Writers use it to describe the results of either good or bad behavior. In this chapter, good fruit is the result of living as God commands. (See: fruit)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The kingdom of heaven is near"

No one knows for sure whether the "kingdom of heaven" was present or still coming when John spoke these words.

English translations often use the phrase "at hand," but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases "is coming near" and "has come near."

Links:

[Matthew 3:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 3

3:1-12

Why did John the Baptist preach in the wilderness?

[3:1]

John the Baptist belonged to and spoke for God. He lived outside of the cities like a prophet from the Old Testament. John fulfilled the promise of the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 40:3) that said that someone from the wilderness would tell the people that Jesus was coming. Many Jews believed that a deliverer would come from the desert to free them from their Roman oppressors (Ezekiel 20:33–38; Hosea 2:14–23).

See: Preach (Preacher); Prophet; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Fulfill (Fulfillment)

Why did John say "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near"?

[3:2]

John told the people to "repent" or "turn away from" (μετανοέω/g3340) their sinful thoughts and actions. By doing so they would be prepared for the Messiah who was about to come.

See: Repent (Repentance); Kingdom of God; Sin

Why did the author of Matthew write the same thing Isaiah wrote?

[3:3]

The author of Matthew wrote the same thing Isaiah wrote (see: Isaiah 40:3). The ancient Jews disobeyed God. God punished the Israelites and sent them to Babylon. God promised that he would forgive them and return them to their home in Israel (see: Isaiah 40:1-2). Matthew said that Isaiah also wrote about John the Baptist because John's message announced the coming of Jesus the messiah.

See: Punish (Punishment); Messiah (Christ)

See Map: Babylon

Why did John live in the way that he lived?

[3:4]

John wore clothes made of camel's hair and a belt made of leather. He ate locusts and wild honey. John lived in this way to show that he was a prophet like Elijah (See: 2 Kings 1:8). He lived simply and avoided luxuries in order to prepare God's people for the coming of Jesus the messiah.

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ); People of God

Why did John baptize people?

[3:6]

John prepared people for the messiah to arrive. He baptized in water those people who repented of their sins (3:6).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Confess (Confession); Sin; Messiah (Christ); Repent (Repentance)

Why did the Pharisees and Sadducees come to the baptism?

[3:7]

The Pharisees and Sadducees were religious and political leaders among the Jewish people. Some scholars think that the Pharisees and Sadducees to whom John spoke were coming to be baptized, too. They likely came to the baptism to learn about the things John taught. John was attracting many followers, and people were coming to him to be baptized. The Jewish leaders worried about people following John the Baptist.

See: Pharisees; Sadducees; Baptize (Baptism)

Why did John rebuke the Jewish leaders?

[3:7]

John understood that the Pharisees and Sadducees came to learn why John served God in the way he did. They did not want to repent of their sins. If the Pharisees and Sadducees actually came to be baptized it is likely that John believed they just wanted people to see them and think they honored God.

See: Pharisees; Sadducees; Repent (Repentance); Baptize (Baptism)

How does someone have Abraham as their father?

[3:9]

The Pharisees and Sadducees were the descendants of Abraham. However, they did not trust God in the way Abraham did.

See: Pharisees; Sadducees; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Why did John talk about a tree?

[3:10]

John wrote about fruit and a tree (see: Matthew 3:10). This was a metaphor. He wanted people to know that Israel was about to be judged. John wanted them to know that God would quickly judge Israel. The Old Testament often used the axe as a symbol of judgement (See: Isaiah 10:15). God was often portrayed there as expecting good fruit from His people (see: Isaiah 5:2; Jeremiah 2:21; 11:16-17).

See: Metaphor; Judge (Judgment); Symbol; Fruit (Metaphor)

Who did John talk about when he talked about someone greater than him?

[3:11]

John spoke to a people group who wanted people to honor him. John wanted people to know that he needed to honor the messiah and he was unworthy to untie his sandals (See: Matthew 3:11). In ancient Israel, only servants untied the sandals of other people.

How will Jesus baptize people with the Holy Spirit and fire?

[3:11]

Some scholars think John's was a prophecy. This was fulfilled by Christians and non-Christians. Non-Christians do not repent and God will judge them. Other scholars think the promise of fire was about Christians. The Holy Spirit purifies Christians.

See: Hebrews 12:29

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Fulfill (Fulfillment); Repent (Repentance); Judge (Judgment); Fire; Holy Spirit; Purify (Pure)

Why did John talk about a winnowing fork?

[3:12]

John talked about a winnowing fork because this tool was used by farmers in the field to separate the wheat from the chaff. Field workers would use this big fork to toss the harvested wheat into the wind. The heavy kernels of wheat would then fall to the ground, and the chaff would blow away. The chaff was often burned by fire. John used this as a metaphor. John wanted people to know that the Holy Spirit makes Christians clean.

See: Holy Spirit; Clean and Unclean

3:13-17

Where were Galilee and the Jordan River?

[3:13]

See Map: Galilee; Jordan River

Why did Jesus want to be baptized by John?

[3:13]

Jesus told John that John needed to baptize him. Jesus wanted John to baptize him in order "for us to fulfill all righteousness."

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Baptize (Baptism); Fulfill (Fulfillment)

Why did John think that he should not baptize Jesus?

[3:14]

John said that he needed to be baptized by Jesus. John believed that Jesus was greater than him. He knew Jesus did not need to repent of his sins. He did not understand that Jesus was baptized for a different reason than the reason John baptized people.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Repent (Repentance); Sin

Why did the Spirit come down on Jesus like a dove?

[3:16]

Many times in the Old Testament, human authors recorded the presence of doves in their stories. Doves were a sign of peace and new life.

See: Genesis 1:2; 8:8-12

See: Sign

Why did the voice from heaven say "this is my beloved son"?

[3:17]

God said that Jesus was his beloved son. Matthew wanted people to know that Jesus is holy and Jesus is God.

See: Son of God; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Jesus is God

Matthew 3:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Matthew tells of the ministry of John the Baptist.

In those days

This is many years after Joseph and his family left Egypt and went to Nazareth. This is probably near the time that Jesus begins his ministry. Alternate translation: "Some time later" or "Some years later"

Matthew 3:2

Repent

This is plural in form. John is speaking to the crowds. the kingdom of heaven is near

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God ruling as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use the word "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "our God in heaven will soon show himself to be king"

Matthew 3:3

General Information:

Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that John the Baptist was God's appointed messenger to prepare for Jesus's ministry.

For this is he who was spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, saying

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For Isaiah the prophet was speaking of John the Baptist when he said"

The voice of one calling out in the wilderness

This can be expressed as a sentence. Alternate translation: "The voice of one calling out in the wilderness is heard" or "They hear the sound of someone calling out in the wilderness"

Make ready the way of the Lord ... make his paths straight

These two phrases mean the same thing.

Make ready the way of the Lord

"Get the road ready for the Lord." Doing this represents being prepared to hear the Lord's message when he comes. People do this by repenting of their sins. Alternate translation: "Prepare to hear the Lord's message when he comes" or "Repent and be ready for the Lord to come"

Matthew 3:4

Now ... wild honey

The word "Now" is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here Matthew tells background information about John the Baptist.

wore clothing of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist

This clothing symbolizes that John is a prophet like the prophets from long ago, especially the prophet Elijah.

Matthew 3:5

Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region

The words "Jerusalem," "Judea," and "the region" are metonyms for the people from those areas. The word "all" is an exaggeration to emphasize that very many people went out. Alternate translation: Then very many people from Jerusalem, Judea, and that region"

Matthew 3:6

They were baptized by him ... River, confessing their sins

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"John baptized them ... River after they confessed their sins"

They

This refers to the people coming from Jerusalem, Judea, and the region around the Jordan River.

Matthew 3:7

General Information:

John the Baptist begins to rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees.

You offspring of vipers, who

This is a metaphor. Here "offspring" means "having the characteristic of." Vipers are a kind of dangerous snakes and represent evil. This can be stated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "You evil poisonous snakes! Who" or "You are evil like poisonous snakes! Who" who warned you to flee from the wrath that is coming?

John uses a question to rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees because they were asking him to baptize them so that God would not punish them, but they did not want to stop sinning. Alternate translation: "you cannot flee from God's wrath like this." or "do not think that you can flee from God's wrath just because I baptize you."

flee from the wrath that is coming

The word "wrath" is being used to refer to God's punishment because his wrath precedes it. Alternate translation: "run away from the punishment that is coming" or "escape because God is about to punish you"

Matthew 3:8

Bear fruit worthy of repentance

The phrase "bear fruit" is a metaphor referring to a person's actions. Alternate translation: "Let your actions show that you have truly repented"

Matthew 3:9

We have Abraham for our father

"Abraham is our ancestor" or "We are descendants of Abraham." The Jewish leaders thought that God would not punish them since they were descendants of Abraham.

For I say to you

This adds emphasis to what John is about to say.

God is able to raise up children for Abraham even out of these stones

"God is able to make physical descendants out of even these

stones and give them to Abraham"

Matthew 3:10

Connecting Statement:

John the Baptist continues to rebuke the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Already the ax has been placed against the root of the trees. So every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire

This metaphor means God is ready to punish sinners. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has his axe and he is ready to cut down and burn any tree that grows bad fruit" or "As a person gets his axe ready to cut down and burn a tree that grows bad fruit, God is ready to punish you for your sins"

Matthew 3:11

for repentance

"to show that you have repented"

But he who comes after me

Jesus is the person who comes after John.

is mightier than I

"is more important than I am"

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire

This metaphor compares John's baptism with water to the future baptism with fire. This means John's baptism only symbolically cleanses people of their sins. The baptism by Holy Spirit and fire will truly cleanse people of their sins. If possible, use the word "baptize" in your translation to keep the comparison to John's baptism.

Matthew 3:12

His winnowing fork is in his hand

This metaphor compares the way Christ will separate the righteous people from the unrighteous people to the way a man separates wheat grain from chaff. Alternate translation: "Christ is like a man whose winnowing fork is in his hand"

His winnowing fork is in his hand

Here "in his hand" means the person is ready to act.

Alternate translation: "Christ is holding a winnowing fork because he is ready"

winnowing fork

This is a tool for tossing wheat up into the air to separate the wheat grain from the chaff. The heavier grain falls back down and the unwanted chaff is blown away by the wind. It is similar in shape to a pitchfork but with wide tines made of wood.

his threshing floor

"his ground" or "the ground where he separates the grain from the chaff"

gather his wheat into the storehouse ... burn up the chaff with fire that can never be put out

This is a metaphor showing how God will separate righteous people from evil people. The righteous will go to

heaven like wheat into a farmer's storehouse, and God will burn the people who are like chaff with a fire that will never be put out.

can never be put out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"will never burn out"

Matthew 3:13

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a later time when John the Baptist baptizes Jesus.

to be baptized by John

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so John could baptize him"

Matthew 3:14

I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?

John uses a question to show his surprise at Jesus's request.

Alternate translation: "You are more important than I am. I should not baptize you. You should baptize me."

Matthew 3:15

for us

Here "us" refers to Jesus and John.

John permitted him

You may need to make explicit that John permitted Jesus to be baptized by John. Alternate translation: "John allowed Jesus to be baptized" or "John agreed to baptize Jesus"

Matthew 3:16

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about John the

Baptist. It describes what happened after he baptized Jesus.

After he was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"After John baptized Jesus"

behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

the heavens were opened to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Jesus saw the sky open" or "God opened the heavens to Jesus"

coming down like a dove

Possible meanings are 1) this is simply a statement that the Spirit was in the form of a dove or 2) this is a simile that compares the Spirit coming down upon Jesus gently, the way a dove would.

Matthew 3:17

a voice came out of the heavens saying

"Jesus heard a voice from heaven." Here "voice" refers to God speaking. Alternate translation: "God spoke from heaven"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

Chapter 4

Matthew 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 6, 15 and 16, which is from the Old Testament.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"the kingdom of heaven has come near"

No one knows for use whether the "kingdom of heaven" was present or still coming when Jesus spoke these words.

English translations often use the phrase "at hand," but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrase "is coming near" and "has come near."

"If you are the Son of God"

The reader should not understand these words in verses 3 and 6 to mean that Satan did not know whether Jesus was the Son of God. God had already said that Jesus was his Son ([Matthew 3:17](#)), so Satan knew who Jesus was. He also knew that Jesus could make stones become bread and could throw himself off of high places and not be hurt. He was trying to make Jesus do these things and so disobey God and obey Satan. These words can be translated as "Show me your power if you are the Son of God" (See: [satan](#) and [sonofgod](#))

Links:

[Matthew 4:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 4

4:1-11

How was Jesus led by the Holy Spirit?

[4:1]

Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit descended like a dove and rested on Jesus in Matthew 3:16. The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tested to show Jesus completely obey God.

See: [Holy Spirit](#); [Test](#)

Where was the wilderness?

[4:1]

The wilderness was not far from where John was baptizing. The wilderness area had few or no people living in it. There was not much food and water in the wilderness.

See: [Baptize \(Baptism\)](#); [Wilderness](#)

How was someone tempted?

[4:1]

The Greek word which Matthew used for "tempted" can mean "testing." When Jesus was tempted, he completely obeyed God.

See: [Tempt \(Temptation\)](#); [Test](#)

Who is the devil?

[4:1]

See: [Satan \(The Devil\)](#)

What is fasting?

[4:2]

See: [Fasting](#)

What is the Son of God?

[4:3]

See: [Son of God](#)

Why did Jesus say that "man shall not live on bread alone"?

[4:4]

When Jesus said, "Man shall not live on bread alone," he said the same thing Moses wrote (see: [Deuteronomy 8:3](#)). God gave manna to the people who followed Moses through the wilderness. This was a miracle which God used to teach the people that the word of God is more important than food.

See: [Manna](#); [Word of God](#); [Miracle](#)

What was the holy city?

[4:5]

The holy city is Jerusalem. It was a city that was different than other cities. It was the place where people worshipped God.

See: [Holy \(Holiness, Set Apart\)](#); [Zion](#); [Worship](#)

What was the temple?

[4:5]

See: [Temple](#)

Why did Satan say, God "will command his angels to take care of you"?

[4:6]

When Satan said that God "will command his angels to take care of you," he said the same things written in [Psalm](#)

91:11-12. He told Jesus that if he were to throw himself down from the highest place of the temple, God would protect him. Satan wanted Jesus to forget that God the Father cared for Jesus.

See: Satan (The Devil); Angel; Temple; God the Father

Why did Jesus tell Satan, “You must not test the Lord your God”?

[4:7]

Jesus told Satan, “You must not test the Lord your God” because he understood that Satan wanted Jesus to not trust God the Father and to disobey God the Father. Jesus only wanted to serve and obey God the Father.

See: Satan (The Devil); Test; Lord; God the Father

Why did Satan want Jesus to worship him?

[4:9]

Satan wanted Jesus to forget about his loyalty to God the Father. If Jesus became loyal to Satan, then Jesus could have the entire world as his reward. Satan wanted Jesus to disobey God.

See: Satan (The Devil); God the Father

Why did Jesus say that someone should only worship God?

[4:10]

Jesus said that someone should only worship God because God alone was worthy to be worshipped.

See: Worship

4:12-22

How had John been handed over?

[4:12]

John had been “handed over.” That is, John was arrested.

Where were Nazareth, Capernaum, Zebulun, and Naphtali?

[4:13]

See Map: Galilee; Nazareth; Capernaum; Zebulun; Naphtali

How was Isaiah’s prophecy fulfilled?

[4:14]

Isaiah’s prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus moved from Nazareth to Capernaum (see: Isaiah 9:1,2).

See: Prophecy (Prophesy) ; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

See Map: Galilee; Nazareth; Capernaum

Why did Jesus preach, “repent for the kingdom of heaven is near”?

[4:17]

Jesus preached, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near.” He was preaching the same thing John the Baptist preached.

See: Preach (Preacher); Repent (Repentance); Kingdom of God

Where was the Sea of Galilee?

[4:18]

See Map: Sea of Galilee

How will Peter and Andrew become “fishers of men”?

[4:19]

When Jesus said that Peter and Andrew would become “fishers of men,” this was a metaphor. He wanted them to know that they would help other people to believe in Jesus and obey Jesus.

See: Disciple; Metaphor

Why did Peter and Andrew immediately follow Jesus?

[4:20]

Peter and Andrew left their jobs fishing to become disciples of Jesus. Matthew wrote that they immediately left their nets to follow Jesus. Some scholars think that Peter and Andrew had heard about Jesus before this. Other scholars do not think they heard about Jesus before this.

See: Disciple

Why were James and John mending their nets?

[4:21]

James and John mended their nets. Fishermen always mended their nets after they finished fishing because the nets would have holes or garbage in them. James and John were getting their nets ready so that they could fish again later or the next day.

Advice to translators: When someone mended their fishing net, they fixed any holes in the net.

What was a synagogue?

[4:23]

See: Synagogue

How was someone possessed by demons?

[4:24]

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

What is an epileptic?

[4:24]

The word translated “epileptic” is a word which meant “moon-struck.” In ancient times, a popular belief was that when a person had seizures, his health was under attack by the moon. Jesus healed the epileptic person. He controlled the moon. Advice to translators: A seizure is a type of illness that causes someone to shake violently and they cannot control it.

What was a paralytic?

[4:24]

A paralytic was a person who had no control over his body.

What was the Decapolis?

[4:25]

The Decapolis was a group of ten cities in ancient Syria. People in these cities spoke Greek and Latin. They were great cities in the Roman empire.

See Map: Decapolis; Syria

Why does Matthew speak of Galilee and the Decapolis, Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan?

[4:25]

Matthew said that great crowds followed Jesus from Galilee and the Decapolis, Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan river. Many different groups of people lived in these places. They spoke many different languages. Matthew wants us to know that many different groups of people loved Jesus. He also wants us to know that Jesus welcomed all people to follow him.

See Map: Galilee; Decapolis; Jerusalem; Judea; Jordan River

Matthew 4:1

General Information:

Here Matthew begins a new part of the story in which Satan tempts Jesus in the wilderness after Jesus has been there for 40 days.

Jesus was led up by the Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Spirit led Jesus"

to be tempted by the devil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so the devil could tempt Jesus"

Matthew 4:2

he had fasted ... he was hungry

These refer to Jesus.

forty days and forty nights

"40 days and 40 nights." This refers to 24-hour periods.

Alternate translation: "40 days"

Matthew 4:3

The tempter

These words refer to the same being as "the devil" (verse 1). You may have to use the same word to translate both.

If you are the Son of God, command

It is best to assume that Satan knew that Jesus is the Son of God. Possible meanings are 1) this is a temptation to do miracles for Jesus's own benefit. Alternate translation: "You are the Son of God, so you can command" or 2) this is a challenge or accusation. Alternate translation: "Prove that you are the Son of God by commanding"

the Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

command these stones to become bread.

You could translate this with a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "say to these stones, 'Become bread.'"

bread

Here "bread" refers to food in general. Alternate translation: "food"

Matthew 4:4

General Information:

Jesus rebukes Satan with a quotation from Deuteronomy.

It is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Moses wrote this in the scriptures long ago"

Man does not live on bread alone

This implies that there is something more important to life than food.

but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God

Here "word" and "mouth" refer to what God says. Alternate translation: "but by listening to everything that God says"

Matthew 4:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 4:6

General Information:

Satan quotes from the Psalms in order to tempt Jesus.

If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down

It is best to assume that Satan knew that Jesus is the Son of God. Possible meanings are 1) this is a temptation to do a miracle for Jesus's own benefit. Alternate translation:

"Since you are truly the Son of God, you can throw yourself down" or 2) this is a challenge or accusation. Alternate translation: "Prove that you are truly the Son of God by throwing yourself down"

the Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

throw yourself down

"let yourself fall to the ground" or "jump down"

for it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the writer wrote in the scriptures" or "for it says in the scriptures"

'He will command his angels to take care of you,' and

This can be translated with a direct quotation, and you can

specify that it is God who will command. Alternate translation: "'God will say to his angels, 'Take care of him,'" and" or "'God will command his angels to take care of you,' and"

They will carry you

"The angels will hold you"

Matthew 4:7

General Information:

Jesus rebukes Satan with another quotation from Deuteronomy.

Again it is written

It is understood that Jesus is quoting scripture again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Again, I will tell you what Moses wrote in the scriptures"

You must not test

Here "you" refers to anyone. Alternate translation: "One should not test" or "No person should test"

Matthew 4:8

Again, the devil

"Next, the devil"

Matthew 4:9

He said to him

"The devil said to Jesus"

All these things I will give you

"I will give you all these things." The tempter is emphasizing here that he will give "all these things," not just some of them.

fall down

"put your face near the ground." This was a common action to show that a person was worshiping.

Matthew 4:10

General Information:

Jesus rebukes Satan with another quotation from Deuteronomy.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about how Satan tempted Jesus.

For it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For Moses also wrote in the scriptures"

You will worship ... you will serve

Both instances of "you" are singular, a command to everyone who hears it.

Matthew 4:11

behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the important new information that follows.

Matthew 4:12

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story in which Matthew describes the beginning of Jesus's ministry in Galilee. These verses explain how Jesus came to be in Galilee.

Now

This word is used here to mark a change in the main story. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

John had been handed over

This can be stated in active form and the information omitted from the euphemism can be stated. Alternate

translation: "the king had handed John over to the prison" or "the king had arrested John"

Matthew 4:13

in the territories of Zebulun and Naphtali

"Zebulun" and "Naphtali" are the names of the tribes that lived in these territories many years earlier before foreigners took control of the land of Israel.

Matthew 4:14

This happened

This refers to Jesus's going to live in Capernaum.

what was said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"what God said"

Matthew 4:15

General Information:

Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus's ministry in Galilee was a fulfillment of prophecy.

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali ... Galilee of the Gentiles!

These are two descriptions of the same territory.

toward the sea

This is the Sea of Galilee.

Matthew 4:16

General Information:

Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus's ministry in Galilee was a fulfillment of prophecy.

The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light

Here "darkness" is a metaphor for not knowing the truth about God. And "light" is a metaphor for God's true message that saves people from their sin.

The people who sat

These words can be combined with the sentence beginning with "The land of Zebulun" (verse 15). Alternate translation:

"In the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali ... where many Gentiles live, the people who sat"

who sat ... who sat

"who were living ... who were living." The word "sat" is an idiom for having lived for a long time in one place, not to sitting on the ground or a piece of furniture.

to those who sat in the region and shadow of death, upon them has a light arisen

This basically has the same meaning as the first part of the sentence. Here "those who sat in the region and shadow of death" is a metaphor. It represents those who did not know God. These people were in danger of dying and being separated from God forever.

Matthew 4:17

the kingdom of heaven is near

The phrase "the kingdom of heaven" refers to God ruling as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, include a word that means "heaven" in your translation.

See how you translated this in [Matthew 3:2]

Matthew 4:18

General Information:

This begins a new scene within the part of the story about Jesus's ministry in Galilee. Here he begins to gather men to be his disciples.

casting a net into the sea

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "throwing a net into the water to

catch fish"

Matthew 4:19

Come, follow me

Jesus invites Simon and Andrew to follow him, live with him, and become his disciples. Alternate translation: "Be my disciples"

I will make you fishers of men

This metaphor means Simon and Andrew will teach people God's true message, so others will also follow Jesus.

Alternate translation: "I will teach you to gather men to me like you used to gather fish"

Matthew 4:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 4:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus calls more men to be his disciples.

He called them

"Jesus called John and James." This phrase also means that Jesus invited them to follow him, live with him, and become his disciples.

Matthew 4:22

they immediately left

"at that moment they left"

left the boat ... and followed him

It should be clear that they immediately put their nets down and left that place with Jesus. If your language requires you to tell whether they were leaving for the rest of the day or for a long time or for the rest of their lives, you should probably translate as they were leaving for the rest of their lives. It would be good to have a note saying that the Greek does not specify how long they would be

gone.

Matthew 4:23

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about the beginning of Jesus's ministry in Galilee. The rest of this chapter summarizes what he did and how the people responded.

teaching in their synagogues

"teaching in the synagogues of the Galileans" or "teaching in the synagogues of those people"

preaching the gospel of the kingdom

Here "kingdom" refers to God's reign as king. Alternate translation: "preaching the good news that God will show himself as king"

every kind of disease and sickness

The words "disease" and "sickness" are closely related but should be translated as two different words if possible.

"Disease" is what causes a person to be sick. "Sickness" is the physical weakness or affliction that results from having a disease.

Matthew 4:24

those who were possessed by demons

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those whom demons controlled"

the epileptics

The word "epileptic" refers to people who have epilepsy and so sometimes become unconscious and move uncontrollably.

Matthew 4:25

the Decapolis

This name means "the Ten Towns." This is the name of a region to the southeast of the Sea of Galilee.

Chapter 5

Matthew 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Many people call the words in Matthew 5-7 the Sermon on the Mount. This is one long lesson that Jesus taught. Bibles divide this lesson into three chapters, but this can sometimes confuse the reader. If your translation divides the text into sections, be sure that the reader understands that the whole sermon is one large section.

Matthew 5:3-10, known as The Beatitudes or as The Blessings, has been set apart by being set farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text, with each line beginning with the word "blessed." This way of placing the words on the page highlights the poetic form of this teaching.

Jesus spoke about many different subjects in this sermon, so you may wish to help the reader by putting an empty line into the text whenever Jesus changed the subject.

Special concepts in this chapter

"His disciples"

It is possible to refer to anyone who followed Jesus as a follower or disciple. Jesus selected twelve of his followers to become his closest disciples, "the twelve disciples." They would later become known as the apostles.

Links:

[Matthew 5:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 5

5:1-12

What is the "Sermon on the mount"?

[5:1]

In Matthew 5-7, Jesus taught people on the side of a mountain. Scholars call this the "sermon on the mount." Scholars

disagree about why Jesus taught these things.

Some scholars think Jesus was teaching Christians how to live. Some scholars think Jesus was talking about how to make the whole world live in a way that honors God. Some scholars think Jesus was teaching people how to live in a way that honors God. If they did not live in this way, then they needed to believe in Jesus so they could be at peace with God. Some scholars think Jesus was teaching Christians how to live when he rules on the earth for 1000 years (see: Revelation 20:1-7).

See: Kingdom of God

Why does Jesus say “blessed” many times?

[5:3, 5:4, 5:5, 5:6, 5:7, 5:8, 5:9, 5:10, 5:11]

Jesus said the word “blessed” many times. He was talking about different people whom God blessed. God favored these people in some way.

Advice to translators: Some scholars call Matthew 5:3-7 the “Beatitudes.”

See: Luke 6:20-26

See: Bless (Blessing)

Who are the poor in spirit?

[5:3]

Jesus taught that God approved of those who were “poor.” Scholars think Jesus spoke of the spiritually poor (see: Matthew 5:3). That is, they knew their great need for God. These people trusted in Jesus and because of this were at peace with God. Because of this, they will inherit the kingdom of God.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Kingdom of God; Spirit (Spiritual)

Who are those who mourn?

[5:4]

Jesus taught that God approved those who mourn. Some scholars think that Jesus spoke about people being sorry for their sins or the sins of other people. This sorrow caused them to weep. They repented. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about the evil of the world. This also caused Christians to weep. These scholars think Jesus spoke about the day when God gathers his people into his kingdom. There will be no mourning in the kingdom of God.

See: Sin; Kingdom of God

Who are the meek?

[5:5]

The meek are people who know they cannot do certain things without help. They know they cannot be at peace with God by themselves. They need Jesus. Because of this, they will inherit the earth. Some scholars think they will reign with Jesus on the earth (see: 2 Timothy 2:12). Other scholars think this was a metaphor. They will inherit the promises God gave to other people.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Metaphor; Kingdom of God

Who are the people who hunger and thirst for righteousness?

[5:6]

Jesus taught that God approved of those who were hungry. He wanted to say that those who were hungry and thirsty really wanted to do the things that God wanted them to do. Scholars think the words, “they will be filled” spoke about God’s promise to approve those who hungered for him in this way.

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

Who are the merciful?

[5:7]

The merciful are people who forgive other people. They forgive other people because God forgave them.

See: Mercy; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

Who are the pure in heart?

[5:8]

The pure in heart are those whom God has made clean. These people will live together with God in heaven forever.

See: Clean and Unclean; Heaven; Heart (Metaphor)

Who are the peacemakers?

[5:9]

The peacemakers are people who try to be at peace with other people. They love other people because God loves all people. Because of this, they try to help people be at peace with God and with other people. They will be sons of God because they will be adopted into God’s family.

See: Adopt (Adoption); Family of God

Who has been persecuted for righteousness’ sake?

[5:10]

Christians are persecuted by non-Christians. This is because they try to do the right things, things that honor God. People who reject Jesus do not like this and persecute Christians. Christians will inherit the kingdom of God.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Kingdom of God

How does God favor Christians when others persecute them?

[5:11]

Jesus said that God blesses people when other people do evil things to them. This is because God blesses Christians when they are persecuted. They are rewarded when they honor God and evil people punish them for it. They will be rewarded.

See: Bless (Blessing); Persecute (Persecution) ; Reward; Punish (Punishment)

What is a prophet?

[5:12]

See: Prophet

5:13-16

Why did Jesus compare Christians to salt?

[5:13]

Jesus compared Christians to salt. This was a metaphor. If salt stops being salt, then it does not do any good. Instead, it is thrown out. In the ancient world, salt was used to preserve food. Some scholars think Jesus wanted to say that if Christians do not do things that honor God, then they too are useless. Salt also makes people thirsty. Other scholars think Jesus wanted to say that Christians made people thirsty. This was a metaphor. They made non-Christians want to know more about God.

See: Metaphor

Why did Jesus compare Christians to light?

[5:14, 5:15, 5:16]

Jesus said that Christians were like light in some way. This was a metaphor. In ancient times, a light helped people know where to go. Christians are to help non-Christians know how to live in a way that honors God and how to be at peace with God. This is how they let their light shine before people. If non-Christians saw Christians loving other people and living in a way that honors God, then they would want to do the same.

See: Metaphor; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why can a city on a hill not be hidden?

[5:14]

When a city is on the top of a hill. People can see it from far away. This is because there are lights in the city that cannot be hidden.

See: Metaphor; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why do people not put a lamp under a basket?

[5:15]

People do not put a light under a basket because it would hide the light. If they did this, then people could not see the light. Therefore, they put the light on a lampstand so that other people can see the light.

See: Metaphor; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Who is your father in heaven?

[5:16]

Christians have a father in heaven. This is God. He lives in heaven.

See: Family of God; Heaven

5:17-20

How did Jesus come to fulfill the law and the prophets?

[5:17]

Jesus said that he did not come to destroy the law and the prophets. Rather, he came to fulfill them. Jesus was speaking about the Old Testament. He did not reject the things taught in the Old Testament. Instead, he fulfilled the many prophecies about the messiah in the Old Testament.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Messiah (Christ)

Did Jesus say that the Law of Moses will remain until the end of the world?

[5:18]

Jesus said that the Law will not pass away until all things have been accomplished. He was speaking about the Law of Moses. Nothing in the Law of Moses would "pass away" until certain things were fulfilled. He was not saying that the heaven and the earth will end before these things happen. Instead, the Law of Moses would remain until he lived a perfect life and died for the sins of those who believe in him. Some scholars think that after this, the Law of Moses ended. Other scholars think that Christians obey certain parts of the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses; Fulfill (Fulfillment); Heaven; Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

What is a jot and tittle?

[5:18]

When Jesus spoke about the jot and tittle, he was talking about Hebrew letters. He wanted to say that not one letter will change of the Old Testament until certain things happened.

Who taught other people to break certain commandments?

[5:19]

Jesus taught that certain people taught other people to break certain commandments in the Law of Moses. In ancient Israel, there were Jewish teachers who taught these things. However, Jesus said that, at this time, the Jews must obey every commandment in the Law of Moses.

See: Command (Commandment); Law of Moses

How are people least and greatest in the kingdom of God?

[5:19]

Jesus said that certain people will be least in the kingdom of heaven and other people will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. They will be rewarded. However, he does not say how certain people will be rewarded and other people will not be rewarded.

See: Kingdom of God; Reward

How does someone enter into the kingdom of heaven?

[5:20]

People will enter into the kingdom of heaven. However, they need to be righteous to enter the kingdom of God. They need to be more righteous than the scribes and pharisees. People thought the scribes and pharisees were the most righteous. The righteousness that Jesus talked about was not something that people could do. Rather, it could only be given. Jesus lived a perfect life. After he did this, he gave this to Christians in some way so they could be at peace with God and enter into the kingdom of heaven.

See: Kingdom of God; Scribe; Pharisees; Righteous (Righteousness)

5:21-26

What did the Jewish teachers teach the people?

[5:21]

The Jewish teachers taught people that it was evil to kill other people. Jesus explained to them that it was wrong to kill someone. However, there were many other wrong things that happened before someone killed another person. Before they killed someone, they were angry with the other person. This was sin. God judges this sin too.

See: Sin; Judge (Judgment)

Why did someone say “you worthless person”?

[5:22]

When someone said, “you worthless person,” this was a great insult. The Jewish leaders might judge this person.

However, if someone said a small insult, Jesus said they might go to hell. This is because everyone who sins deserves to go to hell and live there forever. However, if someone believes in Jesus their sins are forgiven and they will not go to hell.

See: Hell; Sin; Judge (Judgment)

How did Jesus want people to make sacrifices to God?

[5:23, 5:24]

Jesus did not want someone to offer a sacrifice to God if they were angry with someone else. He wanted people to be at peace with others before they made a sacrifice to God. This is because God wanted people to love one another more than he wanted a sacrifice. After they were at peace with other people, then they should make a sacrifice to God.

See: Offer (Offering); Sacrifice

Why did Jesus talk about going to court?

[5:25]

Jesus talked about going to court. This was a type of parable. People should be afraid to go to court when someone is angry with them. If they do this, then the judge may punish them greatly. Because of this, they should make peace with the other person before they are judged. In the same way, people should make peace with other people before God judges them. They should also make peace with God before God judges them.

See: Parable; Ancient Trials (Lawsuit); Judge (Judgment); Punish (Punishment)

5:27-32

How does someone commit adultery?

[5:27]

Jesus spoke about committing adultery. Someone commits adultery when they have sex with someone they are not married to. However, Jesus said that people also commit adultery before they have sex with someone else. They do this when they think about and want to have sex with this person. They sin when they desire to have sex with this person.

See: Adultery; Sexual Immorality

Did Jesus want people to pluck out their eyes?

[5:29]

Jesus said that people should pluck out their eyes. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say that it was better for them to not have eyes than to sin with their eyes.

See: Metaphor; Sin

Who will be thrown into hell?

[5:29]

Certain people will be sent to hell. Everyone who sins will be sent to hell unless they believe in Jesus.

See: Hell; Sin

What is a certificate of divorce?

[5:31]

In ancient times, a certificate of divorce is a piece of paper that was given to a woman after she was divorced. This helped her to marry another man. Many people did this in ancient Israel. However, if people did this, then they caused the woman and the man who remarried her to commit adultery. This is unless the husband committed sexual immorality.

See: 1 Corinthians 7:15

See: Divorce; Adultery; Sexual Immorality

5:33-37

What is false oath?

[5:33]

A false oath is a promise someone makes but they do not do the things they promised to do.

See: Swear (Oath)

How does someone carry out an oath to the Lord?

[5:33]

Jesus spoke about carrying an oath to the Lord. He was speaking about making a promise as if someone was making a promise to God.

See: Swear (Oath); Lord

Why did Jesus not want people to make oaths?

[5:34, 5:35]

Jesus did not want people to make oaths. In ancient times, people swore to many different things. The Jewish teachers had many rules about how someone could make an oath and break an oath. However, Jesus did not want people to swear by anything. If they made any promise and did not do it, then they sinned. He wanted people to do the things they promised to do.

See: Swear (Oath); Sin

Who is the evil one?

[5:37]

The evil one is Satan, or the devil (see: Matthew 4:1).

See: Satan (The Devil)

5:38-48

What is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth?

[5:38]

In the Law of Moses, it said that people were to be punished in a certain way (see: Exodus 21:23-24). People were not supposed to punish people more than the wrong they did to be punished. The Law of Moses protected people from being punished too much. However, Jesus taught that Christians do not need to punish people when people wrong them. Instead, they can forgive other people because God forgave them.

See: Law of Moses; Punish (Punishment)

Who said that people were supposed to hate their enemies?

[5:43]

The Pharisees taught that people were supposed to love other people, but to hate their enemies. However, Jesus taught that Christians are to pray for those who persecute them. This is because God will reward Christians for honoring God when they are persecuted. However, they should pray for the people who persecute them so they can come to believe in Jesus.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ;Pharisees; Reward

What did Matthew say in verse 44?

[5:44]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament contain the words, "bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you." More and older copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. Scholars do not think Matthew wrote these words.

See: Bless (Blessing)

How is someone a son of the Father in heaven?

[5:45]

Christians are children of God. They are sons of God the Father in heaven. Here, Jesus was saying that Christians do the things that God the Father wants them to do when he said they were sons of the Father in heaven.

See: Family of God; God the Father; Heaven

Why did Jesus talk about the sun and the rain?

[5:45]

Jesus talked about the sun and the rain. He wanted to say that God is gracious to Christians and non-Christians. He shows everyone some favor. Because of this, Christians should do the same.

See: Grace

What were tax collectors?

[5:46]

People in Israel hated the tax collectors because they thought they were evil. Tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Roman government. They paid the Romans so they could collect taxes from other people. If they collected more taxes than they paid the Roman government, then they were allowed to keep it. Because of this, many tax collectors became rich. The Jews thought a Jewish tax collector betrayed the Jewish people because they took money from the Jews and gave it to the Romans. They thought tax collectors were evil because they took money from people who honored God and gave it to people who rejected God.

See: Tax (Tax Collector, Toll)

What did Jesus want Christians to do?

[5:47]

Jesus wanted Christians to do more good things than other people. They needed to do more good things than evil people.

See: Gentile

How does God want people to live?

[5:48]

God wants people to be perfect. That is, he wants people to always do good things. While no one is able to do this except Jesus, this is what God wants.

Matthew 5:1

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story in which Jesus begins to teach his disciples. This part continues through the end of chapter 7 and is frequently called the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:2

He opened his mouth

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "Jesus began to speak"

taught them

The word "them" refers to his disciples.

Matthew 5:3

General Information:

Here, Jesus begins to describe the characteristics of people who are blessed.

the poor in spirit

This means people who are humble. Alternate translation: "those who know they need God"

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "for God in heaven will be their king"

Matthew 5:4

those who mourn

Possible reasons they are sad are 1) the sinfulness of the world or 2) their own sins or 3) the death of someone. Do not specify the reason for mourning unless your language requires it.

they will be comforted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will comfort them"

Matthew 5:5

the meek

"the gentle" or "those who do not rely on their own power"

they will inherit the earth

"God will give them the entire earth"

Matthew 5:6

those who hunger and thirst for righteousness

This metaphor describes people who strongly desire to do what is right. Alternate translation: "those who desire to live right as much as they desire food and drink"

they will be filled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will fill them" or "God will satisfy them"

Matthew 5:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 5:8

the pure in heart

"people whose hearts are pure." Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being or intentions. Alternate translation: "those who only want to serve God"

they will see God

This means they will be able to live in God's presence.

Alternate translation: "God will allow them to live with him"

Matthew 5:9

the peacemakers

These are the people who help others to have peace with one another.

for they will be called sons of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for God will call them his children" or "they will be children of God"

sons of God

It is best to translate "sons" with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a human son or child.

Matthew 5:10

those who have been persecuted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those people whom others treat unfairly"

for righteousness' sake
"because they do what God wants them to do"
theirs is the kingdom of heaven
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:3]
Matthew 5:11
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes describing the characteristics of people who are blessed.
Blessed are you
The word "you" is plural.
say all kinds of evil things against you falsely
"say all kinds of evil lies about you" or "say bad things about you that are not true"
for my sake
"because you follow me" or because you believe in me"
Matthew 5:12
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 5:13
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to teach about how his disciples are like salt and light.
You are the salt of the earth
Possible meanings are 1) just as salt makes food good, disciples of Jesus influence the people of the world so that they will be good. Alternate translation: "You are like salt for the people of the world" or 2) just as salt preserves food, disciples of Jesus keep people from becoming totally corrupt. Alternate translation: "As salt is for food, you are for the world"
if the salt has lost its taste
Possible meanings are 1) "if the salt has lost its power to do things that salt does" or 2) "if the salt has lost its flavor."
how can it be made salty again?
"how can it be made useful again?" Jesus uses a question to teach the disciples. Alternate translation: "there is no way for it to become useful again."
except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "except for people to throw it out into the road and walk on it"
Matthew 5:14
You are the light of the world
This means Jesus's followers bring the message of God's truth to all the people who do not know God. Alternate translation: "You are like a light for the people of the world"
A city set on a hill cannot be hidden
At night when it is dark, people can see the city lights shining. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "During the night, no one can hide the lights that shine from a city on a hill" or "Everyone sees the lights of a city on a hill"
Matthew 5:15
Neither do people light a lamp
"People do not light a lamp"
put it under a basket

"place the lamp under a basket." This is saying it is foolish to create light only to hide it so people do not see the light of the lamp.
Matthew 5:16
Let your light shine before people
This means a disciple of Jesus should live in such a way that others can learn about God's truth. Alternate translation: "Let your lives be like a light that shines before people"
your Father who is in heaven
It is best to translate "Father" with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a human father.
Matthew 5:17
Connecting Statement:
Jesus begins to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law.
the prophets
This refers to what the prophets wrote in the scriptures.
Matthew 5:18
truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
until heaven and earth pass away
Here "heaven" and "earth" refer to the entire universe.
Alternate translation: "as long as the universe lasts"
all things have been accomplished
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all things have happened" or "God causes all things to happen"
all things
The phrase "all things" refers to everything in the law.
Alternate translation: "everything in the law" or "all that is written in the law"
Matthew 5:19
whoever breaks
Possible meanings are 1) "whoever disobeys" or 2) "whoever ignores."
the least one of these commandments and teaches
"any of these commandments, even the least important one, and teaches"
whoever ... teaches others to do so will be called
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if anyone ... teaches others to do so, God will call that person"
least in the kingdom of heaven
The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in Matthew. If possible use "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "the least important in his heavenly kingdom" or "the least important under the rule of our God in heaven"
keeps them and teaches them
"obeys all these commandments and teaches others to do the same"
great
most important
Matthew 5:20
For I say to you
This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
you ... your ... you
These are plural.
that unless your righteousness exceeds ... Pharisees, you will in no way enter

This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: "that your righteousness must exceed ... Pharisees in order to enter"

Matthew 5:21

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The "you" is plural in "you have heard." The understood "you" is singular in "Do not murder," but in some languages it may need to be translated as plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about murder and anger.

it was said to them in ancient times

This can be expressed with an active verb. Alternate translation: "God said to those who lived long ago" or "Moses said to your ancestors long ago"

will be subject to judgment

Possible meanings are 1) "will have to go to the judge" or 2) "will be in danger of punishment."

Matthew 5:22

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The "you" is plural in "I say to you."

But I say

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The "I" is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is just as important as the original commands. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis.

brother

This refers to a fellow believer, not to a literal brother or a neighbor.

worthless person ... fool

Both of these insults represent a person who cannot think correctly. "Worthless person" is close to "brainless," where "fool" adds the idea of disobedience to God.

council

This was likely a local council, not the main Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.

Matthew 5:23

you

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural.

offering your gift

"giving your gift" or "bringing your gift"

at the altar

It is implied that this is God's altar at the temple in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "to God at the altar in the temple"

there remember

"while you are standing at the altar you remember"

your brother has anything against you

"another person is angry with you because of something you did"

Matthew 5:24

First be reconciled with your brother

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"First make peace with the person"

Matthew 5:25

Agree with your

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural.

your adversary

This is a person who takes someone to court for doing something wrong to accuse him before a judge.

may hand you over to the judge

Here "hand you over" means to give someone into the control of someone else. Alternate translation: "will let the judge deal with you"

the judge may hand you over to the officer

Here "hand you over" means to give someone into the control of someone else. Alternate translation: "the judge will give you over to the officer"

officer

a person who has authority to carry out the decisions of a judge

you may be thrown into prison

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the officer might put you in prison"

Matthew 5:26

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

from there

"from prison"

Matthew 5:27

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The "you" is plural in "you have heard." The understood "you" is singular in "Do not commit adultery," but in some languages it may need to be translated as plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about adultery and lust.

that it was said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God said" or "that Moses said"

commit

This word means to act out or do something.

Matthew 5:28

But I say

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The "I" is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is just as important as the original commands. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis. See how you translated this in Matthew 5:22.

everyone who looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart

This metaphor indicates that a man who lusts after a woman is as guilty of adultery as a man who actually commits the act of adultery.

to lust after her

"and lusts after her" or "and desires to sleep with her" in his heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts.

Alternate translation: "in his mind" or "in his thoughts"

Matthew 5:29

If your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you

The irony here is that people use their eyes in part to keep from stumbling. Here "eye" is a metonym for what a person chooses to look at or learn about, "stumble" is a metaphor for "sin," and "pluck it out and throw it away from you" is a hyperbolic metaphor for doing everything possible to avoid sinning. Alternate translation: "if what you are interested in causes you to want to sin, do everything you can to stay away from it"

If your

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All instances of "you" and "your" are singular, but in some languages they may need to be translated as plural.

right eye

This refers to the eye on the right-hand side of the face. The Jews thought of the right hand as more important than the left, so the phrase "right eye" was a metaphor for the most important eye. You may need to translate "right" as "better" or "stronger."

pluck it out

This is an exaggerated command for a person to do whatever he needs to do to stop sinning. It means "forcefully remove it" or "destroy it." If the right eye is not specifically mentioned, you may need to translate this "destroy your eyes." If eyes have been mentioned, you may need to translate this "destroy them."

throw it away from you

"get rid of it"

one of your members should perish

"you should lose one part of your body"

than that your whole body should be thrown into hell

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"than for God to throw your whole body into hell"

Matthew 5:30

If your right hand causes

In this metonymy, the hand stands for the actions of the whole person.

right hand

This means the most important hand, as opposed to the left hand. You may need to translate "right" as "better" or "stronger."

cut it off

This is an exaggerated command for a person to do whatever he needs to do to stop sinning.

Matthew 5:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about

divorce.

It was also said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God also said" or "Moses also said"

sends his wife away

This is a euphemism for "divorces his wife."

let him give

"he must give"

Matthew 5:32

But I say

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word.

The "I" is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is just as important as the original commands. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis. See how you translated this in Matthew 5:22.

makes her an adulteress

It is the man who divorces the woman improperly who "causes her to commit adultery." In many cultures it would be normal for her to remarry, but if the divorce is improper, such a remarriage is adultery.

her after she has been divorced

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"her after her husband has divorced her" or "the divorced woman"

Matthew 5:33

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The "you" is plural in "you have heard." The "you" and "your" are singular in "Do not swear" and "carry out your oaths," but in some languages they may need to be translated as plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about swearing oaths.

Again, you

"Also, you" or "Here is another example. You"

it was said to those in ancient times

This can be expressed with an active verb. Alternate

translation: "God said to those who lived long ago" or

"Moses said to your ancestors long ago"

Do not swear a false oath, but carry out your oaths to the Lord.

"Do not swear that you will do something and then not do it. Instead do whatever you have sworn to the Lord that you will do"

Matthew 5:34

But I say

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word.

The "I" is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is equally important to the original commands from God. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis. See how you translated this in Matthew 5:22.

swear not at all

"do not swear at all" or "do not swear by anything"

it is the throne of God

Because God reigns from heaven, Jesus speaks of heaven as if it were a throne. Alternate translation: "it is from here

that God rules"

Matthew 5:35

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes his words from verse 34, telling the people not to swear.

nor by the earth ... city of the great King

Here Jesus means that when people make a promise or when they say that something is true, they must not swear by anything. Some people were teaching that if a person swears by God that he will do something, then he must do it, but if he swears by something else, such as by heaven or earth, then it is less offensive if he does not do what he swore to do. Jesus says that swearing by heaven or earth or Jerusalem is just as serious as swearing by God because those things all belong to God.

it is the footstool for his feet

This metaphor means the earth also belongs to God.

Alternate translation: "it is like a footstool where a king rests his feet"

for it is the city of the great King

"for it is the city that belongs to God, the great King"

Matthew 5:36

General Information:

Previously Jesus told his hearers that God's throne, footstool, and earthly home are not theirs to swear by. Here he says that they may not swear even by their own heads.

your ... you

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of these words are singular, but you may have to translate them as plural.

swear

This refers to taking an oath. See how you translated this in Matthew 5:34.

Matthew 5:37

let your speech be 'Yes, yes,' or 'No, no.'

"if you mean 'yes,' say 'yes,' and if you mean 'no,' say 'no.'"

Matthew 5:38

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The "you" in "you have heard" is plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about retaliating against an enemy.

that it was said

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:27]

eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth

The law of Moses allowed a person to harm a person in the same way he had harmed him, but he could not harm him worse.

Matthew 5:39

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The "you" in "I say to you" is plural. The "you" in "whoever strikes you" and the understood "you" in "turn to him" are both singular, but in

some languages they may need to be translated as plural.

But I say

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The "I" is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is just as important as the original commands. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis.

one who is evil

"an evil person" or "someone who harms you"

strikes ... your right cheek

To strike the side of a man's face was an insult in Jesus's culture. As with the eye and the hand, the right cheek is the more important one, and striking that cheek was a terrible insult.

strikes

hits with the back of an open hand

turn to him the other also

"let him hit your other cheek also"

Matthew 5:40

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular. In some languages they may need to be translated as plural.

tunic ... cloak

The "tunic" was worn close to the body, like a heavy shirt or a sweater. The "cloak," the more valuable of the two, was worn over the "tunic" for warmth and also used as a blanket for warmth at night.

let that person also have

"give also to that person"

Matthew 5:41

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. The word "you" is singular, as is the understood "you" in the command "go." In some languages these may need to be translated as plural.

Whoever

"Anyone who." The context implies that he is speaking about a Roman soldier.

one mile

This is one thousand paces, which is the distance a Roman soldier could legally force someone to carry something for him. If "mile" is confusing, it can be translated as "one kilometer" or "a distance."

with him

This refers to the one who compels you to go.

go with him two

"go the mile he forces you to go, and then go another mile."

If "mile" is confusing, you can translate it as "two kilometers" or "twice as far."

Matthew 5:42

do not turn away from

"do not refuse to lend to." This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: "lend to"

Matthew 5:43

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as

individuals should and should not do. The "you" in "you have heard" is plural. The "you" and "your" are singular in "You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy," but in some languages they may need to be translated as plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. Here he begins to speak about loving enemies.

that it was said

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Matthew 5:27]

your neighbor

Here the word "neighbor" does not refer to a specific neighbor, but to any members of one's community or people group. These are people whom one usually desires to treat kindly or at least believes he ought to treat kindly. Alternate translation: "your countrymen" or "those who belong to your people group"

Matthew 5:44

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All instances of "you" and "your" are plural.

But I say

Jesus agrees with God and his word, but he does not agree with the way the religious leaders have applied God's word. The "I" is emphatic. This indicates that what Jesus says is just as important as the original commands. Try to translate this phrase in a way that shows that emphasis. See how you translated this in Matthew 5:22.

I say to you ... your enemies ... pray ... persecute you

All instances of "you" and "your," as well as the command to pray, are plural.

Matthew 5:45

you may be sons of your Father

It is best to translate "sons" with the same word your

language would naturally use to refer to human sons or children.

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 5:46

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All instances of "you" and "your" are plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes teaching about how he has come to fulfill the Old Testament law. This section began in Matthew 5:17.

what reward do you get?

Jesus uses this question to teach the people that loving those who love them is not something special that God will reward them for. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "you will get no reward."

Do not even the tax collectors do the same thing?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement.

Alternate translation: "Even the tax collectors do the same thing."

Matthew 5:47

what do you do more than others?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "you do nothing more than others."

greet

This is a general term for showing a desire for the well-being of the hearer.

Do not even the Gentiles do the same thing?

This question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Even the Gentiles do the same thing."

Matthew 5:48

Father

This is an important title for God.

Chapter 6

Matthew 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Matthew 6 continues Jesus's extended teaching known as "The Sermon on the Mount."

You may wish to set apart the prayer in 6:9-11 by placing it farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text.

Jesus spoke about many different subjects in this sermon, so you may wish to help the reader by putting an empty line into the text whenever Jesus changed the subject.

Links:

[Matthew 6:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 6

6:1-4

Why did Jesus not want people to do good things in certain ways?

[6:1]

Jesus did not want people to do good things so that other people could see them doing good things. If they do this, other people will reward them. They received their full reward when other people saw them and praised them for it. However, God will not reward them.

See: Reward; Praise

Why did people give alms?

[6:2, 6:3, 6:4]

When someone gave alms, they gave money to people who needed it. When people did this, they should not sound a trumpet. That is, they are not to announce they are giving money to poor people when they do this.

What is a hypocrite?

[6:2]

A hypocrite is someone who says one thing but does something else.

See: Hypocrisy (Hypocrite)

What is a synagogue?

[6:2]

See: Synagogue

How is someone not supposed to let their left hand know what their right hand is doing?

[6:3]

Jesus spoke about having someone's left hand not know what their right hand is doing. When he said this, he wanted people to do things secretly, that is, without other people knowing about it. If they did this, then only God would know. Then God would reward them.

See: Reward

6:5-15

Who are the hypocrites?

[6:5]

Jesus spoke about hypocrites. He was speaking about certain Jewish teachers. These teachers did things so that many people could see them and think that they greatly honored God. This was their reward, other people thought these Jewish teachers honored God. However, they did not honor God when they did this and God did not reward them.

See: Hypocrisy (Hypocrite); Reward

What is an inner chamber?

[6:6]

Jesus spoke about an inner chamber. This is a place inside a person's home. He wanted people to go to a place where no one else could see them. When people do this, God will reward them.

See: Reward

What is a useless repetition?

[6:7]

In ancient times, people who worshipped many gods would pray in a certain way. When they prayed, they would say the same things over and over again. They did this so that their false gods would pay attention to them so they could tell these gods what they need. This was not how Jesus wanted people to pray. God knows what people want when they pray.

However, Jesus still wanted people to pray.

See: False gods; Pray (Prayer)

What is the Lord's prayer?

[6:9]

Jesus taught people to pray in Matthew 6:9-13. Scholars call this the "Lord's prayer."

Who is "our father in heaven"?

[6:9]

Jesus spoke about "our father in heaven." God is the father of Christians and he lives in heaven.

See: God the Father; Heaven; Family of God

What is holy?

[6:9]

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

Why did Jesus say, "may your kingdom come"?

[6:10]

Jesus prayed for the kingdom of God to come. He wanted Christians to pray for this to happen soon.

See: Kingdom of God; Pray (Prayer)

What is the will of God?

[6:10]

See: Will of God

Why did Jesus pray for daily bread?

[6:11]

God gave the disciples daily bread by providing for everything they needed. Bread was a metaphor for food. That is, it included any food the disciples needed. Some scholars say it also included everything else the disciples needed for living. That is, God provided clothing, housing, and everything else they needed. Other scholars say bread was a metaphor for the things in heaven God will give to them.

See: Disciple; Metaphor; Heaven

Why should Christians pray to have their debts forgiven?

[6:12]

In ancient Israel, people thought that sins created a kind of debt where someone owed someone else. God's forgiveness of the disciples' sins was related to the disciples forgiveness of sins people did against them because God wanted the disciples to love other people. God did not forgive the disciples' sins because they did good things. God forgave them because of his mercy. However, when the disciples prayed and asked God to forgive their sins, they needed to be ready to forgive sins people did against them.

See: Sin; Disciple; Redeem (Redemption); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Mercy; Pray (Prayer)

How did Jesus use the word "temptation"?

[6:13]

Some scholars say Jesus when he used the word "temptation"(πειρασμός/g3986) he was thinking about sin. Other scholars say Jesus was thinking about testing. That is, persecution or suffering the disciples had.

See: Sin; Tempt (Temptation); Test; Persecute (Persecution)

Who is the evil one?

[6:13]

Satan, or the devil (see: Matthew 4:1), is the evil one.

See: Satan (The Devil)

What did Matthew write in verse 13?

[6:13]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament contain the words "for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." More and older ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. Therefore, scholars do not think Matthew wrote these words.

See: Kingdom of God; Glory (Glorify)

Why did Jesus speak about trespasses?

[6:14, 6:15]

In verses 14 and 15, Jesus spoke about trespasses. He was saying the same thing he said in verse 12. A trespass is something someone does that goes against the law or against God in some way. It is sin.

See: Sin

6:16-18

What is fasting?

[6:16, 6:17, 6:18]

See: Fasting

Who were the hypocrites?

[6:16]

Jesus spoke about hypocrites. He was speaking about Jewish teachers. They fasted so that people could see them fast and think these teachers did things to honor God.

See: Hypocrisy (Hypocrite); Fasting

Why did Jesus tell people to wash when they fasted?

[6:17]

Jesus wanted people to anoint or wash their face and head when they fasted. This was the opposite of what the Jewish leaders did. If they did this, they did not look like they were hungry. He did not want other people to know they were worshipping God in this way. If they did this, God would reward them.

See: Fasting; Anoint (Anointing); Reward; Worship

6:19-34

Why did Jesus talk about treasures?

[6:19, 6:20, 6:21]

Jesus talked about treasures. Treasures are things people keep that are very valuable. Jesus did not want people to collect things that were valuable on the earth. This is because they did not last long. They were destroyed or someone took them. He wanted people to not care very much about the things they had on the earth. They only have these things while they are alive. Instead, they should store treasures in heaven. This is a metaphor. They should collect rewards from God. These rewards will last forever.

See: Reward; Metaphor; Heaven

Why did Jesus talk about someone's eyes?

[6:22, 6:23]

Jesus talked about a person's eye. He said it was like a lamp. A person uses their eyes to see, which helps them know where they are going. A lamp shines a light so that a person can see where they are going. A person's eye shows what is important to them because it will be the thing they look at the most. In this way, the eye works like a lamp to show a

person what is most important to them.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why did Jesus talk about serving God and wealth?

[6:24]

Jesus talked about serving God and wealth. He wanted to say that people could only truly serve one master. He wanted people to serve God completely. However, many people served money instead. This was a metaphor. For these people money was a type of false god. They could not serve God and this false god at the same time.

See: False gods

How long is a cubit?

[6:27]

Jesus spoke about adding a cubit to how long one lives. This was a short length of time. He wanted to say that no one could make themselves live any longer. This is because only God can do this.

See: Cubit

How is someone anxious?

[6:27, 6:28]

A person is anxious when he is worried about something. A person can be anxious about things like not having enough money or food. Who was Solomon?

Solomon was the most powerful king of ancient Israel. He had a lot of money and built many great things in Israel.

Why did Jesus ask so many questions?

[6:31]

Jesus asked many questions, but he did not expect anyone to answer him. He wanted people to know that God cares more for people than anything else he created. He would care for them and give people everything they need. He corrected them and said they have "little faith." That is, they did not trust in God very much.

See: Faith (Believe in)

Why did Jesus talk about the Gentiles?

[6:32]

Jesus talked about the Gentiles being anxious about getting the things they need to live. This was because they did not know God and they did not know He would provide for them. Jesus wanted Christians to trust in God for these things because he promised to give them the things they need. Instead, they are to be concerned about other things. That is, they were to think about how to honor God and teaching other people about Jesus.

See: Gentile

How do people seek first the kingdom and God's righteousness?

[6:33]

Jesus spoke about seeking first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness. He wanted Christians to think about how they could serve God and his kingdom and how they could do things that honor him.

See: Kingdom of God; Righteous (Righteousness)

Matthew 6:1

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples in his Sermon on the Mount, which began in Matthew 5:3. In this section, Jesus addresses the "acts of righteousness" of alms, prayer, and fasting.

Watch out

This is a way to warn people to be careful. Alternate translation: "Be careful" or "Beware"

before people to be seen by them

It is implied that those who see the person will honor him.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in front of people just so that they can see you and give you honor for what you have done"

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 6:2

do not sound a trumpet before yourself

This metaphor means to do something that purposefully gets people's attention. Alternate translation: "do not draw attention to yourself like someone who plays a loud trumpet in a crowd"

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Matthew 6:3

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples about alms.

do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing

This is a metaphor for total secrecy. Just as hands usually work together and each can be said to "know" what the other is doing at all times, you should not let even those closest to you know when you are giving to the poor.

Matthew 6:4

your alms may be given in secret

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"you can give to the poor without other people knowing"

Matthew 6:5

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" in verses 5 and 7 are plural; in verse 6 they are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about prayer.

so that they may be seen by people

It is implied that those who see them will give them honor.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that people will see them and give them honor"

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Matthew 6:6

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" in verses 5 and 7 are plural; in verse 6 they are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural.

enter your inner chamber. Shut the door

"go to a private place" or "go where you can be alone"

Father, who is in secret

Possible meanings are 1) no one can see God. Alternate translation: "Father, who is invisible" or 2) God is in that private place with the praying person. Alternate translation: "Father, who is with you in private"

Father

This is an important title for God.

your Father who sees in secret

"your Father will see what you do in private and"

Matthew 6:7

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should and should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" in verses 5 and 7 are plural; in verse 6 they are singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural.

do not make useless repetitions

Possible meanings are 1) the repetitions are useless.

Alternate translation: "do not keep uselessly saying things over and over again" or 2) the words or sentences are meaningless. Alternate translation: "do not keep repeating meaningless words"

they will be heard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "their false gods will hear them"

Matthew 6:8

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about how they as individuals should pray. The words "you" and "your" are plural in the first sentence. Within the prayer, the words "you" and "your" are singular and refer to God, "Our Father in heaven."

Father

This is an important title for God.

you ask him

See how you translated "ask" in Matthew 5:42.

Matthew 6:9

Our Father in heaven

This is the beginning of the prayer and how Jesus teaches the people to address God.

may your name be honored as holy

Here "your name" refers to God himself. This can also be expressed with an active verb. Alternate translation: "may people honor you as holy" or "may people honor you because you are holy"

may your name be honored as holy

By saying this, people show that they want to honor God as holy. Alternate translation: "help us to honor your name as holy" or "we want to honor you as holy"

Matthew 6:10

May your kingdom come

Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "May you rule over everyone and everything completely"

May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"May everything on earth happen in accordance with your will, just as everything in heaven does"

Matthew 6:11

General Information:

This is part of a prayer that Jesus was teaching the people. All instances of "we," "us," and "our" refer only to those who would pray this prayer. Those words do not also refer to God, to whom they would be praying.

daily bread

Here "bread" refers to food in general.

Matthew 6:12

debts

A debt is what one person owes another. This is a metaphor for sins.

our debtors

A debtor is a person who owes a debt to another person.

This is a metaphor for those who have sinned against us.

Matthew 6:13

Do not bring us into temptation

The word "temptation," an abstract noun, can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "Do not let anything tempt us" or "Do not let anything cause us to desire to sin"

Matthew 6:14

General Information:

All instances of "you" and "your" are plural. However, Jesus is telling his hearers what will happen to them as individuals if each person does not forgive others.

their trespasses

The abstract noun "trespasses" can be translated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "when they trespass against you"

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 6:15

their trespasses ... your trespasses

The abstract noun "trespasses" can be translated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "them when they trespass against

you ... you when you trespass against God" or "them when they do things that harm you ... you when you do things that make your Father angry"

Matthew 6:16

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" are plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about fasting.

they disfigure their faces

The hypocrites would not wash their faces and would not comb their hair. They did this purposely to draw attention to themselves so that people would see them and give them honor for fasting.

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Matthew 6:17

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular, though in some languages they may also need to be translated as plural.

anoint your head

"put oil in your hair" or "groom your hair." To "anoint" the head here is to take normal care of one's hair. It has nothing to do with "Christ" meaning "anointed one." Jesus means that people should look the same whether they are fasting or not.

Matthew 6:18

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular, though in some languages they may also need to be translated as plural.

Father who is in secret

Possible meanings are 1) no one can see God. Alternate translation: "Father, who is invisible" or 2) God is with that person who fasts secretly. Alternate translation: "Father, who is with you in private" See how you translated this in Matthew 6:6.

Father

This is an important title for God.

who sees in secret

"who sees what you do in private." See how you translated this in Matthew 6:6.

Matthew 6:19

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All occurrences of "you" and "your" are plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about money and possessions.

treasures

riches, the things to which a person gives the most value

where moth and rust destroy

"where moth and rust ruin treasures"

moth

a small, flying insect that destroys cloth

rust

a brown substance that forms on metals

Matthew 6:20

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do.

store up for yourselves treasures in heaven

This is a metaphor that means do good things on earth so God will reward you in heaven.

Matthew 6:21

General Information:

All occurrences of "your" are singular, though in some languages they may also need to be translated in plural. there will your heart be also

Here "heart" means a person's thoughts and interests.

Matthew 6:22

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of "you" and "your" are all singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural.

The eye is the lamp of the body

This is a metaphor. Possible meanings are 1) the eye is like a lamp because it enables a person to see things, or 2) the eye is like a lamp shining on a person's body because it shows what the person is really like. Alternate translation: "A person's eyes are like a lamp for his body"

if your eye is good, your whole body is filled with light

Possible meanings are 1) "if your eye is good, it fills your body with light" or 2) "if your eye is good, it shows that your body is filled with light."

if your eye is good

Possible meanings are "if your eye is noble" or "if your eye sees clearly." Jesus speaks of the eye to talk about what a person thinks about and wants. Possible meanings of the metaphor are 1) "if you are generous" or 2) "if you look at and want at what is good"

your whole body is filled with light

Possible meanings are 1) "you are full of righteousness" or 2) "you understand what is truly good"

eye is

You may have to translate this as plural, "eyes are."

Matthew 6:23

if your eye is bad, your whole body is full of darkness

Possible meanings are 1) "if your eye is bad, it fills your body with darkness" or 2) "if your eye is bad, it shows that your body is full of darkness."

if your eye is bad

Possible meanings are "if your eye is evil" or "if your eye does not see clearly." Jesus speaks of the eye to talk about what a person thinks about and wants. Possible meanings of the metaphor are 1) "if you are greedy," or 2) "if you do not look at and want what is right."

if your eye is bad

This does not refer to magic. Jewish people often used this as a metaphor for someone who is greedy.

your whole body is full of darkness

Possible meanings are "you are full of evil" or 2) "you will

understand nothing about what is right."

if the light that is in you is actually darkness, how great is that darkness!

"if that which is supposed to cause light in your body causes darkness, then your body is in complete darkness"
Matthew 6:24

for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that a person cannot love and be devoted both to God and money at the same time.

You cannot serve God and wealth

"You cannot love God and money at the same time"

Matthew 6:25

General Information:

Here the instances of "you" and "your" are all plural.

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

to you

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do.

is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: "obviously life is more than what you eat, and your body is more than what you wear." or "clearly there are things in life that are more important than food, and there are things concerning the body that are more important than clothes."

Matthew 6:26

barns

places to store crops

Father

This is an important title for God.

Are you not more valuable than they are?

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: "Obviously you are more valuable than birds."
Matthew 6:27

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. All instances of "you" and "your" are plural.

Which one of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his lifespan?

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Here to "add one cubit to his lifespan" is a metaphor for adding time to how long a person will live. Alternate translation: "None of you can, just by worrying, add years to your life. You cannot add even one minute to your life! So you should not worry about things you need."

one cubit

A cubit, a measure of a little less than half a meter, is used here as a metaphor for a short period of time.

Matthew 6:28

Why are you anxious about clothing?

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: "You should not be worried about what you will wear."

Think about

"Consider"

lilies ... They do not labor, and they do not spin cloth

Jesus speaks about the lilies as if they were people who wore clothes. The lilies being clothed is a metaphor for the plants having beautiful and colorful flowers.

lilies

A lily is a kind of wild flower.

Matthew 6:29

even Solomon ... was not clothed like one of these

Jesus speaks about the lilies as if they were people who wore clothes. The lilies being clothed is a metaphor for the plants having beautiful and colorful flowers.

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

was not clothed like one of these

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "did not wear clothes that are as beautiful as these lilies"

Matthew 6:30

so clothes the grass in the fields

Jesus continues to speak about the lilies as if they were people who wore clothes. The lilies being clothed is a metaphor for the plants having beautiful and colorful flowers.

grass

If your language has a general word that can refer both to "grass" and to the word you used for "lilies" in the previous verse, you can use it here.

is thrown into the oven

The Jews at that time used grass in their fires to cook their food. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone throws it into a fire" or "someone burns it"

how much more will he clothe you ... faith?

Jesus uses this question to teach the people that God will provide what they need. Alternate translation: "he will certainly clothe you ... faith."

you of little faith

"you who have such little faith." Jesus addresses the people this way because their anxiety about clothing shows they have little faith in God.

Matthew 6:31

Therefore

"Because of all of this,"

What clothes will we wear

In this sentence, "clothes" is a synecdoche for material possessions. Alternate translation: "What possessions will we have"

Matthew 6:32

For the Gentiles search for these things

"For the Gentiles are concerned about what they will eat, drink, and wear"

your heavenly Father knows that you need them

Jesus is implying that God will make sure their basic needs are met.

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 6:33

seek first his kingdom and his righteousness

Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "concern yourselves first with serving God, who is your king, and doing what is right"

all these things will be given to you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"God will provide all these things for you"
Matthew 6:34
Therefore

"Because of all this"
tomorrow will be anxious for itself
Jesus speaks of "tomorrow" as if it were a person who could
worry. Jesus means that a person will have enough to
worry about when the next day comes.

Chapter 7

Matthew 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Jesus spoke about many different subjects in this sermon, so you may wish to help the reader by putting an empty line into the text whenever Jesus changed the subject.

Special concepts in this chapter

Matthew 5-7

Many people call the words in Matthew 5-7 the Sermon on the Mount. This is one long lesson that Jesus taught. Bibles divide this lesson into three chapters, but this can sometimes confuse the reader. If your translation divides the text into sections, be sure that the reader understands that the whole sermon is one large section.

"By their fruits you will know them"

Fruit is a common image in the scriptures. It is used to describe the results of either good or bad actions. In this chapter, good fruit is the result of living as God commands. (See: fruit)

Links:

[Matthew 7:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 7

7:1-14

Why did Jesus not want Christians to judge one another?

[7:1, 7:2]

Jesus did not want Christians to judge one another. That is, Christians should not condemn other people. This is something that God does. Scholars think that when Christians do this, God will condemn them. God will condemn Christians as severely as Christians condemn other people. However, he did not say that Christians should not judge other Christian's actions to know whether they were doing right or wrong. Also, this does not mean that these Christians will not get to live forever in heaven with God.

See: Condemn (Condemnation); Heaven

Why did Jesus speak about a piece of straw and a log?

[7:3, 7:4, 7:5]

Jesus said that Christians should remove the log from their own eye before they try to remove a piece of straw from their brother's eye. A log is a large piece of wood. This was a metaphor. He wanted Christians to judge themselves before they judge other people. That is, they should know they are doing the right things before they say other people are doing the wrong things.

See: Family of God; Metaphor; Judge (Judgment)

Why should people not give holy things to dogs and pearls to pigs?

[7:6]

Jesus said that people should not give holy things to dogs and pearls to pigs. That is, they should not give holy things to unholy people. This was a metaphor. In ancient Israel, dogs and pigs were unclean animals. Jesus was not just talking about not condemning other people. Here, some scholars think he wanted the Christians to stop teaching the truth of the gospel to those who were condemning them and rejecting the gospel, the messiah, and the kingdom of God. These people may kill those who tell them about Jesus.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Metaphor; Clean and Unclean; Gospel; Messiah (Christ); Kingdom of God; Condemn (Condemnation)

Will Jesus give anything that is asked for to Christians?

[7:7, 7:8]

Jesus talked about God wanting to give things to Christians. He wanted Christians to ask God for things they wanted. However, God would not give them everything they asked. Instead, he would give it to them if it was his will.

Christians were to trust that God would give them what they need and whatever was best for them. Evil people still help their children. God loves Christians more than evil people love their children. Because of this, Christians can trust that God will give them whatever he knows is best for them.

See: Will of God; Family of God

What things should Christians do for others if they want others to do things for them?

[7:12]

Jesus said that Christians should do things for others in the same way they want others to do things for them. This meant that a Christian must treat people in the way they themselves want to be treated. This included Jesus' command that Christians must love their neighbor.

See: Matthew 22:35-40

What is the law and the prophets?

[7:12]

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did Jesus say about wide and narrow gates?

[7:13, 7:14]

Jesus talked about wide and narrow gates. Wide gates were easy to get through and narrow gates were hard to get through. This was a metaphor. Jesus wanted to say that it was difficult to do things to honor God, but it is easy to sin and do things that dishonor God. He also wanted to say that it was easy for people to reject him, and difficult for people to believe in him.

See: Metaphor; Sin

7:15-23

How were false prophets like wolves in sheep's clothing?

[7:15]

Jesus compared false prophets to wolves dressed to look like sheep. This was a metaphor. These wolves dress like sheep to make the sheep think they were also sheep so they could eat them. Jesus wanted to say that false prophets tried to do things that made people think they were Christians who honored God. However, they really were false teachers and trying to harm these Christians.

See: False Prophet; Metaphor

How will people know the false prophets?

[7:16]

Jesus said that people will know the false prophets by their fruit. They are like a tree that produces bad fruit. This was a metaphor. People will know they are false prophets because they live in a way that dishonors God. In the same way, true prophets will live in a way that honors God.

Jesus also talked about destroying the bad tree. He wanted people to know that the false prophets would die and be punished. They would live in hell forever.

See: False Prophet; Metaphor; Fruit (Metaphor); Prophet; Hell; Punish (Punishment)

Who will enter into the kingdom of Heaven?

[7:21]

Jesus said that everyone who calls Jesus their master in that day will enter the kingdom of heaven. Some scholars think Jesus was talking about a future time when Jesus will judge the false prophets. They will not be allowed to enter into the kingdom of heaven. While they said they did many things to serve Jesus, Jesus knew why they did the things they did and that they did not do anything to serve Jesus. Instead, they did lawlessness. That is, they did things Satan wanted them to do.

See: Kingdom of God; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Miracle; Satan (The Devil)

7:24-29

Why did Jesus talk about someone building their house?

[7:24]

Jesus spoke about someone building a house. This was a metaphor. In ancient Israel, people wanted to build their houses on rocks. This protected their houses from falling. If they built their houses on sand, they would be destroyed by the wind and rain. This was a metaphor. People who do the things the false prophets taught would be punished. However, people who did things God taught in the word of God were not punished.

See: Word of God; False Prophet

Why did the scribes teach without authority?

[7:29]

When Jesus taught these things, he knew they were true. The scribes taught many different things and did not agree with one another. Therefore, when they taught, they did not teach as if they knew the things they taught were true. Therefore, people did not know whether to believe them.

See: Scribe

Matthew 7:1

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as

individuals should and should not do. The instances of "you" and the commands are plural.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples in his Sermon on the Mount, which began in Matthew 5:3.

Do not judge

It is implied here that "judge" has the strong meaning of "condemn harshly" or "declare guilty." Alternate translation: "Do not condemn people harshly"

you will not be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will not condemn you harshly"

Matthew 7:2

For

Be sure the reader understands the statement in 7:2 is based on what Jesus said in 7:1.

with the judgment you judge, you will be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will condemn you in the same way you condemn others"

measure

Possible meanings are 1) this is the amount of punishment given or 2) this is the standard used for judgment.

it will be measured out to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will measure it out to you"

Matthew 7:3

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of "you" and "your" are all singular, but in some languages they may need to be plural.

Why do you look ... brother's eye, but you do not take notice of the log that is in your own eye?

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the people for paying attention to other people's sins and ignoring their own.

Alternate translation: "You look ... brother's eye, but you do not notice the log that is in your own eye." or "Do not look ... brother's eye and ignore the log that is in your own eye."

the tiny piece of straw that is in your brother's eye

This is a metaphor that refers to the less important faults of a fellow believer.

tiny piece of straw

"speck" or "splinter" or "bit of dust." Use a word for the smallest thing that commonly falls into a person's eyes.

brother

All occurrences of "brother" in 7:3-5 refer to a fellow believer, not to a literal brother or a neighbor.

the log that is in your own eye

This is a metaphor for a person's most important faults. A log could not literally go into a person's eye. Jesus is exaggerating to emphasize that a person should pay attention to his own more important faults before he deals with another person's less important faults.

log

the largest part of a tree that someone has cut down

Matthew 7:4

How can you say ... your own eye?

Jesus asks this question to challenge the people to pay attention to their own sins before they pay attention to another person's sins. Alternate translation: "You should not say ... your own eye."

Matthew 7:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 7:6

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of "you" and "your" are all plural.

dogs ... pigs

Jews considered these animals dirty, and God told the Jews not to eat them. They are metaphors for wicked people who do not value holy things. It would be best to translate these words literally.

pearls

These are similar to round, valuable stones or beads. They are a metaphor for the knowledge of God or precious things in general.

they may trample

"the pigs may trample"

then turn and tear

"the dogs will then turn and tear"

Matthew 7:7

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of "you" and "your" are all plural.

Ask ... Seek ... Knock

These are metaphors for praying to God. The verb form shows that we are to keep praying until he answers. If your language has a form for continuing to do something over and over, use it here.

Ask

request things from someone, in this case God. See how you translated this word in Matthew 5:42.

it will be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will give you what you need"

Seek

look for someone, in this case God

Knock

To knock on a door was a polite way to request that the person inside the house or room open the door. If knocking on a door is impolite or not done in your culture, use the word that describes how people politely ask for doors to be opened. Alternate translation: "Tell God you want him to open the door"

it will be opened to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will open it for you"

Matthew 7:8

who ... asks

See how you translated "ask" in Matthew 5:42.

Matthew 7:9

Or which one of you ... a stone?

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: "There is not one person among you ... a stone."

son asks

See how you translated "asks" in Matthew 5:42.

a loaf of bread

This refers to food in general. Alternate translation: "some food"

stone

This noun should be translated literally.

Matthew 7:10

Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

Jesus asks another question to teach the people. It is understood that Jesus is still referring to a man and his son.

Alternate translation: "And there is not one person among you, if his son asks for a fish, will give him a snake."

he asks

See how you translated "asks" in Matthew 5:42.

fish ... snake

These nouns should be translated literally.

Matthew 7:11

General Information:

Jesus is talking to a group of people about what they as individuals should or should not do. The instances of "you" and "your" are plural.

how much more will your Father in heaven give ... him?

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate translation: "then your Father in heaven will most certainly give ... him."

Father

This is an important title for God.

ask him

See how you translated "asks" in Matthew 5:42.

Matthew 7:12

whatever things you want people to do to you

"whatever way you want others to act toward you"

for this is the law and the prophets

Here "law" and "prophets" refer to what Moses and the prophets wrote. Alternate translation: "for this is what Moses and the prophets teach in the scriptures"

Matthew 7:13

General Information:

This image of walking through a wide gate to destruction or a narrow gate to life represents how people live and the results of how they live. When you translate, use appropriate words for "wide" and "broad" that are as different as possible from "narrow" in order to emphasize the differences between the two sets of gates and ways.

Enter through the narrow gate ... many people who go through it

This is an image of people traveling on a road and going through a gate into a kingdom. One kingdom is easy to enter; the other is hard to enter.

Enter through the narrow gate

You may need to move this to the end of verse 14:

"Therefore, enter through the narrow gate."

the gate ... the way

Possible meanings are 1) "the way" refers to the road that leads to the gate of a kingdom, or 2) the "the gate" and "the way" both refer to the entrance to the kingdom.

to destruction

This abstract noun can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "to the place where people die"

Matthew 7:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to speak of people choosing how they are

going to live as if they are choosing whether to go on one path or another.

to life

The abstract noun "life" can be translated using the verb "live." Alternate translation: "to the place where people live"

Matthew 7:15

Beware of

"Be on guard against"

who come to you in sheep's clothing but are truly ravenous wolves

This metaphor means that false prophets will pretend they are good and want to help people, but they are really evil and will do people harm.

ravenous wolves

wolves that are extremely hungry and that consume or destroy everything they touch

Matthew 7:16

By their fruits you will know them

This metaphor refers to a person's actions. Alternate translation: "Just as you know a tree by the fruit that grows on it, you will know false prophets by how they act"

Do people gather ... thistles?

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. The people would have known that the answer is no. Alternate translation:

"People do not gather ... thistles."

Matthew 7:17

every good tree produces good fruit

Jesus continues to use the metaphor of fruit to refer to good prophets who produce good works or words.

the bad tree produces bad fruit

Jesus continues to use the metaphor of fruit to refer to bad prophets who produce evil works.

Matthew 7:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 7:19

Every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire

Jesus continues to use fruit trees as a metaphor to refer to false prophets. Here, he only states what will happen to the bad trees. It is implied that the same thing will happen to the false prophets.

is chopped down and thrown into the fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"people chop down and burn"

chopped down

See how you translated this in Matthew 3:10

Matthew 7:20

you will recognize them by their fruits

The word "their" can refer to either the prophets or the trees. This metaphor implies that the fruit of trees and the deeds of prophets both reveal whether they are good or bad. If possible, translate this in a way so that it can refer to both trees and prophets.

Matthew 7:21

will enter into the kingdom of heaven

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation.

Alternate translation: "will live with God in heaven when he shows himself to be king"

those who do the will of my Father who is in heaven

"whoever does what my Father in heaven desires"

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 7:22

in that day

Jesus said "that day" knowing his hearers would understand he was referring to the day of judgment. You should include "the day of judgment" only if your readers would not understand otherwise.

did we not prophesy ... drive out demons ... do many miracles?

The people use a question to emphasize that they did these things. Alternate translation: "we prophesied ... we drove out demons ... we did many miracles."

we

This "we" does not include Jesus.

in your name

Possible meanings are 1) "by your authority" or "by your power" or 2) "because we were doing what you wanted us to do" or 3) "because we asked you for the power to do it"

Matthew 7:23

I never knew you

This means the person does not belong to Jesus. Alternate translation: "You are not my follower" or "I have nothing to do with you"

Matthew 7:24

Therefore

"For that reason"

my words

Here "words" refers to what Jesus says.

like a wise man who built his house upon a rock

Jesus compares those who obey his words to a person who builds his house where nothing can harm it.

rock

This is the bedrock below the topsoil and clay, not a large stone or boulder above the ground.

Matthew 7:25

it was founded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he put its foundation"

Matthew 7:26

like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand

Jesus continues the simile from the previous verse. He compares those who do not obey his words to foolish house-builders. Only a fool would build a house on a sandy place where rain, floods, and wind can sweep the sand away.

Matthew 7:27

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, which began in Matthew 5:3.

fell

Use the general word in your language that describes what happens when a house falls down.

its destruction was complete

The rain, floods, and wind completely destroyed the house.

Matthew 7:28

General Information:

These verses describe how the people in the crowds reacted to Jesus's teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

It came about that when

This phrase shifts the story from Jesus's teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "When" or "After"

were astonished by his teaching

It is clear in 7:29 that they were amazed not just at what Jesus taught but also the way he taught it. Alternate translation: "were amazed by the way he taught"

Matthew 7:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 8

Matthew 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins a new section.

Special concepts in this chapter

Miracles

Jesus performed miracles to show that he could control things that no other people could control. He also showed that it is proper to worship him because he performed miracles. (See: authority)

Links:

[Matthew 8:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 8

8:1-9

Why did the leper bow before Jesus?

[8:2]

A leper bowed before Jesus. He did this to honor Jesus. He believed that Jesus could heal him and make him clean.

See: Leprosy (Leper); Clean and Unclean

Why did Jesus touch the leper?

[8:3]

Jesus touched the leper. This would have been shocking. When someone touches a leper, they can become a leper too. When someone touched a leper, they became unclean (see: Leviticus 5:3). However, Jesus healed this man when he touched him and made him clean.

See: Leprosy (Leper); Clean and Unclean

Why did Jesus tell the leper not to tell anyone he had been healed?

[8:4]

See: Messianic Secret

Why did the leper go to the priest?

[8:4]

According to the Law of Moses, the leper needed to go to the priest after he was healed to be declared clean (see: Leviticus 14:2-8). He wanted this man to go to the priest so they priest would see him and know that Jesus healed the leper. No one had been healed of leprosy in a very long time (see: Numbers 12). When they saw this man, the priests should have known that Jesus is the messiah.

See: Law of Moses, Leprosy (Leper); Clean and Unclean; Priest (Priesthood); Messiah (Christ)

Where was Capernaum?

[8:5]

See Map: Capernaum

What was a centurion?

[8:5]

A centurion was a type of Roman soldier. They led 100 soldiers.

Why did the centurion think that he was not worthy to have Jesus in his home?

[8:8]

This centurion believed that Jesus deserves great honor. He deserved so much honor, that he thought he was too great to enter into his home. He thought that this would dishonor him in some way. This man knew that God gave Jesus permission to do many things. He even believed that his servant could be healed when Jesus spoke.

8:10-17

Why was Jesus amazed at the centurion?

[8:10]

Jesus was amazed at the centurion man. He was a powerful man and he was a Gentile. Despite this, he trusted in Jesus and believed he had great power from God. This is what the Jews should have believed about Jesus, but they did not.

See: Gentile

Who will eat at the table in the kingdom of heaven?

[8:11]

Jesus said people from all over the world will eat at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. That is, Gentiles from all over the world will believe in Jesus and be in the kingdom of heaven with the Jews who believe in Jesus. However, the sons of the kingdom, that is, the unbelieving Jews, would not be in the kingdom of heaven. That is, many Jews would not be in the kingdom because they reject Jesus.

See: Gentile; Kingdom of God

Who was Peter's mother-in-law?

[8:14]

Matthew wrote about Peter's mother-in-law, that is, the mother of Peter's wife. Some scholars think Peter was married at this time. Fewer scholars think Peter was married before he began to follow Jesus and his wife died before he met Jesus.

Why did Matthew write that this woman got up and started serving Jesus?

[8:15]

Matthew wrote that this woman got up and served Jesus after he healed her. When he wrote this, people knew that Jesus healed her immediately and completely when he touched her. She did not get better over a long period of time.

What was demon possession?

[8:16]

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

How did Jesus drive out spirits?

[8:16]

Matthew wrote that Jesus drove out spirits. That is, Jesus cast out demons from people by speaking to them.

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons))

Where did Isaiah say these words?

[8:17]

Isaiah said these words many years before Jesus was born (see: Isaiah 53:4). When Jesus healed people, Matthew wrote that it fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy)

8:18-34

Where was the sea of Galilee?

[8:18]

See Map: Sea of Galilee

Why did Jesus speak in this way to the scribe and the person who followed him?

[8:19, 8:20]

Jesus spoke in a certain way to the scribe. This is because Jesus knew what the scribe thought and believed. He said that because he served God, Jesus was always moving from one place to another place. He told this man he must be willing to give up everything to follow him.

The other person, who was a follower of Jesus, wanted to wait to completely follow Jesus. Jesus knew that by him wanting to wait, the follower of Jesus did not really believe in Jesus. If he did, then he would have immediately followed Jesus.

Advice to translators: In this verse (Matthew 8:21), Matthew wrote about a disciple. This was a man who followed Jesus.

He was not one of the twelve disciples.

See: Son of Man; Scribe

How were the dead to bury the dead?

[8:22]

Jesus told a man to let the dead bury the dead. This was a metaphor. Jesus spoke about the people who rejected him as being dead in some way. That is, they were spiritually dead. This meant that they could not know or understand things about God. Jesus wanted this man to let these dead people bury his father so that he could follow Jesus.

See: Die (Death); Metaphor

Why did Jesus rebuke the disciples?

[8:26]

Some scholars think Jesus rebuked the disciples because they were afraid that the boat would sink and they would die. They did not trust that God would protect Jesus and them.

See: Disciple

Why were the disciples amazed?

[8:27]

The disciples were amazed that Jesus rebuked the wind and the seas. In ancient Israel, people believed that no one could control the seas. No one can control the weather except God. This amazed the disciples because they saw Jesus do something only God could do.

See: Disciple

Where was the country of the Gadarenes?

[8:28]

See Map: Gadarenes

Why did the demon possessed man call Jesus the Son of God?

[8:29]

The demon possessed man called Jesus the Son of God. This is because the demon knew that Jesus is the Son of God.

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Son of God; Demon

What was the set time?

[8:29]

The demons talked about a set time. They knew that there was a time when Jesus would judge them. They also knew that it was not time for Jesus to judge all of the demons.

See: Demon; Judge (Judgment)

Why did the demons want to go into a herd of pigs?

[8:30, 8:31]

The demons asked Jesus to be sent into a herd of pigs. According to the Law of Moses, pigs were unclean. Matthew did not say why they wanted to go into the pigs. Perhaps the demons wanted to have control of the pigs in the same way as they controlled the two men.

See: Matthew 12:43

See: Demon; Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean

Why did the pigs kill themselves?

[8:32]

Matthew wrote that the pigs killed themselves after the demons entered into them. He did not say why they did this.

See: Demon

Why did the people want Jesus to leave Gadarenes?

[8:34]

After the pigs died, the people who cared for the pigs went into the city and told people about what happened. They told them that the two men had been healed. They did not have demons in him anymore.

After they heard what happened to the pigs, the people in Gadarenes wanted Jesus to leave. The demons caused many pigs to die. These pigs were worth a lot of money. They worried that something else would happen and they would lose a lot more money. They did not care that Jesus healed the demon possessed men. They rejected Jesus after they saw that he did these things.

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon

Matthew 8:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that contains several accounts of Jesus healing people. This theme continues through Matthew 9:35.

When Jesus had come down from the hill, large crowds followed him "After Jesus came down from the hill, a large crowd followed him." The crowd may have included both people who had been with him on the mountain and people who had not been with him.

Matthew 8:2

Behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

a leper

"a man who had leprosy" or "a man who had a skin disease"

bowed before him

This is a sign of humble respect before Jesus.

if you are willing

"if you want to" or "if you desire." The leper knew that Jesus had the power to heal him, but he did not know if Jesus would want to touch him.

you can make me clean

Here "clean" means to be healed and to be able to live in the community again. Alternate translation: "you can heal me" or "please heal me"

Matthew 8:3

Be clean

By saying this, Jesus healed the man.

Immediately he was cleansed

"At that moment he was cleansed"

he was cleansed of his leprosy

The result of Jesus saying "Be clean" was that the man was healed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he was well" or "the leprosy left him" or "the leprosy ended"

Matthew 8:4

to him

This refers to the man that Jesus just healed.

say nothing to any man

"do not say anything to anyone" or "do not tell anyone I healed you"

show yourself to the priest

Jewish law required that the person show his healed skin to the priest, who would then allow him or her to return to the community, to be with other people.

offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony to them

The law of Moses required that someone healed of leprosy give a thanksgiving offering to the priest. When the priest accepted the gift, people would know that the man had been healed. Lepers were ostracized, banned from the community, until they had proof of their healing.

to them

This can possibly refer to 1) the priests or 2) all the people or 3) the critics of Jesus. If possible, use a pronoun that could refer to any of these groups.

Matthew 8:5

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a different time and place and tells about Jesus healing another person.

When he was coming into Capernaum

"When Jesus was coming into Capernaum"

Matthew 8:6

paralyzed

unable to move because of disease or stroke

Matthew 8:7

Jesus said to him

"Jesus said to the centurion"

I will come and heal him

"I will come to your house and make your servant well"

Matthew 8:8

under my roof

This is an idiom that refers to inside the house. Alternate translation: "into my house"

say the word

Here "word" represents a command. Alternate translation: "give the command"

will be healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will become well"

Matthew 8:9

under authority ... under me

To be "under" someone means to be less important and to obey the commands of someone more important.

Matthew 8:10

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

I have not found anyone with such faith in Israel

Jesus's hearers would have thought that the Jews in Israel, who claim to be children of God, would have greater faith than anyone. Jesus is saying they are wrong and that the centurion's faith was greater.

Matthew 8:11

you

Here "you" is plural and refers to "those who were following him" in [Matthew 8:10]

from the east and the west

Using the opposites "east" and "west" is a way of saying "everywhere." Alternate translation: "from everywhere" or "from far away in every direction"

recline at the table

People in that culture would lie down beside the table while eating. This phrase indicates that all those at the table are family and close friends. The joy in the kingdom of God

is frequently spoken of as if the people there were feasting.
Alternate translation: "live as family and friends"

in the kingdom of heaven

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation.
Alternate translation: "when our God in heaven shows that he is king"

Matthew 8:12

sons of the kingdom will be cast out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will cast the sons of the kingdom out"

the sons of the kingdom

The phrase "the sons of the kingdom" is a metonym, referring to the unbelieving Jews of the kingdom of Judea. There is also irony here because the "sons" will be thrown out while the strangers will be welcomed. Alternate translation: "those who should have allowed God to rule over them"

the outer darkness

Here "outer darkness" is a metonym for the place where God sends those who reject them. This is a place that is completely separated from God forever. Alternate translation: "the dark place away from God"

weeping and grinding of teeth

"Grinding of teeth" here is a symbolic act, representing extreme sadness and suffering. Alternate translation: "weeping and showing their extreme suffering"

Matthew 8:13

so may it be done for you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so I will do it for you"

the servant was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed the servant"

at that very hour

"at the exact time Jesus said he would heal the servant"

Matthew 8:14

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a different time and place and tells of Jesus healing another person.

Jesus had come

The disciples were probably with Jesus, but the focus of the story is on what Jesus said and did, so introduce the disciples only if needed to avoid wrong meaning.

Peter's mother-in-law

"the mother of Peter's wife"

Matthew 8:15

the fever left her

If your language would understand this personification to mean that the fever could think and act on its own, this can be translated as "she became better" or "Jesus healed her."

got up

"got out of bed"

Matthew 8:16

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to later that evening and tells of Jesus healing more people and casting out demons.

When evening had come

Because Jews did not work or travel on the Sabbath, "evening" may imply after the Sabbath. They waited until evening to bring people to Jesus. You do not need to mention the Sabbath unless you need to avoid wrong meaning.

many who were possessed by demons

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "many people whom demons possessed" or "many people whom demons controlled"

He drove out the spirits with a word

Here "word" stands for a command. Alternate translation: "He commanded the spirits to leave"

Matthew 8:17

This was to fulfill

"Jesus did this to fulfill"

what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what Isaiah the prophet had spoken"

He took our illnesses and bore our diseases

Matthew is quoting the prophet Isaiah to show that when Jesus healed people, he fulfilled what Isaiah had said would happen. These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize that Jesus truly did this. Alternate translation: "Truly he took our illnesses"

Matthew 8:18

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts and tells about Jesus's response to some people who wanted to follow him.

Now

This word is used here to mark a change in the main story. Here Matthew starts to tell a new part of the story.

he gave instructions

"he told his disciples"

Matthew 8:19

Then

This means after Jesus "gave instructions" but before he could get into the boat.

wherever

to any place

Matthew 8:20

Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests

Jesus answers with this proverb. This means even wild animals have somewhere to rest.

Foxes

Foxes are animals like dogs. They eat nesting birds and other small animals. If foxes are unknown in your area, use a general term for dog-like creatures or other furry animals.

holes

Foxes make holes in the ground to live in. Use the appropriate word for the place where the animal you use for "foxes" lives.

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself.

nowhere to lay his head

This refers to a place to sleep. Alternate translation: "no place of his own to sleep"

Matthew 8:21

allow me first to go and bury my father

It is unclear whether the man's father has died and he will bury him immediately, or if the man wants to stay for a longer amount of time until his father dies so he can bury him then. The main point is that the man wants to do something else first before he follows Jesus.

Matthew 8:22

leave the dead to bury their own dead

Jesus does not mean literally that dead people will bury other dead people. Possible meanings of "the dead": 1) it is a metaphor for those who will soon die, or 2) it is a metaphor for those who do not follow Jesus and are spiritually dead. The main point is that a disciple must not let anything delay him from following Jesus.

Matthew 8:23

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to the account of Jesus calming a storm as he and his disciples cross the Sea of Galilee.

entered a boat

"got onto a boat"

his disciples followed him

Try to use the same words for "disciple" and "follow" that you used in ([Matthew 8:21-22](#)).

Matthew 8:24

Behold

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. Your language may have a way of showing this.

Alternate translation: "Suddenly" or "Without warning"

there arose a great storm on the sea

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a powerful storm arose on the sea"

so that the boat was covered with the waves

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that the waves covered the boat"

Matthew 8:25

General Information:

Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus's healing ministry was a fulfillment of prophecy.

woke him up, saying, "Save us

Possible meanings are 1) they first woke Jesus and then they said, "Save us" or 2) as they were waking Jesus up, they were saying "Save us."

us ... we

If you need to translate these words as inclusive or exclusive, then inclusive is best. The disciples probably meant they wanted Jesus to save the disciples and himself from drowning.

we are perishing

"we are going to die very soon." The word "perishing" is a strong word for "dying."

Matthew 8:26

to them

"to the disciples"

Why are you afraid ... faith?

Jesus was rebuking the disciples with this rhetorical question. Alternate translation: "You should not be afraid ... faith!" or "There is nothing for you to be afraid of ... faith!"

you of little faith

"you who have such little faith." Jesus addresses his disciples this way because their anxiety about the storm

shows they have little faith in him to control it. See how you translated this in Matthew 6:30.

Matthew 8:27

What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?

"Even the winds and the sea obey him! What sort of man is this?" This rhetorical question shows that the disciples were surprised. Alternate translation: "This man is unlike any man we have ever seen! Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

even the winds and the sea obey him

For people or animals to obey or disobey is not surprising, but for wind and water to obey is very surprising. This personification describes the natural elements as being able to hear and respond like people.

Matthew 8:28

Connecting Statement:

Here the author returns to the theme of Jesus healing people. This begins an account of Jesus healing two demon-possessed men.

to the other side

"to the other side of the Sea of Galilee"

the Gadarenes

This name refers to the people who lived in the town of Gadara.

two men who were possessed by demons

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"two men whom demons possessed" or "two men whom demons were controlling"

They ... were very violent, so that no traveler could pass that way. The demons that were controlling these two men were so dangerous that no one could go through that area.

Matthew 8:29

Behold

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. Your language may have a way of showing this.

What do we have to do with you, Son of God?

The demons use a question but they are being hostile toward Jesus. Alternate translation: "Do not bother us, Son of God!"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus, which describes his relationship to God.

Have you come here to torment us before the set time?

Again, the demons use a question in a hostile way. Alternate translation: "You should not disobey God by punishing us before the specific time God has set when he will punish us!"

Matthew 8:30

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here Matthew tells background information about a herd of pigs that had been there before Jesus arrived.

Matthew 8:31

If you cast us out

It is implied that the demons knew that Jesus was going to cast them out. Alternate translation: "Because you are going to cast us out"

us

This is exclusive, meaning the demons only.

Matthew 8:32

to them

This refers to the demons inside the men.

The demons came out and went into the pigs

"The demons left the men and entered the pigs"

behold

This alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

rushed down the steep hill

"ran quickly down the steep slope"

they died in the water

"they fell into the water and drowned"

Matthew 8:33

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the account of Jesus healing two demon-possessed men.

tending the pigs

"taking care of the pigs"

what had happened to the men who had been possessed by demons

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"what Jesus did to help the men whom demons had controlled"

Matthew 8:34

Behold

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of showing this.

all the city

The word "city" is a metonym for the people of the city. The word "all" is probably an exaggeration to emphasize how very many people came out. Not necessarily every person came out.

their region

"their area"

Chapter 9

Matthew 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Sinners"

When the people of Jesus's time spoke of "sinners," they were talking about people who did not obey the law of Moses and instead committed sins like stealing or sexual sins. When Jesus said that he came to call "sinners," he meant that only people who believe that they are sinners can be his followers. This is true even if they are not what most people think of as "sinners." (See: sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that a person had something happen to him without saying who caused that something to happen. You may have to translate the sentence so that it tells the reader who performed the action.

Rhetorical questions

Speakers in this chapter asked questions to which they already knew the answer. They asked the questions to show that they were not happy with the hearers or to teach them or to get them to think. Your language may have another way of doing this.

Proverbs

Proverbs are very short sentences that use words that are easy to remember. They teach about something that is generally true. People who understand proverbs usually have to know much about the language and culture of the speaker. When you translate the proverbs in this chapter, you may have to use many more words than the speakers used so that your readers can understand things that the original audiences understood.

Links:

[Matthew 9:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 9

9:1-9

Where was Jesus' own city?

[9:1]

Jesus went to his own city, Capernaum (see: Matthew 4:13).

See Map: Capernaum

Why did these men bring the paralyzed man to Jesus?

[9:2]

Men brought a paralyzed man to Jesus. These men believed in Jesus and knew that he could heal this man who could not walk. Because he knew this man believed in him, Jesus spoke that he forgave this man's sins.

See: Mark 2:3-4; Luke 5:17-26

See: Sin

Why did the scribes think Jesus blasphemed?

[9:3]

The scribes thought that Jesus blasphemed because he forgave this man's sins. They knew that only God could forgive sins. Therefore, they thought Jesus tried to do something that only God could do. However, they did not know that Jesus is God.

See: Scribe; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Sin; Jesus is God

How did Jesus know what the scribes were thinking?

[9:4]

Jesus knew what the scribes were thinking because he is God. Therefore, he knew they were thinking evil things.

See: Scribe; Jesus is God

What did Jesus mean by saying, "which is easier to say"?

[9:5]

Jesus asked the scribes whether it was easier to tell this man that his sins were forgiven or to tell him to get up and walk. It was easier for someone to say your sins are forgiven because no one knew whether this man's sins were forgiven except God. However, if someone told this paralyzed man to walk and he could not, then everyone knew he could not heal the paralyzed man.

Jesus said these things so that the people could know that he could do both of these things.

See: Scribe; Sin

Why were the people afraid?

[9:8]

When the people saw these things, they were "afraid" (φοβέω/g5399). They were not scared of Jesus. Instead, they were amazed that Jesus could do these things. Because of this, they glorified God. They were amazed that God gave Jesus permission to do these things.

See: Glory (Glorify)

9:10-17

What was a tax collector?

[9:10]

Matthew was a tax collector. People in Israel hated the tax collectors. Tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Roman government. They paid the Romans so they could collect taxes from other people. If they collected more taxes than they paid the Roman government, then they were allowed to keep it. Because of this, many tax collectors became rich. The Jews thought a Jewish tax collector betrayed the Jewish people because they took money from the Jews and gave it to the Romans. They thought tax collectors were evil because they took money from people who honored God and gave it to people who rejected God.

See: Tax (Tax Collector, Toll)

Who were sinners?

[9:10]

Matthew wrote about sinners. All people sinned. However, these were people who sinned in a way that other people knew they sinned. People judged them as evil. The Jews would not be friends with these people. The Pharisees would not eat with them because they thought they were unclean.

See: Sin; Clean and Unclean; Pharisees; Judge (Judgment)

Why were people needing a physician?

[9:12]

Jesus talked about people needing a physician. This was a metaphor. He wanted people to know that people who sinned needed Jesus to forgive them. Because of this, all people needed Jesus to forgive them. The Pharisees also needed Jesus to forgive their sins.

See: Metaphor; Sin; Pharisees

Why does God want mercy and not sacrifice?

[9:13]

God said that he wanted mercy and not sacrifice (see: Hosea 6:6). Sacrifices were part of the Law of Moses. God wanted sacrifice, but he did not want people to make sacrifices to him in the wrong way. That is, if people did not love one another or show mercy to one another, their sacrifices would be given in the wrong way.

See: Mercy; Sacrifice; Law of Moses

Who did Jesus come to call?

[9:13]

Jesus said that he came to earth to call certain people to God. That is, he wanted to make it so that sinners could be at peace with God. He did not do this for righteous people, that is, people who thought they were righteous and did not need to be forgiven. However, there is no one who is righteous (see: Romans 3:10).

See: Call (Calling); Righteous (Righteousness); Pharisees; Repent (Repentance)

Why did the Pharisees fast, but the disciples did not fast?

[9:14]

Certain people who followed Jesus asked him why the Pharisees fasted but his disciples did not fast. In ancient Israel, people fasted when they were sad. However, the disciples were not sad because Jesus was with them. It was not a time for them to fast. Rather, it was a time for them to celebrate. Jesus told them that the disciples would fast after he died.

See: Fasting; Pharisees; Disciple

Why did Jesus talk about garments and wineskins?

[9:16, 9:17]

Jesus talked about putting a cloth patch on a garment. If someone put a new piece of cloth on an old piece of clothing, the new piece of cloth would become smaller and cause the clothing to rip. Wineskins were bags of leather that held wine. When someone put wine into an old wineskin, it would burst open. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say that he was going to do something different than the Pharisees. Scholars think that Jesus taught people to do different things than were taught in the Law of Moses.

See: Metaphor; Pharisees; Law of Moses

9:18-31

Why did this man bow before Jesus?

[9:18]

This man bowed before Jesus. This was a way to honor Jesus. He believed that Jesus was able to bring his daughter back to life just by touching her.

Why did this woman touch Jesus?

[9:20]

A woman was constantly bleeding for 12 years. She thought that if she touched Jesus, it would heal her. However, this could not heal her. Jesus knew that she believed in him and because of this, he healed her. She was healed because she trusted in Jesus.

Why was there many people in this man's house?

[9:23]

There were many people in this man's house. They were playing music and many people were very sad. In ancient Israel, this happened when someone died.

Why did these men call Jesus the son of David?

[9:27]

These blind men called Jesus the son of David. They believed Jesus is the Messiah. The Messiah needed to be a descendant of David who would fulfill the covenant God made to David (see: 2 Sam. 7).

See: Messiah (Christ); Fulfill (Fulfillment); Covenant; Son of David; Covenant with David

Why did Jesus not want the blind men to tell other people Jesus healed them?

[9:30]

See: Messianic Secret

9:32-38

What was a mute man?

[9:32]

A mute man was someone who could not talk. Perhaps this man could not talk because he was possessed by demons.

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

How did the Pharisees think that Jesus drove out demons?

[9:34]

The Pharisees said that Satan gave Jesus permission to remove demons from people.

See: Pharisees; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon; Satan (The Devil)

What was a synagogue?

[9:35]

See: Synagogue

What was preaching the gospel?

[9:35]

See Preach (Preacher); Gospel

What did it mean that people were like sheep without a shepherd?

[9:36]

Jesus said the people were like sheep without a shepherd. This was a metaphor. The people did not have anyone to lead them and to teach them about how to live in a way that honors God. The Pharisees could not do this.

See: Shepherd; Metaphor; Pharisees

How was the harvest plentiful, but the laborers few?

[9:37]

Jesus said that the harvest was plentiful but the laborers few. This was a metaphor. There were many people who wanted to learn about Jesus, but there were few people who could go and tell them about Jesus. Therefore, he told the people to

pray and ask God to get people to do this.

See: Harvest

Matthew 9:1

Connecting Statement:

Matthew returns to the theme, which he began in Matthew 8:1, of Jesus healing people. This begins an account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man.

Jesus entered a boat

It is implied that the disciples were with Jesus.

a boat

This is probably the same boat as in Matthew 8:23. You only need to specify this if needed to avoid confusion.

into his own city

"to the town where he lived." This refers to Capernaum.

Matthew 9:2

Behold

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of showing this.

they brought

"some men from the city brought"

their faith

This refers to the faith of the men and may also include the faith of the paralyzed man.

Son

The man was not Jesus's real son. Jesus was speaking to him politely. If this is confusing, it can also be translated "My friend" or "Young man" or even omitted.

Your sins have been forgiven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have forgiven your sins"

Matthew 9:3

Behold

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.

among themselves

Possible meanings are 1) each one was thinking to himself, or 2) they were speaking among themselves.

blaspheming

Jesus was claiming to be able to do things the scribes thought only God can do.

Matthew 9:4

knew their thoughts

Jesus knew what they were thinking either supernaturally or because he could see them talking to each other.

Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?

Jesus used this question to rebuke the scribes. Here "hearts" refers to their minds or their thoughts. Alternate translation: "Do not think evil thoughts."

evil

This is moral evil or wickedness, not simply error in fact.

Matthew 9:5

For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

Jesus uses this question to make the scribes think about what might prove whether or not he could really forgive sins. Alternate translation: "I just said 'Your sins are

forgiven.' You may think that it is harder to say 'Get up and walk,' because the proof of whether or not I can heal the man will be shown by whether or not he gets up and walks." or "You may think that it is easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven' than it is to say 'Get up and walk.'"

which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

The quotes can be translated as indirect quotes. Alternate translation: "which is easier, to tell someone that his sins are forgiven, or to tell him to get up and walk?" or "you may think that it is easier to tell someone that his sins are forgiven than to tell him to get up and walk."

Your sins are forgiven

Here "your" is singular. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "I have forgiven your sins"

Matthew 9:6

that you may know

"I will prove to you." The "you" is plural.

your mat ... your house

Here "you" is singular.

go to your house

Jesus is not forbidding the man to go elsewhere. He is giving the man the opportunity to go home.

Matthew 9:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 9:8

they were afraid

Possible meanings are 1) they were afraid, or 2) they were in awe. "Awe" is a feeling of wonder a person has when they see or experience something great or powerful.

who had given

"because he had given"

such authority

This refers to the authority to declare sins forgiven.

Matthew 9:9

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the account of Jesus healing a paralyzed man. Jesus then calls a tax collector to be one of his disciples.

As Jesus passed by from there

This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story.

If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

passed by

"was leaving" or "was going"

Matthew ... him ... He

Church tradition says that this Matthew is the author of this Gospel, but the text gives no reason to change the pronouns from "him" and "He" to "me" and "I."

He said to him

"Jesus said to Matthew"

He got up and followed him

"Matthew got up and followed Jesus." This means Matthew became Jesus's disciple.

Matthew 9:10

the house

This is probably Matthew's house, but it could also be Jesus's house. Specify only if needed to avoid confusion. behold

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.

sinner

people who did not obey the law of Moses but committed what others thought were very bad sins

Matthew 9:11

When the Pharisees saw it

"When the Pharisees saw that Jesus was eating with the tax collectors and sinful people"

Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?

The Pharisees use this question to criticize what Jesus is doing. Alternate translation: "Your teacher should not eat with tax collectors and sinner."

Matthew 9:12

When Jesus heard this

Here "this" refers to the question the Pharisees asked about Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners.

People who are strong in body do not need a physician, only those who are sick do

Jesus answers with a proverb. He means that he eats with these kinds of people because he has come to help sinners.

People who are strong in body

"People who are healthy"

physician

doctor

only those who are sick do

The phrase "need a physician" is understood. Alternate translation: "only people who are sick need a physician"

Matthew 9:13

You should go and learn what this means

Jesus is about to quote the scriptures. Alternate translation: "You should learn the meaning of what God said in the scriptures"

You should go

Here "you" is plural and refers to the Pharisees.

I desire mercy and not sacrifice

Jesus is quoting what the prophet Hosea wrote in the scriptures. Here, "I" refers to God.

For I came

Here "I" refers to Jesus.

the righteous

Jesus is using irony. He does not think there are any people who are righteous and do not need to repent. Alternate translation: "those who think they are righteous"

Matthew 9:14

Connecting Statement:

The disciples of John the Baptist question the fact that Jesus's disciples do not fast.

do not fast

"continue to eat regularly"

Matthew 9:15

Can the sons of the wedding hall mourn while the bridegroom is still with them?

Jesus uses a question to answer John's disciples. They all

knew that people do not mourn and fast at a wedding celebration. Jesus uses this proverb to show that his disciples do not mourn because he is still there with them. Alternate translation: "The sons of the wedding hall never mourn while the bridegroom is still with them."

sons of the wedding hall

This is an idiom that refers to the men who serve a bridegroom during a wedding. Alternate translation:

"bridegroom's attendants"

the days will come when

This is a way of referring to some time in the future.

Alternate translation: "the time will come when" or

"someday"

the bridegroom will be taken away from them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the bridegroom will not be able to be with them any longer" or "someone will take the bridegroom away from them"

will be taken away

Jesus is probably referring to his own death, but this should not be made explicit here in the translation. To maintain the imagery of a wedding, it is best to just state that the bridegroom will not be there any longer.

Matthew 9:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to answer the question that the disciples of John had asked. He did this by giving two examples of old things and new things that people do not put together.

No man puts a piece of new cloth on an old garment

"No one sews a piece of new cloth on an old garment" or "People do not sew a piece of new cloth as a patch on old garment"

an old garment ... the garment

"old clothing ... the clothing"

the patch will tear away from the garment

If someone were to wash the garment, the patch of new cloth would shrink, but the old garment would not shrink. This would tear the patch off the garment and leave a bigger hole.

the patch

"the piece of new cloth." This is the piece of cloth used to cover a hole in the old garment.

a worse tear will be made

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"this will make the tear worse"

Matthew 9:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to answer the question that disciples of John had asked.

Neither do people put new wine into old wineskins

Jesus uses another proverb to answer John's disciples. This means the same as the proverb in Matthew 9:16.

Neither do people put

"Neither does anyone pour" or "People never put"

new wine

This refers to wine that has not fermented yet. If grapes are unknown in your area, use the general term for fruit.

Alternate translation: "grape juice"

old wineskins

This refers to wineskins that have stretched and dried out

because they were already used for fermenting wine.

wineskins

"wine bags" or "skin bags." These were bags made out of animal skins.

the wine will be spilled, and the wineskins will be destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"and this will ruin the wineskins and spill the wine"

the skins will burst

When the new wine ferments and expands, the skins tear open because they can no longer stretch out.

fresh wineskins

"new wineskins" or "new wine bags." This refers to wineskins that no one has used.

both will be preserved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"this will keep safe both the wineskins and the wine"

Matthew 9:18

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of Jesus bringing to life the daughter of a Jewish official after she had died.

these things

This refers to the answer Jesus gave John's disciples about fasting.

behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

bowed down to him

This is a way someone would show respect in Jewish culture.

come and lay your hand on her, and she will live

This shows that the Jewish official believed Jesus had the power to bring his daughter back to life.

Matthew 9:19

his disciples

"Jesus's disciples"

Matthew 9:20

Connecting Statement:

This describes how Jesus healed another woman while he was on the way to the Jewish official's house.

Behold

The word "Behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

who suffered from a discharge of blood

"who had been bleeding" or "who frequently had a flow of blood." She was probably bleeding from her womb even when it was not the normal time for it. Some cultures may have a polite way of referring to this condition.

twelve years

"12 years"

his garment

"his robe" or "what he was wearing"

Matthew 9:21

For she had said to herself, "If only I touch his clothes, I will be made well."

She said this to herself before she touched Jesus's garment. This tells why she touched Jesus's garment.

If only I touch his clothes

According to Jewish law, because she was bleeding she was not supposed to touch anyone. She touches his clothes so

that Jesus's power would heal her and yet

Matthew 9:22

But Jesus

"The woman was hoping she could touch him secretly, but Jesus"

Daughter

The woman was not Jesus's real daughter. Jesus was speaking to her politely. If this is confusing, it can also be translated "Young woman" or even omitted.

your faith has made you well

"because you believed in me, I will heal you"

the woman was healed from that hour

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Jesus healed her at that moment"

Matthew 9:23

Connecting Statement:

This returns to the account of Jesus bringing the daughter of the Jewish official back to life.

the flute players and the crowd making a commotion

This was a common way to mourn for someone who has died.

flute players

"people who play flutes"

and the crowd making a commotion

The phrase "making a commotion" applies only to "the crowd" and does not include the flute players. Alternation translation: "and the crowd making a lot of noise" or "and the noisy crowd"

Matthew 9:24

Go away

Jesus was speaking to many people, so use the plural command form if your language has one.

the girl is not dead, but she is asleep

Jesus is using a play on words. It was common in Jesus's day to refer to a dead person as one who "sleeps." But here the dead girl will get up, as though she had only been sleeping.

Matthew 9:25

When the crowd had been put outside

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"After Jesus had sent the crowd outside" or "After the family had sent the people outside"

got up

"got out of bed." This is the same meaning as in Matthew 8:15.

Matthew 9:26

General Information:

This is a summary statement that describes the result of Jesus raising this girl from the dead.

Connecting Statement:

This completes the account of Jesus bringing the daughter of the Jewish official back to life.

The news about this spread into all that region

"The people of that whole region heard about it" or "The people who saw that the girl was alive started telling everyone in the whole area about it"

Matthew 9:27

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus healing two blind men.

As Jesus passed by from there

As Jesus was leaving the region
 passed by
 "was leaving" or "was going"
 followed him
 This means they were walking behind Jesus, not necessarily
 that they had become his disciples.
 Have mercy on us
 It is implied that they wanted Jesus to heal them.
 Son of David
 Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated
 as "Descendant of David." However, "Son of David" is also a
 title for the Messiah, and the men were probably calling
 Jesus by this title.
 Matthew 9:28
 When Jesus had come into the house
 This could be either Jesus's own house or the house in
 Matthew 9:10.
 Yes, Lord
 The full content of their answer is not stated, but it is
 understood. Alternate translation: "Yes, Lord, we believe
 you can heal us"
 Matthew 9:29
 touched their eyes and said
 It is not clear whether he touched both men's eyes at the
 same time or used only his right hand to touch one then the
 other. As the left hand was customarily used for unclean
 purposes, it is most likely that he used only his right hand.
 It is also not clear whether he spoke as he was touching
 them or touched them first and then spoke to them.
 Let it be done to you according to your faith
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I
 will do as you have believed" or "Because you believe, I will
 heal you"
 Matthew 9:30
 their eyes were opened
 This means they were able to see. This can be stated in
 active form. Alternate translation: "God healed their eyes"
 or "the two blind men were able to see"
 See that no one knows about this
 Here "See" means "be sure." Alternate translation: "Be sure
 no one finds out about this" or "Do not tell anyone that I
 healed you"
 Matthew 9:31
 But the two men
 "The two men did not do what Jesus told them to do. They"
 spread the news
 "told many people what had happened to them"
 Matthew 9:32
 Connecting Statement:
 This is the account of Jesus healing a demon-possessed man
 who could not speak, and how people responded.
 behold
 The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story.
 Your language may have a way of doing this.
 a mute man ... was brought to Jesus
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "someone brought a mute man ... to Jesus"
 mute
 not able to talk

possessed by a demon
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "whom a demon had possessed" or "whom a demon was
 controlling"
 Matthew 9:33
 When the demon had been driven out
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "After Jesus had forced the demon out" or "After Jesus had
 commanded the demon to leave"
 the mute man spoke
 "the mute man began to speak" or "the man who had been
 mute spoke" or "the man, who was no longer mute, spoke"
 The crowds were astonished
 "The people were amazed"
 This has never been seen
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "This has never happened before" or "No one has ever done
 anything like this before"
 Matthew 9:34
 he drives out demons
 "he forces demons to leave"
 he drives
 The pronoun "he" refers to Jesus.
 Matthew 9:35
 Connecting Statement:
 This is the end of the part of the story that began in
 [Matthew 8:1]
 all the cities
 The word "all" is an exaggeration to emphasize how very
 many cities Jesus went to. He did not necessarily go to
 every one of them. Alternate translation: "many of the
 cities"
 cities ... villages
 "large villages ... small villages" or "large towns ... small
 towns"
 the gospel of the kingdom
 Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. See how you
 translated this in [Matthew 4:23]
 all kinds of disease and all kinds of sickness
 "every disease and every sickness." The words "disease"
 and "sickness" are closely related but should be translated
 as two different words if possible. "Disease" is what causes
 a person to be sick. "Sickness" is the physical weakness or
 affliction that results from having a disease.
 Matthew 9:36
 General Information:
 This begins a new part of the story where Jesus teaches his
 disciples and sends them to preach and heal as he has done.
 They were like sheep without a shepherd
 This simile means they did not have a leader to take care of
 them. Alternate translation: "The people did not have a
 leader"
 Matthew 9:37
 General Information:
 Jesus uses a proverb about harvesting to tell his disciples
 how they should respond to the needs of the crowds
 mentioned in the previous section.
 The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few
 Jesus uses a proverb to respond to what he is seeing. Jesus

means there are a lot of people who are ready to believe God but only few people to teach them God's truth.
The harvest is plentiful
"There is plenty of ripe food for someone to collect"
laborers

"workers"
Matthew 9:38
pray to the Lord of the harvest
"pray to God, because he is in charge of the harvest"

Chapter 10

Matthew 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The sending of the twelve disciples

Many verses in this chapter describe how Jesus sent the twelve disciples out. He sent them to tell his message about the kingdom of heaven. They were to tell his message only in Israel and not to share it with the Gentiles.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The twelve disciples

The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

"The kingdom of heaven has come near"

No one knows for sure whether the "kingdom of heaven" was present or still coming when Jesus spoke these words.

English translations often use the phrase "at hand," but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases "is coming near" and "has come near."

Links:

[Matthew 10:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 10

10:1-15

Who were the twelve disciples and the twelve apostles?

[10:1, 10:2]

The twelve disciples and twelve apostles were the same twelve men.

See: Disciple; Apostle

What did it mean that Jesus sent out the disciples?

[10:5]

That Jesus sent out the disciples meant that he sent them into the towns near where they were. They were to tell other people about Jesus.

Why did Jesus tell the disciples not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans?

[10:5]

Jesus told the disciples not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans. At this time, he wanted them to go to the people of Israel and tell them about Jesus before they told the Gentiles and the Samaritans.

See: Gentile; Samaria; Disciple

How were the people of Israel lost sheep?

[10:6]

Jesus said the people of Israel were lost sheep. This was a metaphor. The people of Israel did not know that Jesus was their messiah. They did not know that Jesus was their king.

See: Metaphor; Kingdom of God

What did the disciples preach to people?

[10:7]

The disciples preached to people that the kingdom of heaven was near. Some scholars think this meant that Jesus offered

to be the king ruling over Israel if they believed in him. Other scholars think Jesus meant that he wanted people to obey him and let him rule over their lives.

See: Matthew 3:2; 4:17

See: Disciple; Preach (Preacher); Kingdom of God

What did Jesus give the disciples permission to do?

[10:8]

Jesus gave the disciples permission to cast out unclean spirits. He also gave them permission to heal people.

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon

How was someone raised from the dead?

[10:8]

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

What was a leper?

[10:8]

See: Leprosy (Leper)

What was casting out demons?

[10:8]

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

What have the disciples been freely given?

[10:8]

Jesus talked about the disciples being given something for free. That is, they were given the permission to preach the truth about Jesus, and to perform miracles. He wanted them to teach people about the truth of Jesus, and to do miracles without taking any money from people.

See: Disciple; Miracle

Why did Jesus not want the disciples to take many things with them?

[10:9, 10:10]

Jesus did not want the disciples to bring money with them or many other things. He wanted them to trust God and he wanted other people to give them the things they needed as they went from one place to another.

See: Disciple

What was a traveling bag?

[10:10]

A traveling bag was something people put things in when they traveled.

What was an extra tunic?

[10:10]

The disciples were not to have two tunics. A tunic was the main piece of clothing worn against the skin.

See: Disciple

Why were the disciples to remain in one house?

[10:11]

The disciples were told to remain in one house. At this time, it was a great honor to have someone stay in your home.

Jesus did not want his disciples to dishonor a host by leaving that house.

See: Disciple

Who was someone who was worthy?

[10:13]

Jesus spoke about someone and a house that was worthy. He was talking about going to a place and finding people who were willing to welcome the disciples into their homes. He did not want them to spend time with people who were going to reject Jesus.

Why were the disciples to shake the dust off their feet?

[10:14]

If the people in a town rejected the disciples, the disciples were told to shake the dust off their feet when they left the town. In ancient Israel, when someone shook the dust off their feet, this was a symbol. This meant they were not friends with the people in that town. It showed that the person shaking the dust off their feet rejected the people in the town.

See: Disciple; Symbol

What was the peace Jesus talked about?

[10:13]

Jesus talked about people being at peace and not being at peace. Some scholars think Jesus was talking about being at peace with God. Other scholars think Jesus was talking about having the peace that came with the kingdom of God.

See: Kingdom of God

What were Sodom and Gomorrah?

[10:15]

Sodom and Gomorrah were cities God punished for being very evil (see: Genesis 19). God completely destroyed these

cities.

When is the day of judgment?

[10:15]

The day of judgment is the day of the lord.

See: Day of Judgment; Day of the Lord

10:16-23

Why did Jesus talk about these different animals?

[10:16]

Jesus said the disciples were sheep in the middle of wolves. This was a metaphor. They were going to places where people were going to try to harm them in some way or to destroy them. He also wanted the disciples to be as wise as serpents. People often thought serpents were the wisest of all animals. He wanted the disciples to be very wise. He also wanted them to be innocent as doves. That is, he did not want anyone to be able to say bad things about them.

See: Disciple; Metaphor

Why were people going to deliver the disciples to the councils?

[10:17]

Jesus said people were going to try to capture the disciples and send them to the council. That is, they were going to bring them to the Jewish leaders to be beaten because they preached about Jesus. They would do this in the synagogues.

See: Disciple; Synagogue; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Preach (Preacher)

How will the disciples speak to the governors and kings?

[10:18]

When the disciples were going to speak to the governors and kings, the Holy Spirit would help them to say the right things.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit

When would these things happen?

[10:19]

Jesus was telling the disciples these things would happen in their time. However, he was also speaking about a time after he died. People will hate Christians because of Jesus' name. That is, they will hate Christians because they believe in Jesus.

See: Disciple

How will Christians be saved?

[10:22]

Jesus said that people who "endure until the end" will be saved. Some scholars think Jesus will only let people who keep believing in him live with God in heaven forever. They think that if someone rejects Jesus, they are no longer at peace with God or were never at peace with God. Other scholars think that God promised to protect people during the tribulation.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Disciple; Heaven; Tribulation

What is persecution?

[10:23]

See: Persecute (Persecution)

When will the son of man come?

[10:23]

Jesus said that the disciples will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the son of man has come. Some scholars think that Jesus was speaking about returning to help Christians before the end of the tribulation. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about Jesus returning to the earth after he died.

See: Daniel 7:13-14

See: Son of Man; Disciple; Tribulation; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Jesus' Return to Earth

10:24-33

Why did Jesus talk about servants and masters?

[10:24, 10:25]

Jesus talked about servants and masters. Jesus wanted the disciples to do the same types of things that he did. He gave them permission to do these things. He wanted them to know that people would insult them for doing these things. They also insulted Jesus. Jesus wanted them to know that people insulted him the same way people will insult the disciples. Certain people said that Jesus served Satan. These people feared the disciples less than they feared Jesus. Therefore, they may insult the disciples even more than they insulted Jesus.

See: Disciple; Satan (The Devil)

Who was Beelzebul?

[10:25]

Beelzebul was another name for Satan.

See: Satan (The Devil)

Why should the disciples not fear other people?

[10:26]

Jesus did not want the disciples to fear people who insulted them. This was because God would judge these people. God knows all the evil things they would do because nothing can be hidden from God.

See: Disciple; Judge (Judgment)

What did Jesus mean by saying, "What I tell you in the darkness"?

[10:27]

Jesus spoke to the disciples in the darkness. That is he told them things at night. He also talked to them when no one else was around. Now he wanted them to tell other people about the things he taught them.

See: Disciple

How was someone able to kill the body but not the soul?

[10:28]

Jesus said that the people who would persecute the disciples were able to kill them physically. However, they were not able to kill their soul. That is, they could not stop them from living with God in heaven forever.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Soul; Heaven

Who is able to kill the body and the soul?

[10:28]

Only God can kill a person's body and soul. Only God can punish someone by sending them to live in hell forever.

See: Soul; Hell

Why did Jesus talk about sparrows?

[10:29]

Jesus talked about sparrows. These were small birds. People thought they were not worth much. This was a metaphor. God cared for even these small birds that people thought were worthless. He wanted people to know that God cared for them very much.

How does someone confess or deny Jesus?

[10:32, 10:33]

Jesus said that he would tell God the Father about people who confess, that is to acknowledge that Jesus is the messiah to other people. However, if they rejected Jesus in some way, then Jesus will reject them in some way. Some scholars think Jesus taught that people who deny Jesus were not truly Christians or they stopped being Christians. Other scholars think Jesus taught people that they would lose rewards if they denied Jesus in some way.

See: Confess (Confession); Reward; God the Father; Messiah (Christ)

10:34-42

Why did Jesus come to bring the sword to the earth?

[10:34]

Jesus taught people to love God and to love other people. He wanted people to forgive one another. However, he also said that he came to the earth to bring a sword and not to bring peace. This was a metaphor. A sword was used to divide. Jesus divided people. Jesus did not make it so that everyone was at peace with God. Only those who believe in Jesus are at peace with God. This is how Jesus divided people. Those who believe in him have peace. Those who reject Jesus will be punished. One must either believe in Jesus or reject him. A person cannot do both of these things.

See: Punish (Punishment)

Why will people be enemies with other people in their house?

[10:36]

Jesus divided people as Christians and non-Christians. Christians believe in Jesus. Non-Christians reject Jesus. It did not matter what other people in someone's house believed about Jesus. Every person must believe in Jesus for themselves to have peace with God. Those who rejected Jesus remained enemies of God and enemies of Christians.

Why did Jesus talk about mothers and fathers?

[10:37]

Jesus talked about mothers and fathers. He did this because he wanted people to know that he wanted people to love him more than they loved their own mother and father. How does someone pick up their cross?

Jesus spoke about someone picking up their cross. This was a metaphor. He wanted people to serve and obey him, even if it was difficult.

See: Cross; Metaphor

How will someone lose their life and find it and someone who finds his life lose it?

[10:39]

Jesus spoke about someone finding their life but losing it. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say that someone who did not want to serve Jesus would not live together with God in heaven forever. However, if someone was killed because they believed in Jesus, even though they died, they would live together with God in heaven forever.

See: Metaphor; Heaven

How did someone welcome a prophet in the prophet's name and receive a prophet's reward?

[10:41]

Jesus said that someone who welcomed a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. He wanted them to know that whoever welcomed prophets to serve Jesus will be rewarded in some way. The disciples were prophets because they spoke the words God wanted them to say to other people.

See: Prophet; Reward; Disciple

How did someone welcome a righteous man in the name of a righteous man and receive a righteous man's reward?

[10:41]

Jesus wanted people to know that whoever welcomed a righteous man into their towns and homes, because he served Jesus, will be rewarded in some way. People thought the disciples were righteous men.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Reward; Disciple

How will someone be rewarded for giving someone a cup of water?

[10:42]

Jesus spoke about giving someone a cup of water to drink. This was a small way someone served another person. He wanted to say that if someone served Jesus, even in a small way, Jesus will reward this person.

See: Reward

Matthew 10:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of Jesus sending out his twelve disciples to do his work.

called his twelve disciples together

"summoned his 12 disciples"

gave them authority

Be sure that the text clearly communicates that this authority was 1) to drive out unclean spirits and 2) to heal disease and sickness.

to drive them out

"to make the unclean spirits leave"

all kinds of disease and all kinds of sickness

"every disease and every sickness." The words "disease" and "sickness" are closely related but should be translated as two different words if possible. "Disease" is what causes a person to be sick. "Sickness" is the physical weakness or affliction that results from having a disease.

Matthew 10:2

General Information:

Here the author provides the names of the twelve apostles as background information.

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here Matthew tells the names of the twelve apostles.

twelve apostles

This is the same group as the "twelve disciples" in Matthew 10:1.

first

This is first in order, not in rank.

Matthew 10:3

Matthew the tax collector

"Matthew, who was a tax collector"

Matthew 10:4

the Zealot

Possible meanings are 1) "the Zealot" is a title that shows that he was part of the group of people who wanted to free the Jewish people from Roman rule. Alternate translation: "the patriot" or "the nationalist" or 2) "the Zealot" is a description that shows that he was zealous for God to be honored. Alternate translation: "the zealous one" or "the passionate one"

who would betray him

"who would betray Jesus"

Matthew 10:5

General Information:

Although verse 5 begins by saying that he sent out the twelve, Jesus gave these instructions before he sent them out.

Connecting Statement:

Here Jesus begins to give instructions to his disciples about what they should do and expect when they go to preach.

These twelve Jesus sent out

"Jesus sent out these twelve men" or "It was these twelve men whom Jesus sent out"

sent out

Jesus sent them out for a particular purpose.

He instructed them

"He told them what they needed to do" or "He commanded them"

Matthew 10:6

lost sheep of the house of Israel

This is a metaphor comparing the entire nation of Israel to sheep who have strayed from their shepherd.

house of Israel

This refers to the nation of Israel. Alternate translation:

"people of Israel" or "descendants of Israel"

Matthew 10:7

as you go

Here "you" is plural and refers to the twelve apostles.

The kingdom of heaven is near

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God ruling as king. This phrase is only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use the word "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 3:2]

Matthew 10:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about what they should do when they go to preach.

Heal ... raise ... cleanse ... cast out ... you have received ... give

These verbs and pronouns are plural and refer to the twelve apostles.

raise the dead

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "cause the dead to

live again"

Freely you have received, freely give

Jesus did not state what the disciples had received or were to give. Some languages may require this information in the sentence. Here "freely" means that there was no payment. Alternate translation: "Freely you have received these things, freely give them to others" or "You received these things without paying, so give them to others without making them pay"

Freely you have received, freely give

Here "received" is a metaphor that represents being made able to do things, and "give" is a metaphor that represents doing things for others. Alternate translation: "Freely you have received the ability to do these things, freely do them for others" or "Freely I have made you able to do these things, freely do them for others"

Matthew 10:9

your

This refers to the twelve apostles and so is plural.

gold, silver, or copper

These are metals out of which coins were made. This list is a metonym for money, so if the metals are unknown in your area, translate the list as "money."

belts

"money belts." A belt is a long strip of cloth or leather worn around the waist. It was often wide enough that it could be folded and used to carry money. Alternate translation: "purses" or "pouches"

Matthew 10:10

traveling bag

This could either be any bag used to carry things on a journey, or a bag used by someone to collect food or money.

an extra tunic

Use the same word you used for "tunic" in Matthew 5:40.

laborer

worker

his food

Here "food" refers to anything a person needs. Alternate translation: "what he needs"

Matthew 10:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about what they should do when they go out to preach.

Whatever city or village you enter

"Whenever you enter a city or village" or "When you go into any city or village"

city ... village

"large village ... small village" or "large town ... small town."

See how you translated this in Matthew 9:35.

you

This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles.

worthy

A "worthy" person is a person who is willing to welcome the disciples.

stay there until you leave

The full meaning of the statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "stay in that person's house until you leave the town or village"

Matthew 10:12

As you enter into the house, greet it

The phrase "greet it" means greet the house. A common greeting in those days was "Peace be to this house!" Here "house" represents the people who live in the house.

Alternate translation: "As you enter the house, greet the people who live in it"

you

This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles.

Matthew 10:13

your ... your

These are plural and refer to the twelve apostles.

the house is worthy ... not worthy

Here "the house" represents those who live in the house. A

"worthy" person is a person who is willing to welcome the

disciples. Jesus compares this person to one who is "not

worthy," a person who does not welcome the disciples.

Alternate translation: "the people who live in that house

receive you well" or "the people who live in that house treat you well"

let your peace come upon it

The word "it" refers to the house, which represents the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: "let them receive your peace" or "let them receive the peace that you greeted them with"

if it is not worthy

The word "it" means the house. Here "house" refers to the people who live in the house. Alternate translation: "if they do not receive you well" or "if they do not treat you well"

let your peace return to you

Possible meanings are 1) if the household was not worthy, then God would hold back peace or blessings from that household or 2) if the household was not worthy, then the apostles were supposed to do something, such as asking God not to honor their greeting of peace. If your language has a similar meaning of taking back a greeting or its effects, that should be used here.

Matthew 10:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about what they should do when they go to preach.

As for those who do not receive you or listen

"If no people in that house or city will receive you or listen"

you ... your

This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles.

listen to your words

Here "words" refers to what the disciples say. Alternate

translation: "listen to your message" or "listen to what you have to say"

city

You should translate this the same way you did in Matthew 10:11.

shake off the dust from your feet

"shake the dust off your feet as you leave." This is a sign that God has rejected the people of that house or city.

Matthew 10:15

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

it will be more bearable

"the suffering will be less"

the land of Sodom and Gomorrah

This refers to the people who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah. Alternate translation: "the people who lived in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah"

that city

This refers to the people in the city that does not receive the apostles or listen to their message. Alternate translation: "the people of the city that does not receive you"

Matthew 10:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples. Here he begins to tell them about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.

See, I send

The word "See" here adds emphasis to what follows.

Alternate translation: "Look, I send" or "Listen, I send" or

"Pay attention to what I am about to tell you. I send"

I send you out

Jesus is sending them out for a particular purpose.

as sheep in the midst of wolves

Sheep are defenseless animals that wolves often attack.

Jesus is stating that people may harm the disciples.

Alternate translation: "as sheep among people who are like dangerous wolves" or "as sheep among people who act the way dangerous animals act"

be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves

Jesus is telling the disciples they must be cautious and harmless among the people. If comparing the disciples to serpents or doves is confusing, it might be better not to state the similes. Alternate translation: "act with understanding and caution, as well as with innocence and virtue"

Matthew 10:17

Watch out for people! They will

You can translate with "because" to show how these two statements relate. Alternate translation: "Watch out for people because they will"

will deliver you up to

"will put you under the control of"

councils

local religious leaders or elders who together keep peace in the community

whip you

"beat you with a whip"

Matthew 10:18

you will be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they will bring you" or "they will drag you"

for my sake

"because you belong to me" or "because you follow me"

to them and to the Gentiles

The pronoun "them" refers either to the "governors and kings" or to the Jewish accusers.

Matthew 10:19

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.

When they deliver you up

"When people take you to the councils." The "people" here are the same "people" as in Matthew 10:17.

you ... you

These are plural and refer to the twelve apostles.

do not be anxious

"do not worry"

how or what you will speak

"how you are to speak or what you are to say." The two ideas may be combined: "what you are to say"

for what to say will be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the Holy Spirit will tell you what to say"

at that time

"right then" or "at that time"

Matthew 10:20

you ... your

These are plural and refer to the twelve apostles.

the Spirit of your Father

If necessary, this can be translated as "the Spirit of God your heavenly Father" or a footnote can be added to make it clear that this refers to God the Holy Spirit and not to the spirit of an earthly father.

Father

This is an important title for God.

in you

"through you"

Matthew 10:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.

Brother will deliver up brother to death

"One brother will deliver up his brother to death" or

"Brothers will deliver up their brothers to death." Jesus

speaks of something that will happen many times.

deliver up brother to death

The abstract noun "death" can be translated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "hand brother over to authorities who will execute him"

a father his child

These words can be translated as a complete sentence.

Alternate translation: "fathers will deliver up their children to death"

rise up against

"rebel against" or "turn against"

cause them to be put to death

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:

"have them put to death" or "have the authorities execute them"

Matthew 10:22

You will be hated by everyone

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Everyone will hate you" or "All people will hate you"

You

This is plural and refers to the twelve disciples.

because of my name

Here "name" refers to the entire person. Alternate

translation: "because of me" or "because you trust in me"

whoever endures

"whoever stays faithful"

to the end

It is not clear whether the "end" means when a person dies, when the persecution ends, or the end of the age when God shows himself to be king. The main point is that they endure as long as necessary.

that person will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will deliver that person"

Matthew 10:23

in this city

Here "this" does not refer to a specific city. Alternate translation: "in one city"

flee to the next

"flee to the next city"

truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

before the Son of Man has

Jesus is speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "before I, the Son of Man, have"

has come

"arrives"

Matthew 10:24

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.

A disciple is not greater than his teacher, nor a servant above his master

Jesus is using a proverb to teach his disciples a general truth. Jesus is emphasizing that the disciples should not expect people to treat them any better than the people treat Jesus.

A disciple is not greater than his teacher

"A disciple is always less important than his teacher" or "A teacher is always more important than his disciple"

nor a servant above his master

"and a servant is always less important than his master" or "and a master is always more important than his servant"

Matthew 10:25

It is enough for the disciple that he should be like his teacher

"The disciple should be satisfied to become like his teacher" be like his teacher

If necessary, you can make explicit how the disciple becomes like the teacher. Alternate translation: "know as much as his teacher knows"

the servant like his master

If necessary, you can make explicit how the servant becomes like the master. Alternate translation: "the servant should be satisfied to become only as important as his master"

If they have called the master ... how much worse ... they call ... the members of his household

Again Jesus is emphasizing that since people have mistreated him, his disciples should expect people to treat them the same or worse.

how much worse will be the names they call the members of his household

"the names that they call the members of his household will certainly be much worse" or "they will certainly call the

members of his household much worse names"

If they have called

"Since people have called"

the master of the house

Jesus is using this as a metaphor for himself.

Beelzebul

This name can either be 1) transcribed directly as "Beelzebul" or 2) translated with its original, intended meaning of "Satan."

his household

This is a metaphor for Jesus's disciples.

Matthew 10:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go out to preach.

do not fear them

Here "them" refers to the people who mistreat followers of Jesus.

there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, and nothing hidden that will not be known

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Being concealed or hidden represents being kept secret, and being revealed represents being made known. Jesus is emphasizing that God will make all things known. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will reveal the things that people hide"

Matthew 10:27

What I tell you in the darkness, say in the daylight, and what you hear softly in your ear, proclaim upon the housetops

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that the disciples should tell everyone what he tells the disciples in private. Alternate translation: "Tell people in the daylight what I tell you in the darkness, and proclaim upon the housetops what you hear softly in your ear"

What I tell you in the darkness, say in the daylight

Here "darkness" is a metonym for "night" which is a metonym for "private." Here "daylight" is a metonym for "public." Alternate translation: "What I tell you privately at night, say in public in the daylight"

what you hear softly in your ear

This is a way of referring to whispering. Alternate translation: "what I whisper to you"

proclaim upon the housetops

Housetops where Jesus lived were flat, and people far away could hear anyone speaking with a loud voice from one.

Here "housetops" refers to any place where all people can hear. Alternate translation: "speak loudly in a public place for all to hear"

Matthew 10:28

General Information:

Here Jesus also begins to give reasons why his disciples should not be afraid of the persecution they might experience.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the persecution they will endure when they go to preach.

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul

This is not distinguishing between people who cannot kill the soul and people who can kill the soul. No person can kill the soul. Alternate translation: "Do not be afraid of people. They can kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul" kill the body

This means to cause physical death. If these words are awkward, they can be translated as "kill you" or "kill other people."

body

the part of a person that can be touched, as opposed to the soul or spirit

kill the soul

This means to harm people after they have physically died. soul

the part of a person that cannot be touched and that lives on after the physical body dies

fear him who is able

You can add "because" to clarify why people should fear God. Alternate translation: "fear God because he is able"

Matthew 10:29

Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin?

Jesus states this proverb as a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "Think about the sparrows. They have so little value that you can buy two of them for only one small coin."

sparrows

These are very small, seed-eating birds. Alternate translation: "small birds"

a small coin

This is often translated as the least valuable coin available in your country. It refers to a copper coin worth about one-sixteenth of a day's wage for a laborer. Alternate translation: "very little money"

not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge

This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: "your Father knows when every one of them falls to the ground"

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 10:30

even the hairs of your head are all numbered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God knows even how many hairs are on your head"

numbered

"counted"

Matthew 10:31

You are more valuable than many sparrows

"God values you more than many sparrows"

Matthew 10:32

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.

everyone who confesses me ... I will also confess before my Father

"whoever confesses me ... I will also confess before my Father" or "if anyone confesses me ... I will also confess him before my Father"

confesses me before men

"tells others that he is my disciple" or "acknowledges before

other people that he is loyal to me"

I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven

You can make explicit the information that is understood.

Alternate translation: "I will also acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven that that person belongs to me"

my Father who is in heaven

"my heavenly Father"

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 10:33

he who denies me ... I will also deny before my Father

"whoever denies me ... I will also deny before my Father" or

"if anyone denies me ... I will also deny him before my Father"

denies me before men

"denies to other people that he is loyal to me" or "refuses to acknowledge to others that he is my disciple"

I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven

You can make explicit the information that is understood.

Alternate translation: "I will deny before my Father who is in heaven that this person belongs to me"

Matthew 10:34

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.

Do not think

"Do not suppose" or "You must not think"

upon the earth

This refers to the people who live on the earth. Alternate translation: "to the people of the earth" or "to people"

a sword

This refers to division, fighting, and killing among people.

Matthew 10:35

to set ... against

"to cause ... to fight against"

a man against his father

"a son against his father"

Matthew 10:36

A man's enemies

"A person's enemies" or "A person's worst enemies"

those of his own household

"members of his own family"

Matthew 10:37

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.

He who loves ... is not worthy

Here "he" means any person in general. Alternate

translation: "Those who love ... are not worthy" or "If you love ... you are not worthy"

loves

The word for "love" here refers to "brotherly love" or "love from a friend." Alternate translation: "cares for" or "is devoted to" or "is fond of"

worthy of me

"deserve to belong to me" or "worthy to be my disciple"

Matthew 10:38

pick up his cross and follow after me
"carry his cross and follow me." The cross represents suffering and death. Taking up the cross represents being willing to suffer and die. Alternate translation: "obey me even to the point of suffering and dying"

pick up
"take up" or "pick up and carry"

Matthew 10:39

He who finds his life will lose it. But he who loses ... will find it
Jesus uses a proverb to teach his disciples. This should be translated with as few words as possible. Alternate translation: "Those who find their lives will lose them. But those who lose their lives ... will find them" or "If you find your life you will lose it. But if you lose your life ... you will find it"

finds

This is a metaphor for "keeps" or "saves." Alternate translation: "tries to keep" or "tries to save"

will lose it

This does not mean the person will die. It is a metaphor that means the person will not experience spiritual life with God. Alternate translation: "will not have true life"

who loses his life

This does not mean to die. It is a metaphor that means a person considers obeying Jesus more important than his own life. Alternate translation: "who denies himself"

for my sake

"because he trusts me" or "on my account" or "because of me." This is the same idea as "for my sake" in Matthew 10:18.

will find it

This metaphor means the person will experience spiritual life with God. Alternate translation: "will find true life"

Matthew 10:40

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to instruct his disciples about the reasons why they should not be afraid of the persecution that they might experience.

He who welcomes

This means he receives someone as a guest.

He who

The word "He" refers to anyone in general. Alternate translation: "Whoever" or "Anyone who" or "The one who" you

This is plural and refers to the twelve apostles to whom Jesus is speaking.

He who welcomes you welcomes me

Jesus means that when someone welcomes you, it is like welcoming him. Alternate translation: "When someone welcomes you, it is like he is welcoming me" or "If someone

welcomes you, it is as if he were welcoming me"

he who welcomes me also welcomes him who sent me

This means that when someone welcomes Jesus, it is like welcoming God. Alternate translation: "When someone welcomes me, it is like he is welcoming God the Father who sent me" or "If someone welcomes me, it is as if he were welcoming God the Father who sent me"

Matthew 10:41

in the name of a prophet

"because that prophet is a prophet" or "because he knows that that person is a prophet." That is, the one who welcomes will receive the reward because he knew that the person he was welcoming was a prophet.

a prophet's reward

This refers to the reward that God gives the prophet, not to the reward that a prophet gives to another person.

in the name of a righteous man

"because that righteous man is a righteous man" or

"because he knows that that person is righteous." That is, the one who welcomes will receive the reward because he knew that the person he was welcoming was a righteous man.

a righteous man's reward

This refers to the reward God gives to a righteous person, not a reward that a righteous person gives to another person.

Matthew 10:42

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes instructing his disciples about what they should do and expect when they go to preach.

Whoever gives

"Anyone who gives"

one of these little ones

"one of these lowly ones" or "the least important of these."

The phrase "one of these" here refers to one of Jesus's disciples.

in the name of a disciple

"because that disciple" or "because he knows that that person is a disciple." That is, the one who welcomes will receive the reward because he knew that the person he was welcoming was a disciple.

truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

he will ... his reward

Here "he" and "his" refer to the one who is giving.

he will in no way lose

"God will not deny him." This has nothing to do with having a possession taken away. It can be stated in positive form.

Alternate translation: "God will certainly give him"

Chapter 11

Matthew 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 11:10.

Some scholars believe that [Matthew 11:20](#) begins a new stage in the ministry of Christ because of Israel's rejection of him.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hidden revelation

After [Matthew 11:20](#) Jesus begins to reveal information about himself and about the plans of God the Father, while hiding this information from those who reject him ([Matthew 11:25](#)).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The kingdom of heaven is near"

No one knows for sure whether the "kingdom of heaven" was present or still coming when John spoke these words.

English translations often use the phrase "at hand," but these words can be difficult to translate. Other versions use the phrases "is coming near" and "has come near."

Links:

[Matthew 11:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 11

11:1-6

What was a disciple?

[11:1]

See: Disciple

What was preaching?

[11:2]

See: Preach (Preacher)

Which John was Matthew writing about?

[11:2]

Matthew wrote about John the Baptist here.

What did John's disciples ask Jesus?

[11:3]

People who followed John the Baptist asked Jesus if he was "the one who is coming." They wanted to know if Jesus was the messiah. John already knew that Jesus was the Messiah (see: Matthew 3:11). Here, John wanted Jesus to tell him again that he was the messiah. Perhaps he wanted to know why he was in prison if Jesus was the Messiah. Or perhaps Jesus did not do the things John thought the messiah would do.

See: Messiah (Christ)

What did it mean that someone was lame?

[11:5]

Someone who was lame could not walk.

What was a leper?

[11:5]

According to the Law of Moses, a leper is not unclean.

See: Leprosy (Leper); Clean and Unclean; Law of Moses

How are the dead raised back to life?

[11:5]

Jesus said the dead are raised back to life. That is, they are resurrected.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

How did Jesus preach the gospel?

[11:5]

Jesus preached the gospel to the poor.

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel

How was someone blessed?

[11:6]

Jesus said blessed is anyone who does not stumble because of him. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say the people who believed he was the messiah would be blessed.

See: Bless (Blessing); Metaphor; Messiah (Christ); Stumble (Stumbling Block)

11:7-19

What were the things Jesus had to say about John the Baptist?

[11:7]

Jesus talked to the crowd about John the Baptist. John the Baptist lived in the desert and wore clothing that was not comfortable. Jesus talked about a reed shaken by the wind. He wanted to say that John did not change because of what people thought about him. He did what God wanted him to do no matter what people said. He did not live in the way powerful kings lived. Instead, he lived as a prophet lived. He focused on telling people about God, not on living in a

certain way.

See: Prophet

How was John greater than a prophet?

[11:9]

John the Baptist was a prophet. However, he did something that no previous prophet did. He prophesied to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah. John's message was the greatest message of all.

See: Malachi 3:1

See: Prophet; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Messiah (Christ)

How was someone in the kingdom of heaven greater than John the Baptist?

[11:11]

Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest person who ever lived, except Jesus. However, anyone who lives in the kingdom was greater than John the Baptist. That is, anyone who lives in the kingdom, was greater in some way that anyone who lived under the Law of Moses.

See: Kingdom of God; Law of Moses

How did the kingdom of heaven suffer violence?

[11:12]

Some scholars think the kingdom was being violently attacked. That is, there was evil forces attacked the kingdom of God. These scholars think an example of this was John the Baptist being put into prison and then later killed because he spoke about the messiah (see: Mark 6:17-29). Other scholars think the kingdom was forcefully advancing into the world. That is, Jesus was casting out demons and performing miraculous signs, showing the power of the kingdom of God.

See: Kingdom of God; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Miracle; Sign

What was the Law and the Prophets?

[11:13]

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

How was John the return of Elijah?

[11:14]

Malachi prophesied that the prophet Elijah would return (see: Malachi 4:5-6). Jesus taught the people that John the Baptist was the fulfillment of the prophecy about the return of Elijah. That is, Malachi was prophesying about a man who was like Elijah would return, and that man was John.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophet; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

Why did Jesus say the Jews were like children?

[11:16]

Jesus said that these Jews were like children. This was metaphor. Just like children will complain when no one dances to their songs, so the people complained against all of God's prophets, including John the Baptist and Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Prophet

What was a gluttonous man?

[11:19]

A gluttonous man was someone who ate too much. They spend most of their life eating and thinking about eating.

What was a drunkard?

[11:19]

A drunkard was someone who drank too much alcohol and often became drunk.

What was a tax collector?

[11:19]

Matthew was a tax collector. People in Israel hated the tax collectors. Tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Roman government. They paid the Romans so they could collect taxes from other people. If they collected more taxes than they paid the Roman government, then they were allowed to keep it. Because of this, many tax collectors became rich. The Jews thought a Jewish tax collector betrayed the Jewish people because they took money from the Jews and gave it to the Romans. They thought tax collectors were evil because they took money from people who honored God and gave it to people who rejected God.

See: Tax (Tax Collector, Toll)

Who were sinners?

[11:19]

Matthew wrote about sinners. All people sinned. However, these were people who sinned in a way that other people knew they sinned. People judged them as evil. The Jews would not be friends with these people. The Pharisees would not eat with them because they thought sinners were unclean.

See: Sin; Clean and Unclean; Pharisees; Judge (Judgment)

How was wisdom justified by her deeds?

[11:19]

Jesus said that wisdom was justified by her deeds. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say that he and John were right for

living in the way they did. The way they lived helped people to know that they served God because they did the things God sent them to do.

See: Metaphor

11:20-30

Why did Jesus reproach certain cities?

[11:20]

Jesus reproached certain cities. He rebuked the people who lived in these cities because they rejected him. The people in these cities did not repent.

See: Repent (Repentance)

Where were Chorazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, and Sidon?

[11:21, 11:22]

See: Map: Chorazin; Bethsaida; Tyre and Sidon

Why did people wear sackcloth and ashes?

[11:21]

People wore sackcloth and ashes when they were mourning or to show people they were sad. Sackcloth was a rough cloth and was known to irritate the skin. To wear sackcloth was a sign that the people repented.

See: Sign; Repent (Repentance)

Where was Capernaum?

[11:23]

See Map: Capernaum

Why did Jesus talk about Sodom?

[11:23]

Sodom was an ancient city. The people of Sodom were very evil (see: Genesis 19). No one in Sodom obeyed God. Jesus was saying that if he had done the same kind of miracles in Sodom as he did in the regions around Jerusalem, the people of Sodom would have repented. But, because the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, Tyre, and Sidon rejected Jesus, these cities would be punished more than Sodom in the day of judgement.

See: Day of the Lord; Day of Judgment; Miracle

Why was Jesus pleased that God only helped certain people to know about him?

[11:25]

Jesus praised God because he concealed things from people who thought they were wise. When Jesus said that God “revealed them to little children” he used a metaphor. That is, Jesus said that God revealed his truth to people who were humble and knew they needed help from God.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Humble (Humility); Reveal (Revelation)

How did Jesus talk about himself and God the Father?

[11:27]

Scholars think Jesus spoke about himself and God the Father as being one. That is, they are of the same nature and character. They know each other perfectly.

See: God the Father; Son of God; Trinity

How does God reveal?

[11:27]

See: Reveal (Revelation)

What did Jesus mean when he said, “I will give you rest”?

[11:28]

Jesus said, “I will give you rest.” Some scholars think Jesus meant that he will refresh those who were weary. Other scholars think Jesus meant that he would encourage and strengthen them to do difficult things. In addition, people can be at rest because they are at peace with God.

What was a yoke?

[11:29, 11:30]

A “yoke” was a thick wooden beam that was set across the neck and shoulders of animals. This allowed the animals to pull heavy loads in a cart, or to pull a plow. When Jesus spoke about a yoke, he used a metaphor. That is, Jesus was willing to share any burden or hardship a Christian might have in their life.

See: Metaphor

Matthew 11:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Matthew tells of how Jesus responded to disciples of John the Baptist.

It came about that when

This phrase shifts the story from Jesus's teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "Then when" or "After"

had finished instructing

"had finished teaching" or "had finished commanding."

his twelve disciples

This refers to the twelve chosen apostles of Jesus.

in their cities

Here "their" refers to all the Jews in general.

Matthew 11:2

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

when John heard in the prison about

This is the first mention of John being in prison. Some languages may need to state that he had been put in prison or that he was in prison. Alternate translation: "Now John had been put in prison. When he heard about" or "When John, who was in prison, heard about"

he sent a message by his disciples

John the Baptist sent his own disciples with a message to Jesus.

Matthew 11:3

said to him

The pronoun "him" refers to Jesus.

Are you the one who is coming

"Are you the one whom we are expecting to come." This is another way to refer to the Messiah or Christ.

should we look for another

"should we be expecting someone else." The pronoun "we" refers to all Jews, not only John's disciples.

Matthew 11:4

report to John

"tell John"

Matthew 11:5

lepers are being cleansed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am healing lepers"

the dead are being raised back to life

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people who have died are being caused to live again" or "I am causing those who have died to become alive again" and

the gospel is being preached to the poor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am preaching good news to the poor"

the poor

This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase.

Alternate translation: "poor people"

Matthew 11:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 11:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

What did you go out in the desert to see—a reed ... wind?

Jesus uses a question to cause the people to think about what kind of person John the Baptist is. Alternate translation: "Surely you did not go out to the desert to see a reed ... wind!"

a reed being shaken by the wind

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus mean the literal plants by the Jordan River or 2) Jesus is using a metaphor to mean a kind of person. Alternate translation: "a man who easily changes his mind and is like a reed blowing back and forth

in the wind"

being shaken by the wind

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:

"swaying in the wind" or "blowing in the wind"

Matthew 11:8

But what did you go out to see—a man ... clothing?

Jesus uses a question to cause the people to think about

what kind of person John the Baptist is. Alternate

translation: "And surely you did not go out to the desert to see a man ... clothing!"

dressed in soft clothing

"wearing expensive clothing." Rich people wore this kind of clothing.

Really

This word adds emphasis to what follows. Alternate

translation: "Indeed"

kings' houses

"kings' palaces"

Matthew 11:9

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

But what did you go out to see—a prophet?

Jesus uses a question to make the people think about what kind of man John the Baptist is. Alternate translation: "But surely you went out to the desert to see a prophet!"

Yes, I say to you,

"I say to you yes,"

much more than a prophet

This can be translated as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "the person you saw was much more than a prophet"

much more than

much more important than

Matthew 11:10

General Information:

Here, Jesus quotes the prophet Malachi to show that the life and ministry of John the Baptist fulfilled prophecy.

This is he of whom it was written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"This is what the prophet Malachi wrote long ago about John the Baptist"

I am sending my messenger

The pronouns "I" and "my" refer to God. Malachi is quoting what God said.

before your face

Here "your" is singular, because God was speaking to the Messiah in the quotation. Also, "face" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "in front of you" or "to go ahead of you"

prepare your way before you

This is a metaphor that means the messenger will prepare the people to receive the Messiah's message.

Matthew 11:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

among those born of women, there has not arisen anyone greater than

John the Baptist

The word "arisen" is a metaphor for being active, referring here to John's activity as a prophet. Alternate translation: "no one born of women has been a greater prophet than John the Baptist"

among those born of women

Even though Adam and Eve were not born of a woman, this is a way of referring to all humans. Alternate translation: "out of all people who have ever lived"

the least important person in the kingdom of heaven

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, try to keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "the least important person under the rule of our God in heaven"

is greater than he is

"is more important than John is"

Matthew 11:12

From the days of John the Baptist

"From the time John began preaching his message." The word "days" probably refers here to a period of months or even years.

the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and men of violence take it by force

There are various possible interpretations of this verse. The UDB assumes that it means that some people want to use God's kingdom for their own selfish purposes and that they are willing to use force against other people to accomplish this. Other versions assume a positive interpretation, that the call to enter the kingdom of God has become so urgent that people must act in an extreme manner in order to answer that call and to resist the temptation to sin further. A third interpretation is that violent people are harming God's people and trying to stop God from ruling.

Matthew 11:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist. all the prophets and the law have been prophesying until John Here "prophets and the law" refer to the things that the prophets and Moses wrote in scripture. Alternate translation: "these are the things that the prophets and Moses have prophesied through the scriptures until the time of John the Baptist"

Matthew 11:14

if you

Here "you" is plural and refers to the crowd.

he is Elijah who was to come

The word "he" refers to John the Baptist. This does not mean John the Baptist is literally Elijah. Jesus means John the Baptist fulfills the prophecy about "Elijah, who is to come" or the next Elijah. Alternate translation: "when the prophet Malachi said that Elijah would return, he was speaking about John the Baptist"

Matthew 11:15

He who has ears to hear, let him hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "ears to hear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. Alternate

translation: "Let the one who is willing to listen, listen" or "The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey"

He who has ... let him hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. Alternate translation: "You who have ... listen"

Matthew 11:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk to the crowds about John the Baptist.

To what should I compare this generation?

Jesus uses a question to introduce a comparison between the people of that day and what children might say in the marketplace. Alternate translation: "This is what this generation is like"

this generation

"the people living now" or "these people" or "you people of this generation"

marketplaces

large, open-air areas where people buy and sell items

Matthew 11:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues the parable that begins with the words "It is like" in verse 16.

saying ... and you did not weep

Jesus uses a parable to describe the people who were alive at that time. He compares them to a group of children who are trying to get the other children to play with them.

However, no matter what they do, the other children will not join them. Jesus means that it does not matter if God sends someone like John the Baptist, who lives in the desert and fasts, or someone like Jesus, who celebrates with sinners and does not fast. The people, most specifically the Pharisees and religious leaders, still remain stubborn and refuse to accept God's truth.

We played a flute for you

"We" refers to the children sitting in the marketplace. Here "you" is plural and refers to the other group of children.

and you did not dance

"but you did not dance to the happy music"

We mourned

This means they sang sad songs like women did at funerals.

and you did not weep

"but you did not cry with us"

Matthew 11:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes talking to the crowds about John the Baptist.

not eating bread or drinking wine

Here "bread" refers to food. It does not mean that John never ate food. It means he fasted often, and when he ate, he did not eat good, expensive food. Alternate translation: "frequently fasting and not drinking alcohol" or "not eating fancy food and not drinking wine"

they say, 'He has a demon.'

This can be translated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "they say that he has a demon." or "they accuse him of having a demon."

they say

All occurrences of "they" refer to the people of that generation, and most specifically to the Pharisees and religious leaders.

Matthew 11:19

The Son of Man came

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, came"

came eating and drinking

This is the opposite of John's behavior. This means more than just consuming the normal amount of food and drink. It means Jesus celebrated and enjoyed good food and drink like other people did.

they say, 'Look, he is a gluttonous man and a drunkard ... sinners!'

This can be translated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "they say that he is a gluttonous man and a drunkard ... sinners." or "they accuse him of eating and drinking too much and of being ... sinners." If you translated "The Son of Man" as "I, the Son of man," you can state this as an indirect statement and use the first person. Alternate translation: "they say that I am a gluttonous man and a drunkard ... sinners."

he is a gluttonous man and a drunkard

"he is a greedy eater and a drunk" or "he continually eats too much food and drinks too much alcohol"

But wisdom is justified by her deeds

This is a proverb that Jesus applies to this situation, because the people who rejected both him and John were not being wise. Jesus and John the Baptist are the wise ones, and the results of their deeds prove it.

wisdom is justified by her deeds

Here "wisdom" is described as a woman who is proven to be right by what she does. Jesus means that the results of a wise person's actions prove that he is truly wise. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the results of a wise person's deeds prove that he is wise"

Matthew 11:20

General Information:

Jesus begins to denounce the people of the cities where he previously did miracles.

denounce the cities

Here "the cities" refers to the people who live there.

Alternate translation: "rebuked the people of the cities" or "accuse the people of the cities of doing wrong"

cities

"towns"

in which most of his miracles were done

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "in which he did most of his miracles"

miracles

"mighty works" or "works of power"

Matthew 11:21

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!

Jesus speaks as if the people of the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida were there listening to him, but they were not.

Woe to you

"How terrible it will be for you." Here "you" is singular and refers to the city. If it is more natural to refer to the people instead of a city, you could translate with a plural "you."

Chorazin ... Bethsaida ... Tyre ... Sidon

The names of these cities are used as metonyms for the people living in these cities.

If the miracles ... in sackcloth and ashes

Jesus is describing a situation that could have happened in the past, but it did not.

If the miracles had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you

This can be translated with active forms. Alternate translation: "If I had done the miracles among the people of Tyre and Sidon that I have done among you"

which were done in you

Here the "you" is plural and refers to Chorazin and Bethsaida. If it is more natural for your language, you could use a dual "you" to refer to the two cities, or a plural "you" to refer to the people of the cities.

they would have repented long ago

The pronoun "they" refers to the people of Tyre and Sidon.

would have repented

"would have shown they were sorry for their sins"

Matthew 11:22

it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you

Here "Tyre and Sidon" refers to the people who live there.

Alternate translation: "God will show more mercy to the people of Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than to you" or "God will punish you more severely at the day of judgment than the people of Tyre and Sidon"

than for you

Here the "you" is plural and refers to Chorazin and Bethsaida.

If it is more natural for your language, you could use a dual "you" to refer to the two cities, or a plural "you" to refer to the people of the cities. The implied information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "than for you, because you did not repent and believe in me, even though you saw me do miracles"

Matthew 11:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the people of the cities where he previously did miracles.

You, Capernaum

Jesus now speaks to the people in the city of Capernaum as if they were listening to him, but they were not. The pronoun "you" is singular and refers to Capernaum throughout these two verses.

You

All occurrences of "you" are singular. If it is more natural to refer to the people of the city, you could translate with a plural "you."

Capernaum ... Sodom

The names of these cities refer to the people living in Capernaum and in Sodom.

do you think you will be exalted to heaven?

"do you think you will be raised up to heaven?" Jesus uses a rhetorical question to rebuke the people of Capernaum for their pride. It can be stated in active form: Alternate translation: "you cannot raise yourself up to heaven!" or "the praise of other people will not raise you up to heaven!" or "God will not bring you up to heaven like you think he will!"

you will be brought down to Hades
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"God will send you down to Hades"
For if in Sodom ... it would still have remained until today
Jesus is describing a situation that could have happened in the past, but it did not.
if in Sodom there had been done the miracles that were done in you
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if I had done the miracles among the people of Sodom that I have done among you"
miracles
"mighty works" or "works of power"
it would still have remained
The pronoun "it" refers to the city of Sodom.
Matthew 11:24
I say to you
This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
it will be easier for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you
Here "land of Sodom" refer to the people who lived there.
Alternate translation: "God will show more mercy to the people of Sodom in the day of judgment than to you" or "God will punish you more severely in the day of judgment than the people of Sodom"
than for you
The implicit information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "than for you, because you did not repent and believe in me, even though you saw me do miracles"
Matthew 11:25
General Information:
Here, Jesus prays to his heavenly Father while still in the presence of the crowd.
Father
This is an important title for God.
Lord of heaven and earth
"Lord who rules over heaven and earth." The phrase "heaven and earth" is a merism that refers to all people and things in the universe. Alternate translation: "Lord who rules over the whole universe"
you concealed these things ... and revealed them
It is not clear what is meant by "these things." If your language needs to specify what is meant, an alternative translation might be best. Alternate translation: "you concealed these truths ... and revealed them"
you concealed these things from
"you hid these things from" or "you have not made these things known to." This verb is the opposite of "revealed."
from the wise and understanding
These nominal adjectives can be translated as adjectives. Alternate translation: "from people who are wise and understanding"
the wise and understanding
Jesus is using irony. He does not think these people are really wise. Alternate translation: "people who think they are wise and understanding"
revealed them
"made them known." The pronoun "them" refers to "these things" earlier in this verse.
to little children

Jesus compares ignorant people to little children. Jesus is emphasizing that many of those who believe him either are not well educated or do not think of themselves as wise.
Matthew 11:26
General Information:
Here, Jesus continues praying to his heavenly Father while still in the presence of the crowd.
for this was pleasing in your sight
The phrase "in your sight" is a metonym that stands for how a person considers something. Alternate translation: "for you considered it good to do this"
Matthew 11:27
General Information:
Here, Jesus begins to address the people again.
All things have been entrusted to me from my Father
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My Father has entrusted all things to me" or "My Father has given everything over to me"
All things
Possible meanings are 1) God the Father has revealed everything about himself and his kingdom to Jesus or 2) God has given all authority to Jesus.
my Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
no one knows the Son except the Father
This double negative emphasizes that the Father is the only one who knows the Son. Alternate translation: "the only one who knows the Son is the Father"
no one knows
The word "knows" here means more than just being acquainted with someone. It means knowing someone intimately because of having a special relationship with him.
the Son
Jesus was referring to himself in the third person.
Son
This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.
no one knows the Father except the Son
"only the Son knows the Father"
Matthew 11:28
all you
All occurrences of "you" are plural.
who labor and are heavy burdened
Jesus speaks of people being discouraged in their attempts to obey all the laws as if those laws were heavy burdens and the people were laboring to carry them. Alternate translation: "who are discouraged from trying so hard" or "Who are discouraged from trying so hard to obey the laws perfectly"
I will give you rest
"I will allow you to rest from your labor and burden"
Matthew 11:29
Take my yoke on you
Jesus continues the metaphor. Jesus is inviting the people to become his disciples and follow him.
I am meek and lowly in heart
Here "meek" and "lowly in heart" mean basically the same thing. Jesus combines them to emphasize that he will be

much kinder than the religious leaders. Alternate translation: "I am gentle and humble" or "I am very gentle" lowly in heart
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being. The phrase "lowly in heart" is an idiom that means "humble." Alternate translation: "humble"
you will find rest for your souls
Here "soul" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "you will find rest for yourselves" or "you will be able to rest"
Matthew 11:30

Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd.
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light
Both of these phrases mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that it is easier to obey him than it is the Jewish law. Alternate translation: "For what I place on you, you will be able to carry because it is light"
my burden is light
The word "light" here is the opposite of heavy, not the opposite of dark.

Chapter 12

Matthew 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 12:18-21, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The Sabbath

This chapter has much to say about how God's people are to obey the Sabbath. Jesus said that the rules that the Pharisees made up did not help people obey the Sabbath the way God wanted them to. (See: sabbath)

"Blasphemy against the Spirit"

No one knows for sure what actions people perform or what words they say when they commit this sin. However, they probably insult the Holy Spirit and his work. Part of the Holy Spirit's work is to make people understand that they are sinners and that they need to have God forgive them. Therefore, anyone who does not try to stop sinning is probably committing blasphemy against the Spirit. (See: blasphemy and holyspirit)

Links:

[Matthew 12:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 12

12:1-8

Why did the Pharisees think that it was wrong to pluck heads of grain and eat them?

[12:2]

The Pharisees thought that it was against the Law of Moses to pluck heads of grain and eat them on the Sabbath. This is because they thought it was work, which was forbidden on the Sabbath. However, they misunderstood the Law of Moses regarding the picking of grain on the Sabbath.

See: Deuteronomy 23:25

See: Law of Moses; Sabbath; Pharisees

How did Jesus tell the Pharisees that the disciples did not break the Law of Moses?

[12:3, 12:4, 12:5]

Jesus told the Pharisee that the disciples did not break the Law of Moses. They were allowed to do this because they were traveling and hungry. This was similar to what King David did (see: 1 Samuel 21:1-6). He also told them that the priests violated the rules the Pharisees made about the Sabbath by working in the temple on the Sabbath. He also wanted them to know that he is greater than the Sabbath. Jesus created the Sabbath and the rules for the Sabbath. This made him ruler over the Sabbath.

See: Temple; Sabbath; Son of Man; Pharisees; Disciple; Priest (Priesthood)

What was the house of God?

[12:4]

The temple was the house of God.

See: Temple

Why did God desire mercy and not sacrifice?

[12:7]

God said that he wanted mercy and not sacrifice (see: Hosea 6:6). God wanted sacrifice, but he did not want people to make sacrifices to him in the wrong way. That is, if people did not love one another or show mercy to one another, their sacrifices would be given in the wrong way.

See: Mercy; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice

12:9-23

Why did the Pharisees want to ask Jesus about healing this man on the Sabbath?

[12:10]

The Pharisees asked Jesus about healing this man on the Sabbath. They taught that someone could not be healed on the Sabbath unless that person was going to die. If someone healed this person, then this was work and broke the Law of Moses. They wanted Jesus to heal this man so they could tell people that Jesus sinned. However, this was not sin. They just thought it was a sin.

The pharisees thought that it was not against the Law of Moses to help their sheep on the Sabbath. Therefore, Jesus wanted them to know that it was also good to heal this man on the sabbath because people are more valuable than animals. He wanted the pharisees to think about this and know that they were wrong in their thinking.

See: Pharisees; Sabbath; Law of Moses; Sin

Why did the Pharisees want to destroy Jesus?

[12:14]

The Pharisees were angry after Jesus healed this man. They thought he sinned and he made them look like they were evil.

See: Pharisees; Sin

Why did Jesus not want people to tell other people about the things he did?

[12:16]

See: Messianic Secret

How did Jesus fulfill the words of Isaiah?

[12:17, 12:18, 12:19, 12:20, 12:21]

Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah (see: Isaiah 42:1-4) by serving God. The Holy Spirit gave him power to do great things. He taught the Gentiles about how to live in a way that honors God. He was humble and compassionate.

See: Gentile; Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Holy Spirit

How did the Gentiles have hope in Jesus' name?

[12:21]

The Gentiles could be at peace with God if they believed in Jesus. At this time, the Jews did not think the Gentiles could be at peace with God.

See: Gentile; Name

How was someone possessed by a demon?

[12:22]

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Who was the Son of David?

[12:23]

The Son of David was the messiah. He was the one who fulfilled the promises God made to David (see: 2 Samuel 7).

See: Covenant with David ; Messiah (Christ); Son of David; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

12:24-37

Who was Beelzebul?

[12:24]

Beelzebul was a name for Satan. Satan was the prince of the demons. He ruled the demons. However, God ruled Satan.

See: Luke 11:17-23

See: Satan (The Devil); Demon

How did the Pharisees think Jesus was able to remove demons from people?

[12:24]

The Pharisees said that Satan gave Jesus permission to remove demons from people.

See: Pharisees; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon; Satan (The Devil)

What was meant by the words, a "kingdom divided against itself"?

[12:25]

A "kingdom divided against itself" referred to a nation or country that divided itself into groups and then fought against each other.

What did it mean that a kingdom divided against itself "is made desolate"?

[12:25]

A kingdom "is made desolate" when the country or nation was destroyed. That is, there would be only a few people left alive and the country would be ruined.

Why did Jesus ask the Pharisees, about driving out demons?

[12:27]

Jesus' question was a rebuke to the Pharisees. Jesus condemned the Pharisees' followers for doing the same things they accused Jesus of doing. However, Jesus did not do these things.

How were people with or against Jesus?

[12:30]

Jesus said that people were either with him or against him. That is, people either fought with him in some way or against him in some way. When he said this, he wanted to say that people could either believe in him or reject him. They could not do both of these things at the same time.

What was the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?

[12:31]

Scholars think different things about how someone blasphemes the Holy Spirit.

Some scholars think Jesus spoke about people rejecting him. If someone does not believe in Jesus, then they will not be forgiven of their sins.

Some scholars think Jesus spoke about someone seeing Jesus do miracles and saying that Satan gave him the power to do this. Therefore, people today cannot blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

Other scholars think Jesus spoke about people who said that the Holy Spirit did not do the things that he did.

See: Sin; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Holy Spirit; Miracle; Satan (The Devil)

Why did Jesus talk about trees and fruit?

[12:33]

Jesus talked about trees and fruit. This was a metaphor. Scholars think different things about what this metaphor meant:

Some scholars Jesus compared himself to a tree, and the miracles he did as the fruit. They think Jesus was telling the Pharisees that they could not say that his miracles were good, but that he, as a person, was bad.

Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about the Pharisees. That is, the things they did were different from the things they said they believed.

See: Metaphor; Fruit (Metaphor); Pharisees

What did Jesus mean by calling the Pharisees the “offspring of vipers”?

[12:34]

Some scholars think Jesus was saying the Pharisees were men whose ancestor was the serpent himself, that is, the Devil.

Scholars think Jesus used the metaphor of a viper to show that the Pharisees were both evil and dangerous.

See: Pharisees; Metaphor

What were the treasures of someone’s heart?

[12:35]

The treasures of a person’s heart was a metaphor. That is, from deep within a person’s mind and soul comes what that person truly believes, whether good or evil.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Metaphor; Mind; Soul

What is the day of judgment?

[12:36]

See: Day of Judgment

How was someone justified?

[12:37]

See: Justify (Justification)

How is someone condemned?

[12:37]

See: Condemn (Condemnation)

12:38-50

What was an “adulterous generation”?

[12:39]

When Jesus spoke about an “adulterous generation” he used a metaphor. Some scholars think Jesus was speaking directly to the Scribes and Pharisees, and told them they were an “adulterous generation”. That is, the Scribes and Pharisees did not truly obey and follow God completely.

See: Metaphor; Adultery; Generation; Scribe; Pharisees

What was a sign?

[12:39]

See: Sign

What was the “sign of the prophet Jonah”?

[12:39]

Jonah was a prophet in ancient Israel (see: Jonah 1-4). He was swallowed by a very large fish and was in the fish for three days. After three days, he was released. Something like this was going to happen to Jesus. He would die and after three days, he would come back to life.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Son of Man; Prophet; Sign

Where was Nineveh?

[12:41]

See Map: Nineveh

How were the people of Nineveh going to judge the Jews?

[12:41]

When Jesus spoke about standing up to judge the Jews, he used a metaphor. When God sent Jonah the prophet to Nineveh to speak for God, the people there repented. However, when God sent Jesus into the world, the Scribes and Pharisees rejected Jesus and the things he taught. Therefore in some way, this will serve as a judgment against people who do not repent from their evil ways, that they might obey and follow Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Repent (Repentance); Prophet; Scribe; Pharisees; Judge (Judgment)

See Map: Nineveh

See: Jonah 3:1-10

Who was the Queen of the South?

[12:42]

Jesus spoke about the queen of the south. He was thinking about the Queen of Sheba (see: 1 Kings 10). Her country was far to the south of Israel.

See Map: Sheba

What was an unclean spirit?

[12:43]

See: Demon

What were waterless places?

[12:43]

Waterless places referred to areas that were dry, or a desert. The demons wandered through those areas, but did not stay there.

See: Demon

What was meant by the words, "it finds that house swept out and put in order"?

[12:44]

When Jesus spoke about a house being "swept out and put in order" he used a metaphor. That is, he was speaking about a person who had a demon cast out from him. When that person did not believe in Jesus the house remained empty, and therefore able to be inhabited once again by demons.

See: Metaphor; Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Who were Jesus' mother and brothers?

[12:46]

When Jesus was speaking, his mother and brothers wanted to speak with him. This was his mother Mary and her sons. Jesus told them about another type of mother and brother. Scholars think Jesus wanted people to know that people who obeyed God were his true family.

See: Family of Jesus; Family of God

What is the will of God?

[12:50]

See: Will of God

Matthew 12:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Matthew tells of growing opposition to Jesus's ministry. Here, the Pharisees criticize his disciples for picking grain on the Sabbath.

At that time

This marks a new part of the story. Alternate translation: "A little later"

grainfields

This is a place to plant grain. If wheat is unknown and "grain" is too general, then you can use "fields of the plant they made bread from."

pluck heads of grain and eat them

Picking grain in others' fields and eating it was not considered stealing. The question was whether one could do this otherwise lawful activity on the Sabbath.

to pluck heads of grain and eat them

"to pick some of the wheat and eat it" or "to pick some of the grain and eat it"

heads of grain

The heads of grain are the topmost part of the wheat plant. It holds the mature grain or seeds of the plant.

Matthew 12:2

do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath

Picking grain in others' fields and eating it was not considered stealing. The question was whether one could do this otherwise lawful activity on the Sabbath.

the Pharisees

This does not mean all of the Pharisees. Alternate translation: "some Pharisees"

See, your disciples

"Look, your disciples." The Pharisees use this word to draw attention to what the disciples are doing.

Matthew 12:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus responds to the Pharisees' criticism.

to them

"to the Pharisees"

Have you never read ... with him?

Jesus uses a question to respond to the criticism of the Pharisees. Jesus is challenging them to think about the meaning of the scriptures they have read. Alternate translation: "I know you have read about ... with him"

when he was hungry, and the men who were with him

The phrase "were hungry" is understood from the phrase "was hungry." Alternate translation: "when he was hungry and the men who were with him were hungry" or "when he and those with him were hungry"

Matthew 12:4

the house of God

During the time of David there was no temple yet. Alternate translation: "the tabernacle" or "the place for worshiping God"

bread of the presence

This is sacred bread that priests placed before God in the tabernacle. Alternate translation: "bread that the priest placed before God" or "sacred bread"

those who were with him

"the men who were with David"

but lawful only for the priests

"but, according to the law, only the priests could eat it"

Matthew 12:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

Have you not read in the law that ... but are guiltless?

Jesus uses a question to respond to the criticism of the Pharisees. Jesus is challenging them to think about the meaning of what they have read in the scriptures. Alternate translation: "Surely you have read in the law of Moses that ... but are guiltless." or "You should know that the law teaches that ... but are guiltless."

profane the Sabbath

"do on the Sabbath what the law forbids them to do on that day"

are guiltless

"God will not punish them" or "God does not consider them guilty"

Matthew 12:6

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

one greater than the temple

"someone who is more important than the temple." Jesus was referring to himself as the one greater.

Matthew 12:7

General Information:

Here Jesus quotes the prophet Hosea to rebuke the Pharisees.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

If you had known what this meant, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless

Here Jesus quotes scripture. Alternate translation: "The prophet Hosea wrote this long ago: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' If you had understood what this meant, you

would not have condemned the guiltless"

I desire mercy and not sacrifice

In the law of Moses, God did command the Israelites to offer sacrifices. This means God considers mercy more important than the sacrifices.

I desire

The pronoun "I" refers to God.

the guiltless

This can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "those who are not guilty"

Matthew 12:8

the Son of Man is

Jesus was referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am"

is Lord of the Sabbath

"rules over the Sabbath" or "makes the laws about what people can do on the Sabbath"

Matthew 12:9

General Information:

Here the scene shifts to a later time when the Pharisees criticize Jesus for healing a man on the Sabbath.

Then Jesus left from there

"Jesus left the grainfields" or "Then Jesus left"

their synagogue

Possible meanings are 1) the word "their" refers to the Jews of that town. Alternate translation: "the synagogue" or 2) the word "their" refers to the Pharisees that Jesus had just spoken to, and this was the synagogue that they and other Jews in that town attended. The word "their" does not mean that the Pharisees owned the synagogue. Alternate translation: "the synagogue that they attended"

Matthew 12:10

Behold

The word "Behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

a man who had a withered hand

"a man who had a paralyzed hand" or "a man with a crippled hand"

The Pharisees asked Jesus, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" so that they might accuse him of sinning.

"The Pharisees wanted to accuse Jesus of sinning, so they asked him, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?'"

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath

"According to the law of Moses, may a person heal another person on the Sabbath"

so that they might accuse him of sinning

They did not just want to accuse Jesus in front of the people. The Pharisees wanted Jesus to give an answer that contradicted the law of Moses so they could take him before a judge and legally charge him with breaking the law.

Matthew 12:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus responds to the Pharisees' criticism.

What man would there be among you, who, if he had just one sheep ... would not take hold of it and raise it out?

Jesus uses a question to respond to the Pharisees. He is challenging them to think about what kind of work they do on the Sabbath. Alternate translation: "Every one of you, if

you only had one sheep ... would grab the sheep and raise it out."

raise
lift

Matthew 12:12

How much more valuable, then, is a man than a sheep!

The phrase "how much more" adds emphasis to the statement. Alternate translation: "Obviously, a man is much more valuable than a sheep!" or "Just think about how much more important a man is than a sheep"

it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath

"those who do good on the Sabbath are obeying the law"

Matthew 12:13

Then Jesus said to the man, "Stretch out your hand."

This can be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Then Jesus commanded the man to stretch out his hand."

to the man

"to the man with the paralyzed hand" or "to the man with the crippled hand"

Stretch out your hand

"Hold out your hand" or "Extend your hand"

He stretched

"The man stretched"

it was restored to health

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it was healthy again" or "it became well again"

Matthew 12:14

plotted against him

"planned to harm Jesus"

were seeking how they might destroy him

"were discussing how they might kill Jesus"

Matthew 12:15

General Information:

This account explains how the actions of Jesus fulfilled one of the prophecies of Isaiah.

Jesus, knowing this, withdrew

"Jesus was aware of what the Pharisees were planning, so he withdrew"

withdrew from

"departed from" or "left"

Matthew 12:16

not to make him known to others

"not to tell anyone else about him"

Matthew 12:17

that it might be fulfilled, what

The phrase "that it might be fulfilled" can be translated as the beginning of a new sentence. If so, the previous verse should end with a period. Alternate translation: "This was to fulfill what"

what had been said through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"what God had said long ago through the prophet Isaiah:"

Matthew 12:18

Connecting Statement:

Here Matthew quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that Jesus's ministry fulfilled scripture.

See

"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to

tell you"

my ... I

All occurrences of these words refer to God. Isaiah is quoting what God said to him.

my beloved one, in whom my soul is well pleased

"he is my beloved one, and I am very pleased with him"

in whom my soul is well pleased

Here "soul" refers to the whole person. Alternate

translation: "with whom I am very pleased"

he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles

This means that God's servant will tell the Gentiles that there will be justice. It can be stated clearly that God is the one who will bring about justice, and the abstract noun

"justice" can be expressed as "what is right." Alternate

translation: "he will announce to the nations that God will do for them what is right"

Matthew 12:19

Connecting Statement:

Matthew continues to quote the prophet Isaiah.

neither will anyone hear his voice in the streets

Here people not hearing his voice represents him not

speaking loudly. And, "in the street" is an idiom that means "publicly." Alternate translation: "he will not he shout in the cities and towns"

He ... his

All occurrences of these words refer to God's chosen servant.

Matthew 12:20

He

All occurrences of "he" refer to God's chosen servant.

He will not break any bruised reed; he will not quench any smoking flax

Both of these statements mean the same thing. They are metaphors emphasizing that God's servant will be gentle and kind. Both "bruised reed" and "smoking flax" represent weak and hurting people. If the metaphor is confusing, you could translate the literal meaning. Alternate translation: "He will be kind to weak people, and he will be gentle to those who are hurting"

bruised reed

"damaged plant"

he will not quench any smoking flax

"he will not put out any smoking flax" or "he will not stop any smoking flax from burning"

smoking flax

This refers to a lamp wick after the flame has gone out and when it is only smoking.

flax, until

This can be translated with a new sentence: "flax. This is what he will do until"

he leads justice to victory

Leading someone to victory represents causing him to be victorious. Causing justice to be victorious represents making things right that had been wrong. Alternate translation: "he makes everything right"

Matthew 12:21

in his name the Gentiles will have hope

The Gentiles will trust him to fulfill his promises. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs

"trust" or "confidently wait" or "confidently expect."
Alternate translation: "the Gentiles will trust in his name" or "the Gentiles will confidently wait for him to fulfill his promises"

in his name

The word "his" refers to God's servant who was spoken of in [Matthew 12:18]

Matthew 12:22

General Information:

Here the scene shifts to a later time when the Pharisees accuse Jesus of healing a man by the power of Satan.

Then someone blind and mute, possessed by a demon, was brought to Jesus

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone brought to Jesus a man who was blind and mute because a demon was controlling him"

someone blind and mute

"someone who could not see and could not talk"

Matthew 12:23

All the crowds were amazed

"All the people who had seen Jesus heal the man were greatly surprised"

the Son of David

This is a title for the Christ or Messiah.

Son of

Here this means "descendant of."

Matthew 12:24

this miracle

This refers to the miracle of the healing of a blind, deaf, and demon-possessed man.

This man does not cast out demons except by Beelzebul ... demons

This double negative emphasizes that they think that the power of Beelzebul is the only thing that makes it possible for Jesus casts out demons. Alternate translation: "This man is only able to cast out demons because he is a servant of Beelzebul"

This man

The Pharisees avoid calling Jesus by name to show they reject him.

the prince of the demons

"the chief of the demons"

Matthew 12:25

General Information:

Here Jesus begins to respond to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed the man by the power of Satan.

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand

Jesus uses a proverb to respond to the Pharisees. Both of these statements mean the same thing. They emphasize that it would not make sense for Beelzebul to use his power to fight other demons.

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate

Here "kingdom" refers to those who live in the kingdom.

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "A kingdom will not last when its people fight among themselves"

every city or house divided against itself will not stand

Here "city" refers to the people who live there, and "house" refers to a family. Being "divided against itself" represents

its people fighting each other. Alternate translation: "it ruins a city or a family when the people fight each other"

Matthew 12:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed the man by the power of Satan.

If Satan drives out Satan

The second use of Satan refers to the demons that serve Satan. Alternate translation: "If Satan works against his own demons"

How then will his kingdom stand?

Jesus uses this question to show the Pharisees that what they were saying was illogical. Alternate translation: "His kingdom would not be able to stand!" or "His kingdom would not last!"

Matthew 12:27

Beelzebul

This name refers to the same person as "Satan" (verse 26). by whom do your sons drive them out?

Jesus uses another question to challenge the Pharisees.

Alternate translation: "then you must say your followers also drive out demons by the power of Beelzebul. But you know this is not true."

your sons

Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees. The phrase "your sons" refers to their followers. This was a common way of referring to those who follow teachers or leaders. Alternate translation: "your followers"

For this reason they will be your judges

"Because your followers cast out demons by the power of God, they prove that you are wrong about me."

Matthew 12:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

But if I

Here "if" does not mean Jesus is questioning how he drives out demons. Here Jesus uses the word to introduce a true statement. Alternate translation: "But because I"

then the kingdom of God has come upon you

"then the kingdom of God has arrived among you." Here

"kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "this means God is establishing his rule among you"

come upon you

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people of Israel.

Matthew 12:29

How can anyone enter the house ... belongings from his house

Jesus uses a parable to continue his response to the Pharisees. Jesus means he can drive out demons because he is more powerful than Satan.

How can anyone enter ... without tying up the strong man first?

Jesus uses a question to teach the Pharisees and the crowd. Alternate translation: "No one can enter ... without tying up the strong man first." or "If a person wants to enter ... he must first tie up the strong man."

without tying up the strong man first

"without taking control of the strong man first"

Then he will steal

"The he can steal" or "Then he will be able to steal"

Matthew 12:30

who is not with me

"who does not support me" or "who does not work with me"

is against me

"opposes me" or "works against me"

the one who does not gather with me scatters

Jesus is using a metaphor that refers to a person either gathering the flock of sheep to a shepherd or making them scatter away from the shepherd. Jesus means that a person is either helping to make people become disciples of Jesus or he is making people reject Jesus.

Matthew 12:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

say to you

Here "you" is plural. Jesus is speaking directly to the Pharisees, but he is also teaching the crowd.

every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will forgive every sin that people commit and every evil thing they say" or "God will forgive every person who sins or says evil things"

blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will not forgive the person who speaks evil things about the Holy Spirit"

Matthew 12:32

Whoever speaks any word against the Son of Man

Here "word" refers to what someone says. Alternate

translation: "If a person says anything bad about the Son of Man"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself.

that will be forgiven him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will forgive a person for that"

that will not be forgiven him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will not forgive that person"

neither in this world, nor in that which is to come

Here "this world" and "that which is to come" refer to the present life and the next life. Alternate translation: "in this life or in the next life" or "now or ever"

Matthew 12:33

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

Make a tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad

Possible meanings are 1) "If you make a tree good, its fruit will be good, and if you make the tree bad, its fruit will be bad" or 2) "If a tree is good, it will have good fruit, and if a tree is bad, it will have bad fruit." This was a proverb.

People were to apply its truth to how they can know whether a person is good or bad.

good ... bad

"healthy ... diseased"

a tree is recognized by its fruit

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:

"people recognize a tree by its fruit" or "people know whether a tree is good or bad by looking at its fruit"

Matthew 12:34

You offspring of vipers

Here "offspring" means "having the characteristic of."

Vipers are poisonous snakes that are dangerous and

represent evil. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 3:7]

You ... you

These are plural and refer to the Pharisees.

how can you say good things?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the Pharisees. Alternate

translation: "you cannot say good things." or "you can only say evil things."

out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks

Here "heart" is a metonym for the thoughts in a person's

mind. Here "mouth" is a synecdoche that represents a

person as a whole. Alternate translation: "what a person says with his mouth reveals what is in his mind"

Matthew 12:35

The good man from the good treasure of his heart produces what is

good, and the evil man from the evil treasure of his heart produces

what is evil

Jesus speaks about the "heart" as if it were a container that

a person fills with good or evil things. This is a metaphor

that means what a person says reveals what the person is

truly like. If you want to keep this imagery, see the UDB.

You can also translate the literal meaning. Alternate

translation: "A man who is truly good will speak good

things, and the man who is truly evil will speak evil things"

Matthew 12:36

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his response to the Pharisees' accusation

that he healed the man by the power of Satan.

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

people will give an account for

"God will ask people about" or "people will have to explain to God"

every idle word they will have said

Here "word" refers to something that someone says. This

refers to statements that do no good. This is a metonym for

statements made by people who are lazy or otherwise not

doing anything good. Alternate translation: "every idle

thing they will said"

idle

empty, useless, careless

Matthew 12:37

you will be justified ... you will be condemned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will justify you ... God will condemn you"

Matthew 12:38

Connecting Statement:

The dialogue in these verses happens immediately after

Jesus responded to the Pharisees' accusation that he healed a man by the power of Satan.

we wish

"we want"

to see a sign from you

You can make explicit why they want to see a sign.

Alternate translation: "to see a sign from you that proves what you say is true"

Matthew 12:39

General Information:

Here Jesus begins to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.

An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign ... given to it

Jesus is speaking to the Jews of his generation. Alternate translation: "You are an evil and adulterous generation who demands signs from me ... given to you"

adulterous generation

Here "adulterous" is a metaphor for people who are not faithful to God. Alternate translation: "unfaithful generation" or "godless generation"

no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah

This double negative emphasizes that the sign of Jonah is the only sign that will be given. Alternate translation: "The only sign that will be given to it is the sign of Jonah"

no sign will be given to it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will not give it a sign"

the sign of Jonah

"what happened to Jonah" or "the miracle that God did for Jonah"

Matthew 12:40

three days and three nights

This means complete 24-hour periods. Alternate translation: "three complete days"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself.

in the heart of the earth

This means inside a physical grave.

Matthew 12:41

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.

The men of Nineveh

"The citizens of Nineveh"

at the judgment

"on judgment day" or "when God judges people"

this generation of people

This refers to the Jews living during the time Jesus was preaching.

and will condemn it

Possible meanings are 1) "condemn" here represents accusing. Alternate translation: "and will accuse this generation of people" or 2) God will condemn this generation of people because they did not repent as the people of Nineveh had. Alternate translation: "and God will condemn this generation"

and see

"and look." This emphasizes what Jesus says next.

someone greater

"someone more important"

someone

Jesus is speaking about himself.

than Jonah is here

You can make explicit the implicit meaning of Jesus's

statement. Alternate translation: "than Jonah is here, yet you still have not repented, which is why God will condemn you"

Matthew 12:42

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.

Queen of the South

This refers to the Queen of Sheba. Sheba was a land south of Israel.

will rise up at the judgment

"will stand up at the judgment"

at the judgment

"on judgment day" or "when God judges people." See how you translated this in Matthew 12:41.

this generation

This refers to the Jews living during the time Jesus was preaching.

and condemn them

See how you translated a similar statement in [Matthew 12:41]

She came from the ends of the earth

Here "ends of the earth" is an idiom that means "far away."

Alternate translation: "She came from very far away"

She came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon

This statement explains why the Queen of the South will condemn the people of Jesus's generation. Alternate translation: "For she came"

and see

"and look." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

someone greater

"someone more important"

someone

Jesus is speaking about himself.

than Solomon is here

You can make explicit the implicit meaning of Jesus's statement. Alternate translation: "than Solomon is here, yet you do not listen. That is why God will condemn you"

Matthew 12:43

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees. He begins to tell a parable.

waterless places

"dry places" or "places where no people live"

does not find it

Here "it" refers to rest.

Matthew 12:44

Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'

This can be translated as a statement rather than a quotation. Alternate translation: "So, the unclean spirit decides to return to the house from which it came."

to my house from which I came

This is a metaphor for the person in whom the unclean spirit was living. Alternate translation: "to the place I left"

it finds the house empty

Again, "house" is a metaphor for the person in whom the unclean spirit was living. Here, "empty" suggests that no one is living in the house. There is no other spirit living in the person.

it had been swept clean and put in order.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"someone had swept the house clean and has put everything in the house where it belongs"

Matthew 12:45

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes the parable that he began with the words

"When an unclean spirit" in verse 43.

It will be just like that with this evil generation

This means that if the people of Jesus's generation do not believe him and become his disciples, they will be in a worse situation than they were before he came.

Matthew 12:46

General Information:

The arrival of Jesus's mother and brothers becomes an opportunity for him to describe his spiritual family.

behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new people in the story.

Your language may have a way of doing this.

his mother

This is Mary, Jesus's human mother.

his brothers

These are probably other children born to Mary, but it is possible that the word "brothers" here refers to Jesus's cousins.

seeking to speak

"wanting to speak"

Matthew 12:47

Someone said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers stand outside, seeking to speak to you."

This can be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Someone told Jesus that his mother and brothers were outside and wanted to speak to him."

Matthew 12:48

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in Matthew 12:1, where Matthew tells of growing opposition to Jesus's ministry.

who told him

The details of the message the person told Jesus are understood and not repeated here. Alternate translation:

"who told him that his mother and brothers wanted to speak to him"

Who is my mother and who are my brothers?

Jesus uses these questions to teach the people. Alternate translation: "I will tell you who are really my mother and brothers"

Matthew 12:49

See

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

here are my mother and my brothers

This is a metaphor that means Jesus's disciples belong to Jesus's spiritual family. This is more important than belonging to his physical family.

Matthew 12:50

whoever does

"anyone who does"

Father

This is an important title for God.

that person is my brother, and sister, and mother

This is a metaphor meaning that those who obey God belong to Jesus's spiritual family. This is more important than belonging to his physical family.

Chapter 13

Matthew 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 13:14-15, which is from the Old Testament.

This chapter begins a new section. It contains some of Jesus's parables about the kingdom of heaven.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metonymy

Jesus often says the word "heaven" when he wants his hearers to think of God, who lives in heaven ([Matthew 13:11](#)).

Implicit information

Speakers usually do not say things that they think their hearers already understand. When Matthew wrote that Jesus "sat beside the sea"

Metaphor

Speakers often use words for things that can be touched to speak of things that cannot be touched. Jesus spoke of a bird eating a seed to describe how Satan kept people from understanding Jesus's message ([Matthew 13:19](#)).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that a person had something happen to him without saying who caused that something to happen. For example, "they were scorched"

Parables

The parables were short stories that Jesus told so that people would easily understand the lesson he was trying to teach them. He also told the stories so that those who did not want to believe in him would not understand the truth ([Matthew 13:11-13](#)).

Links:

Matthew 13

13:1-9

Why did Jesus get into the boat?

[13:2]

Jesus got into a boat near the beach. He did this so that people could hear him.

What was a parable?

[13:3]

See: Parable

Why did Matthew write about sowing seeds?

[13:4]

In this passage, Matthew wrote about sowing seeds. This was a parable. He wrote about the different types of people.

Jesus explained the meaning of this parable later in this chapter.

See: Matthew 13:3-9; Luke 8:5-8

See: Sow (Plant); Parable

What was a thorny plant?

[13:7]

A thorny plant was a type of weed. Weeds are bad plants. They harm the good plants. These plants grew in places where people did not want them to grow. Farmers wanted to stop these plants from growing because they harmed the good plants that they wanted to grow.

Why did Jesus say, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear"?

[13:9]

When Jesus said "he who has ears to hear, let him hear," he wanted someone to really listen to what he said because they needed to hear it.

13:10-23

Who was given the mystery of the kingdom of heaven?

[13:11]

Jesus spoke about the mystery of the kingdom of God. Jesus was speaking to the disciples. However, scholars think all Christians can know about the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

See: Mystery; Kingdom of God

What was meant by the words, "seeing, they do not see"?

[13:13]

The words, "seeing, they do not see" meant that while a person could see, they did not understand the meaning of what was seen. Jesus also said that there were people who, "hearing, but they do not hear." People heard Jesus' words, but they did not understand what they were hearing.

How was Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled?

[13:14]

Jesus said that one of Isaiah's prophecies was fulfilled (see: Isaiah 6:9-10). Isaiah spoke about a time when some people would not understand the things God taught, but other people would understand the things God taught and they would repent.

See: Prophecy (Prophesy) ; Fulfill (Fulfillment); Repent (Repentance)

What did Jesus mean when he spoke about someone's heart becoming dull?

[13:15]

When Jesus spoke about a person with a "dull" (παχύνω/g3975) heart, he meant that person was very slow to understand things about God.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

Why did many prophets and righteous men want to see the things these people now saw?

[13:17]

Jesus said that many prophets and righteous men wanted to see the things these people now saw. That is, they wanted to see Jesus the messiah. However, they did not live at the same time that Jesus lived. Jesus wanted them to know that they were blessed to be able to see the messiah.

See: Prophet; Righteous (Righteousness); Messiah (Christ); Bless (Blessing)

Why did Jesus tell the people to listen to the parable of the farmer?

[13:18]

Jesus told the people to listen to the parable of the farmer because he was about to explain the meaning of this parable.

See: Parable

What was the word?

[13:19]

Jesus explained the parable about sowing seeds. This was a metaphor. The seeds cast by the sower was the word of God. That is, the things about which Jesus taught. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the gospel. Fewer scholars think Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God.

See: Parable; Sow (Plant); Metaphor; Word of God; Gospel; Kingdom of God

How were people like seeds sown beside the road?

[13:19]

Jesus used a metaphor to talk about what happened to some people when they heard the gospel. The road was a place where seeds could not grow. Some scholars think that Jesus spoke about peoples' hearts that were hard, like a road. These people say they were Christians, but they did not do things that honored God. Therefore, they were not at peace with God. Other scholars think that Jesus spoke about people who were not Christians. These people did not believe in the things Jesus taught. They did not believe in Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Gospel; Satan (The Devil); Heart (Metaphor)

How were people like seeds sown on rocky ground?

[13:20]

Jesus used a metaphor to talk about what happened to some people when they heard the gospel. On the rocky ground, the seed could begin to grow. But there was not enough dirt for it to grow very much, so it died. Some scholars think that Jesus spoke about Christians. These people believed in Jesus, but they rejected Jesus when they were persecuted. Therefore, they were not at peace with God. Other scholars think that Jesus spoke about people who were not Christians. These people said they were Christians, but rejected Jesus when they were persecuted. Therefore, they were not Christians.

See: Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution) ; Gospel

How were people like seeds sown with the thorns?

[13:22]

Jesus used a metaphor to talk about what happened to some people when they heard the gospel. Thorn plants were bad plants. The thorn plants killed the good plants. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about Christians who believed in Jesus, but they made other things more important than Jesus in their life. They did not honor God as much as they should have honored him. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about people who were not Christians. They said they were Christians, but they cared more for the things they owned than they cared for Jesus. They were not Christians.

Advice to translators: Here, "thorns" is a type of plant that grows among other plants and kills them. It is also not good to be used for anything.

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Metaphor; Gospel

How were people like seeds sown on good soil?

[13:23]

Jesus used a metaphor to talk about what happened to some people when they heard the gospel. People whose hearts were like "good soil" obeyed God and did things that honored God. They produced fruit when they did this. That is, they did not live in the way they used to live. They helped others to believe in Jesus and did the things that honored Jesus.

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Metaphor

How did someone bear fruit?

[13:23]

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

13:24-30

How was the kingdom of heaven like a man who sowed good seeds in his field?

[13:24]

Jesus told the people another parable. He compared the kingdom of heaven to a man who sowed good seeds in his field. After this man did this, his enemies sowed weeds in his field. If weeds and wheat grew in the same field, the farmer would have to wait until both the weeds and the wheat were grown before he could remove the weeds. Jesus wanted people to know that there will be people in the world who believe in Jesus and do things that honor God. They are like the wheat in the parable. However, God has an enemy, Satan. Satan fights against God. Jesus wanted people to know that there will also be evil people in the world who reject God. They must remain in the world until a day when God judges everyone and separates the Christians from non-Christians. At this time, God will punish the non-Christians. When Jesus spoke about the harvest, he was speaking about the day of judgment.

See: Parable; Kingdom of God; Satan (The Devil); Harvest; Day of Judgment;

13:31-36

How was the kingdom of heaven like a mustard seed?

[13:31]

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven was like a mustard seed. This was a metaphor. The mustard seed was very small seed. It

was about 1 millimeter in size. A mustard tree was very large. Jesus wanted to say that the kingdom of God began very small, but will become very great.

See: Kingdom of God; Metaphor

Why did Jesus tell the parable of yeast?

[13:33]

Jesus told the parable of yeast to say that God will reign over the whole world. When a woman mixed a small amount of yeast with a big amount of flour, the flour raised. In the same way, some scholars think God's rule over a few people would spread throughout the whole world. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about his rule over Jerusalem.

See: Yeast (Leaven); Parable

Where did a prophet say these words?

[13:35]

See: Psalm 78:2

13:37-43

Who is the Son of Man?

[13:37]

Jesus is the Son of Man.

See: Son of Man

Who is the devil?

[13:39]

The devil is Satan.

See: Satan (The Devil)

What is the end of the age?

[13:40]

The end of the age is the day of the lord.

See: Day of the Lord; Day of Judgment

Why did Jesus talk about fire?

[13:42]

In the Bible, when someone is punished, they are often talked about as being burned with fire.

See: Fire; Punish (Punishment); Hell

What is an angel?

[13:41]

See: Angel

What were "all the things that cause sin and those who commit iniquity"?

[13:41]

When Jesus talked about "all the things that cause sin and those who commit lawlessness", he was talking about all kinds of temptations and people that cause other people to sin. These people who cause others to sin were people who rejected God. They caused other people to do things that do not honor God. They also lived as if there was no God.

Why did Jesus talk about weeping and the grinding of teeth?

[13:42]

Jesus said that people who were being punished would cry loudly and grind their teeth. Because they were punished, they would have much pain. They would cry because of the pain.

See: Punish (Punishment)

How do righteous people shine like the sun?

[13:43]

Jesus said that the righteous people will shine like the sun. This is a metaphor. Some scholars think Christians will share in the glory and honor of Jesus.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Metaphor; Glory (Glorify)

Why did Jesus say, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear"?

[13:43]

When Jesus said "he who has ears to hear, let him hear," he wanted someone to really listen to what he said because they needed to hear it.

13:44-53

How was the kingdom of heaven like a treasure hidden in a field?

[13:44]

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven was like a treasure hidden in a field. This was a parable. He wanted people to know that they should do anything they can to be part of Jesus' kingdom. When someone learns about Jesus, they should be willing to give up everything they have to serve Jesus.

See: Kingdom of God; Parable

How was the kingdom of heaven like a man who looked for valuable pearls?

[13:45]

Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven was like a man who looked for valuable pearls. This was a parable. He wanted people to know that they should do anything they can to be of Jesus' kingdom. When someone learns about Jesus, they should be willing to give up everything they have to serve Jesus.

See: Kingdom of God; Parable

How was the kingdom of heaven like a net cast into the sea?

[13:47]

Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven was like a fishing net cast into the sea. This was a parable. Jesus wanted people to know that there will also be evil people in the world who reject God. However, God will judge everyone and will separate the Christians from non-Christians. At this time, God will punish the non-Christians. When Jesus spoke about separating the fish and the end of the age, he was speaking about the day of judgment.

Jesus said the angels would do this. He wanted people to know that the angels will serve God at this time. They will help God when he judges people.

See: Parable; Kingdom of God; Day of Judgment; Angel; Punish (Punishment); Judge (Judgment)

Why did Jesus talk about weeping and the grinding of teeth?

[13:50]

Jesus said that people who were being punished would cry and grind their teeth. Because they were punished, they would have much pain. They would cry because of the pain.

See: Punish (Punishment)

Why did Jesus speak about certain scribes?

[13:52]

Jesus spoke about certain scribes. Some scribes heard about Jesus and his kingdom and believed in Jesus. They then understood the things the Old Testament prophets spoke about regarding the kingdom and the Messiah. They also understood the things Jesus taught about the kingdom and the messiah.

See: Scribe; Kingdom of God; Messiah (Christ)

13:54-58

Where was Jesus' own region?

[13:54]

Jesus left Capernaum and returned to his own region. That is, he returned to the area near Nazareth.

See Map: Capernaum; Nazareth

What was a synagogue?

[13:54]

See: Synagogue

Why did the people wonder who taught Jesus?

[13:54]

In ancient Israel, many teachers learned from other teachers. They then taught the same things their teachers taught. This is why they wanted to know who taught Jesus. He did not teach the same things any other teacher taught.

Why did the people ask who gave Jesus the power to do miracles?

[13:54]

The people asked who gave Jesus the power to do miracles. They did not think God gave Jesus the power to do these miracles. They thought Satan gave him the power (see: Mark 3:22).

See: Miracle; Satan (The Devil)

Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?

[13:55, 13:56]

These people were talking about Jesus' brothers and sisters. Some scholars think that Mary and Joseph had other children after Jesus was born. Fewer scholars think that Mary and Joseph did not have any more children after Jesus. They think these were cousins of Jesus.

What did Matthew mean when he said the people were offended by Jesus?

[13:57]

When Matthew said that the people were offended, he meant that the people rejected Jesus. They did not believe he was sent from God and their messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ)

How was a prophet honored?

[13:57]

Jesus said that people honored a prophet, except in his hometown. To honor a prophet was to show him great respect, and to listen closely to the things he spoke, because a prophet spoke the truth from God. Jesus was a prophet. Perhaps he was also thinking about how Israel would reject him as their messiah.

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus not do many miracles in Nazareth?

[13:58]

Jesus did miracles so that people would know that God sent him. However, the people in Nazareth did not think God sent Jesus to be the messiah. They would not believe he was the messiah even if Jesus did many miracles. Therefore, Jesus did not do many miracles in Nazareth.

See: Miracle; Messiah (Christ)

See Map: Nazareth

Matthew 13:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story where Jesus begins to teach the crowds, using parables, about the kingdom of heaven.

On that day

These events happened on the same day as those in the previous chapter.

out of the house

It is not mentioned at whose house Jesus was staying.

sat beside the sea

It is implied that he sat down to teach the people.

Matthew 13:2

so he got into a boat

It is implied that Jesus got into a boat because it would make it easier to teach the people.

a boat

This was probably an open, wooden fishing boat with a sail.

Matthew 13:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a person who sows seeds.

Jesus said many things to them in parables

"Jesus told them many things in parables"

to them

"to the people in the crowd"

Behold

"Look" or "Listen." This word calls attention to what is to be said next. Alternate translation: "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

a farmer went out to sow seed

"a farmer went out to scatter seeds in a field"

Matthew 13:4

As he sowed

"As the farmer scattered the seed"

beside the road

This refers to a "path" next to the field. The ground there would have been hard from people walking on it.

devoured them

"ate all the seeds"

Matthew 13:5

rocky ground

This is ground full of rocks with just a thin layer of soil on top of the rocks.

Immediately they sprang up

"The seeds quickly sprouted and grew"

Matthew 13:6

they were scorched

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the sun scorched the plants, and they became too hot"

they withered away

"the plants became dry and died"

Matthew 13:7

fell among the thorn plants

"fell where plants with thorns grew"

choked them

"choked the new sprouts." Use your word for the way weeds prevent other plants from growing well.

Matthew 13:8

produced a crop

"grew more seeds" or "gave fruit"

some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty

The words "seeds," "produced," and "crop" are understood from the previous phrase. These can be expressed clearly. Alternate translation: "some seeds produced one hundred times as much crop, some seeds produced sixty times as much crop, and some seeds produced thirty times as much crop"

one hundred ... sixty ... thirty

"100 ... 60 ... 30"

Matthew 13:9

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling a parable about a person who sows seeds.

He who has ears, let him hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has ears" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 11:15]

He who ... let him

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 11:15]

Matthew 13:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 13:11

General Information:

Jesus explains to his disciples why he teaches with parables.

You have been given the privilege of understanding mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given

This can be translated with the active form and with implied information expressed clearly. Alternate

translation: "God has given you the privilege of understanding mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but God has not given it to these people" or "God has made you able to understand mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but he has not enabled these people to understand"

You have been given the privilege
The word "You" is plural here and refers to the disciples.
mysteries of the kingdom of heaven
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule. The phrase
"kingdom of heaven" occurs only in the book of Matthew. If
possible, try to keep it in your translation. Alternate
translation: "the secrets about our God in heaven and his
rule"

Matthew 13:12

has will be given more

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:
"has understanding, God will give him more
understanding"

whoever does not have

"whoever does not have understanding" or "whoever does
not receive what I teach"

even what he has will be taken away from him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"God will take away even what he has"

Matthew 13:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to explain to his disciples why he teaches in
parables.

to them ... they

All occurrences of "them" and "they" refer to the people in
the crowd.

Though they are seeing, they do not see; and though they are hearing,
they do not hear, or understand.

Jesus uses this parallelism to tell and emphasize to the
disciples that the crowd refuses to understand God's truth.

Though they are seeing

These words could refer to 1) them seeing what Jesus does.

Alternate translation: "Though they see what I do" or 2)
their ability to see with their eyes. Alternate translation:
"Though they are able to see"

they do not see

Here "see" represents understanding. Alternate translation:
"they do not understand"

though they are hearing

These words could refer to 1) them hearing what Jesus
teaches. Alternate translation: "Though they hear what I
say" or 2) their ability to hear with their ears. Alternate
translation: "Though they are able to hear"

they do not hear

Here "hear" represents listening well. Alternate translation:
"they do not listen well" or "they do not pay attention"

Matthew 13:14

General Information:

Here Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that the
people's failure to understand Jesus's teaching is a
fulfillment of prophecy.

To them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, that which says

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"They are fulfilling what God said long ago through the
prophet Isaiah"

Listening, you will hear, but you will never understand; seeing, you will
see, but you will never know

This begins a quote from the prophet Isaiah about the
unbelieving people of Isaiah's day. Jesus uses this quote to

describe the very crowd that was listening to him. These
statements are again parallel and emphasize that the
people refused to understand God's truth.

Listening, you will hear, but you will never understand

"You will hear things, but you will not understand them."

You can make explicit what the people will hear. Alternate
translation: "You will hear what God says through the
prophets, but you will not understand its true meaning"

seeing, you will see, but you will never know

You can make explicit what the people will see. Alternate
translation: "you will see what God does through the
prophets, but you will not understand it"

Matthew 13:15

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes quoting the prophet Isaiah.

For the heart of this people ... I would heal them

God describes the people of Israel as if they had physical
diseases that cause them to be unable to learn, to see, and
to hear. God wants them to come to him so he will heal
them. This is all a metaphor describing the people's

spiritual condition. It means the people are stubborn and
refuse to receive and understand God's truth. If they would,
then they would repent and God would forgive them and
welcome them back as his people. If the meaning is clear,
keep the metaphor in your translation.

the heart of this people has become dull

Here "heart" refers to the mind. Alternate translation:

"these people's minds are slow to learn" or "these people
can no longer learn"

with their ears they hardly hear

They are not physically deaf. Here "hardly hear" means
they refuse to listen and learn God's truth. Alternate
translation: "they refuse to use their ears to listen"

they have shut their eyes

This means they refuse to understand, not that they have
literally closed their eyes. Alternate translation: "they
refuse to use their eyes to see"

understand with their heart

The word "heart" here is a metonym for people's innermost
being. You may need to use the word in your language for
the source of people's thinking and feelings. Alternate
translation: "understand with their minds"

turn again

"turn back to me" or "repent"

I would heal them

"have me heal them." This means God would heal them
spiritually by forgiving their sins and receiving them again
as his people. Alternate translation: "have me receive them
again"

Matthew 13:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes explaining to his disciples why he teaches
with parables.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear

Both of these statements mean the same thing. Jesus is
emphasizing that they have pleased God because they have
believed what Jesus has said and done.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see

Here "eyes" refers to the whole person. Alternate

translation: "You are blessed because your eyes are able to see"

your ... you

All occurrences of these words are plural and refer to the disciples.

your ears, for they hear

Here "ears" refer to the whole person. You can also make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "blessed are your ears, for they hear" "you are blessed because your ears are able to hear"

Matthew 13:17

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

you

All occurrences of this word are plural and refer to the disciples.

the things that you see

You can make explicit what they have seen. Alternate translation: "the things you have seen me do"

the things that you hear

You can make explicit what they have heard. Alternate translation: "the things you have heard me say"

Matthew 13:18

Connecting Statement:

Here Jesus begins to explain to his disciples the parable about a person who sows seeds, which he began in Matthew 13:3.

Matthew 13:19

the word of the kingdom

"the message about God's rule as king"

the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart

Jesus speaks of Satan causing the person to forget what he has heard as if Satan were a bird snatching the seed from the ground. Alternate translation: "The evil one causes him to forget the message that he has heard just as a bird snatches away seed from the ground"

the evil one

This refers to Satan.

snatches away

Try to use a word that means to grab something away from someone who is the rightful owner.

what has been sown in his heart

This can be translated in active form: Alternate translation: "the message that God sowed in his heart" or "the message that he heard"

in his heart

Here "heart" refers to the mind of the hearer.

This is the seed that was sown beside the road

"This is the meaning of the seed that was sown beside the road" or "The road where seed was sown represents this person"

beside the road

See how you translated this in Matthew 13:4.

Matthew 13:20

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to explain to his disciples the parable about a person who sows seeds.

What was sown on rocky ground

The phrase "what was sown" refers to seed that fell.

Alternate translation: "The seed that fell on rocky ground"

What was sown on rocky ground is

"The rocky ground where seed was sown represents" or "The rocky ground where seed fell represents"

the person who hears the word

In the parable, the seed represents the word.

the word

This represents God's message. Alternate translation: "the message" or "God's teaching"

receives it with joy

Believing the word is spoken of as receiving it. Alternate translation: "joyfully believes it"

Matthew 13:21

yet he has no root in himself and he endures for a while

"yet he has shallow roots and only lasts for a little while."

The root represents what makes a person continue to believe God's message. Alternate translation: "But like a plant that does not grow deep roots, he only endures for a little while"

he quickly falls away

Here "falls away" means stops believing. Alternate translation: "immediately he falls away" or "he quickly stops believing the message"

Matthew 13:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to explain to his disciples the parable about a person who sows seeds.

What was sown

This refers to seed that was sown or that fell. Alternate

translation: "The seed that was sown" or "The seed that fell"

What was sown among the thorn plants

"The ground with the thorn plants where seed was sown"

this is the person

"this represents the person"

the word

"the message" or "God's teaching"

the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word

Jesus speaks about the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches distracting a person from obeying God's word as if they were weeds that could wind around a plant and keep it from growing. Alternate translation: "as weeds prevent good plants from growing, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches keep this person from listening to God's word"

cares of the world

"the things in this world that people worry about"

the deceitfulness of riches

Jesus describes "riches" as if it were a person who could deceive someone. This means people think having more money will make them happy, but it will not. Alternate translation: "the love of money"

he becomes unfruitful

The person is spoken of as if he were a plant. Being unfruitful represents being unproductive. Alternate translation: "he becomes unproductive" or "he does not do what God wants"

Matthew 13:23

The seed that was sown on the good soil

You may have to consider "the seed" as a metonym for the soil on which the seed was sown. Alternate translation: "The good soil where seeds were sown"

He bears fruit and produces a crop

The person is spoken of as if he were a plant. Alternate translation: "Like a healthy plant that bears a crop of fruit, he is productive"

a crop, yielding in one case a hundred, in another sixty, and in another thirty times as much as was planted

See how you translated similar phrases in [Matthew 13:8]

a hundred ... sixty ... thirty

100 ... 60 ... 30

Matthew 13:24

Connecting Statement:

Here Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a field with both wheat and weeds growing in it.

Jesus presented another parable

This metaphor speaks of Jesus telling the people the parable as if he were putting a tangible object in front of them so they could examine it. Alternate translation: "Jesus told them another parable"

The kingdom of heaven is like a man

The translation should not equate the kingdom of heaven to a man, but rather the kingdom of heaven is like the situation described in the parable.

The kingdom of heaven is like

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "When our God in heaven shows himself to be king, it will be like"

good seed

"good food seeds" or "good grain seeds." The audience probably thought that Jesus was talking about wheat.

Matthew 13:25

his enemy came

"his enemy came to the field"

weeds

These weeds look like food plants when they are young, but their grain is poison. Alternate translation: "bad seed" or "weed seeds"

Matthew 13:26

When the blades sprouted

"When the wheat seeds sprouted" or "When the plants came up"

produced their crop

"produced grain" or "produced the wheat crop"

then the weeds appeared also

"then people could see there were weeds in the field also"

Matthew 13:27

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell a parable about a field with both wheat and weeds growing in it.

the landowner

This is the same person who sowed good seed in his field.

did you not sow good seed in your field?

The servants used a question to emphasize their surprise. Alternate translation: "you sowed good seed in your field!"

did you not sow

The landowner probably had his servants plant the seeds.

Alternate translation: "did we not sow"

Matthew 13:28

He said to them

"The landowner said to the servants"

So do you want us

The word "us" refers to the servants.

Matthew 13:29

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes the parable about a field with both wheat and weeds growing in it.

The landowner said

"The landowner said to his servants"

Matthew 13:30

I will say to the reapers, "First pull out the weeds and tie them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn."

You can translate this as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "I will tell the reapers to first gather up the weeds and tie them in bundles to burn them, and then gather the wheat into my barn."

barn

a farm building that can be used for storing grain

Matthew 13:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a very small seed that grows into a very big plant.

The kingdom of heaven is like

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24]

mustard seed

a very small seed that grows into a large plant

Matthew 13:32

This seed is indeed the smallest of all seeds

Mustard seeds were the smallest seeds known to the original hearers.

But when it has grown

"But when the plant has grown"

it is greater than

"it is larger than"

becomes a tree

A mustard plant can grow about 2 to 4 meters tall.

birds of the sky

"birds"

Matthew 13:33

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about the effect that yeast has on flour.

The kingdom of heaven is like yeast

The kingdom is not like the yeast, but the spread of the kingdom is like the spreading of the yeast.

The kingdom of heaven is like

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24]

three measures of flour

Say "a large amount of flour" or use a term that your culture uses for measuring large amounts of flour.
until all the dough had risen
The implied information is that the yeast and the three measures of flour were made into dough for baking.
Matthew 13:34
All these things Jesus said to the crowds in parables; and he said nothing to them without a parable
Both sentences mean the same thing. They are combined to emphasize that Jesus taught the crowds only with parables.
All these things
This refers to what Jesus taught beginning at Matthew 13:1. he said nothing to them without a parable
"he taught them nothing except by parables." The double negative can be expressed in a positive way. Alternate translation: "everything he taught them he said in parables"
Matthew 13:35
General Information:
Here the author quotes from the Psalms to show that Jesus's teaching in parables fulfilled prophecy.
what had been said through the prophet might be fulfilled, when he said
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what God told one of the prophets to write long ago might come true"
when he said
"when the prophet said"
I will open my mouth
This is an idiom that means to speak. Alternate translation: "I will speak"
things that were hidden
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "things that God has kept hidden"
from the foundation of the world
The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since the beginning of the world" or "since God created the world"
Matthew 13:36
Connecting Statement:
Here the scene shifts to the house where Jesus and his disciples were staying. Jesus begins to explain to them the parable of the field that had both wheat and weeds, which he told beginning in Matthew 13:24.
went into the house
"went indoors" or "went into the house where he was staying"
Matthew 13:37
He who sows the good seed
"The one who sows the good seed" or "The sower of the good seed"
the Son of Man
Jesus is referring to himself.
Matthew 13:38
the sons of the kingdom
The idiom "sons of" refers to those who belong to or to have the same character as someone or something. Alternate translation: "the people who belong to the kingdom" of the kingdom
Here "kingdom" refers to God the king. Alternate

translation: "of God"
the sons of the evil one
The idiom "sons of" refers those who belong to or to have the same character as someone or something. Alternate translation: "the people who belong to the evil one"
Matthew 13:39
the enemy who sowed them
"the enemy who sowed the weeds"
Matthew 13:40
Connecting Statement:
Jesus finishes explaining to his disciples the parable of the field with both wheat and weeds.
Therefore, as the weeds are gathered up and consumed by fire
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Therefore, as people gather up weeds and burn them in the fire"
Matthew 13:41
The Son of Man will send out his angels
Here Jesus is speaking of himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will send out my angels"
all stumbling blocks
everything that causes people to sin
those who commit lawlessness
"those who are lawless" or "evil people"
Matthew 13:42
furnace of fire
This is a metaphor for the fires of hell. If the term "furnace" is not known, "oven" can be used. Alternate translation: "fiery furnace"
weeping and grinding of teeth
"Grinding of teeth" here is a symbolic act, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]
Matthew 13:43
shine like the sun
If this simile is not understandable in your language, you can use: "be as easy to see as the sun."
Father
This is an important title for God.
He who has ears, let him hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has ears" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Matthew 11:15]
He who has ... let him hear
Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this in [Matthew 11:15]
Matthew 13:44
General Information:
In this parable, Jesus uses a simile to teach his disciples what the kingdom of heaven is like.
Connecting Statement:
Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a person who sold his possessions to purchase something of great value.
The kingdom of heaven is like
Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The

phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24]

like a treasure hidden in a field

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a treasure that someone had hidden in a field"

treasure

a very valuable and precious thing or collection of things

hid it

"covered it up"

sells everything he possesses, and buys that field

The implied information is that the person buys the field to take possession of the hidden treasure.

Matthew 13:45

General Information:

In this parable, Jesus uses a simile to teach his disciples what the kingdom of heaven is like.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a person who sold his possessions to purchase something of great value.

like a man who is a merchant looking for valuable pearls

The implied information is that the man was looking for valuable pearls that he could buy.

a merchant

a trader or wholesale dealer who often obtains merchandise from distant places

valuable pearls

A "pearl" is a smooth, hard, shiny, white or light-colored bead formed inside mollusks in the sea and highly prized as a gem or to make into valuable jewelry. Alternate translation: "fine pearls" or "beautiful pearls"

Matthew 13:46

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 13:47

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about fishermen who use a large net to catch fish.

the kingdom of heaven is like a net

The kingdom is not like the net, but the kingdom draws all kinds of people like a net catches all kinds of fish.

the kingdom of heaven is like

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24]

like a net that was cast into the sea

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "like a net that some fishermen cast into the sea"

was cast into the sea

"was thrown into the sea"

Matthew 13:48

drew it up on the beach

"pulled the net up onto the beach" or "pulled the net ashore"

the good ones

Sometimes other creatures go into nets, but fishermen usually cast nets to catch fish, so most modern translations

read, "the good fish."

the bad ones

Sometimes other creatures go into nets, but fishermen usually cast nets to catch fish, so most modern translations read, "the bad fish."

threw away

"did not keep"

Matthew 13:49

Connecting Statement:

Jesus explains the parable about fishermen who use a large net to catch fish.

will come

"will come out" or "will go out" or "will come from heaven"

the wicked from among the righteous

These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives.

Alternate translation: "the wicked people from the righteous people"

Matthew 13:50

They will throw them

"The angels will throw the wicked people"

furnace of fire

This is a metaphor for the fires of hell. If the term "furnace" is not known, "oven" can be used. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:42]

weeping and grinding of teeth

"Grinding of teeth" here is a symbolic act, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]

Matthew 13:51

Connecting Statement:

Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven by telling a parable about a person who manages a household. This is the end of the part of the story about Jesus teaching the crowds about the kingdom of heaven through using parables.

Have you understood all these things?" The disciples said to him, "Yes."

If necessary, both direct quotations can be translated as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "Jesus asked them if they had understood all this, and they said that they did understand."

Matthew 13:52

has become a disciple to the kingdom of heaven

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "has learned the truth about our God in heaven, who is king" or "has submitted himself to God's rule"

is like a man who is the owner of a house, who draws out old and new things from his treasure

Jesus speaks another parable. He compares scribes, who know very well the scriptures that Moses and the prophets wrote, and who also now accept Jesus's teachings, to a house owner who uses both old and new treasures.

treasure

A treasure is a very valuable and precious thing or a collection of things. Here it may refer to the place where these things are stored, the "treasury" or "storeroom."

Matthew 13:53

Then it came about that when

This phrase shifts the story from Jesus's teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "Then when" or "After"

Matthew 13:54

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that runs through Matthew 17:27, where Matthew tells of continued opposition to Jesus's ministry and teaching about the kingdom of heaven. Here, the people of Jesus's home town reject him.

his own region

"his hometown." This refers to the town of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up.

in their synagogue

The pronoun "their" is referring to the people of the region.

they were astonished

"they were amazed"

Where does this man get his wisdom and these miraculous powers from?

The people believed that Jesus was just an ordinary man. They use this question to express their amazement that he was so wise and was able to do miracles. Alternate translation: "How can an ordinary man like this be so wise and do such great miracles?" or "It is strange that he is able to speak with such wisdom and do these miracles!"

Matthew 13:55

Is not this man the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? Are not his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?

The crowd uses these questions to express their belief that they know who Jesus is and that he is just an ordinary man.

Alternate translation: "He is just the son of a carpenter. We know his mother Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas."

the carpenter's son

A carpenter is someone who makes things with wood or stone. If "carpenter" is not known, "builder" can be used.

Matthew 13:56

Are not all his sisters with us?

The crowd uses these questions to express their belief that they know who Jesus is and that he is just an ordinary man. Alternate translation: "And all his sisters are with us, too."

Where did he get all these things?

The crowd uses this question to show their understanding that Jesus must have gotten his abilities from somewhere. They were probably expressing their doubt that he got his abilities from God. Alternate translation: "He must have gotten his ability to do these things from somewhere!" or "We do not know where he got these abilities!"

all these things

This refers to Jesus's wisdom and ability to do miracles.

Matthew 13:57

They were offended by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The people of Jesus's hometown took offense at him" or "The people rejected Jesus"

A prophet is not without honor

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "A prophet receives honor everywhere" or "People everywhere honor a prophet"

his own country

"his own region" or "his own hometown"

in his own family

"in his own home"

Matthew 13:58

He did not do many miracles there

"Jesus did not do many miracles in his own hometown"

Chapter 14

Matthew 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verses 1 and 2 continue the account from chapter 13. Verses 3-12 stop the account and speak of things that happened earlier, possibly soon after Satan tempted Jesus

Possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Passive voice

Many sentences in this chapter tell that a person had something happen to him without saying who caused that something to happen. For example, the writer does not tell who brought John's head to Herodias's daughter

Links:

[Matthew 14:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 14

14:1-12

Who was Herod the tetrarch?

[14:1]

See: King Herod

What were the powers that were at work with Jesus?

[14:2]

Herod said that certain powers were at work in Jesus. At this time, many Jews thought that someone received great power to do miracles if they were resurrected. Since Herod thought Jesus was John the Baptist resurrected, this is why he thought Jesus received his power to do miracles. Herod did not think God gave Jesus the power to do these things.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Miracle; King Herod

Why did Herod arrest John the Baptist?

[14:3]

John the Baptist spoke against King Herod. He said the things Herod did were evil. John said it was wrong for Herod to marry Herodias because her husband Philip was still alive. This made Herodias angry. Herodias wanted to kill John. However, Herod worried about what people would do if he killed John because the people knew John to be a prophet. Therefore, he put him into prison.

See: Leviticus 20:21

See: Prophet; King Herod

Who was Herodias?

[14:3]

Herodias was the wife of King Herod. Before he married her, Herodias was married to Herod's brother Philip.

What was a prophet?

[14:5]

See: Prophet

What was a "birthday" celebration?

[14:6]

A birthday is a celebration of the day someone was born. Every year on the same day on which a person was born, people celebrated that person.

What did it mean that Herodias' daughter's dance pleased Herod?

[14:6]

Scholars think that in ancient times, it was common for a woman to dance in a sensual way. That is, they danced in a way that made the people watching them want to have sex.

What was an oath?

[14:7]

See: Swear (Oath)

Why was Herod upset with his step-daughter's request?

[14:9]

Herod was upset because he did not want to kill John the Baptist. He knew John was a man who honored God. However, he did not want people to see him break his oath. Therefore, he had John killed.

See: Swear (Oath); King Herod

Why did John's disciples take his body and bury it?

[14:12]

John's disciples took his body away and buried it. This honored John as a prophet. According to the Law of Moses, a person who died needed to be buried immediately.

See: Disciple; Law of Moses

14:13-21

What were the five loaves about which the disciples spoke?

[14:17]

The loaves of bread about which the disciples spoke were round, flat cakes of bread about the size of a man's hand.

Why did Jesus "bless" the bread?

[14:19]

When Jesus blessed the bread, he was thanking God for giving them the bread.

How much did the people have left over after they ate?

[14:20]

After they ate, the disciples had far more food left than what they began with. Scholars think this was to show how great this miracle was.

See: Miracle

How many people ate the bread and fish?

[14:21]

Matthew said that 5000 men ate the bread and fish. There were also women and children who needed to eat. Therefore, many more than 5000 people ate.

14:22-33

What was the fourth watch of the night?

[14:25]

When Matthew wrote about the fourth watch, he was writing about a time after midnight, between 3:00 and 6:00 a.m.

What was a ghost?

[14:26]

The disciples saw Jesus walking on the water. They did not think anyone could do this. Therefore, they thought he was a ghost. A "ghost" referred to the spirit of someone who had died. The disciples thought he was not real, even though he could be seen.

See: Disciple; Spirit (Spiritual)

What did Peter doubt?

[14:31]

Matthew wrote that Peter doubted something. That is, he did not trust in Jesus to do the thing he promised to do.

Why did the disciples worship Jesus?

[14:33]

The disciples worshipped Jesus because they believed he was the Son of God. They believed Jesus is God because only God could do the miracles Jesus did.

See: Disciple; Worship; Son of God; Jesus is God

Where was Gennesaret?

[14:34]

See Map: Gennesaret

Matthew 14:1

General Information:

These verses explain Herod's reaction when he heard about Jesus. This event happens some time after the events that follow in the narrative.

About that time

"In those days" or "While Jesus was ministering in Galilee"

heard the news about Jesus

"heard reports about Jesus" or "heard about the fame of Jesus"

Matthew 14:2

He said

"Herod said"

has risen from the dead

The words "the dead" speak of all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from the dead speaks of coming alive again.

Therefore these powers are at work in him

Some Jews at that time believed if a person came back from the dead he would have powers to do mighty things.

Matthew 14:3

General Information:

Matthew recounts the story of John the Baptist's death in order to show why Herod reacted the way he did when he heard about Jesus.

Connecting Statement:

Here the author begins to tell about how Herod had executed John the Baptist. These events occur some time before the event in the previous verses.

Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison

It says that Herod did these things although he actually ordered others to do them for him. Alternate translation: "Herod ordered his soldiers to arrest and bind John the Baptist and put him in prison"

Philip's wife

Philip was Herod's brother. Herod had taken Philip's wife to be his own wife.

Matthew 14:4

For John ... as your wife

If needed, you can present the events of 14:3-4 in the order that they happened, as in the UDB.

For John had said to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her as your wife."

This can be expressed as an indirect quote, if needed.

Alternate translation: "For John had said to Herod that it was not lawful for Herod to have Herodias as his wife."

For John had said to him

"For John had kept saying to Herod"

It is not lawful

Philip was still alive when Herod married Herodias.

Matthew 14:5

would have killed him

"wanted to kill John"

he feared

"Herod feared"

they regarded him

"they regarded John"

Matthew 14:6

in the midst

You can make explicit the implicit information. Alternate translation: "in the midst of the guests attending the birthday celebration"

Matthew 14:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 14:8

After being instructed by her mother

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"After her mother instructed her"

instructed

"coached" or "told"

she said

"the daughter of Herodias said to Herod"

platter

a very large plate

Matthew 14:9

The king was grieved by her request

The abstract noun "request" can be stated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "The king was grieved because she had asked him to kill John"

The king

"King Herod"

grieved

sad and upset, as when a friend or family member dies

he ordered that it should be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he

ordered his men to do what she said"

Matthew 14:10

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the account of how Herod executed John the Baptist.

Matthew 14:11

his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"someone brought his head on a platter and gave it to the girl"

platter

a very large plate

girl

Use the word for a young, unmarried girl.

Matthew 14:12

his disciples

"the disciples of John"

the corpse

"the dead body"

they went and told Jesus

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "the disciples of John went and told Jesus what had happened to John the Baptist"

Matthew 14:13

Now

This word is used here to mark a change in the main story.

Here Matthew returns to telling about Jesus.

heard this

"heard what happened to John" or "heard the news about John"

he withdrew

"he left" or "he went away"

from there

"from that place"

When the crowds heard of it

"When the crowds heard where Jesus had gone" or "When the crowds heard that he had left"

the crowds

"the crowds of people" or "the huge group of people" or "the people"

on foot

This means that the people in the crowd were walking.

Matthew 14:14

Then Jesus came before them and saw the large crowd

"When Jesus came ashore, he saw a large crowd"

Matthew 14:15

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus feeding five thousand people with only five small loaves of bread and two small fish.

the disciples came to him

"Jesus's disciples came to him"

the hour has already passed

Possible meanings of the words "the hour" are 1) they refer to the time for teaching. Alternate translation: "there is no more time for you to teach" Or 2) they refer to the day.

Alternate translation: "the day is already over."

Matthew 14:16

They have no need

"The people in the crowd have no need"

You give them

The word "You" is plural, referring to the disciples.

Matthew 14:17

They said to him

"The disciples said to Jesus"

five loaves of bread

Loaves of bread are lumps of dough that have been shaped and baked.

Matthew 14:18

Bring them to me

"Bring the loaves and fish to me"

Matthew 14:19

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the account of Jesus feeding five thousand people.

sit down

"lie down." Use the verb for the position people in your culture usually are in when they eat.

He took

"He held in his hands." He did not steal them.

broke the loaves

"tore the loaves"

loaves

"loaves of bread" or "whole breads"

Looking up

Possible meanings are 1) "While looking up" or 2) "After looking up"

Matthew 14:20

and were filled

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:

"until they were full" or "until they were no longer hungry"

they took up

"the disciples gathered up" or "some people gathered up"

twelve baskets full

"12 baskets full"

Matthew 14:21

Those who ate

"Those who ate the bread and the fish"

five thousand men

"5,000 men"

Matthew 14:22

Connecting Statement:

The following verses describe events that happened right after Jesus fed the five thousand people.

Immediately he

"As soon as Jesus had finished feeding all the people, he"

Matthew 14:23

When evening came

"Late in the evening" or "When it became dark"

Matthew 14:24

being tossed about by the waves

"and the disciples could not control the boat because of the large waves"

Matthew 14:25

In the fourth watch of the night

The fourth watch is between 3 a.m. and sunrise. Alternate translation: "Just before dawn"

walking on the sea

"walking on top of the water"

Matthew 14:26

they were troubled

"they were very afraid"

ghost

a spirit that has left the body of a person who has died

Matthew 14:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 14:28

Peter answered him

"Peter answered Jesus"

Matthew 14:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 14:30

when Peter saw the strong wind

Here "saw the strong wind" means he became aware of the wind. Alternate translation: "when Peter saw that the wind was tossing the waves back and forth" or "when he realized how strong the wind was"

Matthew 14:31

You of little faith, why

"You who have such little faith, why." Jesus addressed Peter this way because Peter became afraid. It can also be translated as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "You have so little faith! Why"

why did you doubt?

Jesus uses a question to tell Peter than he should not have doubted. You can make explicit what Peter should not have

doubted. Alternate translation: "you should not have doubted that I could keep you from sinking."

Matthew 14:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 14:33

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

Matthew 14:34

Connecting Statement:

Matthew describes in 14:34-36 what happened after Jesus walked on the water. He summarizes how the people were responding to Jesus's ministry.

When they had crossed over

"When Jesus and his disciples had crossed over the lake"

Gennesaret

This is a small town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Matthew 14:35

they sent messages

"the men of that area sent messages"

Matthew 14:36

They begged him

"The sick people begged him"

his garment

"his robe" or "what he was wearing"

were healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "became well"

Chapter 15

Matthew 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 15:8-9, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The "traditions of the elders"

The "traditions of the elders" were oral laws that the Jewish religious leaders developed because they wanted to make sure that everyone obeyed the law of Moses. However, they often worked harder to obey these rules than to obey the law of Moses itself. Jesus rebuked the religious leaders for this, and they became angry as a result. (See: lawofmoses)

Jews and Gentiles

The Jews of Jesus's time thought that only Jews could please God by the way they lived. Jesus healed a Canaanite Gentile woman's daughter to show his followers that he would accept both Jews and Gentiles as his people.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Sheep

The Bible often speaks of people as if they were sheep because sheep need someone to take care of them. This is because they do not see well and they often go to where other animals can kill them easily.

Links:

[Matthew 15:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 15

15:1-20

Why did the Pharisees and scribes come from Jerusalem?

[15:1]

The Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to see what Jesus and the disciples were doing.

See: Pharisees; Scribe; Disciple

What was the tradition of the elders?

[15:2]

The tradition of the elders were the things the Pharisees and Scribes taught. They taught these things because other teachers before them taught these things. These were not things taught in the Law of Moses.

See: Pharisees; Scribe; Law of Moses

Why did people not eat without washing their hands?

[15:2]

In ancient Israel, the Jews did not eat unless they washed their hands in a certain way. Their hands were not dirty, they were just not washed in the way the Pharisees and scribes taught that they needed to be washed. These were certain rules made by the Jewish teachers, which Matthew called the “traditions of the elders.” They taught that Jews needed to wash their hands after they went to the marketplace. They needed to wash because they were Gentiles in the marketplace and Gentiles were unclean. These rules were not in the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean; Gentile

What did Matthew say about honoring your father and mother?

[15:4]

In the Law of Moses, children were told to honor their father and mother. However, the Jewish teachers in Israel taught something different. They taught that children could promise something to God. If they did this, they did not need to give it to help their parents. Neither did they need to use it in a certain way or to give it to a priest. Jesus said this did not obey the Law of Moses, nor obey the command to honor your father and mother.

See: Law of Moses; Priest (Priesthood)

Why would someone die for speaking evil about his father or mother?

[15:4]

In the Law of Moses, it said that whoever curses or insults his mother or father will die.

See: Exodus 21:17

See: Curse; Law of Moses

What did Matthew write in verse 6?

[15:6]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament contain the words “word of God.” Other ancient copies of the Greek New Testament contain the word “commandment” instead of “word of God.” Scholars do not know what Matthew wrote.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

How did the Pharisees and scribes make void the word of God?

[15:6]

Jesus said that the Pharisees and Scribes made void the word of God. That is, when they made up their own rules, they emptied the Law of Moses in some way. It made people think they were following the laws God made, but they were following rules made by men.

See: Pharisees; Scribe; Word of God; Law of Moses

What was a hypocrite?

[15:7]

A hypocrite was someone who said one thing and did something different. The Pharisees and Scribes were hypocrites when they said they lived in a way that honored God when they really lived in a way that dishonored God.

See: Hypocrisy (Hypocrite); Pharisees; Scribe

When did Isaiah write these things?

[15:7]

See: Isaiah 29:13

What defiled someone?

[15:11]

Jesus said that things that entered into a person did not defile them, that is, it did not make them unclean. Instead, it was the things that came out of people that defiled them. That is, it was things a person thought and did that made them unclean.

See: Clean and Unclean

What did Jesus want to teach when he told this parable?

[15:13]

Jesus told the disciples a parable. He spoke about a plant being taken out of the ground. He wanted the disciples to know that God will stop the things the Pharisees taught. He also told them that the Pharisees were like blind people. This is a metaphor. The Pharisees could not help people know how to live in a way that honored God because they themselves did not know how to live in a way that honored God.

See: Parable; Disciple; Pharisees; Metaphor

What is sexual immorality?

[15:19]

See: Sexualimmorality

15:21-39

Where were Tyre and Sidon?

[15:21]

Tyre and Sidon were cities outside of Israel.

See Map: Tyre and Sidon

Why did this woman shout at Jesus?

[15:22]

Matthew wrote that a Canaanite woman came shouting at Jesus. This woman was a Gentile. Despite this, she believed that Jesus was the Messiah and could heal her daughter.

See: Gentile; Messiah (Christ); Son of David; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

See Map: Canaan

What did Jesus teach through this woman?

[15:24, 15:25, 15:26, 15:27, 15:28]

At this time, Jesus was teaching the Jews and wanted the Jews to believe in him. When Jesus spoke about the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," he was speaking about the Jews who needed the messiah.

The Jews believed that the Gentiles were like dogs. That is, they were less than human in some way. This is a metaphor.

Jesus used this to talk about how people cared for their dogs and because of this they can know that God cares for and loves the Gentiles. When Jesus healed this woman, he wanted the disciples to know that he loved the Gentiles, even though the Jews were the people of God.

See: Pharisees; Gentile; Clean and Unclean; Shepherd; People of God; Metaphor; Disciple

Who did Jesus heal?

[15:30]

Jesus healed many people near the Sea of Galilee. Many of these people were Gentiles. The crowds were amazed and they glorified God.

See: Glory (Glorify); Gentile

See Map: Sea of Galilee

What was meant by the words, "such a deserted place"?

[15:33]

When the disciples talked about being in a deserted place, they were in a place where there was nowhere to buy food.

Perhaps they were in the wilderness or desert.

See: Disciple

How many people would be full after eating one loaf of bread?

[15:34]

Bread was made into a loaf. In ancient times, a person needed at least one loaf a day to live. For a meal, seven loaves and a few fish would have only fed a few small families.

How much fish and bread were left over?

[15:37]

When Matthew said there were 7 large baskets of food left over after everyone ate, this showed that this was a great miracle.

See: Miracle

Matthew 15:1

General Information:

The scene shifts to events that occur some time after events of the previous chapter. Here Jesus responds to the criticisms of the Pharisees.

Matthew 15:2

Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders?

The Pharisees and scribes use this question to criticize Jesus and his disciples. Alternate translation: "Your disciples do not respect the rules that our ancestors have given us."

traditions of the elders

This is not the same as the law of Moses. This refers to later teachings and interpretations of the law given by religious leaders after Moses.

they do not wash their hands

This washing is not only to clean hands. This refers to a ceremonial washing according to the tradition of the elders. Alternate translation: "they do not wash their hands properly"

when they eat bread

The word "bread" here is a synecdoche for any kind of food, and the word "when" refers to what people generally do before eating meals. Alternate translation: "before they eat" Matthew 15:3

Then why do you violate the commandment of God for the sake of your traditions?

Jesus answers with a question to criticize what the religious leaders do. Alternate translation: "And I see that you refuse to obey God's commands just so that you can follow what your ancestors taught you!"

Matthew 15:4

General Information:

Jesus quotes twice from Exodus to show how God expects people to treat their parents.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the Pharisees.

He who speaks evil of his father or mother will surely die

"The people should execute anyone who speaks evil of his father or mother"

Matthew 15:5

But you say

Here "you" is plural and refers to the Pharisees and scribes.

Matthew 15:6

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the Pharisees.

that person does not need to honor his father

The words beginning with "But you say"

does not need to honor his father

It is implied that "his father" means "his parents." This means the religious leaders taught that a person does not need to show respect to his parents by taking care of them. you have made void the word of God

Here "the word of God" refers specifically to God's commands. Alternate translation: "you have treated the word of God as if it were invalid" or "you have ignored God's commands"

for the sake of your traditions

"because you want to follow your traditions"

Matthew 15:7

General Information:

Here Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to rebuke the Pharisees and scribes.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his response to the Pharisees and scribes.

Well did Isaiah prophesy about you

"Isaiah told the truth in this prophecy about you"

when he said

It is implied that Isaiah is speaking what God told him.

Alternate translation: "when he told what God said"

Matthew 15:8

General Information:

Jesus continues to quote the prophet Isaiah to rebuke the Pharisees and scribes.

This people honors me with their lips

Here "lips" refers to speaking. Alternate translation: "These people say all the right things to me"

me

All occurrences of this word refer to God.

but their heart is far from me

Here "heart" refers to a person's thoughts or emotions. This phrase is a way of saying the people are not truly devoted to God. Alternate translation: "but they do not really love me"

Matthew 15:9

They worship me in vain

"Their worship means nothing to me" or "They only pretend to worship me"

the commandments of people

"the rules that people make up"

Matthew 15:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach the crowd and his disciples about what defiles a person and why the Pharisees and scribes were wrong to criticize him.

Matthew 15:11

enters into the mouth ... comes out of the mouth

Jesus is contrasting what a person eats to what a person says. Jesus means that God is concerned with what a person says rather than what a person eats.

Matthew 15:12

the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"this statement made the Pharisees angry" or "this statement offended the Pharisees"

Matthew 15:13

Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up

This is a metaphor. Jesus means that the Pharisees do not actually belong to God, so God will remove them.

my heavenly Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

will be rooted up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "my Father will uproot" or "he will take out of the ground" or "he will remove"

Matthew 15:14

Let them alone

The word "them" refers to the Pharisees.

blind guides ... both will fall into a pit

Jesus uses another metaphor to describe the Pharisees.

Jesus means that the Pharisees do not understand God's commands or how to please him. Therefore, they cannot teach others how to please God.

Matthew 15:15

Connecting Statement:

Peter wants Jesus to explain the parable that Jesus told in [Matthew 15:13-14](#).

to us

"to us disciples"

Matthew 15:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus explains the parable that he told in [Matthew 15:13-14](#).

Are you also still without understanding?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the disciples for not understanding the parable. Also, the word "you" is emphasized. Jesus cannot believe his own disciples do not understand. Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you, my disciples, still do not understand what I teach!"

Matthew 15:17

Do you not understand ... into the latrine?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the disciples for not understanding the parable. Alternate translation: "Surely you understand ... into the latrine."

passes into the stomach

"goes into the stomach"

latrine

This a polite term for the place where people bury body waste.

Matthew 15:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to explain the parable that he told in [Matthew 15:13-14](#).

things that come out of the mouth

This refers to what a person says. Alternate translation: "words that a person says"

from the heart

Here "heart" refers to a person's mind or innermost being. Alternate translation: "from inside the person" or "from a person's mind"

Matthew 15:19

murder

the act of killing innocent people

Matthew 15:20

to eat with unwashed hands

This refers to eating without first ceremonially washing one's hands according to the traditions of the elders.

Alternate translation: "eating without first washing one's hands"

Matthew 15:21

General Information:

This begins an account of Jesus healing the daughter of a Canaanite woman.

Jesus went away

It is implied that the disciples went with Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus and his disciples went away"

Matthew 15:22

Behold, a Canaanite woman came

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "There was a Canaanite woman who came"

a Canaanite woman came out from that region

"a woman who was from that region and who belonged to the group of people called Canaanites came." The country of Canaan no longer existed by this time. She was a part of a people group that lived near the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

Have mercy on me

This phrase implies that she is requesting that Jesus heal her daughter. Alternate translation: "Have mercy and heal my daughter"

Son of David

Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "Descendant of David." However, "Son of David" is also a title for the Messiah, and the woman may have been calling Jesus by this title.

My daughter is severely demon-possessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A demon is controlling my daughter terribly" or "A demon is tormenting my daughter severely"

Matthew 15:23

answered her not a word

Here "word" refers to what a person says. Alternate translation: "said nothing to her"

Matthew 15:24

I was not sent to anyone except to the lost sheep ... Israel

This double negative emphasizes that the lost sheep are the only ones to whom Jesus was sent. Alternate translation: "I was sent only to the lost sheep ... Israel"

I was not sent to anyone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God did not send me to anyone"

to the lost sheep of the house of Israel

This is a metaphor comparing the entire nation of Israel to sheep who have gone away from their shepherd. See how you translated this in [Matthew 10:6]

Matthew 15:25

she came

"the Canaanite woman came"

bowed down before him

This shows that the woman humbled herself before Jesus.

Matthew 15:26

It is not proper to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs

Jesus responds to the woman with a proverb. The basic meaning is that it is not right to take what is supposed to belong to Jews and give it to non-Jews.

the children's bread

Here "bread" refers to food in general. Alternate translation: "the children's food"

the little dogs

The Jews considered dogs to be unclean animals. Here they are used as an image for non-Jews.

Matthew 15:27

even the little dogs eat some of the crumbs that fall from their masters' tables

The woman responds by using the same imagery as Jesus used in the proverb he just spoke. She means non-Jews should be able to have a small amount of the good things Jews are throwing away.

little dogs

Use words here for dogs of any size that people keep as pets. See how you translated this in Matthew 15:26.

Matthew 15:28

let it be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will do"

Her daughter was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed her daughter" or "Her daughter became well"

from that hour

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "at exactly the same time" or "immediately"

Matthew 15:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 15:30

lame, blind, mute, and crippled people

"those who could not walk, those who could not see, those who could not talk, and those whose arms or legs did not function"

They presented them at Jesus' feet

Apparently some of these sick or crippled people were unable to stand up, so when their friends brought them to Jesus, they placed them on the ground in front of him.

Alternate translation: "The crowds placed the sick people on the ground in front of Jesus"

Matthew 15:31

the crippled made well

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the crippled become well"

the crippled ... the lame ... the blind

These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives.

Alternate translation: "the crippled persons ... the lame persons ... the blind persons"

Matthew 15:32

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus feeding four thousand people with seven loaves of bread and a few small fish.

without eating, or they may faint on the way

"without eating because they might faint on the way"

Matthew 15:33

Where can we get enough loaves of bread in such a deserted place to satisfy so large a crowd?

The disciples use a question to state that there is nowhere to get food for the crowd. Alternate translation: "There is nowhere nearby that we can get enough bread for such a large crowd."

Matthew 15:34

Seven, and a few small fish

The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "We have seven loaves of bread, and we also have a few small fish"

Matthew 15:35

sit down on the ground

Use your language's word for how people customarily eat when there is no table, whether sitting or lying down.

Matthew 15:36

He took the seven loaves and the fish

"Jesus held the seven loaves and the fish in his hands"

he broke the loaves

"he tore the loaves"

gave them

"gave the bread and the fish"

Matthew 15:37

they gathered

"the disciples gathered" or "some people gathered"

Matthew 15:38

Those who ate

"The people who ate"

four thousand men

"4,000 men"

Matthew 15:39

the region

"the area"

Magadan

This region is sometimes called "Magdala."

Chapter 16

Matthew 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Yeast

Jesus spoke of the way people thought about God as if it were bread, and he spoke of what people taught about God as if it were the yeast that makes bread dough become larger and the baked bread taste good. He did not want his followers to listen to what the Pharisees and Sadducees taught. This was because if they did listen, they would not understand who God is and how he wants his people to live.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Jesus told his people to obey his commands. He did this by telling them to "follow" him. It is as if he were walking on a path and they were walking after him.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Background information

Matthew continues his account from chapter 15 in verses 1-20. The account stops in verse 21 so Matthew can tell the reader that Jesus told his disciples again and again that people would kill him after he arrived in Jerusalem. Then the account continues in verses 22-27 with what happened the first time Jesus told the disciples that he would die.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus uses a paradox when he says, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" ([Matthew 16:25](#)).

Links:

[Matthew 16:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 16

16:1-12

Why did the Pharisees and Sadducees want a sign from heaven?

[16:1]

The Pharisees wanted Jesus to give them a sign from the sky. That is, a sign from heaven. They wanted Jesus to prove to them that God gave Jesus permission to do these miracles. They thought that Satan gave Jesus permission to do these things (see: 9:34; Mark 3:22)

See: Pharisees; Sadducees; Sign; Heaven; Miracle; Satan (The Devil)

Why did Jesus speak about the weather?

[16:2]

In ancient Israel, the Pharisees and Sadducees predicted the weather. It is very difficult to know what will happen with the weather. Jesus said they were able to see certain things and know what the weather would do. However, they saw the things Jesus did, but could not understand the things that were happening around them.

See: Pharisees; Sadducees

What were the signs of the times?

[16:3]

Jesus spoke about the “signs of the times.” He was speaking about certain things that happened so that people would know that Jesus is the messiah.

See: Sign; Messiah (Christ)

What was an evil and adulterous generation?

[16:4]

When Jesus spoke about an “adulterous generation,” he used a metaphor. Some scholars think Jesus was speaking directly to the Scribes and Pharisees, and told them they were an “adulterous generation”. That is, the Scribes and Pharisees did not truly obey and follow God completely.

See: Metaphor; Adultery; Generation; Scribe; Pharisees

What was the sign of Jonah?

[16:4]

Jonah was a prophet in ancient Israel (see: Jonah 1-4). He was swallowed by a fish and was in the fish for three days. After three days, he was released. Something like this was going to happen to Jesus. He would die and after three days, he would come back to life.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Son of Man; Sign; Prophet

Why did Jesus talk about yeast?

[16:6]

Jesus used the metaphor of yeast. He did this to talk about the Pharisees teaching evil things. This would make other people want to do evil things.

See: Yeast (Leaven); Metaphor; Pharisees

Why did the disciples reason with each other?

[16:7]

The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant when he talked about the yeast. They thought he was concerned because they did not bring bread with them.

See: Yeast (Leaven)

What was little faith?

[16:8]

Jesus said that certain people had little faith. That is, these people did not trust in Jesus very much.

See: Faith (Believe in)

Why did Jesus ask the disciples so many questions?

[16:8, 16:9, 16:10, 16:11]

Jesus asked many different questions because they did not understand what Jesus was saying about who he is and why he did these things. They knew Jesus had already fed more than 5000 people through a miracle, but they forgot he could do this and worried that the people would not eat. Therefore, Jesus rebuked them. That is, he spoke to them in a way that they would know they did something wrong.

16:13-20

Where was Caesarea Philippi?

[16:13]

See Map: Caesarea Philippi

Who is the Son of Man?

[16:13]

Many years before Jesus lived, Daniel prophesied about the “son of man” (see: Daniel 7:13). Jesus asked who people thought fulfilled this prophecy. People did not agree about who fulfilled Daniel’s prophecy. Jesus is the Son of man.

See: Son of Man; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

Who did Peter believe that Jesus was?

[16:16]

See: Messiah (Christ), Son of God

How did Peter know that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God?

[16:17]

Peter knew that Jesus was the messiah and the Son of God because God helped him to know this. He needed God to help

him know this.

See: Messiah (Christ), Son of God; Reveal (Revelation)

On what rock will Jesus build his church?

[16:18]

Some scholars think when Jesus spoke about the rock upon which he would build his church, he used a metaphor. They think he was speaking about what Peter said. That is, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. A “rock” is solid and a large rock cannot be changed. Jesus is the messiah and this can never be changed. Fewer scholars think Jesus was speaking about making his church with the things done by Peter and the apostles.

See: Ephesians 2:20

See: Church; Messiah (Christ); Son of God; Apostle

What are the gates of hades?

[16:18]

Jesus spoke about the gates of Hades. Hades is another name for hell. Some scholars think Jesus wanted to say that Satan is not able to stop Jesus from doing the things Jesus wanted to do. Other scholars think this was a metaphor. People who believe in Jesus will not live forever in hell after they die.

See: Hell; Satan (The Devil); Metaphor

What are the keys to the kingdom of heaven?

[16:19]

Jesus said that he will give Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven. He gave Peter permission to do something. Scholars think Jesus gave Peter and the other apostles permission to teach people how to live in a way that honored God. They would help people understand Jesus and the Law of Moses.

See: Kingdom of God; Apostle; Law of Moses

What did it mean for Peter to bind and loose things on earth?

[16:19]

Jesus gave Peter permission to bind and loose certain things on the earth. Some scholars think Jesus gave Peter, and the apostles, permission to rule over Christians. That is, they could allow Christians to do some things and they could make Christians stop doing other things. Some scholars think Peter will be able to do this when Jesus rules on the earth. Other scholars think God was going to teach people, through the apostles, how to live in a way that honored God after Jesus died. He would do this by revealing himself to the apostles and prophets.

See: Kingdom of God; Reveal (Revelation); Apostle; Prophet

Why did Jesus not want the disciples to tell people that he is the messiah?

[16:20]

See: Messianic Secret; Disciple; Messiah (Christ)

16:21-28

Who were the elders, chief priests, and scribes?

[16:21]

When Matthew spoke about the elders, he was speaking about older men in Israel who lead the people in some way. Together these three groups helped to lead Israel to worship and obey God.

See: Chief Priest; Scribe

How would Jesus raised back to life on the third day?

[16:21]

When Jesus said that he would be raised back to life after three days, he was talking about his resurrection.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Peter rebuke Jesus?

[16:23]

Peter rebuked Jesus, that is. Peter said that Jesus must not be speaking correctly. Peter thought that the messiah would not suffer and die in the way Jesus said. However, Jesus rebuked Peter. He said Peter did something wrong. The things he said were the things that Satan wanted Peter to say. He wanted the messiah to be the way he wanted the messiah to be, and not to do the things God wanted the messiah to do.

See: Satan (The Devil); Messiah (Christ)

How was Peter a stumbling block to Jesus?

[16:23]

Jesus said that Peter was a stumbling block. This was a metaphor. Even though he did not know it, Peter was tempting Jesus. He was trying to get Jesus to do what Satan wanted, not what God wanted.

See: Stumble (Stumbling Block); Tempt (Temptation); Metaphor

How could a person “take up his cross”?

[16:24]

Jesus died on a cross. He obeyed God even though he suffered for obeying God. He wanted people to do the same thing.

He wanted them to obey God, even if they suffered because they obeyed God.

See: Cross

How does someone save their life?

[16:25]

Jesus talked about "life" in two ways in this passage. He spoke about the life a person has before they die and the life they have after they die. He wanted people to obey God before they die if they wanted to live with God in heaven forever.

Those who die on Earth because they obeyed God will live with God in heaven after they die.

See: Heaven; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

How will the Son of Man come to the earth?

[16:27]

Jesus said that the Son of Man will come to the earth with great glory (see: Daniel 7:13-14).

See: Son of Man; Glory (Glorify)

How will Jesus reward people?

[16:27]

See: Reward

How will people not die before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom?

[16:28]

Jesus said that some of the people with him will not die before they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about revealing himself to the disciples after his resurrection. Other scholars think Matthew will write about this in Matthew 17.

See: Son of Man; Kingdom of God; Reveal (Revelation); Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Matthew 16:1

General Information:

This begins an encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees and Sadducees.

tested him

Here "tested" is used in a negative sense. Alternate translation: "challenged him" or "wanted to trap him"

Matthew 16:2

When it is evening

The situation can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "If the sky is red in the evening" or "If the sky is red when the sun is setting"

When it is evening

"When the sun is setting"

fair weather

This means clear, calm, and pleasant weather.

for the sky is red

As the sun is setting, Jews knew that if the color of the sky changes to red, it is a sign the next day will be clear and calm.

Matthew 16:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues his response to the Pharisees and Sadducees.

When it is morning

The situation can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "If the sky is red in the morning" or "If the sky is red when the sun is rising"

foul weather

"cloudy, stormy weather"

red and overcast

"red and cloudy"

You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky

"You know how to look at the sky and understand what kind of weather you will have"

but you cannot interpret the signs of the times

"but you do not know how to look at what is happening

right now and understand what it means"

Matthew 16:4

An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign ... given to it Jesus is speaking to his present generation. Alternate translation: "You are an evil and adulterous generation who demands signs from me ... given to you" See how you translated this in [Matthew 12:39]

An evil and adulterous generation

Here "adulterous" is a metaphor for people who are not faithful to God. See how you translated this in [Matthew 12:39]

no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah

This double negative emphasizes that the sign of Jonah is the only sign that will be given. Alternate translation: "The only sign that will be given to it is the sign of Jonah"

no sign will be given to it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will not give it a sign"

the sign of Jonah

"what happened to Jonah" or "the miracle that God did for Jonah." See how you translated this in Matthew 12:39.

Matthew 16:5

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a later time. Jesus uses an opportunity to warn his disciples about the Pharisees and Sadducees.

the other side

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "the other side of the lake" or "the other side of the Sea of Galilee"

Matthew 16:6

the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

Here "yeast" is a metaphor that refers to evil ideas and wrong teaching. Translate as "yeast" here and do not explain its meaning in your translation. This meaning will be made clear in 16:12.

Matthew 16:7

reasoned among themselves

"discussed this with each other" or "thought about this"

Matthew 16:8

You of little faith

"You who have such little faith." Jesus addresses his disciples this way because their concern about not bringing bread shows they have little faith in Jesus to provide for them. See how you translated this in Matthew 6:30.

why do you reason ... taken no bread?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke his disciples for not understanding what he just said. Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you think it was because you forgot to bring bread that I talked about the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

Matthew 16:9

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to warn his disciples about the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Do you not understand? Do you not remember ... you gathered up?

Jesus use questions to rebuke the disciples. Alternate translation: "Surely you understand and remember ... you gathered up!" or "You should understand. You should remember ... you gathered up."

five thousand

"5,000"

Matthew 16:10

four thousand

"4,000"

Or the seven loaves ... you took up?

"Do you also not remember the seven loaves ... you took up?" Jesus uses a question to rebuke his disciples. Alternate translation: "Surely you also remember the seven loaves ... you took up!"

Matthew 16:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to warn his disciples about the Pharisees and Sadducees.

How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread?

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the disciples. Alternate translation: "You should have understood that I was not really speaking about bread."

the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

Here "yeast" represents evil ideas and wrong teaching. Translate as "yeast" and do not explain the meaning in your translation. In 16:12 the disciples will understand the meaning.

Matthew 16:12

they ... them

These refer to the disciples.

Matthew 16:13

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a later time. Jesus asks his disciples if they understand who he is.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

the Son of Man

Jesus is referring to himself.

Matthew 16:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 16:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 16:16

the Son of the living God

This is an important title for Jesus that shows his relationship to God.

the living God

Here "living" contrasts the God of Israel to all the false gods and idols that people worshiped. Only the God of Israel is alive and has power to act.

Matthew 16:17

flesh and blood have not revealed

Here "flesh and blood" refers to a human being. Alternate translation: "a human did not reveal"

this to you

Here "this" refers to Peter's statement that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the Living God.

but my Father who is in heaven

The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "but it was my Father in heaven who revealed this to you"

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

Matthew 16:18

I also say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

you are Peter

The name Peter means "rock."

upon this rock I will build my church

Here "build my church" is a metaphor for uniting the people who believe in Jesus into a community. Possible meanings are 1) "this rock" represents Peter, or 2) "this rock" represents the truth that Peter had just said in [Matthew 16:16]

The gates of Hades will not prevail against it

Here "Hades" is spoken of as if it were a city surrounded by walls with gates that keep dead people in and other people out. Here "Hades" represents death, and its "gates" represent its power. Possible meanings are 1) "the powers of death will not overcome my church" or 2) "my church will break down the power of death the way an army breaks into a city."

Matthew 16:19

I will give to you

Here "you" is singular and refers to Peter.

the keys of the kingdom of heaven

Keys are objects that are used to lock or unlock doors. Here they represent authority.

the kingdom of heaven

This refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation.

Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven

Here "bind" is a metaphor meaning to forbid something,

and "loose" is a metaphor meaning to allow something. Also, "in heaven" is a metonym that represents God himself. Alternate translation: "God in heaven will approve whenever you forbid or allow something on earth" Matthew 16:20

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank. Matthew 16:21

Connecting Statement:
Jesus tells his disciples for the first time that he will die soon.

suffer many things at the hands of the elders ... scribes
Here "hands" represents power. Alternate translation: "suffer many things because of the elders ... scribes" scribes, be killed, and be raised back to life on the third day
Here to raise back to life is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. The elders and chief priests would accuse Jesus so that others would kill him. Alternate translation: "scribes. People will then kill him, and on the third day God will make him become alive again"

third day
"Third" is the ordinal form of "three." Matthew 16:22

Then Peter took him aside
Jesus tells them for the first time that he will die soon
Peter took him aside
"Peter spoke to Jesus when no one else could hear them"
May this be far from you
This is an idiom that means "may this never happen." Alternate translation: "No" or "Never" or "May God forbid this"

Matthew 16:23
Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me
Jesus means that Peter is acting like Satan because Peter is trying to prevent Jesus from accomplishing what God sent him to do. Alternate translation: "Get behind me, because you are acting like Satan! You are a stumbling block to me" or "Get behind me, Satan! I call you Satan because you are a stumbling block to me"

Get behind me
"Get away from me"
you do not think about the things of God, but about the things of people
"you do not think about what God thinks is important; instead, you only think about the things that people think are important"

Matthew 16:24
to follow me
Following Jesus here represents being one of his disciples. Alternate translation: "to be my disciple" or "to be one of my disciples"

must deny himself
"must not give in to his own desires" or "must forsake his own desires"

take up his cross, and follow me
"carry his cross, and follow me." The cross represents suffering and death. Taking up the cross represents being willing to suffer and die. Alternate translation: "and obey me even to the point of suffering and dying" or "and he

must obey me even to the point of suffering and dying" and follow me
Following Jesus here represents obeying him. Alternate translation: "and obey me" Matthew 16:25

For whoever wants
"For anyone who wants" will lose it
This does not mean the person must necessarily die. It is a metaphor that means the person will consider obeying Jesus as being more important than his own life.

for my sake
"because he trusts me" or "on my account" or "because of me" will find it
This metaphor means the person will experience spiritual life with God. Alternate translation: "will find true life" Matthew 16:26

For what does it profit a person ... his life?
Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "It does not profit a person ... his life." if he gains the whole world
The words "the whole world" are an exaggeration for great riches. Alternate translation: "if he gains everything he desires"

but forfeits his life
"but he loses his life"
What can a person give in exchange for his life?
Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "There is nothing that a person can give to regain his life." Matthew 16:27

the Son of Man ... his Father ... Then he
Here Jesus refers to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of man ... my Father ... Then I" will come in the glory of his Father
"will come, having the same glory as his Father." This can be stated in first person. Alternate translation: "will come, having the same glory as my Father"

with his angels
Possible meanings are 1) Alternate translation: "with his Father's angels" or "with my Father's angels" or 2) Alternate translation: "with the Son of Man's angels" or "with my angels." You do not have to specify in your translations to whom the angels belong. Alternate translation: "and the angels will be with him" or "and the angels will be with me" his Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and the Son of Man, Jesus. according to his deeds
"according to what that person has done" Matthew 16:28

Truly I say to you
"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

you
All occurrences of this word are plural and refer to the disciples.

will not taste death

Here "taste" means to experience. Alternate translation:
"will not experience death" or "will not die"
until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom

Here "his kingdom" represents him being King. Alternate translation: "until they see the Son of Man coming as King" or "until they see the evidence that the Son of Man is King"

Chapter 17

Matthew 17 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Elijah

The Old Testament prophet Malachi lived many years before Jesus was born. Malachi had said that before the Messiah came a prophet named Elijah would return. Jesus explained that Malachi had been talking about John the Baptist. Jesus said this because John the Baptist had done what Malachi had said that Elijah would do. (See: prophet and christ)

"transfigured"

Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. Matthew says in this chapter that Jesus's body shone with this glorious light so that his followers could see that Jesus truly was God's Son.

At the same time, God told them that Jesus was his Son. (See: glory and fear)

Links:

[Matthew 17:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 17

17:1-13

How was Jesus transfigured?

[17:2]

When Matthew said that Jesus was transfigured, he wanted to say that Jesus was changed in some way. The disciples did not see Jesus' body as it had been. They saw him as he will be when he returns to the earth in glory.

See: Disciple; Jesus' Return to Earth; Glory (Glorify)

Why did Peter, James, and John see Elijah and Moses?

[17:3]

Peter, James, and John saw Elijah and Moses. Elijah and Moses were in heaven. Scholars think this was a symbol. Elijah represented the prophets, and Moses represented the Law of Moses. They symbolized that both the Law and the prophets prophesied about Jesus the messiah.

See: Symbol; Messiah (Christ); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Law of Moses; Prophecy (Prophecy)

Why did Peter want to make three shelters?

[17:4]

Peter wanted to make three shelters. He wanted to make one for Jesus, one for Elijah, and one for Moses. He did not realize that Jesus was greater than Elijah and Moses. Scholars disagree about why he wanted to do this.

Some scholars think Peter wanted to build three tents of meeting. This is because he wanted to build a place where God could talk to men once again. He did not know that God was already talking to people through Jesus. They did not need to meet in a tent to learn what God said to them. Some scholars think Peter wanted to build three shelters (see: Leviticus 23).

Perhaps he thought this was for the Feast of Shelters when the messiah came to reign over the world (see: Zechariah 14:16)

See: Tent of Meeting; Festival of Shelters; Messiah (Christ)

Who spoke from the cloud?

[17:5]

God the Father was the one who was speaking from the cloud. In the Bible, heaven is often spoken about as if it is in the clouds.

See: God the Father; Heaven

Why were the disciples afraid?

[17:6]

The disciples were afraid because they thought the time was coming for God to judge the world. Perhaps the disciples was partly afraid, but partly worshipping God.

See: Disciple; Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment

Why did Jesus tell them not to say anything?

[17:9]

See: Messianic Secret

What did Jesus mean when he said, "until the Son of Man has risen from the dead"?

[17:9]

Jesus spoke about the Son of Man rising from the dead. He was speaking about himself. He would be resurrected. At this time, the disciples did not understand that Jesus would be resurrected. Certain Jewish teachers even taught that no one would rise from the dead. This is why they discussed what Jesus said among themselves.

See: Son of Man; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Disciple

What did the Scribes teach about Elijah?

[17:10]

The Scribes taught that Elijah would return to the earth before the messiah came. He would tell Israel to repent and to be ready for the messiah. It is not known whether they taught that Elijah would come back to the earth or that there would be a prophet who was like Elijah.

See: Scribe; Messiah (Christ); Repent (Repentance); Prophet

Who was Jesus talking about when he said that Elijah has come?

[17:12, 17:13]

Jesus told them that the Scribes were right about Elijah. A prophet like Elijah did help Israel to be ready for the messiah and he wanted them to repent of the sins. When Jesus spoke about this Elijah, he was speaking about John the Baptist.

See: Malachi 3:1

See: Scribe; Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Repent (Repentance); Sin

17:14-23

Why did this man kneel before Jesus?

[17:14]

A man knelt before Jesus. He did this to honor Jesus.

What was wrong with this man's son?

[17:15]

This man had a son who was epileptic. The epilepsy was because he had a demon in him that caused him to shake violently. It also caused his son to fall into water and fire.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why could the disciples not cast out this demon?

[17:16]

Jesus said the disciples could not cast out this demon because they did not have enough faith. Scholars think the disciples had doubts about what Jesus had commanded them to do earlier (see: 10:8).

See: Disciple; Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Faith (Believe in)

Why did Jesus rebuke the "unbelieving and corrupt generation"?

[17:17]

Jesus rebuked the "unbelieving and corrupt generation." That is, he said that many people in Israel were evil for rejecting him. He was not speaking about everyone in Israel. Some people believed in him. Perhaps Jesus said this because he wanted the disciples to know that they acted in the same way the non-Christians acted.

See: Disciple; Generation

Why did Jesus say, "nothing will be impossible for you"?

[17:20]

When Jesus said, "nothing will be impossible for you," he was not saying that people who believe in him can do anything. Instead, he was saying that when someone obeys God, they can do things they did not think they could do. God can make anything happen and he can use people to make anything happen that he wants to happen.

Jesus said that they did not trust him very much. He said their faith was like a mustard seed. This was a metaphor. The mustard seed was very small seed. It was about 1 millimeter in size. A mustard tree was very large. Jesus wanted to say that if they trusted him, he would help them to do very great things.

See: Metaphor; Faith (Believe in)

Where was Galilee?

[17:22]

See map: Galilee

Who is the Son of Man?

[17:22]

Jesus is the Son of Man.

See: Son of Man

How will Jesus be raised up?

[17:23]

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

17:24-27

What was the half-shekel tax?

[17:24]

Jesus spoke about a half-shekel tax. This was a tax the Jews paid to serve the temple in Jerusalem. A half-shekel was the amount of money a typical person earned in one day. Jews, from the age of twenty-one, were required to pay this tax once every year.

See: Tax (Tax Collector, Toll); Temple

Why did Jesus talk about the tax that was paid to the temple?

[17:25]

Jesus spoke about the temple to his disciples. He said that the sons of kings do not pay taxes to the kings. Therefore, he did not need to pay taxes to the temple because he is the Son of God. However, Jesus did not want the people collecting the taxes to reject him because they did not understand that he is the Son of God. He got the money from a fish. This was a miracle.

See: Disciple; Son of God; Miracle; Temple

How much was the shekel?

[17:27]

The shekel was the same amount of money as four drachma. Because of this, Jesus had enough money to pay the tax for him and Peter.

Matthew 17:1

General Information:

This begins the account of Jesus's transfiguration.

Peter, James, and John his brother

"Peter, James, and James's brother John"

Matthew 17:2

He was transfigured before them

When they looked at him, his appearance was different from what it had been.

He was transfigured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "His appearance had changed" or "He appeared very different" before them

"in front of them" or "so they could clearly him"

His face shone like the sun, and his garments became as brilliant as the light

These are similes that emphasize how bright Jesus's appearance became.

his garments

"what he was wearing"

Matthew 17:3

Behold

This word alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

to them

This refers to Peter, James, and John.

with him

"with Jesus"

Matthew 17:4

answered and said

"said." Peter is not responding to a question.

it is good for us to be here

It is not clear whether "us" refers only to Peter, James, and John, or if it refers to everyone there, including Jesus, Elijah, and Moses. If you can translate so that both options are possible, do so.

Matthew 17:5

behold

This alerts the reader to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

overshadowed them

"came over them"

there was a voice out of the cloud

Here "voice" refers to God speaking. Alternate translation: "God spoke to them from out of the cloud"

Matthew 17:6

the disciples heard it

"the disciples heard God speak"

Matthew 17:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 17:8

they ... saw no one except Jesus only

This double negative emphasizes that Jesus was the only thing that they saw. Alternate translation: "they ... saw only Jesus"

Matthew 17:9

Connecting Statement:

The following events happen immediately after the three disciples witness Jesus's transfiguration.

As they

"As Jesus and the disciples"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself.

Matthew 17:10

Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?

The disciples are referring to the belief that Elijah will come back to life and return to the people of Israel before the Messiah comes.

Matthew 17:11

restore all things

"put things in order" or "get the people ready to receive the Messiah"

Matthew 17:12

But I tell you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

they ... their

All occurrences of these words may mean either 1) the Jewish leaders or 2) all the Jewish people.

the Son of Man will also suffer at their hands

Here "hands" refers to power. Alternate translation: "they will make the Son of Man suffer"

the Son of Man will

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will"

Matthew 17:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 17:14

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of Jesus healing a boy who had an evil spirit. These events happen immediately after Jesus and his disciples descend from the mountain.

Matthew 17:15

have mercy on my son

It is implied that the man wants Jesus to heal his son.

Alternate translation: "have mercy on my son and heal him"

is epileptic

This means that he sometimes had seizures. He would become unconscious and move uncontrollably. Alternate translation: "has seizures"

Matthew 17:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 17:17

Unbelieving and perverse generation, how

"This generation does not believe in God and loves to do evil rather than good. How"

how long will I have to stay with you? How long must I bear with you?

These questions show Jesus is unhappy with the people.

Alternate translation: "I am tired of being with you! I am tired of your unbelief and corruption!"

Matthew 17:18

the boy was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the boy became well"

from that hour

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "immediately" or "at that moment"

Matthew 17:19

we

Here "we" refers to the disciples and does not include Jesus.

Why could we not cast it out?

"Why could we not make the demon come out of the boy?"

Matthew 17:20

For I truly say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

if you have faith even as small as a grain of mustard seed

Jesus compares the size of a mustard seed to the amount of faith needed to do a miracle. A mustard seed is very small, but it grows into a large plant. Jesus means it only takes a small amount of faith to do a great miracle.

nothing will be impossible for you

This can be stated in a positive form. Alternate translation: "you will be able to do anything"

Matthew 17:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 17:22

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts momentarily, and Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a second time.

they stayed

"Jesus and his disciples stayed"

The Son of Man will be given over

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Someone will deliver the Son of Man"

given over into the hands of people

The word "hands" here is a metonym for the power that people use hands to exercise. Alternate translation: "taken and put under the power of people" or "taken and given to people who will control him"

The Son of Man

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person.

into the hands of people

Here "hands" refers to power or control. Alternate

translation: "to the control of the people" or "to the people"

Matthew 17:23

him ... he

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person.

third day

"Third" is the ordinal form of "three."

he will be raised up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will raise him up" or "God will cause him to become alive again"

deeply grieved

very sad and upset, as when a friend or family member dies. See how you translated "grieved" in Matthew 14:9.

Matthew 17:24

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts again to a later time when Jesus teaches Peter about paying the temple tax.

When they

"When Jesus and his disciples"

the two-drachma tax

This was a tax that Jewish men paid to support the temple in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "the temple tax"

Matthew 17:25

the house

"the place where Jesus was staying"

What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect tolls or taxes? From their sons or from others?

Jesus asks these questions to teach Simon, not to gain information for himself. Alternate translation: ""Listen, Simon. When kings collect taxes, they collect it from people who are not members of their own family. Do you agree that this is true?"

their sons

Possible meanings are that this word 1) is a synecdoche that refers to any members of the kings' family or 2) is a metaphor for the people of the kings' own country.

Alternate translation: "their own family" or "the people of their own country"

Matthew 17:26

General Information:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in Matthew 13:54, where Matthew tells of continued opposition to Jesus's ministry and teaching about the kingdom of heaven.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach Peter about paying the temple tax.

"From others," Peter answered

If you translated Jesus's questions as statements in [Matthew 17:25]

From others

"From people who are not members of their own family."

See how you translated these words in [Matthew 17:25](#).

the sons

Possible meanings are that this word 1) is a synecdoche that refers to any members of the kings' family or 2) is a metaphor for the people of the kings' own country. See how you translated these words in [Matthew 17:25]

Matthew 17:27

But so that we do not cause the tax collectors to stumble, go

Causing people to stumble is a metaphor for offending them. Possible meanings are 1) Jesus was concerned that the tax collectors would think he had done something very wrong. Alternate translation: "so that we do not cause the

tax collectors to think that we do something that is very bad" or 2) Jesus was concerned that the tax collectors might think that he was a sinner and so could not be the Messiah. Alternate translation: "so that we do not cause the tax collectors to reject me"

throw in a hook

Fishermen tied hooks to the end of a line, then threw it in the water to catch fish.

its mouth

"the fish's mouth"

a shekel

a silver coin worth four days' wages

Take it

"Take the shekel"

for me and you

Here "you" is singular and refers to Peter. Each man had to pay a half shekel tax. So one shekel would be enough for Jesus and Peter to pay their taxes.

Chapter 18

Matthew 18 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

What should Jesus's followers do when other followers sin against them?

Jesus taught that his followers must treat each other well and not be angry with each other. They should forgive anyone who is sorry for his sin, even if he has committed the same sin before. If he is not sorry for his sin, Jesus's followers should speak with him alone or in a small group. If he is still not sorry after that, then Jesus's followers can treat him as guilty. (See: repent and sin)

Links:

[Matthew 18:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 18

18:1-14

Why did Matthew write about who was the greatest in the kingdom of God?

[18:1]

Some scholars think Matthew wrote about who was the greatest in the kingdom of God because the disciples were thinking about who would have the most power. However, Jesus taught that greatness was about being humble and being a servant.

See: Mark 9:33-37

See: Kingdom of God; Disciple

Why did Jesus talk about little children?

[18:3]

Jesus helped the disciples to understand what he said by talking about a child. Scholars think Jesus was speaking about how a child is humble and needed a parent to live. They think this was also a metaphor. In the same way, the disciples needed to be humble, knowing they depended on God for everything.

See: Metaphor; Disciple

What was a stumbling block?

[18:6]

See: Stumble (Stumbling Block); Walk

What was a woe?

[18:7]

See: Woe

Did Jesus want people to cut off their hands and feet?

[18:8]

Jesus said that people should cut off their hands or feet if it caused other people to sin. This was a metaphor. Some scholars think that Jesus was saying it was better to go to heaven without enjoying the sinning on earth, than to go on sinning in this world and then go to hell.

See: Metaphor; Hell; Sin

What is the eternal fire?

[18:8]

Jesus spoke about an eternal fire. He was speaking about hell, where people are punished with fire.

See: Hell; Punish (Punishment); Fire

Why did Jesus speak about angels?

[18:10]

In ancient Israel, the Jews taught that only certain angels were close to God and could see God. However, Jesus said that all the angels are always looking at God. He wanted to tell them that God cared very much for these "little children."

See: Angel

What did Matthew write in verse 11?

[18:11]

Some of the ancient copies of the Greek New Testament contain the words, "for the Son of Man came to save that which was lost." Older and more ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not contain these words. Therefore, scholars think Matthew did not write these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

What did Jesus teach about when he told people about the sheep?

[18:12]

Jesus told them a parable about sheep. Just as a shepherd rejoices when he finds the one lost sheep, so God rejoices when one sinner repents. Scholars think Jesus told this parable to teach that God's will is that no one would perish, that is, that no one would reject God.

See: Parable; Shepherd; Heaven; Repent (Repentance); Will of God

18:15-20

Who are the brothers about which Jesus spoke?

[18:15]

When Jesus spoke about brothers, he was speaking about Christians.

See: Family of God

What was meant by the words, "gained your brother"?

[18:15]

Jesus said that a Christian who helps another Christian not to sin has gained his brother. That is, his brother has been restored to him in friendship and is at peace with him and with God.

See: Sin; Family of God

How was "every word confirmed"?

[18:16]

Sometimes a Christian who sins does not listen to another Christian who is trying to get him to stop sinning. Jesus said when this happens to take one or two other Christians to listen to the words of the Christian who sinned. This is so that every word will be confirmed. That is, there would be evidence to bring about forgiveness and reconciliation between these Christians.

See: Sin

What did it mean to treat a person "as a Gentile and a tax collector" if they did not repent of their sin?

[18:17]

When a Christian sinned and did not listen to correction from other Christians, Jesus said to treat them the same way they treated a tax collector or a Gentile. That is, they were to be separated from other Christians in some way. Jesus wanted the Christians to treat the sinning Christian in the same way they treat non-Christians who sin. That is, they are to tell them that they need to repent.

See: Gentile; Sin; Repent (Repentance)

How did the disciples bind and loose things on the earth?

[18:18]

Jesus gave the disciples permission to bind and loose certain things on the earth. Some scholars think Jesus gave the apostles permission to rule other Christians. That is, they could say that doing certain things were good and doing other things is evil. Some scholars think the apostles will be able to do this when Jesus rules on the earth. Other scholars think God was going to teach people, through the apostles, how to live in a way that honored God after Jesus died. He would do this by revealing himself to the apostles and prophets.

See: Kingdom of God; Reveal (Revelation); Apostle; Prophet

What did Jesus teach the disciples about being in their midst?

[18:20]

Jesus taught the disciples about prayer. Jesus wanted his disciples to know that when two or three of them are gathered together to worship him, he would help them in some way. He also wanted them to know that God would still be with

them after Jesus died.
See: Disciple; Pray (Prayer)

18:21-35

Why did Peter ask Jesus about forgiving other Christians seven times?

[18:21]

Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive another Christian. The Jews taught that someone needed to forgive 3 times. Scholars think Peter thought to forgive someone seven times would be the most anyone could forgive.

See: Family of God; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

How many is seventy times seven?

[18:22]

Seventy times seven is 490.

Why did Jesus tell Peter a parable about the king's servants?

[18:23]

Jesus told Peter a parable about a certain king's servants. He wanted Peter to know about the kingdom of heaven. He wanted the disciples to remember that Jesus forgave them. They could never have worked hard enough to earn God's favor and be at peace with God. Jesus forgave them freely. When they do not forgive another Christian freely, Jesus said they act in the same way this servant acted. They forgot they were forgiven more by God than this person needed to be forgiven by them. He treated this man worse than God treated him. Because of this, God will punish Christians when they do not forgive other Christians.

See: Parable; Kingdom of God; Serve; Atonement (Atonement); Punish (Punishment)

How much money is 10,000 talents?

[18:24]

A talent was a very large amount of money. It would have normally taken someone about 20 years to earn one talent. This was an amount of money that no one would ever be able to pay back.

How much money is a denarii?

[18:28]

At this time, a person typically earned a denarii every day they worked.

See: Denarius

Matthew 18:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that runs through Matthew 18:35, where Jesus teaches about life in the kingdom of heaven. Here, Jesus uses a little child to teach the disciples.

At that time

Very soon after the events described in the previous verse.

Who is greatest

"Who is the most important" or "Who among us will be the most important"

in the kingdom of heaven

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "in God's kingdom" or "when our God in heaven establishes his rule on earth"

Matthew 18:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 18:3

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

unless you turn ... children, you will in no way enter the kingdom of heaven

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "you will enter the kingdom of heaven only if you turn ... children"

become like little children

Jesus uses a simile to teach the disciples that they should not be concerned with who is most important. They should be concerned with becoming humble like a child.

enter the kingdom of heaven

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "enter God's kingdom" or "belong to our God in heaven when he establishes his rule on earth"

Matthew 18:4

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues teaching the disciples that they need to be humble like a child if they want to be important in God's kingdom.

is the greatest

"is the most important" or "will be the most important"

in the kingdom of heaven

The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is used only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "in God's kingdom" or "when our God in heaven establishes his rule on earth"

Matthew 18:5

in my name

Here "my name" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because he is my disciple"

Whoever ... in my name receives me

Jesus means that it is the same as welcoming him. Alternate translation: "When someone ... in my name, it is like he is welcoming me" or "When someone ... in my name, it is as if

he were welcoming me"

Matthew 18:6

that a large millstone should be hung about his neck, and that he should be sunk into the depths of the sea

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if someone put a large millstone around his neck and threw him into the deep sea"

millstone

This is a large, heavy, circular stone used for grinding wheat grain into flour. Alternate translation: "a heavy stone"

Matthew 18:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to use a little child to teach the disciples and warns against the terrible consequences of causing children to sin.

to the world

Here "world" refers to people. Alternate translation: "to the people of the world"

stumbling blocks ... those stumbling blocks come ... the person through whom those stumbling blocks come

Here "stumbling" is a metaphor for sin. Alternate translation: "things that cause people to sin ... things come that cause people to sin ... any person who causes others to sin"

Matthew 18:8

If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you

Jesus exaggerates here to emphasize that people must do anything necessary to remove from their lives what causes them to sin.

your ... you

All occurrences of these words are singular. Jesus is speaking to all people in general. It may be more natural for your language to translate with a plural "you."

into life

"into eternal life"

than to be thrown into the eternal fire having two hands or two feet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "than to have both hands and feet when God throws you into the eternal fire"

Matthew 18:9

If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you

The command to destroy the eye, perhaps the most important part of the body, is probably an exaggeration for his hearers to do anything necessary to remove from their lives anything that causes them to sin.

causes you to stumble

Here "stumble" is a metaphor for sin. Alternate translation: "causes you to sin"

your ... you

All occurrences of these words are singular. Jesus is speaking to all people in general. It may be more natural for your language to translate with a plural "you."

into life

"into eternal life"

than to be thrown into the fiery hell having both eyes

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"than to have both eyes when God throws you into the fiery hell"

the fiery hell

"hell, which is full of fire" or "the fire of hell"

Matthew 18:10

See that

"Be careful that" or "Be sure that"

you do not despise any of these little ones

"you do not think of these little ones as being unimportant."

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:

"you show respect to these little ones"

For I say to you

This add emphasis to what Jesus says next.

that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven

Jewish teachers taught that only the most important angels could be in God's presence. Jesus means that the most important angels speak to God about these little ones.

always look on the face of my Father

This is an idiom that means they are in God's presence.

Alternate translation: "are always close to my Father" or

"are always in the presence of my Father"

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

Matthew 18:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 18:12

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to use a little child to teach the disciples and tells a parable to explain God's care for people.

What do you think?

Jesus uses this question to get people's attention. Alternate translation: "Think about how people act." or "Think about this."

you

This word is plural.

a hundred ... ninety-nine

"100 ... 99"

does he not leave ... astray?

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate

translation: "he will always leave ... astray."

Matthew 18:13

If he finds it ... that did not go astray

This is the end of the parable that begins with the words "If anyone" in verse 12.

truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next. The word "you" is plural.

Matthew 18:14

it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish

"your Father in heaven does not want any of these little ones to die" or "your Father in heaven does not want even one of these little ones to die"

your

This word is plural.

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 18:15

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach his disciples about forgiveness and reconciliation.

your brother

This refers to a fellow believer in God, not a physical brother. Alternate translation: "your fellow believer"

you will have gained your brother

"you will have made your relationship with your brother good again"

Matthew 18:16

so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be confirmed

Here "mouth" and "word" refer to what a person says. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that two or three witnesses may say that what you say about your brother is true"

Matthew 18:17

if he refuses to listen to them

"if your fellow believer refuses to listen to the witnesses who came with you"

to the church

"to the whole community of believers"

let him be to you as a pagan and a tax collector

"treat him as you would treat a pagan or tax collector." This implies that they should remove him from the community of believers.

Matthew 18:18

I tell you truly

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

you

All occurrences of this word are plural.

whatever things you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and

whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven

Here "bind" is a metaphor meaning to forbid something, and "loose" is a metaphor meaning to allow something.

Also, "in heaven" is a metonym that represents God himself. See how you translated similar phrases in [Matthew 16:19]

Matthew 18:19

if two of you

It is implied that Jesus means "if at least two of you" or "if two or more of you."

they ... them

These refer to the "two of you." Alternate translation:

"you ... you"

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

Matthew 18:20

two or three

It is implied that Jesus means "two or more" or "at least two."

are gathered

"meet"

in my name

Here "name" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because they are my

disciples"

Matthew 18:21

seven times

"7 times"

Matthew 18:22

seventy times seven

Possible meanings are 1) "70 times 7" or 2) "77 times." If using a number would be confusing, you can translate it as "more times than you can count" or "you must always forgive him."

Matthew 18:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus uses a parable to teach about forgiveness and reconciliation.

the kingdom of heaven is similar

This introduces a parable. See how you translated a similar parable introduction in [Matthew 13:24]

to settle accounts with his servants

"his servants to pay him what they owed him" or "to have his servants tell him what they had done with the goods he had entrusted to them"

Matthew 18:24

the settling

This abstract noun can be stated as a verb. Alternate

translation: "to settle accounts"

one servant was brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"someone brought one of the king's servants"

ten thousand talents

"10,000 talents" or "more money than the servant could ever repay"

Matthew 18:25

his master commanded him to be sold ... and payment to be made

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the king commanded his servants to sell the man ... and to pay the debt with the money from the sale"

Matthew 18:26

fell down, bowed down

This shows that the servant approached the king in the most humble way possible.

before him

"before the king"

Matthew 18:27

he was moved with compassion

"he felt compassion for the servant"

released him

"let him go"

Matthew 18:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable to his disciples.

one hundred denarii

"100 denarii" or "one hundred days' wages"

He took hold of him

"The first servant took hold of his fellow servant"

Matthew 18:29

fell down

This shows that the fellow servant approached the first servant in the most humble way possible. See how you translated this in [Matthew 18:26]

and pleaded with him
 "and begged him"
 Matthew 18:30
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus continues telling a parable to his disciples.
 he went and threw him into prison
 "the first servant went and threw his fellow servant into prison"
 Matthew 18:31
 his fellow servants
 "other servants"
 told their master
 "told the king"
 deeply grieved
 very sad and upset, as when a friend or family member dies. See how you translated this phrase in Matthew 17:23.
 Matthew 18:32
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus continues telling a parable to his disciple.
 Then that servant's master called him
 "Then the king called the first servant"
 you pleaded with me
 "you begged me"
 Matthew 18:33
 Should you not have ... you?
 The king uses a question to scold the first servant. Alternate translation: "You should have ... you!"
 Matthew 18:34
 General Information:
 This is the end of the part of the story that began in

Matthew 18:1, where Jesus teaches about life in the kingdom of heaven.
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus concludes his parable about forgiveness and reconciliation.
 His master
 "The king"
 handed him over
 "gave him over." Most likely the king himself did not take the first servant to the torturers. Alternate translation: "he ordered his servants to give him over"
 to the torturers
 "to those who would torture him"
 that was owed
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the first servant owed the king"
 Matthew 18:35
 my heavenly Father
 This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
 you ... your
 All occurrences of these words are plural. Jesus is speaking to his disciples, but this parable teaches a general truth that applies to all believers.
 from your heart
 Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being. The phrase "from your heart" is an idiom that means "sincerely." Alternate translation: "sincerely" or "completely"

Chapter 19

Matthew 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Divorce

Jesus taught about divorce because the Pharisees wanted people to think Jesus's teachings about divorce were wrong ([Matthew 19:3-12](#)). Jesus talked about what God had first said about marriage when he created it.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metonymy

Jesus often says the word "heaven" when he wants his hearers to think of God, who lives in heaven ([Matthew 19:12](#)).

Links:

[Matthew 19:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 19

19:1-12

Where were Galilee and Judea?

[19:1]

See Map: Galilee; Judea

Where was the area beyond the Jordan River?

[19:1]

Jesus left Capernaum to go to Judea. This was a place past the Jordan River. Judea was on the west side of the Jordan River. This was an area where Jews lived. Matthew wrote about the area east of the Jordan river when he wrote the words, beyond the Jordan River. This was a place where Gentiles lived.

See: Gentile

See Map: Capernaum; Jordan River; Judea

How did the Pharisees test Jesus?

[19:3]

Matthew wrote that the Pharisees tested Jesus. That is, they wanted to get him to say something that made people angry. It would make certain people angry if Jesus said people could not get divorced. It would make certain other people angry if Jesus said that people could get divorced.

See: Pharisees; Divorce

What did Moses teach about divorce?

[19:7, 19:8]

Moses taught about divorce in the Law of Moses. The Pharisees thought that Moses said a man could divorce his wife.

However, they did not think that a woman could divorce her husband. Some Pharisees taught that a man could only divorce his wife if she committed adultery or did evil things. Other Pharisees taught that any man could divorce his wife if he wanted to, even if she did not do anything wrong.

When a man wrote his wife a “certificate of divorce,” he sent her away with a certificate saying that she no longer belonged to the man as his wife. This would help her to marry another man.

See: Deuteronomy 24:1-4

See: Divorce; Pharisees; Law of Moses; Adultery

What did Jesus teach about divorce?

[19:9]

Jesus told the Pharisees what the Law of Moses actually said. Moses did not want people to get divorced because God did not want people to get divorced. Instead, Moses knew that some people had hard hearts. That is, they did not want to listen to God’s will about divorce. Moses allowed people to be divorced because of this. However, a certificate of divorce must be written.

Jesus told them about the marriage between Adam and Eve (see: Genesis 1:27; 2:24). A husband and wife became one flesh. That is, it was never God’s desire or intention for a married couple to divorce. Jesus only allowed for divorce when there was sexual immorality.

See: Divorce; Pharisees; Law of Moses; Sin; Will of God

What was sexual immorality?

[19:9]

See: Sexual Immorality

Why did the disciples say to Jesus, “it is not good to marry”?

[19:10]

Jesus said that it was not good to marry. Some scholars think the disciples were asking Jesus about not marrying again after being divorced. Other scholars think the disciples wanted to know from Jesus if it was good to marry at all, because they served Jesus.

See: Disciple

What did Jesus mean when he said, “not everyone can accept this teaching”?

[19:11]

Jesus said, “not everyone can accept this teaching.” Some scholars think Jesus was talking about his teaching in verses four through nine. Other scholars think he wanted to say that only certain people will understand the things he taught in this verse.

What was a eunuch?

[19:12]

A eunuch was a man who was incapable of producing children. However, Jesus spoke about different types of eunuchs. Some men are born with a damaged penis and they are not able to have sex. Other men were made eunuchs. In ancient times, a king may have cut off a man’s penis if he put this man in charge of caring for his many wives. Other people made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of God. This was a metaphor. They chose not to marry so they could better serve Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Kingdom of God

19:13-15

Why did people want their children to have Jesus touch them?

[19:13]

The people brought their children to have Jesus touch them. They thought that if they did this, Jesus would bless the children. He did this by putting his hands on them and saying a blessing.

See: Bless (Blessing)

Why did the disciples rebuke the people for bringing their children to have Jesus touch them?

[19:13]

The disciples rebuked the people for bringing their children to have Jesus touch them. Scholars think the disciples thought Jesus needed to be doing other things. Perhaps they thought that Jesus should be teaching adults instead.

See: Disciple

What did Jesus teach the disciples about the kingdom of God?

[19:14]

Jesus told the disciples they were wrong for rebuking these people. Jesus wanted the little children to come to him. This was because many adults rejected Jesus. They thought they knew more about the Messiah than they did. However, the children were willing to learn and did not reject Jesus.

After this, Jesus taught the disciples about the kingdom of God. If people wanted to have the kingdom of God, they needed to believe in Jesus the same way children believed in Jesus. Children often trusted someone completely, but adults often only trusted someone who had earned it.

See: Disciple; Messiah (Christ); Kingdom of God

19:16-30

What was having eternal life?

[19:16]

See: Eternal Life

How was someone good?

[19:17]

When Jesus spoke about someone who was good, he was speaking about someone who is always does the right thing. Only God is good in this way. Scholars think Jesus said that he is God. The man did not understand what it meant to be “good” and to obey God perfectly.

See: Jesus is God

What were these commandments about which Jesus spoke?

[19:17]

Jesus talked about some of the ten commandments in the Law of Moses.

See: Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5

See: Ten Commandments; Law of Moses

What was adultery?

[19:18]

See: Adultery

What was bearing false witness?

[19:18]

Someone who bore false witness lied about someone. They said someone did something they did not do or did not do something that they did. It also meant to give a false report in a court of law.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit); Witness (Martyr)

Why did Jesus want this man to sell everything he had?

[19:21]

Jesus knew that the man loved money more than anything else. He did not truly trust in God or that Jesus was the messiah. He trusted in the things he had. Because of this, Jesus wanted him to sell all he had in order to follow him. All people do not need to sell everything they have to be Christians. This was not a command for all people in order for them to follow Jesus. Jesus knew the man's money kept him from completely trusting in him.

See: Messiah (Christ)

What was treasure in heaven?

[19:21]

Jesus spoke about some rewards people will get after they die when he spoke about treasure in heaven.

See: Reward; Heaven

Why was it hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God?

[19:23]

Some scholars think it was hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God because the people who were rich held onto their money and valuable things too tightly. That is, they trusted in their possession more than they trusted God. Jesus used the metaphor of a camel. A camel would never fit through the eye of a needle, which is less than one millimeter. However, Jesus wanted the disciples to know that though things might seem impossible to men, all things are possible for God.

See: Bless (Blessing); Kingdom of God; Metaphor

Advice to translators: Someone who has a lot of money is considered rich. They have riches.

What did Jesus want to teach the disciples?

[19:26]

Jesus wanted to teach his disciples that there was only one way to have peace with God and to enter into his kingdom.

People need to trust in Jesus. People should not trust in anything or anyone else.

See: Disciple; Kingdom of God

When will the Son of Man sit on his glorious throne?

[19:28]

Jesus spoke about a time when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne. Jesus was speaking about himself ruling his kingdom.

See: Son of Man; Glory (Glorify); Kingdom of God; Throne

How will the disciples judge Israel?

[19:28]

Jesus said that the disciples will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. They will judge Israel in some way. However, he did not say when or how they would do this.

See: Disciple; Tribes of Israel; Judge (Judgment)

How will people be given "a hundred times" as much as they left behind?

[19:29]

Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the many homes that would be opened for the servants of God. The brothers and sisters were those who believed in Jesus and became brothers and sisters in Christ. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about spiritual blessings that replaced the homes and families that were left behind. The blessings might be considered "a hundred times" better than what they left behind.

See: Family of God; Spirit (Spiritual); Bless (Blessing); Reward

Matthew 19:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that runs through [Matthew 22:46]

It came about that when

This phrase shifts the story from Jesus's teachings to what happened next. Alternate translation: "When" or "After" had finished these words

Here "words" refers to what Jesus taught starting in [Matthew 18:1]

departed from

"walked away from" or "left"

Matthew 19:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 19:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach about marriage and divorce. came to him

"came to Jesus"

testing him, saying to him

Here "tested" is used in a negative sense. Alternate translation: "and challenged him by asking him" or "and wanted to trap him by asking him"

Matthew 19:4

Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female?

Jesus uses this question to remind the Pharisees of what the scripture says about men, women, and marriage. Alternate translation: "Surely you have read that in the beginning when God created people he made them male and female."

Matthew 19:5

General Information:

Jesus quotes from Genesis to show that a husband and wife should not divorce.

He who made them also said, 'For this reason ... flesh.'

This is part of what Jesus expected the Pharisees to have understood from the scripture. The direct quotation can be expressed as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "And surely you know that God also said that for this reason ... flesh."

For this reason

This is a part of the quotation from Genesis story about Adam and Eve. In that context the reason a man will leave his father and mother is because God created a woman to be the man's companion.

join to his wife

"stay close to his wife" or "live with his wife"

the two will become one flesh

This is a metaphor that emphasizes the unity of a husband and a wife. Alternate translation: "they will become like one person"

Matthew 19:6

So they are no longer two, but one flesh

This is a metaphor that emphasizes the unity of a husband and a wife. Alternate translation: "So a husband and wife are no longer like two persons, but they are like one person"

Matthew 19:7

They said to him

"The Pharisees said to Jesus"

command us

"command us Jews"

certificate of divorce

This is a document that legally ends the marriage.

Matthew 19:8

For your hardness of heart

The phrase "hardness of heart" is a metaphor that means "stubbornness." Alternate translation: "Because of your stubbornness" or "Because you are stubborn"

your hardness ... allowed you ... your wives

Here "you" and "your" are plural. Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees, but Moses gave this command many years earlier to their ancestors. Moses's command applied to all Jewish men in general.

from the beginning

Here "beginning" refers to when God first created man and woman.

Matthew 19:9

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

marries another

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "marries another woman"

Matthew 19:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 19:11

to whom it is given

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to whom God gives it" or "whom God enables to follow it"

Matthew 19:12

there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"there are men whom other men have made eunuchs"

eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs

Possible meanings are 1) "men who have made themselves eunuchs by removing their private parts" or 2) "men who choose to remain unmarried and sexually pure."

for the sake of the kingdom of heaven

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "so they can better serve our God in heaven"

Matthew 19:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus receives and blesses little children.

some little children were brought to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"some people brought little children to Jesus"

Matthew 19:14

Permit

allow

do not forbid them to come to me

"do not stop them from coming to me"

for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such ones

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "for when our God in heaven establishes his rule on earth, he will be king over such as these" or "for God will allow such as these into his kingdom"

belongs to such ones

"belongs to those who are like children." This is a simile that means those who are humble like children will enter God's kingdom.

Matthew 19:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 19:16

Connecting Statement:

Here the scene shifts to a different time when Jesus explains to a rich man what it will cost to follow him.

Behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story.

Your language may have a way of doing this.

good thing

This means a thing that pleases God.

Matthew 19:17

Why do you ask me about what is good?

Jesus uses this rhetorical question to encourage the man to think about his reason for asking Jesus about what is good.

Alternate translation: "You ask me about what is good" or

"Think about why you ask me about what is good."

Only one is good

"God alone is completely good"

to enter into life

"to receive eternal life"

Matthew 19:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 19:19

love your neighbor as yourself

The Jewish people believed that their neighbors were only other Jews. Jesus is extending that definition to include all people. Alternate translation: "love every other person as much as you love yourself"

Matthew 19:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 19:21

If you wish

"If you want"

to the poor

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective.

Alternate translation: "to those who are poor"

you will have treasure in heaven

The phrase "treasure in heaven" is a metaphor that refers to a reward from God. Alternate translation: "God will reward you in heaven"

Matthew 19:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 19:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus explains to his disciples the rewards of giving up material possessions and relationships to follow him.

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

to enter the kingdom of heaven

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. This phrase is found only in the book of Matthew. If possible, keep "heaven" in your translation. Alternate translation: "to accept our God in heaven as their king" or "to enter God's kingdom"

Matthew 19:24

it is easier ... kingdom of God

Jesus uses an exaggeration to illustrate how very difficult it is for rich people to enter the kingdom of God.

the eye of a needle

the hole near one end of a needle, through which thread is passed

Matthew 19:25

they were very astonished

"the disciples were amazed." It is implied that they were astonished because they believed having riches was proof that God approved of someone.

Who then can be saved?

The disciples use a question to emphasize their surprise.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Then there is no one whom God will save!" or "Then there

is no one who will receive eternal life!"

Matthew 19:26

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 19:27

we have left everything

"we have left all our wealth" or "we have given up all our possessions"

What then will we have?

"What good thing will God give us?"

Matthew 19:28

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

in the new age

"in the new time." This refers to when God restores all things. Alternate translation: "at the time when God makes all things new"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself.

sits on his glorious throne

Sitting on his throne represents ruling as a king. His throne being glorious represents his rule being glorious. Alternate translation: "sits as king on his glorious throne" or "rules gloriously as king"

sit upon twelve thrones

Here sitting on thrones refers to ruling as kings. The

disciples will not be equal to Jesus who is also on a throne.

They will receive authority from him. Alternate translation:

"sit as kings on 12 thrones"

the twelve tribes of Israel

Here "tribes" refers to people from those tribes. Alternate

translation: "the people of the 12 tribes of Israel"

Matthew 19:29

for my name's sake

Here "name" refers to the entire person. Alternate

translation: "because of me" or "because he believes in me"

receive one hundred times as much

"receive from God 100 times as many good things as they gave up"

will inherit eternal life

This is an idiom that means "God will bless them with eternal life" or "God will cause them to live forever."

Matthew 19:30

But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first

Here "first" and "last" refer to people's status or importance. Jesus is contrasting people's status now with

their status in the kingdom of heaven. Alternate

translation: "But many who seem to be important now will be the least important, and many who seem to be

unimportant now will be very important"

Chapter 20

Matthew 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The parable of the landowner and his vineyard

Jesus tells this parable ([Matthew 20:1-16](#)) to teach his disciples that what God says is right is different from what people say is right.

Links:

[Matthew 20:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 20

20:1-16

Why did Jesus speak a parable about a landowner?

[20:1]

Jesus told the disciples a parable about a landowner. The landowner gave each man a denarius,. This was the amount of money he would get for working one day. He gave each man the same amount of money, even though they worked for different lengths of time. He wanted to teach them about how God rewarded people. He did this in a way that was just. He does not reward people who do more things or greater things. He rewards people on how much they obey God.

See: Parable; Disciple; Kingdom of God; Reward

When did the landowner hire these men?

[20:1]

He hired some men early in the morning, perhaps at 6am. The third hour was at 9am. The sixth hour was at 12pm. The ninth hour was 3pm. The eleventh hour was at 5pm. They worked to about 6pm.

How will the first be last?

[20:16]

Jesus said that the first will be last and the last will be first. This was a metaphor. He wanted people to know that people who are not honored while they live on earth will be rewarded and honored in Jesus' kingdom. However, the people who want to be honored while they live on earth will not be honored in Jesus' kingdom. Jesus wanted Christians to serve other people.

See: Metaphor; Reward; Kingdom of God

What did Matthew write in verse 16?

[20:16]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament contain the words “many are called, but few are chosen.” More and older copies of the Greek New Testament do not contain these words. Scholars think that Matthew did not write these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

20:17-28

What did Jesus tell the disciples would soon happen?

[20:18]

Jesus told the disciples that he was going to die and would be made alive again. That is, he will be resurrected.

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Who is the Son of Man?

[20:18]

See: Son of Man

Why did the chief priests and scribes give Jesus over to the Gentiles?

[20:19]

At this time, the Jews were not able to kill a criminal. Only their Roman leaders could do this. They were Gentiles. Jesus wanted to say that the Jewish leaders would get the Gentile leaders to kill Jesus.

See: Chief Priest; Scribe; Gentile

What did it mean to be flogged?

[20:19]

Jesus said that he was going to be flogged. That is, he would be beaten with a whip.

Who will sit at Jesus' right and left side in heaven?

[20:21, 20:23]

Jesus will sit at God the Father's right hand in heaven. Therefore, God is at Jesus' left hand side in heaven. However, God the Father is the one who decides who will sit at the right hand of Jesus (see: Matthew 20:23). The mother wanted her sons to be honored in heaven more than the other disciples.

See: God the Father; Heaven; Disciple

What was the cup Jesus was about to drink?

[20:22]

Jesus said that he was about to drink from a cup. This was a metaphor. He was about to suffer and die. When they said they could drink from this cup, Jesus prophesied that they would suffer and die.

See: Metaphor; Prophecy (Prophecy)

Why were the disciples angry with James and John?

[20:24]

Some scholars think the other disciples were angry with James and John because they asked Jesus to honor them in a special way. Other scholars think the other disciples were jealous or afraid James and John might be honored over them.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus speak about the Gentiles?

[20:25]

Jesus spoke about the Gentiles. The Gentiles ruled over the Jews and were very harsh to them. However, Jesus did not want certain Christians to rule over other Christians in this way. He wanted Christian leaders to serve other Christians.

How did Jesus give his life as a ransom for many?

Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many. That is, he died so that people would be at peace with God. Matthew spoke about Jesus dying as a price to be paid for their sin. Jesus was punished for the sins of those who believe in him. By dying, Jesus set them free from being slaves to always wanting to sin.

See: Atone (Atonement); Sin; Son of Man

Who will be honored in heaven?

[20:26]

Jesus taught the disciples that certain people will be honored in heaven. Just as Jesus came to serve, so Christians who serve other people will be honored in heaven.

See: Disciple; Heaven

20:29-34

Where was Jericho?

[20:29]

See Map: Jericho

Why did the crowd rebuke these men?

[20:31]

Matthew wrote that the crowd of people rebuked the two blind men. Some scholars think they wanted the blind men to be quiet to respect Jesus. Perhaps they were being very loud. Or perhaps they were rebuked for saying that Jesus is the messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ)

How was Jesus the Son of David?

[20:31]

The blind man called Jesus the "Son of David." David was one of Jesus' ancestors. He called him this because the messiah was prophesied to be one of David's descendants. He was to fulfill the covenant God made with David.

See: Messiah (Christ); Covenant with David ; Prophecy (Prophecy); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Matthew 20:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable about a landowner who hires workers, to illustrate how God will reward those who belong to the kingdom of heaven.

For the kingdom of heaven is like

This is the beginning of a parable. See how you translated the introduction to the parable in [Matthew 13:24]

Matthew 20:2

After he had agreed

"After the landowner had agreed"

one denarius

This was the daily wage at that time. Alternate translation: "one day's wages"

he sent them into his vineyard

"he sent them to work in his vineyard"

Matthew 20:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

He went out again

"The landowner went out again"

the third hour

The third hour is around nine in the morning.

standing idle in the marketplace

"standing in the marketplace not doing anything" or

"standing in the marketplace with no work to do"

marketplace

a large, open-air area where people buy and sell food and other items

Matthew 20:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 20:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

Again he went out

"Again the landowner went out"

the sixth hour and again the ninth hour

The sixth hour is around noon. The ninth hour is around three in the afternoon.

did the same

This means the landowner went to the marketplace and hired workers.

Matthew 20:6

the eleventh hour

This is about five in the afternoon.

standing idle

"not doing anything" or "not having any work"

Matthew 20:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 20:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

beginning from the last to the first

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "beginning with the workers who started working last, then the workers who started working earlier, and finally the workers who started working first" or "first paying the workers I hired last, then paying the workers I hired earlier in the day, and finally paying the workers I hired first"

Matthew 20:9

who had been hired

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom the landowner hired"

Matthew 20:10

one denarius

This was the daily wage at that time. Alternate translation:

"one day's wages"

Matthew 20:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

When they received

"When the workers who had worked the longest received"

the landowner

"the vineyard owner"

Matthew 20:12

you have made them equal to us

"you have paid them the same amount of money as you

paid us"

we who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat

The phrase "borne the burden of the day" is an idiom that means "worked the entire day." Alternate translation: "we who have worked the entire day, even during the hottest part"

Matthew 20:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

one of them

"one of the workers who had worked the longest"

Friend

Use a word that one man would use to address another man whom he is politely rebuking.

Did you not agree with me for one denarius?

The landowner uses a question to rebuke the workers who

were complaining. Alternate translation: "We already agreed that I would give you one denarius."

one denarius

This was the daily wage at that time. Alternate translation: "one day's wages"

Matthew 20:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 20:15

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his parable about a landowner who hires workers.

Is it not lawful for me to do as I want with what belongs to me?

The landowner uses a question to correct the workers who were complaining. Alternate translation: "It is lawful for me to do what I want with my own possessions."

Is it not lawful for me

"Do I not have the right" or "Is it not proper." The landowner is reminding the laborers that everyone allows people to do what they wish with their own property. He is not asking if there is a law against what he is doing.

Or are you envious because I am good?

The landowner uses a question to rebuke the workers who were complaining. Alternate translation: "You should not be envious because I am good."

I am good

In the context here, the reader should understand the landowner being "good" as "generous," the opposite of the laborers being "evil," which is "envious."

Matthew 20:16

So the last will be first, and the first last

Here "first" and "last" refer to people's status or importance. Jesus is contrasting people's status now with their status in the kingdom of heaven. See how you translated a similar statement in Matthew 19:30. Alternate translation: "So those who seem to be unimportant now will be the most important, and those who seem to be the most important now will be the least important"

So the last will be first

Here the parable has ended and Jesus is speaking. Alternate translation: "Then Jesus said, 'So the last will be first'"

Matthew 20:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a third time as he and his disciples travel to Jerusalem.

going up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was on top of a hill, so people had to travel up to get there.

Matthew 20:18

See, we are going

Jesus uses the word "See" to tell the disciples they must pay attention to what he is about to tell them.

we are going

Here "we" refers to Jesus and the disciples.

the Son of Man will be given over

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone will give the Son of Man over"

Son of Man ... him

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If

necessary, you can translate these in the first person.

They will condemn

The chief priests and scribes will condemn Jesus.

Matthew 20:19

and will deliver him to the Gentiles for them to mock

The chief priests and scribes will deliver Jesus to the Gentiles, and the Gentiles will mock him.

to flog

"to whip him" or "to beat him with whips"

third day

"Third" is the ordinal form of "three."

him ... him ... he

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person. If necessary, you can translate these in the first person.

he will be raised up

The words "be raised up" are an idiom for "be made alive again." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will raise him up" or "God will make him alive again"

Matthew 20:20

Connecting Statement:

In response to the question that the mother of two of the disciples asks, Jesus teaches his disciples about authority and serving others in the kingdom of heaven.

the sons of Zebedee

This refers to James and John.

Matthew 20:21

at your right hand ... at your left hand

These refer to having positions of power, authority, and honor.

in your kingdom

Here "kingdom" refers to Jesus ruling as king. Alternate translation: "when you are king"

Matthew 20:22

You do not know

Here "you" is plural and refers to the mother and the sons.

Are you able

Here "you" is plural, but Jesus is only talking to the two sons.

drink the cup that I am about to drink

To "drink the cup" or "drink from the cup" is an idiom that means to experience suffering. Alternate translation:

"suffer what I am about to suffer"

They said

"The sons of Zebedee said" or "James and John said"

Matthew 20:23

My cup you will indeed drink

To "drink a cup" or "drink from a cup" is an idiom that means to experience suffering. Alternate translation: "You will indeed suffer as I will suffer"

right hand ... left hand

These refer to having positions of power, authority, and honor. See how you translated this in [Matthew 20:21]

but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for my Father has prepared those places, and he will give them to whom he chooses"

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the

relationship between God and Jesus.

Matthew 20:24

heard this

"heard what James and John had asked Jesus"

they were very angry with the two brothers

If necessary, you can make explicit why the ten disciples were angry. Alternate translation: "they were very angry with the two brothers because each of them also wanted to sit in a place of honor next to Jesus"

Matthew 20:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes teaching his disciples about authority and serving others.

called them

"called the twelve disciples"

the rulers of the Gentiles dominate them

"the Gentile kings forcefully rule over their people"

their important men

"the important men among the Gentiles"

exercise authority over them

"have control over the people"

Matthew 20:26

whoever wishes

"whoever wants" or "whoever desires"

Matthew 20:27

to be first

"to be important"

Matthew 20:28

the Son of Man ... his life

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. If necessary, you can translate this in the first person.

did not come to be served

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "did not come so that other people would serve him" or "did not come so that other people would serve me"

but to serve

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "but to serve other people"

to give his life as a ransom for many

Jesus's life being a "ransom" is a metaphor for his being punished in order to set people free from being punished for their own sins. Alternate translation: "to give his life as a substitute for many" or "to give his life as a substitute to set many free"

to give his life

To give one's life is an idiom meaning to die voluntarily, usually in order to help others. Alternate translation: "to die"

for many

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "for many people"

Matthew 20:29

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of Jesus healing two blind men.

As they went

This refers to the disciples and Jesus.

followed him

"followed Jesus"

Matthew 20:30

There were two blind men sitting

This is sometimes translated as "Behold, there were two blind men sitting." Matthew is alerting us to a new people in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

When they heard

"When the two blind men heard"

was passing by

"was walking by them"

Son of David

Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "Descendant of King David." However, "Son of David" is also a title for the Messiah, and the men were probably calling Jesus by this title.

Matthew 20:31

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 20:32

called to them

"called to the blind men"

do you wish

"do you want"

Matthew 20:33

that our eyes may be opened

The men speak of becoming able to see as if their eyes were to be opened. Because of Jesus's previous question, we understand that they were expressing their desire.

Alternate translation: "we want you to open our eyes" or

"we want to be able to see"

Matthew 20:34

being moved with compassion

"having compassion" or "feeling compassion for them"

Chapter 21

Matthew 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 21:5,16 and 42, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal. In this way he was like a king who came into a city after he had won an important battle. Also, the kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on donkeys. Other kings rode on horses. So Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel and that he was not like other kings.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about this event. Matthew and Mark wrote that the disciples brought Jesus a donkey. John wrote that Jesus found a donkey. Luke wrote that they brought him a colt. Only Matthew wrote that there

were both a donkey and a colt. No one knows for sure whether Jesus rode the donkey or the colt. It is best to translate each of these accounts as it appears in the ULB without trying to make them all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 21:1-7](#) and [Mark 11:1-7](#) and [Luke 19:29-36](#) and [John 12:14-15](#))

Hosanna

This is what the people shouted to welcome Jesus into Jerusalem. This word means "save us," but people used it to praise God.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The kingdom of God will be taken away from you"

No one knows for sure what this phrase means. No one knows if Jesus meant that God would someday give the kingdom back or not.

Links:

[Matthew 21:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 21

21:1-11

Where were Bethpage, and the Mount of Olives?

[21:1]

See Map: Bethpage; Mount of Olives

How did Jesus enter into Jerusalem?

[21:2]

Jesus entered Jerusalem in the same way a king returned home after a great victory in a war. Often, they rode on horses or in a chariot. Jesus entered Jerusalem on a colt because he told people that he was the messiah and the king of the Jews (see: Zechariah 9:9). He also had a great victory. He lived the perfect life and was about to die so that people could have peace with God.

See: 21:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19

See: Messiah (Christ); Atonement (Atonement); Chariot

See Map: Jerusalem

What was a colt?

[21:2]

A colt was a young donkey. This colt was with its mother, a donkey (see: Matthew 21:2). No one had ever ridden this colt. Why did Jesus say, "the Lord has need of them"?

[21:3]

Some scholars think that Jesus said, "the Lord has need of them" to say that God needed them for God's purpose. Other scholars think Jesus said this because he was calling himself Lord. That is, he was calling himself God. Still other scholars think the owner of the colt was traveling with Jesus, and Jesus said the owner had need of the colt.

See: Jesus is God

What prophet said these things?

[21:4]

When Jesus did these things, he fulfilled the prophecy Zechariah made (see: Zechariah 9:9). Jesus was the king about whom Zechariah wrote.

Why did the disciples put their cloaks on the colt?

[21:7]

The disciples put their cloaks on the colt to make it easier for Jesus to ride on it. A cloak was a thick coat people wore outside of their clothes.

See: Disciple

Why did the people put things on the road?

The road on which Jesus rode the colt was dirty. The people showed the highest honor to Jesus by putting things on the road so that he would not get dirty. In ancient times, people did this to welcome a new king (see: 2 Kings 9:13).

Why did the people shout "hosanna"?

[21:9]

The people shouted "Hosanna" because they wanted God to save them. They said that Jesus came "in the name of the Lord." That is, God gave Jesus power and permission to reveal God's will. They believed Jesus was the messiah who came to begin the kingdom promised to David.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Heaven; Bless (Blessing); Messiah (Christ); Will of God; Covenant with David ; Reveal (Revelation)

What did the people think about Jesus?

[21:11]

The people thought Jesus was a prophet. However, they did not believe he was the messiah. They did not know that he was their king.

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

See Map: Nazareth; Galilee

21:12-22

Why did Jesus make people leave the temple?

[21:11, 21:12]

Jesus made people leave the temple. These were people who sold things. He did not want people to try to make money in the temple. He only wanted people to go to the temple to worship God. People from every nation were to go to the temple to pray (see: Isaiah 56:7). However, the Jews did not want other people to go to the temple to worship God. Instead, they used the area made for the Gentiles to worship God as a market to make money.

Jesus said the temple was made into a “den of robbers.” That is, a place where people who robbed other people lived (see: Jeremiah 7:11). Scholars think Jesus said the same thing Jeremiah wrote so everyone would know that the people did not honor God in the temple.

Earlier, Jesus also made people leave the temple (see: John 2:13-22).

See: Temple; Gentile; Worship; Pray (Prayer)

Why were the chief priests and scribes angry at Jesus?

[21:15]

The chief priests and scribes wanted to kill Jesus because of what he did. Some scholars think the chief priests and the scribes made money from the things sold in the temple. Jesus stopped them from making money in the temple. Other scholars think they were angry because the children said that Jesus was the messiah.

See: Temple; High Priest; Chief Priest; Scribe; Messiah (Christ)

Where did the Jewish leaders read this?

[21:16]

The Jewish leaders read the things Jesus said in Psalms (see: Psalms 8:2).

Where was Bethany?

[21:17]

See Map: Bethany

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?

[21:19]

Jesus saw a fig tree. It did not have fruit. He cursed it. He did not do this because he was hungry or angry. It was a metaphor. In the same way a fig tree produced figs, so God wanted Israel to produce fruit. That is, he wanted Israel to serve and obey him. However, they did not do this. Therefore, they made themselves useless to God.

See: Curse; Fruit (Metaphor); Metaphor

Why did Jesus speak about a mountain?

[21:21]

Jesus spoke about a mountain to teach his disciples. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say they could do great things if they trusted in God, that is, Jesus wanted the disciples to pray with faith. They were not actually going to move a mountain. This was hyperbole. However, God did many miracles through these disciples after Jesus was made alive again.

See: Disciple; Metaphor; Miracle; Hyperbole; Pray (Prayer); Faith (Believe in)

21:23-32

Who were the elders?

[21:23]

The elders were the Jewish leaders who were older men.

See: Elder; Chief Priest

Why did the leaders want to know who gave Jesus permission to do the things he did?

[21:23]

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus who gave him permission to do the things he did. They did not think God gave him permission to do the things he did. They thought Satan gave him permission to do these things. Some scholars think the leaders really wanted to have Jesus say that God sent him. They thought that the Law of Moses said they could kill him if he did this. However, God sent Jesus.

See: Satan (The Devil); Law of Moses

Why did Jesus ask the leaders about the baptism of John?

[21:25]

Jesus asked the leaders about who gave John the Baptist permission to do the things he did. The people in Israel loved John the Baptist. They thought God sent him. John the Baptist said that Jesus was the messiah. The leaders were afraid of saying that God sent John because they would also have to say that God sent Jesus. However, the people would be angry

with these leaders and reject them if they said that God did not send John.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus speak about two sons?

[21:28]

Jesus spoke about two sons. One son said no, but obeyed his father. The second son said yes to his father but did not obey him. This was a parable. He wanted the Jewish leaders to know that the people who sinned, but came to believe in him were like the first son. The Jewish leaders who said nice things to Jesus but did not believe in him were like the second son. The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus and rejected God who sent Jesus. The tax collectors and prostitutes believed in Jesus, therefore they obeyed God.

See: Parable; Tax (Tax Collector, Toll) ; Prostitute (Prostitution) ; Repent (Repentance); Will of God; Kingdom of God; Sin

21:33-46

Why did Jesus talk about a vineyard?

[21:33]

Jesus used a parable about a vineyard. He did this to talk about Israel. In the same way a farmer makes and protects a vineyard, so God made and protects the nation of Israel. God gave certain leaders permission to care for Israel. He sent prophets to Israel to help the Israelites obey God. However, they did not do what these prophets said to do. Finally, God sent Jesus. That is, he sent his son. Then the Jewish leaders had him killed.

See: Parable; Vine (Vineyard); Prophet; Son of God

Why did the owner of the vineyard send servants?

[21:34]

The owner of the vineyard sent his servants to get what they promised to the owner for using his land. They promised him a certain part of what they grew.

Why did the men beat the servants?

[21:35]

These men did not want to give the servant what they promised to give to the owner of the land. Therefore, they beat the servants. They wanted the owner to know they were not going to give him anything and that he should not send any more servants.

What was an inheritance?

[21:38]

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

From what scripture did Jesus quote?

[21:42]

See: Psalm 118:22-23

How would the kingdom of God be taken away from the Jewish leaders?

[21:43]

Jesus said the kingdom of God would be taken away from the Jewish leaders. He was rejecting them because they rejected him. They would not be a part of his kingdom. Jesus also said he would give it to another nation that produced fruit. That is, people who obey him and honor him will inherit the kingdom of God. This included Gentile people who obeyed and honored Jesus.

See: Kingdom of God; Fruit (Metaphor); Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Gentile

Why did the Jewish leaders want to arrest Jesus?

[21:46]

The Jewish leaders wanted to arrest Jesus after they heard what he said. That is, they wanted to catch him so they could kill him. This is because they knew he was speaking about them. Jesus knew the Jewish leaders wanted to kill him.

Why were the Jewish leaders afraid of the crowd?

[21:46]

Matthew wrote that the Jewish leaders feared all the people there. Many people thought Jesus was a great man. However, Matthew wanted people to know that the Jewish leaders feared the people more than they feared God. They thought they were obeying God by killing Jesus. However, they were not obeying God.

Matthew 21:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus's entry into Jerusalem.

Here he gives his disciples instructions about what they are to do.

Bethphage

This is a village near Jerusalem.

Matthew 21:2

a donkey tied up

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "a donkey that someone has tied up"

tied up there

You can make explicit how the donkey is tied. Alternate translation: "tied up there to a post" or "tied up there to a tree"

colt

young male donkey

Matthew 21:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:4

General Information:

Here the author quotes the prophet Zechariah to show that Jesus fulfilled prophecy by riding a donkey into Jerusalem.

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here Matthew explains that Jesus's actions fulfilled scripture. all this happened to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this happened so that Jesus would fulfill what God spoke through the prophet long ago"

through the prophet

There were many prophets. Matthew was speaking of Zechariah. Alternate translation: "the prophet Zechariah"
Matthew 21:5

the daughter of Zion

The "daughter" of a city means the people of the city.

Alternate translation: "the people of Zion" or "the people who live in Zion"

Zion

This is another name for Jerusalem.

on a donkey—on a colt, the foal of a donkey

The phrase "on a colt, the foal of a donkey" is explaining that the donkey is a young animal. Alternate translation: "on a young, male donkey"

Matthew 21:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:7

cloaks

These were outer clothing or long coats.

Matthew 21:8

crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches off the trees and spread them in the road

These are ways to show honor to Jesus as he was entering Jerusalem.

Matthew 21:9

Hosanna

This word means "save us," but it can also mean "praise God!"

the son of David

Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "descendant of king David." However, "Son of David" is also a title for the Messiah, and the crowd was probably calling Jesus by this title.

in the name of the Lord

Here "in the name" means "in the power" or "as a representative." Alternate translation: "in the power of the Lord" or "as the representative of the Lord"

Hosanna in the highest

Here "highest" refers to God who rules from the highest heaven. Alternate translation: "Praise God, who is in the highest heaven" or "Praise be to God"

Matthew 21:10

all the city was stirred

Here "city" refers to the people living there. Alternate translation: "many people from all over the city were

stirred"

stirred

"excited"

Matthew 21:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:12

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus entering into the temple.

Jesus entered the temple

Jesus did not enter the actual temple. He entered the courtyard around the temple.

who bought and sold

Merchants were selling animals and other items that travelers bought to offer the proper sacrifices at the temple.

Matthew 21:13

General Information:

Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to rebuke the vendors and money changers.

He said to them

"Jesus said to those who were changing money and buying and selling things"

It is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The prophets wrote long ago" or "God said long ago"

My house will be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My house will be"

My house

Here "My" refers to God and "house" refers to the temple.

a house of prayer

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "a place where people pray"

a den of robbers

Jesus uses a metaphor to scold the people for buying and selling items in the temple. Alternate translation: "like a place where robbers hide"

Matthew 21:14

the blind and the lame

These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives.

Alternate translation: "those who were blind and those who were lame"

lame

those who have an injured foot or leg that makes walking difficult

Matthew 21:15

the marvelous things

"the wonderful things" or "the miracles." This refers to Jesus healing the blind and lame people in Matthew 21:14.

Hosanna

This word means "save us" but can also mean "praise God!"

See how you translated this in Matthew 21:9.

the Son of David

Jesus was not David's literal son, so this may be translated as "descendant of king David." However, "Son of David" is also a title for the Messiah, and the children were probably calling Jesus by this title. See how you translated this in Matthew 21:9.

they became very angry

It is implied that they were angry because they did not believe Jesus was the Christ and they did not want other people praising him. Alternate translation: "they became very angry because people were praising him"

Matthew 21:16

General Information:

Jesus quotes from the Psalms to justify how the people had responded to him.

Do you hear what they are saying?

The chief priests and scribes ask this question to rebuke Jesus because they are angry with him. Alternate translation: "You should not allow them to say these things about you!"

But have you never read ... praise?"

Jesus asks this question to remind the chief priests and scribes of what they have studied in the scriptures.

Alternate translation: "Yes, I hear them, but you should remember what you read in the scriptures ... praise."

Out of the mouths of little children and nursing infants you have prepared praise

The phrase "out of the mouths" refers to speaking, and "prepared praise" is a metonym for preparing the children and infants to praise. Alternate translation: "You prepared little children and nursing infants to give praise to God"

Matthew 21:17

Jesus left them

"Jesus left the chief priests and scribes"

Matthew 21:18

Connecting Statement:

In verses 18 through 22, Jesus uses a fig tree to teach his disciples about faith and prayer.

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here Matthew explains that Jesus is hungry and that is why he stops at the fig tree.

Matthew 21:19

he ... found nothing on it except leaves

This double negative emphasizes that leaves were the only things that he found. Alternate translation: "he ... found only leaves on it"

withered

died and dried up

Matthew 21:20

How did the fig tree immediately wither away?

The disciples use a question to emphasize how surprised they are. Alternate translation: "We are astonished that the fig tree has dried up so quickly!"

wither away

"dry up and die"

Matthew 21:21

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

if you have faith and do not doubt

Jesus expresses the same idea both positively and negatively to emphasize that this faith must be genuine.

Alternate translation: "if you truly believe"

you will even say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,'

You can translate this direct quotation as an indirect quotation. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you will even be able to tell this mountain to get up and throw itself into the sea,"

it will be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it will happen"

Matthew 21:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:23

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of the religious leaders questioning Jesus's authority.

had come into the temple

It is implied that Jesus did not enter the actual temple. He entered the courtyard around the temple.

these things

This refers to Jesus teaching and healing in the temple. It probably also refers to Jesus driving out the buyers and sellers the previous day.

Matthew 21:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to respond to the religious leaders.

from where did it come?

"where did he get the authority to do that?"

If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'

This has quotes within a quote. You could translate the direct quotations as an indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "If we say that we believe John received his authority from heaven, then Jesus will ask us why we did not believe John."

From heaven

Here "heaven" refers to God. Alternate translation: "from God in heaven"

Why then did you not believe him?

The religious leaders know that Jesus could scold them with this rhetorical question. Alternate translation: "Then you should have believed John the Baptist"

Matthew 21:26

But if we say, 'From men,'

This is a quote within a quote. You could translate the direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "But if we say that we believe John received his authority from men,"

we fear the crowd

"we fear what the crowd would think or even do to us"

they all view John as a prophet

"they believe John is a prophet"

Matthew 21:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable about two sons to rebuke the religious

leaders and to illustrate their unbelief.

But what do you think?

Jesus uses a question to challenge the religious leaders to think deeply about the parable he will tell them. Alternate translation: "Tell me what you think about what I am about to tell you."

Matthew 21:29

he changed his mind

This refers to the son reconsidering his thoughts and deciding to act differently from how he had said he would act.

Matthew 21:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 21:31

They said

"The chief priests and elders said"

Jesus said to them

"Jesus said to the chief priests and elders"

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

the tax collectors and the prostitutes will enter the kingdom of God before you do

Here "kingdom of God" refers to God's rule as king.

Alternate translation: "when God establishes his rule on earth, he will agree to bless the tax collectors and prostitutes by ruling over them before he agrees to do that for you"

before you do

Possible meanings are 1) God will accept the tax collectors and prostitutes sooner than he will accept the Jewish religious leaders, or 2) God will accept the tax collectors and prostitutes instead of the Jewish religious leaders.

Matthew 21:32

John came to you

Here "you" is plural and refers to all the people of Israel, not just the religious leaders. Alternate translation: "John came to the people of Israel"

in the way of righteousness

This is an idiom that means John showed the people the right way to live. Alternate translation: "and told you the way God wants you to live"

you did not believe him

Here "you" is plural and refers to the religious leaders.

Matthew 21:33

Connecting Statement:

To rebuke the religious leaders and illustrate their unbelief, Jesus tells a parable about rebellious servants.

a landowner

"a person who owned a piece of property"

a hedge

"a wall" or "a fence"

dug a winepress in it

"dug a hole in the vineyard in which to press the grapes"

rented it out to vine growers

The owner still owned the vineyard, but he allowed the vine growers to take care of it. When the grapes became ripe, they were to give some of them to the owner and keep

the rest.

vine growers

These were people who knew how to take care of vines and grapes.

Matthew 21:34

to collect his fruit

The landowner expected the vine growers pay him for allowing them to use the vineyard by giving him some of the fruit they had grown.

Matthew 21:35

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

his servants

"the landowner's servants"

Matthew 21:36

General Information:

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Matthew 21:37

General Information:

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Matthew 21:38

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

Matthew 21:39

General Information:

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Matthew 21:40

Now

The word "now" does not mean "at this moment," but it is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

Matthew 21:41

They said to him

Matthew does not make clear who answered Jesus. If you need to specify an audience you can translate as "The people said to Jesus."

He will violently destroy those wicked people

"He will bring those wicked people to a miserable end" or

"He will make those evil people die in misery"

Matthew 21:42

General Information:

Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah to show that God will honor the one whom the religious leaders reject.

Connecting Statement:

Here Jesus begins to explain the parable of the rebellious servants.

Jesus said to them

It is unclear to whom Jesus asks the following question. If you need to make "them" specific, use the same audience as you did in Matthew 21:41.

Did you never read ... eyes?"

Jesus uses a question to make his audience think deeply about what this scripture means. Alternate translation:

"Think about what you have read ... eyes."

The stone which the builders rejected has been made the cornerstone

Jesus is quoting from the Psalms. This is a metaphor that means the religious leaders, like builders, will reject Jesus, but God will make him the most important in his kingdom, like the cornerstone in a building.

has been made the cornerstone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"has become the cornerstone"

This was from the Lord

"The Lord has caused this great change"

it is marvelous in our eyes

Here "in our eyes" refers to seeing. Alternate translation: "it is wonderful to see"

Matthew 21:43

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

to you

Here "you" is plural. Jesus was speaking to the religious leaders who had rejected him.

the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a nation that produces its fruits

Here "kingdom of God" refers to God's rule as king. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will take his kingdom away from you and will give it to a nation that produces the kingdom's fruits" or "God will reject you, and he will be king over people from other nations that

produce the kingdom's fruits"

that produces its fruits

"Fruits" here is a metaphor for "results" or outcome."

Alternate translation: "that produces good results"

Matthew 21:44

Whoever falls on this stone will be broken to pieces

Here, "this stone" is the same stone as in [Matthew 21:42]

But anyone on whom it falls will be crushed

This means basically the same thing as the previous sentence. It is a metaphor that means the Christ will have the final judgment and will destroy everyone who rebels against him.

Matthew 21:45

Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders react to the parable that Jesus told.

his parables

"Jesus's parables"

Matthew 21:46

General Information:

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Chapter 22

Matthew 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 44, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Wedding Feast

In the parable of the wedding feast ([Matthew 22:1-14](#)), Jesus taught that when God offers to save a person, that person needs to accept the offer. Jesus spoke of life with God as a feast that a king prepares for his son, who has just gotten married. In addition, Jesus emphasized that not everyone whom God invites will properly prepare themselves to come to the feast. God will throw these people out from the feast.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Implicit information

Speakers usually do not say things that they think their hearers already understand. When the king in the parable said, "My oxen and fattened calves have been killed" ([Matthew 22:4](#)), he assumed that the hearers would understand that those who had killed the animals had also cooked them.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. To the Jews, the ancestors were the masters of the descendants, but in one psalm David calls one of his descendants "Lord." Jesus tells the Jewish leaders that this is a paradox, saying, "If David then calls the Christ 'Lord,' how is he David's son?" ([Matthew 22:45](#)).

Links:

[Matthew 22:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 22

22:1-14

What was a parable?

[22:1]

See: Parable

Why did Jesus want this man to invite certain types of people to a dinner or a banquet?

[22:3]

Jesus wanted this man to invite certain types of people to a feast because Jesus wanted God to reward them in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus sent his servants to call those who had been invited to this feast. He was talking about the Jews. He wanted the Jews to believe in him, but they rejected him. When he spoke about the king, Jesus was speaking about himself. He also wanted to say that the Jews did evil things to the apostles. When he spoke about those who were not invited, he was speaking about the Gentiles. The Gentiles believed in Jesus and would be rewarded. When Jesus spoke

about the man not wearing wedding clothes, he was speaking about someone who wanted to be rewarded by God, but who rejected Jesus. Jesus will punish this man.

See: Wedding; Reward; Kingdom of God; Apostle; Gentile; Punish (Punishment)

What is the outer darkness?

[22:13]

Jesus spoke about the outer darkness. He was speaking about hell. This is a place where people will be punished for their sins.

See: Hell; Punish (Punishment); Sin

What did it mean that many people are called but few are chosen?

[22:14]

Jesus said that many people were called but few people were chosen. He wanted everyone to believe in him, but only a few people believed in him. Everyone could believe in him and be rewarded, but most people reject him.

See: Elect (Election); Call (Calling); Reward; Kingdom of God

22:15-22

What was a pharisee?

[22:15]

See: Pharisees

How did the Jewish leaders try to trap Jesus?

[22:15]

The Jewish leaders tried to trap Jesus. That is, they tried to get Jesus to say something that would cause someone to be angry with him. They wanted Jesus to speak against the leader of the Roman Empire. They did this by asking Jesus about paying taxes to the ruler of the Roman Empire. The Jewish leaders asked Jesus about paying taxes. The Romans made the Jews pay taxes to them every year. The Jews had to pay the Romans to rule them. The Jews did not like having to pay this tax. The Jews would have been angry if Jesus said that the Jews should pay this tax to the Romans. The Romans would be angry if Jesus said that the Jews should not pay this tax to the Romans.

See: Tax (Tax Collector, Toll); Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

What was a Herodian?

[22:16]

A Herodian was someone who served King Herod. He was the leader of the Jews and served the Romans.

See: King Herod

What was a hypocrite?

[22:18]

A hypocrite was a person who said one thing, but they did not believe it. Or they said something and did not do it.

See: Hypocrisy (Hypocrite)

What was a denarius?

[22:19]

See: Denarius

What were the things that belonged to Caesar?

[22:21]

The things that belonged to Caesar were all things that allowed him to govern Rome. This included taxes that must be paid to his government. The coins, at that time, had the face of Caesar imprinted on them.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

What were the things that belonged to God?

[22:21]

Scholars think Jesus was speaking about people's hearts when he spoke about the things that belonged to God. That is, a person should live according to faith. They should love, worship, and obey God. God is the creator of everything. He is rules everything. Therefore, all things belong to God.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Faith (Believe in)

22:23-33

What did the Sadducees think happened when people died?

[22:23]

The Sadducees did not think that people would be resurrected. That is, they did not think people would go to heaven or hell when they died. They did not believe in many things taught in the Bible.

See: Sadducees; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Heaven; Hell

Why did the Sadducees ask Jesus this question?

[22:28]

The Sadducees tried to trap Jesus by asking this question. They wanted Jesus to say something that would make people angry. They thought their question proved that no one would be resurrected.

See: Law of Moses; Sadducees; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say to the Sadducees, "you do not know the scriptures or the power of God"?

[22:29]

When Jesus told the Sadducees they did not "know the scriptures or the power of God" he meant they had not understood the scriptures correctly. That is, they did not understand what the Bible taught about resurrection. They also did not understand God's power to raise a person from the dead and give them a new body.

See: Sadducees; Heaven; Worship; Angel; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus speak about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

[22:32]

See: Exodus 3:6

22:34-46

What was meant by the words, "on these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets"?

[22:40]

Jesus told the lawyer that the two greatest commandments were to love God and to love other people. That is, if a person loved God and people the way the Bible told them to, then they obeyed all of the Law of Moses.

See: Scribe; Command (Commandment); Law of Moses

What are the Law and the prophets?

[22:40]

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What was meant by the words, "how then does David in the spirit call him Lord"?

[22:43]

Scholars think that Jesus wanted his listeners to know that the Holy Spirit told David what to say when he wrote Psalm 110:1.

See: Holy Spirit

What did David mean with the words, "the Lord said to my Lord"?

[22:44]

Scholars think that when David said, "the Lord said to my Lord" he was speaking about the messiah whom God sent. In other words, David said, "God (Yahweh) said to my Lord (Messiah)." David said that Jesus is God. God will also make the messiah's enemies his footstool. That is, one day God will defeat all of the messiah's enemies.

See: Lord; Yahweh (I am); Messiah (Christ); Trinity; Jesus is God

Why did people stop asking Jesus questions?

[22:46]

Matthew wrote that people stopped asking Jesus questions. This was because they knew they could not trap Jesus by asking him questions because of the way Jesus answered them.

Matthew 22:1

Connecting Statement:

To rebuke the religious leaders and to illustrate their unbelief, Jesus tells a parable about a marriage feast. to them

"to the people"

Matthew 22:2

The kingdom of heaven is like

This is the beginning of a parable. See how you translated this in Matthew 13:24.

Matthew 22:3

those who had been invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people the king had invited"

Matthew 22:4

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

servants, saying, "Tell them who are invited, "See ... feast."

This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation.

Also, this can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"servants, ordering them to tell those whom he invited,

'See ... feast.'"

See

"Look" or "Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to

tell you"

My oxen and fattened cattle have been killed

It is implied that the animals are cooked and ready to eat.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My servants have killed and cooked my oxen and my fattened cattle"

My oxen and fattened cattle

"My best oxen and calves for eating"

Matthew 22:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

But they paid no attention

"But the guests the king invited ignored the invitation"

Matthew 22:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 22:7

they destroyed those murderers

"they killed those murderers." If your language has a strong word for "killed," you might want to use it here.

Matthew 22:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

those who were invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those whom I invited"

Matthew 22:9

the highway crossings

"where the main roads of the city cross." The king is sending the servants to the place where they are most likely to find people.

Matthew 22:10

both bad and good

"both the good people and the bad people"

So the wedding hall was filled with guests

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So the guests filled the wedding hall"

hall

a large room

Matthew 22:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

Matthew 22:12

how did you come in here without wedding clothes?

The king uses a question to scold the guest. Alternate translation: "you are not wearing proper clothes for a wedding. You should not be here."

the man was speechless

"the man was silent"

Matthew 22:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his parable about a marriage feast.

Bind this man hand and foot

"Tie him up so that he cannot move his hands or feet"

the outer darkness

Here "outer darkness" is a metonym for the place where God sends those who reject them. This is a place that is completely separated from God forever. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]

weeping and the grinding of teeth

"Grinding of teeth" is symbolic action, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]

Matthew 22:14

For many people are called, but few are chosen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God invites many people, but he only chooses a few"

For

This marks a transition. Jesus has ended the parable and now explains the point of the parable.

Matthew 22:15

Connecting Statement:

This begins an account of the religious leaders trying to trap Jesus with several difficult questions. Here the Pharisees ask him about paying taxes to Caesar.

how they might entrap Jesus in his own talk

"how they could cause Jesus to say something wrong so they could arrest him"

Matthew 22:16

their disciples ... Herodians

The disciples of the Pharisees supported paying taxes only to Jewish authorities. The Herodians supported paying taxes to the Roman authorities. It is implied that the

Pharisees believed that no matter what Jesus said, he would offend one of these groups.

Herodians

These were officials and followers of the Jewish king Herod. He was friends with Roman authorities.

you do not show partiality between people

"you do not show special honor to anyone" or "you do not consider anyone more important than anyone else"

Matthew 22:17

to pay taxes to Caesar

People did not pay taxes directly to Caesar but to one of his tax collectors. Alternate translation: "to pay the taxes that Caesar requires"

Matthew 22:18

Why are you testing me, you hypocrites?

Jesus uses a question to scold those who were trying to trap him. Alternate translation: "Do not test me, you hypocrites!" or "I know that you hypocrites are only trying to test me!"

Matthew 22:19

denarius

This was a Roman coin worth one day's wages.

Matthew 22:20

to them

Here "them" refers to the Herodians and the disciples of the Pharisees.

Whose image and name are these?

Jesus uses a question to get the people to think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: "Tell me whose image and name you see on this coin."

Matthew 22:21

Caesar's

You can make clear the understood information in their response. Alternate translation: "The coin has Caesar's image and name on it"

things that are Caesar's

"things that belong to Caesar"

things that are God's

"things that belong to God"

Matthew 22:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 22:23

Connecting Statement:

The Sadducees try to trap Jesus by asking him a difficult question about marriage and the resurrection of the dead.

Matthew 22:24

Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies ... brother.'

The religious leaders were asking Jesus about what Moses had written in the scriptures. If your language does not allow quotes within quotes, this could be stated as an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies ...brother."

his brother ... his wife ... his brother

Here "his" refers to the dead man.

Matthew 22:25

Connecting Statement:

The Sadducees continue asking Jesus a question.

The first

"The oldest"

Matthew 22:26

the second ... the third ... the seventh

"the next oldest ... the next oldest ... the youngest" or "his oldest younger brother ... that brother's oldest younger brother ... the youngest"

Matthew 22:27

After them all

"After every brother had died"

Matthew 22:28

Now

Here the Sadducees shift from the story about the seven brothers to their actual question.

in the resurrection

"when dead people come back to life"

Matthew 22:29

You are mistaken

It is implied that Jesus means that they are mistaken about what they think about the resurrection. Alternate translation: "You are mistaken about the resurrection"

the power of God

"what God is able to do"

Matthew 22:30

in the resurrection

"when dead people rise back to life"

they neither marry

"people will not marry"

nor are given in marriage

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"nor will people give their children in marriage"

Matthew 22:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins asking a question to show that people who have died will live again. He is scolding the Sadducees by asking this question. He is not looking for an answer.

have you not read

This is the beginning of a question that end with the words "the God of Jacob" in verse 32. Jesus asks this question to remind the religious leaders of what they know from scripture. If this rhetorical question is translated as a statement, the question mark in verse 32 would be changed to a period. Alternate translation: "you have read"

what was spoken to you by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"what God spoke to you"

Matthew 22:32

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes asking the question he began in verse 31.

the God of Jacob?

This question begins in verse 31 and ends in verse 32. Jesus uses this question to remind the Sadducees of what is in the scripture and to rebuke them for not understanding it. If you translated the rhetorical question as a statement in verse 31, then the question mark here would be changed to a period. Alternate translation: "the God of Jacob."

'I am the God of ... Jacob'

You can translate the direct quotation as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "that he is the God of ... Jacob"

of the dead, but of the living

These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives.

Alternate translation: "of dead people, but he is the God of living people"

Matthew 22:33

General Information:

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Matthew 22:34

General Information:

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Matthew 22:35

Connecting Statement:

A Pharisee who was an expert in the law tries to trap Jesus by asking him a difficult question about the greatest commandment.

Matthew 22:36

General Information:

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Matthew 22:37

General Information:

Jesus quotes a verse from Deuteronomy as the greatest commandment.

with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind

These three phrases are used together to mean

"completely" or "earnestly." Here "heart" and "soul" are metonyms for a person's inner being.

Matthew 22:38

the great and first commandment

Here "great" and "first" mean the same thing. They emphasize that this is the most important commandment.

Matthew 22:39

General Information:

Jesus quotes a verse from Leviticus as the second greatest commandment.

your neighbor

Here "neighbor" means more than just those who live nearby. Jesus means a person must love all people.

Matthew 22:40

On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets Here the phrase "the whole law and the prophets" refers to all of scripture. Alternate translation: "Everything that Moses and the prophets wrote in the scriptures is based on these two commandments"

Matthew 22:41

Connecting Statement:

Jesus asks the Pharisees a difficult question in order to stop their attempts to trap him.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story in which Jesus asks the religious leaders a question.

Matthew 22:42

son ... son of David

In both of these "son" means "descendant."

Matthew 22:43

General Information:

Jesus quotes from the Psalms to show that the Christ is more than just "the son of David."

How then does David in the Spirit call him Lord

Jesus uses a question to make the religious leaders think deeply about the Psalm he is about to quote. Alternate

translation: "Then, tell me why David in the Spirit calls him Lord"

David in the Spirit

"David, whom the Holy Spirit is inspiring." This means the Holy Spirit is influencing what David says.

call him

Here "him" refers to the Christ, who is also the descendant of David.

Matthew 22:44

The Lord said

Here "Lord" refers to God the Father.

to my Lord

Here "Lord" refers to the Christ. Also, "my" refers to David. This means the Christ is superior to David.

Sit at my right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

until I make your enemies your footstool

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "until I conquer your enemies" or "until I make your enemies bow down before you"

Matthew 22:45

General Information:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in Matthew 19:1, that tells of Jesus ministering in Judea.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the account of the religious leaders trying to trap Jesus with several difficult questions.

If David then calls the Christ 'Lord,' how is he David's son?

Jesus uses a question to make the religious leaders think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation:

"David calls him 'Lord,' so the Christ has to be more than just a descendant of David."

If David then calls the Christ

David referred to Jesus as "Lord" because Jesus was not only a descendant of David, but he was also superior to him.

Matthew 22:46

to answer him a word

Here "word" refers to what people say. Alternate

translation: "to answer him anything" or "to answer him" any more questions

It is implied that no one asked him the kind of questions that were intended to make him say something wrong so the religious leaders could arrest him.

Chapter 23

Matthew 23 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Hypocrites

Jesus calls the Pharisees hypocrites many times ([Matthew 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29](#)) and carefully tells what he means by doing that. The Pharisees made rules that no one could actually obey, and then they persuaded the ordinary people that they were guilty because they could not obey the rules. Also, the Pharisees obeyed their own rules instead of obeying God's original commands in the law of Moses.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Name calling

In most cultures, it is wrong to insult people. The Pharisees took many of the words in this chapter as insults. Jesus called them "hypocrites," "blind guides," "fools," and "serpents" ([Matthew 23:16-17](#)). Jesus uses these words to say that God would surely punish them because they were doing wrong.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus uses a paradox when he says, "He who is greatest among you will be your servant" ([Matthew 23:11-12](#)).

Links:

[Matthew 23:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 23

23:1-12

How did the scribes and pharisees sit in Moses's seat?

[23:2]

Jesus said that the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say they they thought God gave them permission to do the things that Moses did. When Moses told people to do something in the Law of Moses, it was as if God told them to do it. The Scribes and Pharisees thought this was true when they taught people.

See: Scribe; Pharisees; Metaphor; Law of Moses

Why should people not imitate the deeds of the Scribes and Pharisees?

[23:3]

Jesus said that the people should not imitate the deeds of the Scribes and Pharisees. That is, they should not do the same types of things the Scribes and Pharisees did. This is because the Scribes and Pharisees did not do the things they taught. They taught good things, but they did not do these good things.

See: Scribe; Pharisees

What were phylacteries?

[23:5]

Phylacteries were leather bags or boxes in which pieces of parchment with portions of the Law of Moses written on them were placed. The Jewish leaders wore these on the forearms or fastened in some way onto their foreheads.

See: Deuteronomy 6:8, 11:18

Advice to translators: Parchment were pieces of leather and someone could write on them.

What did it mean for the Pharisees to “enlarge the edges of their garments”?

[23:5]

The Jews wore clothes with tassels on the edges or corners. These were to remind the people of the Law of Moses. The Pharisees purposefully wore the tassels on the edges of their garments extra long, so people would see them and want to honor them. They did not do this to honor God.

See: Law of Moses; Pharisees

See: Numbers 15:38-39

Why did Jesus not want people to be called “rabbi”?

[23:8]

Some scholars think Jesus did not want people to want to be called “rabbi” because people who did this thought they were greater than other people. Fewer scholars think Jesus was saying that there was truly only one “rabbi” or teacher God sent to men, and that was Jesus.

See: Rabbi

Why did Jesus not want people to be called “father”?

[23:9]

Jesus did not want people to call someone “father” in this way because there is only one who Jesus believed was the father, and that is God. God is the only father in this way and is the only one to be honored as father.

See: God the Father

What did Jesus want people to do?

[23:11, 23:12]

Jesus wanted people to serve one another. In the kingdom of God, those who are considered the greatest are those who serve others. They serve others because this honors God. If they do not do this, then God will humble them in some way.

See: Kingdom of God

23:13-22

What was a woe?

[23:13]

See: Woe

What was a hypocrite?

[23:13]

A hypocrite was someone who said one thing and did something different.

See: Hypocrisy (Hypocrite)

How do the scribes and Pharisees shut the kingdom of heaven?

[23:13]

Jesus said that the Scribes and Pharisees shut the kingdom of heaven. Some scholars think the Pharisees did this by teaching false things about God. They did not want people to enter into the kingdom of heaven. They could not help people to be at peace with God because they were not at peace with God.

See: Scribe; Pharisees; Kingdom of God

What did Matthew write in verse 14?

[23:14]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament include a verse 14 which says, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, while you make a show of long prayers. You will therefore receive greater condemnation.” Other ancient copies of the Greek New Testament put these words after verse 12. More and older copies of Greek New Testament do not contain these words. Scholars do not think Matthew wrote these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

What did Jesus mean by telling the Pharisees, “you go over sea and land to make one convert”?

[23:15]

When Jesus said the Scribes and Pharisees went over sea and land to make one convert he was using a figure of speech. That is, they worked very hard to get someone to worship God in the way they thought was right. However, when they do this, they taught them the wrong things. This made it harder for them to know the right things. People would not have peace with God even though the Pharisees promised them peace with God.

See: Scribe; Pharisees

What was a blind guide?

[23:16]

Jesus spoke about a blind guide. This was a metaphor. A guide was someone who helped people to know where to go or what to do. When he said they were blind, he wanted to say that they did not understand spiritual things.

See: Blind (Metaphor)

What did it mean for someone to "swear"?

[23:16]

he Pharisees were wrong with their teaching about swearing an oath. Jesus taught them that it was wrong to break any oath.

See: Swear (Oath)

Why did Jesus talk about a cup and a plate?

[23:25, 23:26]

When Jesus taught about the cup and the plate, he used a metaphor. Just as a person cleaned the outside of a cup, so Jesus was telling the Jewish leaders that they were only concerned about how they looked on the outside. That is, they were concerned with what people thought of them. Jesus taught the Jewish leaders that they should be more concerned about the things they thought and wanted to do. If they did that, they would do the right things.

See: Metaphor; Clean and Unclean

How were the Jewish leaders like whitewashed tombs?

[23:27]

When Jesus said the Jewish leaders were like whitewashed tombs he used a metaphor. Some scholars think Jesus was telling the Pharisees that they tried to make themselves look good on the outside, but on the inside was nothing but unclean thoughts and lives.

See: Tomb; Metaphor; Clean and Unclean

23:29-39

Why did Jesus talk about the prophets?

[23:29]

Jesus rebuked the Jewish leaders. These leaders thought they honored the prophets by decorating their tombs. They thought they would not have killed the prophets if they were alive when the prophets were alive. However, Jesus lived among the Pharisees and he was God's greatest prophet. The Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus. They would be punished and live forever in hell because they rejected Jesus.

See: Prophet; Pharisees; Punish (Punishment); Hell

Who did Jesus send?

[23:34]

Jesus talked about sending certain people. These were the prophets and apostles. He sent them to Israel to declare the truth about Jesus. He prophesied that the Jewish leaders would also reject the people Jesus sent. All people who followed the Jewish leaders will also be punished.

See: Prophet; Apostle; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Synagogue; Crucify (Crucifixion); Punish (Punishment)

Who were Abel and Zechariah?

[23:35]

Abel and Zechariah were people who were killed because they obeyed God. In the Old Testament, Abel was the first person murdered, and Zechariah was the last person murdered.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What did Jesus say to Jerusalem?

[23:37]

Jesus spoke to Jerusalem. He was speaking to the Jews. God sent prophets to the Jews so they would honor and obey God. However, they did not want to do these things. Because of this, God will punish the Jews. They will not see Jesus until he returns.

See: Psalm 118:26

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Prophet; Punish (Punishment)

Matthew 23:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story, in which Jesus teaches about salvation and the final judgment. Here he begins to warn the people about the scribes and Pharisees.

Matthew 23:2

sit in Moses' seat

Here "seat" represents the authority to rule and make

judgments. Alternate translation: "have authority as Moses had" or "have authority to say what the law of Moses means"

Matthew 23:3

whatever ... do these things and observe them

"all the things ... do them and observe them" or

"everything ... do it and observe it"

Matthew 23:4

they bind heavy burdens that are difficult to carry, and then they put

them on people's shoulders. But they themselves will not move a finger to carry them

Here "bind heavy burdens ... put them on people's shoulders" is a metaphor for the religious leaders making many difficult rules and making the people obey them. And "will not move a finger" is an idiom that means the religious leaders will not help the people. Alternate translation: "they make you obey many rules that are difficult to follow. But they do nothing at all to help you follow the rules"

Matthew 23:5

They do all their deeds to be seen by people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"They do all their deeds so that people can see what they do"

For they make their phylacteries wide, and they enlarge the edges of their garments

Both of these are things the Pharisees do to appear as if they honor God more than other people.

phylacteries

small leather boxes containing paper with scripture written on it

they enlarge the edges of their garments

The Pharisees made the tassels on the bottom of their robes especially long to show their devotion to God.

Matthew 23:6

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the crowds and disciples about the Pharisees.

places of honor ... chief seats

Both of these are the places where the most important people sit.

Matthew 23:7

marketplaces

large, open-air areas where people buy and sell items

to be called 'Rabbi' by people.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for people to call them 'Rabbi.'"

Matthew 23:8

But you must not be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"But you must not let anyone call you"

you

All occurrences of "you" are plural and refer to all of Jesus's followers.

all of you are brothers

Here "brothers" means "fellow believers."

Matthew 23:9

call no man on earth your father

Jesus is using hyperbole to tell his hearers that they must not allow even the most important people to be more important to them than God is. Alternate translation: "do not call any man on earth your father" or "do not say that any man on earth is your father"

you have only one Father

"Father" here is an important title for God.

Matthew 23:10

Neither must you be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Also, do not let anyone call you"

you have only one teacher, the Christ

When Jesus said "the Christ," he was speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the Christ, am your only teacher"

Matthew 23:11

he who is greatest among you

"the person who is most important among you"

among you

Here "you" is plural and refers to Jesus's followers.

Matthew 23:12

exalts himself

"makes himself important"

will be humbled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will humble"

will be exalted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will make important" or "God will honor"

Matthew 23:13

General Information:

Jesus speaks of the kingdom of heaven as if it were a house, the door into which the Pharisees have shut from the outside so that neither they nor anyone else can enter the house. If you do not keep the metaphor of the house, be sure to change all instances of "shut" and "enter." Also, since the words "kingdom of heaven," which refer to God, who lives in heaven, occur only in Matthew, try to use your language's word for "heaven" in your translation.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to rebuke the religious leaders because of their hypocrisy.

But woe to you

"How terrible it will be for you!" See how you translated this in Matthew 11:21.

You shut the kingdom of heaven against people ... you do not enter it ...

neither do you allow those about to enter to do so

Jesus is speaking of the kingdom of heaven, which is God ruling over his people, as if it were a house, the door into

which the Pharisees have shut from the outside so that

neither they nor anyone else can enter the house. The

phrase "kingdom of heaven" is found only in the book of

Matthew. If possible, use your language's word for "heaven"

in your translation. Alternate translation: "You make it

impossible for people to enter the kingdom of heaven ... you

do not enter it ... neither do you allow those about to enter

to do so" or "You prevent people from accepting God, who

lives in heaven, as king ... you do not accept him as king ...

and you make it impossible for those about to accept him as

king to do so"

Matthew 23:14

General Information:

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Matthew 23:15

you go over sea and land

This is an idiom that means they go to distant places.

Alternate translation: "you travel great distances"

to make one convert

"to make one person accept your religion"

son of hell

Here "son of" is an idiom that means "one belonging to."
Alternate translation: "person who belongs in hell" or
"person who should go to hell"

Matthew 23:16

blind guides

The Jewish leaders were spiritually blind. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth. See how you translated "blind guides" in [Matthew 15:14]

by the temple, it is nothing

"by the temple does not have to keep his oath"

is bound to his oath

"is tied to his oath." The phrase "bound to his oath" is a metaphor for being required to do what one has said he would do in an oath. Alternate translation: "must do what he promised to do"

Matthew 23:17

blind fools

The Jewish leaders were spiritually blind. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth.

Which is greater, the gold or the temple that makes the gold holy?

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the Pharisees because they treated the gold as if it were more important than the temple. Alternate translation: "The temple that has dedicated the gold to God is more important than the gold!"
the temple that makes the gold holy

"the temple that makes the gold belong to God alone"

Matthew 23:18

And

The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "And you also say"

it is nothing

"he does not have to do what he has sworn to do" or "he does not have to keep his oath"

the gift

This is an animal or grain that a person would bring to God by putting it on God's altar.

is bound to his oath

"is tied to his oath." Being required to do what one has said he would do in an oath is spoken of as if he is tied to the oath. Alternate translation: "must do what he promised to do"

Matthew 23:19

blind people

The Jewish leaders were spiritually blind. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth.

Which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift holy?

Jesus uses this question to rebuke the Pharisees for treating the gift as if it were more important than the altar. Alternate translation: "The altar that makes the gift holy is greater than the gift!"

the altar that makes the gift holy

"the altar that makes the gift special to God"

Matthew 23:20

by everything on it

"by all the gifts that people have placed on it"

Matthew 23:21

the one who lives in it

God the Father

Matthew 23:22

him who sits on it

God the Father

Matthew 23:23

Woe to you ... hypocrites!

"How terrible it will be for you ... hypocrites!" See how you translated this in Matthew 11:21.

mint and dill and cumin

These are various leaves and seeds people used to make food taste good.

you have left undone

"you have not obeyed"

the weightier matters

"the more important matters"

But these you ought to have done

"You ought to have obeyed these more important laws"

and not to have left the other undone

This can be stated in positive and active form. Alternate translation: "and to make sure the other is done" or "and to make sure to do the other"

Matthew 23:24

You blind guides

Jesus uses this metaphor to describe the Pharisees. Jesus means that the Pharisees do not understand God's commands or how to please him. Therefore, they cannot teach others how to please God. See how you translated this metaphor in [Matthew 15:14]

you who strain out a gnat but swallow a camel

Being careful to follow the less important laws and ignoring the more important laws is as foolish as being careful not to swallow the smallest unclean animal but eating the meat of the largest unclean animal. Alternate translation: "you are as foolish as a person who strains out a gnat that falls into his drink but swallows a camel"

strain out a gnat

This means to pour a liquid through a cloth to remove a gnat from a drink.

gnat

a small flying insect

Matthew 23:25

Woe to you ... hypocrites!

"How terrible it will be for you ... hypocrites!" See how you translated this in Matthew 11:21.

For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence

This is a metaphor that means the scribes and Pharisees appear pure on the outside to others, but on the inside they are wicked.

they are full of robbery and self-indulgence

"they take what belongs to others, and they do almost everything to benefit themselves"

Matthew 23:26

You blind Pharisee

The Pharisees were spiritually blind. Although they thought of themselves as teachers, they were unable to understand God's truth.

Clean first the inside of the cup and of the plate, so that the outside may become clean also

This is a metaphor that means that if they would become pure in their inner being, then the result is that they would be pure on the outside as well.

Matthew 23:27

you are like whitewashed tombs ... unclean

This is a simile that means the scribes and Pharisees may appear to be pure on the outside, but they are wicked on the inside.

whitewashed tombs

"tombs that someone has painted white." The Jews would paint tombs white so that people would easily see them and avoid touching them. Touching a tomb would make a person ceremonially unclean.

Matthew 23:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 23:29

of the righteous

This nominal adjective can be stated as an adjective.

Alternate translation: "of the righteous people"

Matthew 23:30

in the days of our fathers

"during the time of our forefathers"

we would not have been partners with them

"we would not have joined with them"

shedding the blood of

Here "blood" refers to life. To shed blood means to kill.

Alternate translation: "killing" or "murdering"

Matthew 23:31

sons of those who murdered the prophets

Possible meanings are 1) the word "sons" is a metonym for "descendants." Alternate translation: "descendants of those who murdered the prophets" or 2) the word "sons" is a metaphor for people who are like others. Alternate translation: "just like those who murdered the prophets."

Matthew 23:32

You also fill up the measure of your fathers

Jesus uses this as a metaphor meaning the Pharisees will complete the wicked behavior that their forefathers started when they killed the prophets. Alternate translation: "You also finish the sins your ancestors began"

Matthew 23:33

You serpents, you offspring of vipers

Serpents are snakes, and vipers are poisonous snakes. They are dangerous and often symbols of evil. Alternate translation: "You who are as evil and dangerous as poisonous snakes"

offspring of vipers

Here "offspring" means "having the characteristic of." See how you translated a similar phrase in Matthew 3:7.

how will you escape the judgment of hell?

Jesus uses this question as a rebuke. Alternate translation: "there is no way for you to escape the judgment of hell!"

Matthew 23:34

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the religious leaders because of their hypocrisy.

I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes

Sometimes the present tense is used to show that someone will do something very soon. Alternate translation: "I will send prophets, wise men, and scribes to you"

chase from city to city

You may need to make explicit that the purpose of chasing is to persecute. Alternate translation: "chase from city to city and persecute them" or "persecute them in city after city"

Matthew 23:35

upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on the earth ... blood ... blood

The phrase "upon you will come" is an idiom that means to receive punishment. To shed blood is a metonym meaning to kill people, so "righteous blood that has been shed on the earth" represents righteous people who have been killed. Alternate translation: "God will punish you for the murders of all the righteous people ... murder .. murder"

Abel ... Zechariah

Abel was the first righteous victim of murder, and Zechariah, who was murdered by Jews in the temple, was probably thought to be the last. These two men represent all the righteous people who have been murdered.

Zechariah

This Zechariah is unknown. He was not the father of John the Baptist.

whom you murdered

Jesus does not mean the people to whom he is speaking actually murdered Zechariah. He means their ancestors did.

Matthew 23:36

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Matthew 23:37

Connecting Statement:

Jesus mourns over the people of Jerusalem because they reject every messenger that God sends to them.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem

Jesus speaks to the people of Jerusalem as though they were the city itself.

those who are sent to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those whom God sends to you"

your children

Jesus is speaking to Jerusalem as if it is a woman and the people are her children. Alternate translation: "your people" or "your inhabitants"

just as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings

This is a simile that emphasizes Jesus's love for the people and how he wanted to take care of them.

hen

a female chicken. You can translate with any bird that protects her children under her wing.

Matthew 23:38

your house is left to you desolate

"God will leave your house, and it will be empty"

your house

Possible meanings are 1) "the city of Jerusalem" or 2) "the

temple."
Matthew 23:39
I say to you
This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord
Here "in the name" means "in the power" or "as a
representative." See how you translated this in [Matthew
21:9]

Chapter 24

Matthew 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Jesus begins to prophesy about the future from that time until he returns as king of everything. (See: prophet)

Special concepts in this chapter

"The end of the age"

In this chapter, Jesus gives an answer to his disciples when they ask how they will know when he will come again.

The example of Noah

In the time of Noah, God sent a great flood to punish people for their sins. He warned them many times about this coming flood, but it actually began suddenly. In this chapter, Jesus draws a comparison between that flood and the last days. (See: sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Let"

The ULB uses this word to begin several commands of Jesus, such as "let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains" (24:16), "let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house" (24:17), and "let him who is in the field not return to take his cloak" (24:18). There are many different ways to form a command. Translators must select the most natural ways in their own languages. Note that this word does not mean "permit."

Links:

[Matthew 24:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 24

24:1-14

What did Jesus say about the temple buildings?

[24:1]

The disciples were amazed by the buildings that made the temple in Jerusalem. However, Jesus prophesied that the temple would be destroyed. The destruction of the temple happened about 40 years after Jesus returned to heaven. However, it was not completely destroyed at that time. There is one wall that still remains from the temple in Jerusalem.

See: Disciple; Temple; Prophecy (Prophesy) ; Heaven

See Map: Jerusalem; Mount of Olives

What was a sign?

[24:3]

See: Sign

What was meant by the words, "the end of the age"?

[24:3]

Scholars have different ideas about the end of the age.

The end of the age took place about 40 years after Jesus died when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. The destruction of Jerusalem began the end of the age and it will end in the future. Jesus spoke about actual events that will occur.

See: Last Days

What did Jesus teach about the signs of the "end of the age"?

[24:4]

Jesus told his disciples about things that would happen at the end of the age. However, the disciples did not know when all these things were going to happen. Jesus did talk about certain things that must happen before he returns to the earth.

There will be many false Christs. That is, people who say they are messiah, but are false teachers. There will be wars and rumors of wars. That is, people will worry about wars and there will be many wars. There will be many earthquakes and famines. Jesus said these are "birth pains." This was a metaphor to say that difficult things that will happen are just the beginning of the difficult things to come. People who worship Jesus will be persecuted. Some people will make it so that certain Christians they know will be persecuted. There will be many false prophets. They will teach people the wrong things and people will obey them. People will do many evil things and because of this people will stop loving one another.

See: Last Days; Disciple; Jesus' Return to Earth; Messiah (Christ); Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution) ; Gospel; False

Prophet; Worship

How are these things like the pain of having a child?

[24:8]

Jesus said that these things are like the pains of having a child. This was a metaphor. When a mother brings a child into the world, it hurts. However, something new is made. Jesus was warning the disciples that there would be difficult and painful things in the future. Those things would happen before Jesus returns.

See: Metaphor; Disciple; Jesus' Return to Earth; Persecute (Persecution)

What did Jesus mean when he said, "for my name's sake"?

[24:9]

When Jesus said, "for my name's sake" he meant that people were going to persecute the disciples and even kill them because they were loyal to him, and honored him as the messiah.

See: Name; Disciple; Persecute (Persecution) ; Messiah (Christ)

How will the person who "endures to the end" be saved?

[24:13]

Jesus said that the person who endures to the end when persecuted will be saved. Scholars think Jesus was talking about different things when he said these words.

Some scholars think Jesus was talking about a person who remains faithful, even when there is persecution. That is, Jesus will ultimately save them from persecution on earth by taking them to heaven.

Other scholars think there will be people who say they are Christians, but reject Jesus when persecution comes. They prove that they were never truly Christians.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Heaven; Gospel; Kingdom of God; Preach (Preacher)

24:15-28

What is the abomination of desolation?

[24:15]

Jesus talked about an "abomination of desolation." This was when someone who rejected God did something that greatly dishonored God. Daniel also wrote about this (see: Daniel 7:27; 11:31; 12:11). Some scholars think Daniel wrote about a Gentile leader who sacrificed an unclean animal on the altar in the temple. Some scholars think Jesus talked about a time when the antichrist would sacrifice something in the temple or claim to be God in the temple. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about a time when people would no longer go to the temple. Other scholars think it is some type of idolatry. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about a time 40 years after he returned to heaven. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about a time near to his return to the earth (see: Revelation 4-19).

See: Gentile; Sacrifice; Clean and Unclean; Altar; Temple; Antichrist; Idolatry (Idol); Heaven; Jesus' Return to Earth

What did Jesus want people to do when they saw the abomination of desolation?

[24:16]

Jesus wanted people to flee and go away from Jerusalem when people saw the abomination of desolation. He wanted them to know that he will judge people at this time. He warned people by telling them that there would be great dangers at this time.

See: Daniel 9:27

See: Woe; Tribulation; Judge (Judgment)

How did Jesus want the people to pray?

[24:20]

When Jesus told the people to pray, he meant that they should pray continually. This is because it would be very difficult to live during these times. Winter weather made travel much more difficult. The Jewish Christians still followed the Sabbath according to the Law of Moses, so traveling on a Sabbath would also be difficult for them. He wanted them to pray that they would not have more difficult things in their life when they had to live through these difficult times.

See: Pray (Prayer); Sabbath; Law of Moses; Persecute (Persecution)

What is the great tribulation?

[24:21]

See: Tribulation

What was meant by the words, "unless those days are shortened"?

[24:22]

Jesus said that if God did not make this period of time short, then no flesh would be saved. That is, no one would live through it. Jesus warned people about a time of great tribulation. Scholars think that God's judgment will be so complete that all people would die. However, God will shorten the time of his judgment on earth so that his elect will be saved.

See: Elect (Election); Tribulation; Judge (Judgment)

Why should people not believe that Jesus returned?

[24:23]

Jesus warned about a time when many people would say they are the messiah or that they are Jesus who returned to earth. However, everyone will know that Jesus has returned to earth when he returns (see: Matthew 24:23-27). Therefore, people should not believe other people who say this even if they do miracles and signs. However, many Christians will believe these false messiahs and false prophets.

See: Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth; False Prophet; Sign; Miracle; Son of Man

Why did Jesus speak about vultures?

[24:28]

Jesus spoke about vultures. They are birds that eat dead animals. They can see these dead animals from far away. When people saw vultures in the sky, they knew that there was a dead animal. This was a metaphor. He was speaking about how everyone will know when Jesus returns to the earth.

See: Metaphor

24:29-44

When are the days of tribulation?

[24:29]

Jesus spoke about certain days of tribulation or trouble. Some scholars think he spoke about the difficult times that happened soon after he returned to earth. Other scholars think he spoke about the time near his return to the earth.

See: Tribulation; Jesus' Return to Earth; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Jesus talk about things that happen in the sky?

[24:29]

Jesus spoke about certain things people could see in the sky. Some scholars think these things will actually happen just before Jesus returns to the earth. Other scholars think this was a metaphor. Just as the stars will fall from the sky, so the rulers of the world will be destroyed. Jesus said these things to warn people.

See: Joel 2:10; 3:15; Ezekiel 32:7-8

See: Metaphor

What will people see?

[24:30]

The people will see sign of the Son of Man. That is, the sign itself will be Jesus coming to earth with glory. Scholars think Jesus will return to earth and everyone will know that he is God.

See: Sign; Son of Man; Glory (Glorify); Jesus is God; Jesus' Return to Earth; Heaven

What will Jesus do when he returns to the earth?

[24:30, 24:31]

When Jesus returns to the earth, he will bring angels who serve him. He will gather all Christians from all over the world and bring them to himself.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Angel; Elect (Election)

Why did Jesus talk about a fig tree?

[24:32]

Jesus talked about a fig tree to help people understand the things he said. This was a metaphor. When a fig tree does certain things, people know that the seasons are changing. He wanted people to know that he was going to return to the earth soon when the things he spoke about happened.

See: Metaphor; Jesus' Return to Earth; Hebrew Calendar (Seasons in Israel)

When will all these things happen?

[24:34]

Some scholars think that these things happened 40 years after Jesus prophesied these things. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about people in the future who lived when they saw the things he spoke about in this passage.

Jesus said that heaven and earth will end, but his words will not change. The apostle spoke about heaven and earth ending (see: Revelation 21). However, the things about which Jesus spoke must first happen.

Jesus said that he did not know when these things would happen. Only God the Father knew these things will happen.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Jesus' Return to Earth; Heaven; God the Father; Apostle

Why did Jesus speak about Noah?

[24:37]

When Noah lived, God punished the whole world with a flood. God warned people that he was going to punish them, but they did not listen to Noah, or repent. When the flood came, the people were not prepared and they could not escape the waters of the flood. This is also how it will be when Jesus returns. People will not believe the things Jesus said. They will be unprepared, that is, they will not repent of their sin. God will punish them and it will be too late for them to repent.

See: Repent (Repentance); Son of Man; Punish (Punishment); Sin

How will one person be taken and the other left behind?

[24:40]

Jesus warned that two people will be together. One of them will be taken and the other will be left behind. Some scholars

think Jesus was speaking about the rapture. At this time, Christians will be taken from the earth and non-Christians will be left behind to endure the tribulation. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about non-Christians being taken away to judgment and death.

See: RaptureKingdom of God; Tribulation; Judge (Judgment)

24:45-51

Why did Jesus talk about a master and a servant?

[24:45]

Jesus talked about a master and a servant. He wanted the Chrsitians to encourage other Chrsitians because they served him. He will reward the Christians who obey him. However, there are some people who do not obey Jesus and Jesus will reject them. Scholars think these are people who say they are Christians but who reject Jesus and do not serve him.

Because of this, Jesus will send them to be punished forever in hell.

See: Reward; Hell

What was a hypocrite?

[24:51]

A hypocrite was someone who said one thing and did something else.

See: Hypocrisy (Hypocirte)

What is weeping and grinding of teeth?

[24:51]

Jesus spoke about weeping and grinding teeth. This is what people would do when they were suffering. Scholars think people who are in great pain will grind their teeth and cry loudly. In the Bible, these words are used to talk about the things people do when they are being punished.

See: Punish (Punishment)

Matthew 24:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to describe events that will happen before he comes again during the end times.

from the temple

It is implied that Jesus was not in the temple itself. He was in the courtyard around the temple.

Matthew 24:2

Do you not see all these things?

Jesus uses a question to make the disciples think deeply about what he will tell them. Alternate translation: "Let me tell you something about all these buildings."

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

not one stone will be left on another that will not be torn down

It is implied that enemy soldiers will tear down the stones.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"when the enemy soldiers come, they will tear down every stone in these buildings"

Matthew 24:3

What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age

Here "your coming" refers to when Jesus will come in power, establishing God's reign on earth and bringing this age to an end. Alternate translation: "What will be the sign that you are about to come and that the world is about to end"

Matthew 24:4

Be careful that no one leads you astray

Here "leads you astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "Be careful that no one deceives you"

Matthew 24:5

many will come in my name

The name here is the name of Messiah or Christ, not of Jesus and seems to be a metonym for the authority of the

Christ. Alternate translation: "many will claim to have my authority as Christ"

will lead many astray

Here "leads you astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "will deceive many people"

Matthew 24:6

See that you are not troubled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Do not let these things trouble you"

Matthew 24:7

For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom

Both of these mean the same thing. Jesus is emphasizing that people everywhere will fight each other.

Matthew 24:8

the beginning of birth pains

This refers to the pains a woman feels before giving birth to a child. This metaphor means these wars, famines, and earthquakes are just the beginning of the events that will lead to the end of the age.

Matthew 24:9

they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you

"people will give you over to the authorities, who will make you suffer and will kill you."

You will be hated by all the nations

Here "nations" is a metonym, referring to the people of nations. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People from every nation will hate you" for my name's sake

Here "name" refers to the complete person. Alternate translation: "because you believe in me"

Matthew 24:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 24:11

will rise up

"Rise" here is an idiom for "become established." Alternate translation: "will come"

and lead many astray

Here "lead ... astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "and deceive many people"

Matthew 24:12

lawlessness will increase

The abstract noun "lawlessness" can be translated with the phrase "disobeying the law." Alternate translation: "disobeying the law will increase" or "people will disobey God's law more and more"

the love of many will grow cold

Possible meanings are 1) "many people will no longer love other people" or 2) "many people will no longer love God."

Matthew 24:13

the one who endures to the end will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will save the person who endures to the end"

the one who endures

"the person who stays faithful"

to the end

It is not clear whether the word "end" refers to when a person dies or when the persecution ends or the end of the age when God shows himself to be king. The main point is that they endure as long as necessary.

the end

"the end of the world" or "the end of the age"

Matthew 24:14

This good news of the kingdom will be preached

Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People will tell the good news that God will rule"

all the nations

Here, "nations" stands for people. Alternate translation: "all people in all places"

Matthew 24:15

the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the shameful one who defiles the things of God, about whom Daniel the prophet wrote"

let the reader understand

This is not Jesus speaking. Matthew added this to alert the reader that Jesus was using words that they would need to think about and interpret.

Matthew 24:16

General Information:

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Matthew 24:17

let him who is on the housetop

Housetops where Jesus lived were flat, and people could stand on them.

Matthew 24:18

General Information:

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Matthew 24:19

in those days

"at that time"

Matthew 24:20

that your flight will not occur

"that you will not have to flee" or "that you will not have to run away"

the winter

"the cold season"

Matthew 24:21

General Information:

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Matthew 24:22

Unless those days had been shortened, no flesh would be saved

This can be stated in positive and active form. Alternate translation: "If God had not shortened the time of suffering, everyone would have died" or "Because God shortened those days, some people lived"

no flesh

"nobody" or "no one." Here, "flesh" is poetic way of referring to people.

those days will be shortened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will shorten the time of suffering"

Matthew 24:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.

do not believe it

"do not believe the false thing they have said to you"

Matthew 24:24

so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect

Here "lead astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. This can be translated as two sentences. Alternate translation: "so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect" or "so as to deceive people. If possible, they would even deceive the elect"

Matthew 24:25

General Information:

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Matthew 24:26

if they say to you, 'Look, he is in the wilderness,' do

This can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "if someone tells you that the Christ is in the wilderness, do"

Or, 'See, he is in the inner rooms,'

This can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Or, if someone tells you that the Christ is in the inner room,"

in the inner rooms

"in a secret room" or "in secret places"

Matthew 24:27

as the lightning shines ... so will be the coming

This means that the Son of Man will come very quickly and will be easy to see.

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

Matthew 24:28

Wherever a dead animal is, there the vultures will gather

This is probably a proverb that the people of Jesus's time understood. Possible meanings are 1) when the Son of Man comes, everyone will see him and know that he has come, or 2) wherever spiritually dead people are, false prophets

will be there to tell them lies.

vultures

birds that eat the bodies of dead or dying creatures

Matthew 24:29

immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun

"as soon as the tribulation of those days has finished, the sun"

the tribulation of those days

"that time of suffering"

the sun will be darkened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will make the sun dark"

the powers of the heavens will be shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will shake things in the sky and above the sky"

Matthew 24:30

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

all the tribes

Here "tribes" refers to people. Alternate translation: "all the people of the tribes" or "all the people"

Matthew 24:31

He will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet

"He will have a trumpet sounded and send his angels" or

"He will have an angel blow a trumpet, and he will send his angels"

He ... his

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

they will gather

"his angels will gather"

his elect

These are the people whom the Son of Man has chosen.

from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other

Both of these mean the same thing. They are idioms that mean "from everywhere." Alternate translation: "from all over the world"

Matthew 24:32

General Information:

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Matthew 24:33

he is near, at the very gates

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person and using the imagery of a king or important official getting close to the gates of a walled city. This metaphor means the time for Jesus to come is soon. Alternate translation: "I am near and will soon appear"

Matthew 24:34

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

this generation will not pass away

Here "pass away" is a polite way of saying "die." Alternate translation: "the people of this generation will not all die"

this generation

Possible interpretations are 1) "all people alive today," referring to the people alive when Jesus was speaking, or 2) "all people alive when these things I have just told you about happen." Try to translate so that both interpretations are possible.

until all of these things will have happened

"until God causes all these things to happen"

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and the earth will pass away

The words "heaven" and "earth" are a synecdoche that includes everything that God has created, especially those things that seem permanent. Jesus is saying that his word, unlike these things, is permanent. Alternate translation:

"Even heaven and the earth will pass away"

my words will never pass away

Here "words" refers to what Jesus has said. Alternate

translation: "what I say will always be true"

Matthew 24:36

that day and hour

Here "day" and "hour" refer to the exact time that the Son of Man will return.

nor the Son

"not even the Son"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

Father

This is an important title for God.

Matthew 24:37

As the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man

"At the time when the Son of Man comes, it will be like the time of Noah."

so will be the coming of the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

Alternate translation: "so will it be when I, the Son of Man, come"

Matthew 24:38

General Information:

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Matthew 24:39

away—so will be the coming of the Son of Man

This can be translated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "away. This is how it will be when the Son of Man comes"

Matthew 24:40

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to tell his disciples to be ready for his return.

Then

This is when the Son of Man comes.

one will be taken, and one will be left

Possible meanings are 1) the Son of Man will take one away to heaven and will leave the other on earth for punishment or 2) the angels will take one away for punishment and leave the other for blessing.

Matthew 24:41

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 24:42

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true"

be on your guard

"pay attention"

Matthew 24:43

that if the master of the house ... broken into

Jesus uses a parable of a master and servants to illustrate

that his disciples should be prepared for his return.

the thief

Jesus is saying he will come when people are not expecting him, not that he will come to steal.

he would have been on guard

"he would have guarded his house"

would not have allowed his house to be broken into

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"would not have allowed anyone to get into his house to steal things"

Matthew 24:44

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

Matthew 24:45

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues his proverb of a master and servants to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return.

So who is the faithful and wise servant whom his master ... time?

Jesus uses this question to make his disciples think.

Alternate translation: "So who is the faithful and wise servant? He is the one whom his master ... time." or "Be like the faithful and wise servant, whom his master ... time."

give them their food

"give the people in the master's home their food"

Matthew 24:46

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 24:47

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Matthew 24:48

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes his proverb of a master and servants to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return.

says in his heart

Here "heart" refers to the mind. Alternate translation: "thinks in his mind"

My master has been delayed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My master is slow to return" or "My master will not return for a long time"

Matthew 24:49

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 24:50

on a day that the servant does not expect and at an hour that he does not know

Both of these statements mean the same thing. They emphasize that the master will come when the servant is not expecting him.

Matthew 24:51

cut him in pieces

This is an idiom that means to make the person suffer terribly.

assign him a place with the hypocrites

"put him with the hypocrites" or "send him to the place where hypocrites are sent"

there will be weeping and grinding of teeth

"Grinding of teeth" here is a symbolic act, representing extreme suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]

Chapter 25

Matthew 25 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the teaching of the previous chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

The parable of the ten virgins

Jesus told the parable of the ten virgins ([Matthew 25:1-13](#)) to tell his followers to be ready for him to return. His hearers could understand the parable because they knew Jewish wedding customs.

When the Jews arranged marriages, they would plan for the wedding to take place weeks or months later. At the proper time, the young man would go to his bride's house, where she would be waiting for him. The wedding ceremony would take place, and then the man and his bride would travel to his home, where there would be a feast.

Links:

[Matthew 25:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 25

25:1-13

Why did Jesus talk about ten virgins?

[25:1]

Jesus spoke about ten virgins and the kingdom of heaven. This was a parable. In ancient Israel, a groom would go to the house of his bride's parents to get married. Then he would bring her to his house at night. There would be a feast at his house.

Jesus wanted people to be ready for him to return, even if it took longer for Jesus to return than they expected. Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about Jews who lived during the tribulation. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking

about Christians.

The virgins who were not prepared for the groom to come were not allowed to be part of the wedding feast. Some scholars think this is because they rejected Jesus. They will be punished and live forever in hell. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about Christians who would not be rewarded because they did not obey Jesus.

Advice to translators: A virgin was someone who has never had sex. A groom or bridegroom was what people called a man who was getting married. A bride was what people called a woman who was getting married.

See: Kingdom of God; Parable; Bride of Christ; Wedding; Tribulation; Jesus' Return to Earth; Punish (Punishment); Reward

25:14-30

Why did Jesus talk about the parable of the five talents?

[25:15]

Jesus told these people a parable about servants. Jesus is the master. He gave each of his servants talents. A talent was a very large sum of money. It would normally take a person 20 years to earn this much money. He wanted to say that Jesus gave people different abilities and trusted them to serve him in different ways. Two of the servants used their money. He wanted people to know that it pleased God when people used their abilities to serve God. The other man did not use the abilities God gave him. Overall, he wanted people to know that God would reward people who served and obeyed him. He would also entrust more to people who had been faithful to him.

When Jesus spoke about the evil servant, some scholars think he was speaking about the Jews. God had trusted them and told them about the messiah. However, they rejected the messiah and would be punished for it. Other scholars think that the evil servants were people who said they served God, but who were not at peace with God. They would be punished and sent to hell.

See: Parable; Reward; Punish (Punishment); Hell; Messiah (Christ)

What is the outer darkness?

[25:30]

When Jesus spoke about the outer darkness, he was speaking about hell.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Hell

What is weeping and grinding of teeth?

[25:30]

Jesus spoke about weeping and grinding teeth. This is what people would do when they were suffering. Scholars think people who are in great pain will grind their teeth and cry loudly. In the Bible, these words are used to talk about the things people do when they are being punished.

See: Punish (Punishment)

25:31-46

What will Jesus do when he returns to the earth?

[25:31]

When Jesus, the Son of man, returns to the earth, he will bring angels who serve him. He will gather all Christians from all over the world and bring them to himself. He will sit on his glorious throne. That is, he will rule the world.

Jesus will also separate the sheep from the goats. This is a metaphor. He will separate Christians from non-Christians.

Christians will inherit the kingdom of God. This is something that God prepared for them when he created the world. He rewards them because they served other people and when they served other people, they served God. He will punish those who did believe and obey God. They will be sent to hell to be punished.

See: Son of Man; Jesus' Return to Earth; Angel; Throne; Glory (Glorify); Metaphor; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Kingdom of God; Reward; Hell; Punish (Punishment); Righteous (Righteousness); Eternal Life

Matthew 25:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable about wise and foolish virgins to illustrate that his disciples should be prepared for his return.

the kingdom of heaven will be like

Here "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's rule as king. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" is used only in Matthew. If possible, use "heaven" in your translation. See how you translated this in [Matthew 13:24]

lamps

These could have been 1) lamps or 2) torches made by putting cloth around the end of a stick and wetting the cloth with oil.

Matthew 25:2

Five of them

"Five of the virgins"

Matthew 25:3

did not take any oil with them

"had with them only the oil in their lamps"

Matthew 25:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 25:5

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story. while the bridegroom was delayed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "while the bridegroom was taking a long time to arrive"

they all got sleepy

"all ten virgins got sleepy"

Matthew 25:6

there was a cry

"someone shouted"

Matthew 25:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable.

trimmed their lamps

"adjusted their lamps so they would burn brightly"

Matthew 25:8

The foolish said to the wise

These nominal adjectives can be stated as adjectives.

Alternate translation: "The foolish virgins said to the wise virgins"

our lamps are going out

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "the fire in our lamps is about to burn out"

Matthew 25:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 25:10

they went away

"the five foolish virgins went away"

to buy

The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "to buy more oil"

those who were ready

These are the virgins who had extra oil.

the door was shut

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the servants shut the door"

Matthew 25:11

open for us

This implicit information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "open the door for us so we can come inside"

Matthew 25:12

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes the parable about the ten virgins.

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what the master says next.

I do not know you

"I do not know who you are." This is the end of the parable.

Matthew 25:13

you do not know the day or the hour

Here "day" and "hour" refer to an exact time. The implied information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "you do not know the exact time when the Son of Man will return"

Matthew 25:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable about faithful and unfaithful servants to illustrate that his disciples should remain faithful during his absence and be prepared for his return.

it is like

The word "it" here refers to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 13:24).

was about to go

"was ready to go" or "was to go soon"

entrusted his possessions to them

"put them in charge of his possessions"

his possessions

"what he owned"

Matthew 25:15

five talents

"five talents of gold." Avoid translating this into modern money. A "talent" of gold was worth twenty years' wages.

The parable is contrasting the relative amounts of five, two, and one, as well as the large amount of wealth involved.

Alternate translation: "five bags of gold" or "five bags of gold, each worth 20 years' wages"

to another he gave two ... gave one talent

The word "talents" is understood from the previous phrase.

Alternate translation: "to another he gave two talents of gold ... gave one talent of gold" or "to another he gave two bags of gold ... gave one bag of gold"

according to his own ability

The implicit information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "according to each servant's skill in managing wealth"

Matthew 25:16

worked with them

"invested the talents" or "used them in business" or "traded with them"

gained another five talents

"out of his investments he earned another five talents"

Matthew 25:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable about the servants and the talents.

gained another two

"earned another two talents"

Matthew 25:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 25:19

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling the parable about the servants and the talents.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

Matthew 25:20

I have gained five talents more

"I have earned five more talents"

talents

A "talent" was worth twenty years' wages. Avoid translating this into modern money. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:15]

Matthew 25:21

Well done

"You have done well" or "You have done right." Your culture might have an expression that a master (or someone in authority) would use to show that he approves of what his servant (or someone under him) has done.

Enter into the joy of your master

The phrase "Enter into the joy" is an idiom. Also, the master is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "Come and be happy with me"

Matthew 25:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling the parable about the servants and the talents.

I have gained two more talents

"I have earned two more talents"

Matthew 25:23

Well done

"You have done well" or "You have done right." Your culture might have an expression that a master (or someone in authority) would use to show that he approves of what his servant (or someone under him) has done. See how you translated this in Matthew 25:21.

Enter into the joy of your master

The phrase "Enter into the joy" is an idiom. Also, the master is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "Come and be happy with me" See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:21]

Matthew 25:24

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling the parable about the servants and the talents.

a hard man

Possible meanings are 1) a man who demands much from other people or 2) a man who does not treat others well.

You reap where you did not sow, and you harvest where you did not scatter

The words "reap where you did not sow" and "harvest where you did not scatter" mean the same thing. They refer to a farmer who gathers crops that other people have planted. The servant uses this metaphor to accuse the master of taking what rightfully belongs to others.

scatter

"scatter seed." This refers to sowing seed by gently throwing handfuls of it onto the soil.

Matthew 25:25

See, you have here what belongs to you

"Look, here is what is yours"

Matthew 25:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues telling a parable about the servants and the talents.

You wicked and lazy servant, you knew

"You are a wicked servant who does not want to work. You knew"

I reap where I have not sowed and harvest where I have not scattered

The words "reap where I have not sowed" and "harvest where I have not scattered" mean the same thing. They refer to a farmer who gathers crops that people who work for him have planted. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:24]

Matthew 25:27

received back my own

The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "received back my own money"

interest

payment from the banker for the temporary use of the master's money

Matthew 25:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus concludes the parable about the servants and the talents.

take away the talent

The master is speaking to other servants.

talent

A "talent" was worth twenty years' wages. Avoid translating this into modern money. See how you translated this in [Matthew 25:15]

Matthew 25:29

who possesses

It is implied that the person who possesses something also uses it wisely. Alternate translation: "who uses well what he has"

he will have an abundance

"he will have much more"

from anyone who does not possess anything

It is implied that the person does possess something but he does not use it wisely. Alternate translation: "from anyone does not use well what he has"

will be taken away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will take away" or "I will take away"

Matthew 25:30

the outer darkness

Here "outer darkness" is a metonym for the place where God sends those who reject them. This is a place that is completely separated from God forever. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]

weeping and grinding of teeth

"Grinding of teeth" is symbolic action, representing extreme sadness and suffering. See how you translated this in [Matthew 8:12]

Matthew 25:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to tell his disciples how he will judge people when he returns at the end time.

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

Matthew 25:32

Before him will be gathered all the nations

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He will gather all the nations before him"

Before him

"In front of him"

all the nations

Here "nations" refers to people. Alternate translation: "all people from every country"

as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats

Jesus uses a simile to describe how he will separate the people.

Matthew 25:33

He will place the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left

This is a metaphor that means the Son of Man will separate all people. He will put the righteous people at his right side, and he will put the sinners at his left side.

Matthew 25:34

the King ... his right hand

Here, "the King" is another title for the Son of Man. Jesus

was referring to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "I, the King, ... my right hand"

Come, you who have been blessed by my Father

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Come, you whom my Father has blessed"

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

inherit the kingdom prepared for you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "inherit the kingdom that God has made ready for you"

inherit the kingdom prepared for you

Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "receive the blessings of God's rule that he has planned to give you"

from the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since he first created the world"

Matthew 25:35

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 25:36

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 25:37

the righteous

This can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "the righteous people"

Or thirsty

The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Or when did we see you thirsty"

Matthew 25:38

Or naked

This is the end of a series of questions that begins in verse 37. The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Or when did we see you naked"

Matthew 25:39

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 25:40

the King

This is another title for the Son of Man. Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

say to them

"say to those at his right hand"

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This emphasizes what the King says next.

one of the least

"one of the least important"

these brothers of mine

Here "brothers" refers to anyone, male or female, who

obeys the King. Alternate translation: "my brothers and sisters here" or "these who are like my brothers and sisters"

you did it for me

"I consider that you did it for me"

Matthew 25:41

Then he will

"Then the King will." Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

you cursed

"you people whom God has cursed"

the eternal fire that has been prepared

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the eternal fire that God has prepared"

his angels

the devil's helpers

Matthew 25:42

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 25:43

naked, but you did not clothe me

The words "I was" preceding "naked" are understood. Alternate translation: "I was naked, but you did not give me clothes"

sick and in prison

The words "I was" preceding "sick" are understood. Alternate translation: "I was sick and in prison"

Matthew 25:44

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling his disciples how he will judge people when he returns at the end time.

they will also answer

"those on his left will also answer"

Matthew 25:45

for one of the least of these

"for any of the least important ones of my people"

you did not do for me

"I consider that you did not do it for me" or "I was really the one whom you did not help"

Matthew 25:46

General Information:

This is the end of the part of the story that began in Matthew 23:1, where Jesus teaches about salvation and the final judgment.

These will go away into eternal punishment

"The King will send these to a place where they will receive punishment that never ends"

but the righteous into eternal life

The understood information can be made clear. Alternate translation: "but the King will send the righteous to the place where they will live forever with God"

the righteous

This nominative adjective can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "the righteous people"

Chapter 26

Matthew 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with

the poetry in 26:31, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sheep

Sheep are a common image used in Scripture to refer to the people of Israel. In [Matthew 26:31](#), however, Jesus used the words "the sheep" to refer to his disciples and to say that they would run away when he was arrested.

Passover

The Passover festival was when the Jews would celebrate the day God killed the firstborn sons of the Egyptians but "passed over" the Israelites and let them live.

The eating of the body and blood

[Matthew 26:26-28](#) describes Jesus's last meal with his followers. At this time, Jesus told them that what they were eating and drinking were his body and his blood. Nearly all Christian churches celebrate "the Lord's Supper," the "Eucharist", or "Holy Communion" to remember this meal.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Judas's kiss for Jesus

[Matthew 26:49](#) describes how Judas kissed Jesus so the soldiers would know whom to arrest. The Jews would kiss each other when they greeted each other.

"I am able to destroy the temple of God"

Two men accused Jesus of saying that he could destroy the temple in Jerusalem and then rebuild it "in three days" ([Matthew 26:61](#)). They were accusing him of insulting God by claiming that God had given him the authority to destroy the temple and the power to rebuild it. What Jesus actually said was that if the Jewish authorities were to destroy this temple, he would certainly raise it up in three days ([John 2:19](#)).

Links:

[Matthew 26:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 26

26:1-5

What was Passover?

[26:2]

See: Passover

How will the Son of Man be crucified?

[26:2]

Jesus prophesied that the Son of Man will be crucified. He told people that he was about to die by crucifixion. Jesus told his disciples that someone would help others to arrest Jesus. He was thinking about Judas helping the Jewish leaders to arrest and crucify Jesus.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Son of Man; Crucify (Crucifixion); Disciple

Who were the chief priests and elders?

[26:3]

When Jesus spoke about elders, he was speaking about certain Jewish leaders who were older men.

See: Chief Priest; Elder

What was the palace of the high priest?

[26:3]

The palace of the high priest was the place where the high priest lived. He also worked in this place.

See: High Priest

Why did the Jewish leaders plot to kill Jesus?

[26:4]

The Jewish leaders plotted to kill Jesus. That is, they made plans to arrest and kill Jesus. They believed that he broke the Law of Moses and should be killed. However, he did not break the Law of Moses. They had to plan to do this in secret, because many people loved Jesus and thought he was a prophet. They did not want people to see them arrest Jesus. They feared what people would be angry if they arrested Jesus.

See: Law of Moses; Prophet

26:6-16

Where was Bethany?

[26:6]

See Map: Bethany

What was a leper?

[26:6]

See: Leprosy (Leper)

Why was Jesus reclining at the table?

[26:7]

In ancient Israel, people ate by reclining at a table. Jesus reclined at a table because he had just eaten.

What did this woman have?

[26:7]

The woman had a jar with certain oil that smelled very good. Some people call this perfume. She opened this jar and poured it on Jesus head and feet to honor him. Jesus also said when she did this it was an anointing that prepared his body to be buried. In ancient Israel, people poured various ointments or oils on a dead person before they buried them.

See: John 12:3-7

See: Anoint (Anointing)

Why did the disciples not want this woman to do this?

[26:8, 26:9]

The disciples did not want this woman to pour this expensive oil on Jesus. This is because it would only smell good for a short time. However, if it was sold, it was worth about the same amount of money as someone would make in one year. This could be used to help many poor people. Jesus said they were wrong. This is because what she did was a symbol. She helped Jesus prepare to die so people could be at peace with God. This was greater than helping poor people.

See: Symbol; Disciple

What is the good news?

[26:13]

See: Gospel; Preach (Preacher)

Why did Judas go to the chief priests?

[26:14]

Judas went to the chief priests to help them arrest Jesus. Scholars do not agree why he did this. The priests gave Judas a large amount of money to help them.

See: Zechariah 11:12-13

See: Chief Priest

26:17-35

What was the first day of unleavened bread?

[26:17]

The first of unleavened bread was the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread. This was the day they sacrificed a lamb for the passover.

See: Exodus 12:14-20

See: Festival of Unleavened Bread; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice; Passover

What did it mean that the disciples needed to prepare for the passover meal?

[26:17]

The disciples needed to prepare for the passover meal. That is, they needed to become clean so they could eat this meal. They also needed to get certain foods ready to eat for this meal.

See: Disciple; Passover; Clean and Unclean

Why did Jesus say "my time is at hand"?

[26:18]

When Jesus said "my time is at hand," he used a metaphor. He was saying that it was about time for him to die.

See: Metaphor

How did Jesus know that one of his disciples was going to betray him?

[26:21]

After travelling with these twelve disciples for three years, Jesus had one last meal with them. During this meal, he told them that one of the disciples would betray him. Scholars think that the Holy Spirit helped Jesus to know which disciple was going to betray him.

This man would be punished for what he did. He would live forever in hell and be punished there forever. This is why it would be better for him to have not been born than to be punished forever in hell.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit; Hell; Son of Man; Woe; Punish (Punishment)

Why did Jesus say the things he did to the disciples?

[26:23, 26:24]

During this last meal, Jesus told the disciples certain things. Christians now celebrate the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus (see: 1 Corinthians 11:23-25). Scholars disagree about why Jesus wanted Christians to do this.

See: Lord's Supper; New Covenant; Kingdom of God

What was a hymn?

[26:30]

A hymn was a song that was sung to worship God.

See: Worship

Where was the Mount of Olives?

[26:30]

See Map: Mount of Olives

Why did Jesus say that “all of you will fall away”?

[26:31]

Jesus said that the disciples would fall away. He said this would fulfill what Zechariah prophesied (see: Zechariah 13:7).

This was a metaphor. Jesus was the shepherd and the disciples were the sheep. When Jesus died, the disciples would not want people to know they followed Jesus. However, this did not last for very long.

Peter said that he would never deny Jesus, that is, fall away. However, Peter denied Jesus three times that night.

See: Fall (Fall Away, Stand); Prophecy (Prophesy) ; Metaphor; Fulfill (Fulfillment); Shepherd

Where were these things written?

[26:31]

See: Zechariah 13:7

Where was Galilee?

[26:32]

See Map: Galilee

How will Peter deny Jesus?

[26:34]

Jesus said that Peter would deny him. That is, Peter would say that he did not know Jesus. Peter would deny knowing Jesus and being one of Jesus’s disciples.

See: Disciple

26:36-46

Where was Gethsemane?

[26:36]

See Map: Gethsemane

What is a soul?

[26:38]

See: Soul

Why was Jesus sorrowful?

[26:38]

Jesus was sorrowful when he prayed. He knew he was about to die. He was not afraid to die because he knew why he had to die. However, he was overwhelmed because he knew that he was about to be separated from God the Father in some way. He was also punished by God for the sins of all people.

See: Atone (Atonement); Sin; Pray (Prayer)

Why did Jesus want the cup to pass?

[26:39]

Jesus asked God the Father if it was possible for the cup to pass. That is, he asked God the Father if he really had to die.

This is a metaphor. He wanted to not have to be punished for all people. However, he was willing to die to obey God.

See: God the Father; Metaphor; Punish (Punishment); Will of God

Why did Jesus want Peter to pray not to enter into temptation?

[26:41]

Jesus wanted Peter to pray. However, Peter could not pray for one hour without falling asleep. Jesus told Peter to pray and ask not to enter into temptation. That is, that he would not be tempted. Peter was about to be tempted to deny Jesus and he, in fact, did deny Jesus (see: 26:69-75).

See: Pray (Prayer); Tempt (Temptation)

What did Jesus mean when he said, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak?

[26:41]

Jesus said that the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak. People are weak, that is, they give up easily when they are suffering. They cannot do things that honor God without the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit wanted to help Peter.

He just needed to ask for help.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Flesh; Holy Spirit

How has the hour at hand?

[26:45]

Jesus said the hour is at hand. That is, the things he talked about were about to happen.

Who were the sinners?

[26:45]

Jesus said that he was betrayed to sinners. These sinners were the Jewish leaders. They were supposed to help people worship God. Instead, they did evil. He knew Judas was coming to help them arrest Jesus, even before he could see or hear Judas. Jesus did not wait for Judas but went out to meet him.

See: Son of Man; Sin; Worship

26:47-56

Who were the chief priests and elders?

[26:47]

When Matthew wrote about the elders, he was speaking about certain Jewish leaders who were older men.

See: Chief Priest; Scribe; Elder

How did Judas kiss Jesus?

[26:48, 26:49]

Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek. In ancient Israel, people often greeted each other in this way. What was a rabbi?

See: Rabbi

Why did someone cut off this man's ear?

[26:51]

Someone who was with Jesus fought trying to defend Jesus. He did not want the Jewish leaders to arrest Jesus. When he did this, he cut off someone's ear in his fighting.

See: High Priest

How many angels were twelve legions?

[26:53]

Twelve legions of angels were 60,000 angels.

See: Angel

What scriptures does this fulfill?

[26:54]

Jesus said that when the Jewish leaders arrested him, this fulfilled certain prophecies. These were prophecies said by Isaiah (see: Isaiah 53) and Zechariah (see: Zechariah 13:7). The disciples forsook Jesus. That is, they rejected him in some way and ran away.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

26:57-68

What was the courtyard of the high priest?

[26:58]

The courtyard was an open space around the palace of the high priest. The Jewish leaders took Jesus to the courtyard of the high priest. This was where Peter went and sat down and watched the trial of Jesus.

See: High Priest; Scribe; Elder; Chief Priest; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

What was testimony against Jesus?

[26:59]

The Jewish leaders wanted testimony against Jesus. That is, they wanted people to speak against Jesus. They wanted them to say that he broke the Law of Moses in a way that meant he needed to be put to death. However, Jesus never broke the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses

What was meant by the words, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days"?

[26:61]

Jesus' accusers claimed that he made the statement, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days"?

This was a false accusation. When Jesus spoke about the destroying of a temple, this was a metaphor. He was speaking about the temple of his own body, which was to be put to death, and then raised to life in three days (see: John 2:18-22).

See: Temple; Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did the high priest ask Jesus if he was the Messiah, the Son of God?

[26:63]

The high priest asked Jesus if he was the Messiah, the Son of the blessed one because he wanted to accuse Jesus of blasphemy. When he asked Jesus this, he wanted to see if Jesus would plainly say that he is the Messiah and God.

See: Messiah (Christ); Son of God; High Priest; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Jesus is God

How did Jesus answer the high priest?

[26:64]

Jesus answered in a way that said he was equal to God. The high priest will see Jesus again when he is next to God in heaven in a place of honor and power and when he comes to judge the world. He will also return to the earth on clouds and will rule the world (see: Daniel 7:13-14).

The high priest tore his clothes because he thought Jesus blasphemed God. This is what the high priest did when someone blasphemed. According to the Law of Moses, blasphemy was punished by killing the person who blasphemed. However,

Jesus did not blaspheme God because he is God.

See: Son of Man; Right Hand; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Jesus is God; Heaven; Judge (Judgment); Jesus' Return to Earth; Law of Moses

How did the people ask Jesus to prophesy?

[26:68]

Many people beat Jesus at the same time. Scholars think his eyes were covered and he could not see. They mocked Jesus by asking him to prophesy and tell them which of the people hit him.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)

26:69-75

Why did Peter deny Jesus?

[26:70, 26:72]

When Jesus was arrested, Peter followed near to Jesus. However, he stayed far away so people would not know he was one of the people who followed Jesus. He feared getting arrested. Therefore, he did not want anyone to know that he was one of the disciples. This is why he denied knowing Jesus.

See: Disciple

See: Map: Galilee; Nazareth

Why did the people talk about the way Peter spoke?

[26:73]

The people in Jerusalem spoke in a different way than the people in Galilee. Because of this, the girl knew Peter was from Galilee, the same place where Jesus and his disciples lived.

See: Disciple

See Map: Galilee

Why did Peter begin to curse and swear?

[26:74]

Peter wanted this girl to think he was not a disciple of Jesus. After he told her that he was not a disciple, he put himself under curses and swore. That is, he said if he was lying, God should curse him. He swore to her in the same way someone would speak in front of a judge.

See: Disciple; Swear (Oath); Curse; Judge (Judgment)

Matthew 26:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story that tells of Jesus's crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Here he tells his disciples how he will suffer and die.

It came about that when

"After" or "Then, after." This phrase shifts the story from Jesus's teachings to what happened next.

all these words

This refers to all that Jesus taught starting in Matthew 24:3.

Matthew 26:2

the Son of Man will be given over to be crucified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"some men will give the Son of Man to other people who will crucify him"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

Matthew 26:3

Connecting Statement:

These verses give background information about the Jewish leaders' plot to arrest and kill Jesus.

were gathered together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"came together" or "met together"

Matthew 26:4

Jesus stealthily

"Jesus secretly"

Matthew 26:5

Not during the festival

What the leaders did not want to do during the festival can

be made clearer. Alternate translation: "We should not kill Jesus during the festival"

the festival

This is the yearly Passover festival.

Matthew 26:6

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of a woman pouring expensive oil on Jesus before his death.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

Simon the leper

It is implied that this is a man whom Jesus had healed from leprosy.

Matthew 26:7

he was reclining

"Jesus was lying on his side." You can use your language's word for the position people usually are in when they eat.

a woman came to him

"a woman came to Jesus"

alabaster jar

This is a costly container made of soft stone.

ointment

oil that has a pleasing smell

she poured it upon his head

The woman did this to honor Jesus.

Matthew 26:8

What is the reason for this waste?

The disciples ask this question out of their anger over the woman's actions. Alternate translation: "This woman has done a bad thing by wasting this ointment!"

Matthew 26:9

This could have been sold for a large amount and given

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"She could have sold this for a large amount of money and given the money"

to the poor

Here "the poor" can be stated as an adjective. Alternate

translation: "to poor people"

Matthew 26:10

Why are you causing trouble for this woman?

Jesus asks this question as a rebuke of his disciples.

Alternate translation: "You should not be causing trouble for this woman!"

Why are you

All occurrences of "you" are plural and refer to the disciples.

Matthew 26:11

the poor

This can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation:

"poor people"

Matthew 26:12

ointment

This is oil that has a pleasing smell. See how you translated this in Matthew 26:7.

Matthew 26:13

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

wherever this good news is preached

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"wherever people preach this good news"

what this woman has done will also be spoken of in memory of her

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they will remember what this woman has done and will tell others about her" or "people will remember what this woman has done and will tell others about her"

Matthew 26:14

Connecting Statement:

Judas Iscariot agrees to help the Jewish leaders arrest and kill Jesus.

Matthew 26:15

to turn him over to you

"to bring Jesus to you"

thirty pieces of silver

Since these words are the same as those in an Old Testament prophecy, keep this form instead of changing it to modern money.

thirty pieces

"30 pieces"

Matthew 26:16

to turn him over to them

"to enable them to seize him"

Matthew 26:17

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus celebrating the Passover with his disciples.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

Matthew 26:18

He said, "Go into the city to a certain man and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'""

This has quotations within quotations. You can state some of the direct quotations as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "He told his disciples to go into the city to a certain man and tell him that the Teacher says to him, 'My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" or "He told his disciples to go into the city to a certain man and say to him that the Teacher's time is at hand and he will keep the Passover with his disciples at that man's house."

My time

Possible meanings are 1) "The time that I told you about" or 2) "The time God has set for me."

is at hand

Possible meanings are 1) "is near" or 2) "has come."

keep the Passover

"eat the Passover meal" or "celebrate the Passover by eating the special meal"

Matthew 26:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 26:20

he sat down to eat

Use the word for the position people in your culture usually are in when they eat.

Matthew 26:21

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

Matthew 26:22

Surely not I, Lord?

"I am surely not the one, am I, Lord?" Possible meanings are 1) this is a rhetorical question since the apostles were sure they would not betray Jesus. Alternate translation: "Lord, I would never betray you!" or 2) this was a sincere question since Jesus's statement probably troubled and confused them.

Matthew 26:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 26:24

The Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

will go

Here "go" is a polite way to refer to dying. Alternate

translation: "will go to his death" or "will die"

just as it is written about him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"just as the prophets wrote about him in the scriptures"

that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the man who betrays the Son of Man"

Matthew 26:25

Is it I, Rabbi?

"Rabbi, am I the one who will betray you?" Judas may be using a rhetorical question to deny that he is the one who will betray Jesus. Alternate translation: "Rabbi, surely I am

not the one who will betray you."

You have said it yourself

This is an idiom that Jesus uses to mean "yes" without being completely clear about what he means. Alternate translation: "You are saying it" or "You are admitting it" Matthew 26:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper as he celebrates the Passover with his disciples.

took ... blessed ... broke

See how you translated these words in Matthew 14:19. Matthew 26:27

He took

Translate "took" as you did in Matthew 14:19.

a cup

Here "cup" refers to the cup and the wine in it.

gave it to them

"gave it to the disciples"

Drink it

"Drink the wine from this cup"

Matthew 26:28

For this is my blood

"For this wine is my blood"

blood of the covenant

"blood that shows that the covenant is in effect" or "blood that makes the covenant possible"

is poured out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"will soon flow out of my body" or "will flow out of my wounds when I die"

Matthew 26:29

I say to you

This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

fruit of the vine

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "wine"

in my Father's kingdom

Here "kingdom" refers to God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "when my Father establishes his rule on earth" my Father's

Father is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

Matthew 26:30

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples as they walk to the Mount of Olives.

hymn

a song of praise to God

Matthew 26:31

General Information:

Jesus quotes the prophet Zechariah to show that in order to fulfill prophecy, all of his disciples will leave him.

fall away

"leave me"

for it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the prophet Zechariah wrote long ago in the scriptures"

I will strike

Here "I" refers to God. It is implied that God will cause or allow people to harm and kill Jesus.

the shepherd ... sheep of the flock

These are metaphors that refer to Jesus and the disciples.

the sheep of the flock will be scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they will scatter all the sheep of the flock" or "the sheep of the flock will run off in all directions"

Matthew 26:32

after I am raised up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after God raises me up" or "after God brings me back to life"

Matthew 26:33

fall away

See how you translated this in Matthew 26:31.

Matthew 26:34

Truly I say to you

"I tell you the truth." This adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.

before the rooster crows

Roosters often crow about the time the sun comes up, so the hearers might have understood these words as a metonym for the sun coming up. However, the actual crowing of a rooster is an important part of the story later on, so keep the word "rooster" in the translation.

rooster

a male chicken, a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up

crows

This is the common English word for what a rooster does to make his loud call.

you will deny me three times

"you will say three times that you are not my follower"

Matthew 26:35

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 26:36

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus praying in Gethsemane.

Matthew 26:37

began to become sorrowful

"he became very sad"

Matthew 26:38

My soul is deeply sorrowful

Here "soul" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "I am very sad"

even to death

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "and I feel as if I could even die"

Matthew 26:39

fell on his face

He purposely lay face down on the ground to pray.

My Father

This is an important title for God that shows the relationship between God and Jesus.

let this cup pass from me

Jesus speaks of the work that he must do, including dying on the cross, as if it were a bitter liquid that God has commanded him to drink from a cup. The word "cup" is an

important word in the New Testament, so try to use an equivalent for that in your translation.

this cup

Here "cup" is a metonym that stands for the cup and the contents within it. The contents in the cup are a metaphor for the suffering that Jesus will have to endure. Jesus is asking the Father if it is possible for him not to have to experience the death and suffering that Jesus knows will soon happen.

Yet, not as I will, but as you will

This can be expressed as a full sentence. Alternate translation: "But do not do what I want; instead, do what you want"

Matthew 26:40

he said to Peter, "What, could you not watch

Jesus is speaking to Peter, but the "you" is plural, referring to Peter, James, and John.

What, could you not watch with me for one hour?

Jesus uses a question to scold Peter, James, and John.

Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you could not stay awake with me for one hour!"

Matthew 26:41

you do not enter into temptation

Here the abstract noun "temptation" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "no one tempts you to sin"

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak

Here "spirit" is a metonym that stands for a person's desires to do good. "Flesh" stands for the needs and desires of a person's body. Jesus means that the disciples may have the desire to do what God wants, but as humans they are weak and often fail.

Matthew 26:42

He went away

"Jesus went away"

a second time

The first time is described in [Matthew 26:39]

My Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

if this cannot pass away unless I drink it

"if the only way this can pass away is if I drink it." Jesus speaks of the work that he must do as if it were a bitter liquid that God has commanded him to drink.

if this

Here "this" refers to the cup and the contents within it, a metaphor for suffering, as in Matthew 26:39).

unless I drink it

"unless I drink from it" or "unless I drink from this cup of suffering." Here "it" refers to the cup and the contents within it, a metaphor for suffering, as in Matthew 26:39).

your will be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "may what you want happen" or "do what you want to do"

Matthew 26:43

their eyes were heavy

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "they were very sleepy"

Matthew 26:44

third time

The first time is described in [Matthew 26:39]

Matthew 26:45

Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?

Jesus uses a question to scold the disciples for going to sleep. Alternate translation: "I am disappointed that you are still sleeping and resting!"

the hour is at hand

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "the time has come"

the Son of Man is being betrayed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"someone is betraying the Son of Man"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

betrayed into the hands of sinners

Here "hands" refers to power or control. Alternate

translation: "betrayed into the power of sinners" or

"betrayed so that sinners will have power over him"

Look

"Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

Matthew 26:46

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 26:47

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of when Judas betrayed Jesus and the religious leaders arrested him.

While he was still speaking

"While Jesus was still speaking"

clubs

large pieces of hard wood for hitting people

Matthew 26:48

Now ... Seize him

Here "Now" is used to mark a pause in the main story. Here Matthew tells background information about Judas and the signal he planned to use to betray Jesus.

saying, "The one I kiss is the man. Seize him."

This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "saying that the one he kissed was the one they should seize."

kiss

This was a respectful way to greet one's teacher.

Matthew 26:49

he came up to Jesus

"Judas came up to Jesus"

kissed him

"met him with a kiss." Good friends would kiss each other on the cheek, but a disciple would probably kiss his master on the hand to show respect. No one knows for sure how Judas kissed Jesus.

Matthew 26:50

Then they came

Here "they" refers to the people with clubs and swords that came with Judas and the religious leaders.

laid hands on Jesus, and seized him

"grabbed Jesus, and arrested him"

Matthew 26:51

Behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

Matthew 26:52

who take up the sword

The word "sword" is a metonym for the act of killing someone with a sword. The implied information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "who pick up a sword to kill others" or "who want to kill other people"

sword will perish by the sword

"sword will die by means of the sword" or "sword—it is with the sword that someone will kill them"

Matthew 26:53

Do you think that I could not call ... angels?

Jesus uses a question to remind the person with the sword that Jesus could stop those who are arresting him. Alternate translation: "Surely you know that I could call ... angels."

Do you think

Here "you" is singular and refers to the person with the sword.

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

more than twelve legions of angels

The word "legion" is a military term that refers to a group of about 6,000 soldiers. Jesus means God would send enough angels to easily stop those who are arresting Jesus. The exact number of angels is not important. Alternate translation: "more than 12 really large groups of angels"

Matthew 26:54

But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, that this must happen?

Jesus uses a question to explain why he is letting these people arrest him. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "But if I did that, I would not be able to fulfill what God said in the scriptures must happen"

Matthew 26:55

Have you come out with swords and clubs to seize me like a robber?

Jesus is using this question to point out the wrong actions of those arresting him. Alternate translation: "You know that I am not a robber, so it is wrong for you to come out to me bringing swords and clubs"

clubs

large pieces of hard wood for hitting people

in the temple

It is implied that Jesus was not in the actual temple. He was in the courtyard around the temple.

Matthew 26:56

the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I would fulfill all that the prophets wrote in the scriptures" abandoned him

"left him." If your language has a word that means they left him when they should have stayed with him, use it here.

Matthew 26:57

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus's trial before the council of Jewish religious leaders.

Matthew 26:58

Peter followed him

"Peter followed Jesus"

courtyard of the high priest

an open area near the high priest's house

He went inside

"Peter went inside"

the officers

These were probably the servants of the "scribes and elders" (Matthew 26:57).

Matthew 26:59

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

so that they

Here "they" refers to the chief priests and the members of the council.

might put him to death

"might have a reason to execute him"

Matthew 26:60

two came forward

"two men came forward" or "two witnesses came forward"

Matthew 26:61

This man said, 'I am able to destroy ... days.'

If your language does not allow quotes within quotes you can rewrite it as a single quote. Alternate translation: "This man said that he is able to destroy ... days."

This man said

"This man Jesus said"

in three days

"within three days," before the sun goes down three times, not "after three days," after the sun has gone down the third time

Matthew 26:62

What is it that they are testifying against you?

The chief priest is not asking Jesus for information about what the witnesses said. He is asking Jesus to prove what the witnesses said is wrong. Alternate translation: "What is your response to what the witnesses are testifying against you?"

Matthew 26:63

Son of God

This is an important title that describes the relationship between the Christ and God.

the living God

Here "living" contrasts the God of Israel to all the false gods and idols that people worshiped. Only the God of Israel is alive and has power to act. See how you translated this in Matthew 16:16.

Matthew 26:64

You have said it yourself

This is an idiom that Jesus uses to mean "yes" without being completely clear about what he means. Alternate translation: "You are saying it" or "You are admitting it"

But I tell you, from now on you

Here "you" is plural. Jesus is speaking to the high priest and to the other persons there.

from now on you will see the Son of Man

Possible meanings are 1) the phrase "from now on" is an idiom that means they will see the Son of Man in his power at some time in the future or 2) the phrase "from now on" means that from the time of Jesus's trial and onward, Jesus is showing himself to be the Messiah who is powerful and victorious.

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself in third person.

sitting at the right hand of Power

Here "Power" is metonym that represents God. To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "sitting in the place of honor beside the all-powerful God"

coming on the clouds of heaven

"riding to earth on the clouds of heaven"

Matthew 26:65

the high priest tore his clothes

Tearing clothing was a sign of anger and sadness.

He has spoken blasphemy

The reason the high priest called Jesus's statement blasphemy is probably that he understood Jesus's words in [Matthew 26:64]

Why do we still need witnesses?

The high priest uses this question to emphasize that he and the members of the council do not need to hear from any more witnesses. Alternate translation: "We do not need to hear from any more witnesses!"

now you have heard

Here "you" is plural and refers to the members of the council.

Matthew 26:66

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 26:67

Then they

Possible meanings are 1) "Then some of the men" or 2) "Then the soldiers."

spit in his face

This was done as an insult.

slapped him

hit him in the face with the palms of their hands

Matthew 26:68

Prophecy to us

Here "Prophecy to us" means to tell by means of God's power. It does not mean to tell what will happen in the future.

you Christ

Those hitting Jesus do not really think he is the Christ. They call him this to mock him.

Matthew 26:69

General Information:

These events happen at the same time as Jesus's trial before the religious leaders.

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of how Peter denies three times that he knows Jesus, as Jesus said he would do.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

Matthew 26:70

I do not know what you are talking about

Peter was able to understand what the servant girl was saying. He used these words to deny that he had been with Jesus.

Matthew 26:71

When he went out

"When Peter went out"

gateway

opening in the wall around a courtyard

said to those there

"said to the people who were sitting there"

Matthew 26:72

He again denied it with an oath

"He denied it again by swearing"

Matthew 26:73

one of them

"one of those who were with Jesus"

one of them, for the way you speak gives you away

This can be translated with a new sentence. "one of them. We can tell you are from Galilee because you speak like a Galilean"

Matthew 26:74

to curse

"to call down a curse on himself"

rooster crowed

A rooster is a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up. A rooster that has called out is said to have "crowed." See how you translated this in Matthew 26:34.

Matthew 26:75

Peter remembered the words that Jesus had said, "Before the rooster crows you will deny me three times."

This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation.

Alternate translation: "Peter remembered that Jesus told him that before the rooster crowed, he would deny Jesus three times."

Chapter 27

Matthew 27 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Delivered him to Pilate the governor"

The Jewish leaders needed to get permission from Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, before they could kill Jesus. This was because Roman law did not allow them to kill Jesus themselves. Pilate was going to set one prisoner free, and he wanted to set Jesus free, but they wanted him to free a very bad prisoner named Barabbas instead.

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([Matthew 27:60](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Sarcasm

The soldiers said, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

Links:

[Matthew 27:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 27

27:1-10

Why did the Jewish leaders plot to kill Jesus?

[27:1]

The Jewish leaders plotted to kill Jesus because they believed that he broke the Law of Moses and should be killed.

However, he did not break the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses; Chief Priest; Elder

Why did the Jewish leaders take Jesus to Pilate?

[27:2]

Pilate was the Roman governor in charge of the Jews. The Jews took Jesus to Pilate because they could not kill anyone without the Pilate giving them permission to do it. The Jews who were there wanted to kill Jesus.

See: Palace; Crucify (Crucifixion)

How was someone condemned?

[27:3]

See: Condemn (Condemnation)

Why did Judas repent?

[27:3, 27:4]

Judas saw that the Jewish leaders were trying to kill Jesus. Because of this, he repented of what he did. That is, he wished that he had not helped the Jewish leaders to capture Jesus. He tried to give them the money back that these leaders gave to him. He knew that he did something wrong and that Jesus would be killed even though Jesus did not do anything wrong.

See: Repent (Repentance); Blood

Why did the chief priest buy the field with the money?

[27:7]

The chief priests did not want the money back they gave to Judas. This is because the money had been used to help to kill Jesus. This was irony. That was because they had used the money, which was considered blood money that was given to Judas, to purchase a field that was known as the "field of blood."

See: Jeremiah 19:1-11; Zechariah 11:12-13

See: Irony; Chief Priest

Advice to translators: Blood money is money that someone made for killing someone else or helping to kill another person.

27:11-31

What was meant by Jesus' answer to Pilate, saying, "You say so"?

[27:11]

Jesus said, "You say so." Some scholars think this was a way of saying, "what you are saying is true." Other scholars think Jesus was saying that Pilate was correct in what he said, but that he did not truly understand the meaning of what he said.

Why did Jesus not say anything to Pilate about the charges against him?

Jesus did not say anything to Pilate because Jesus did not do anything wrong. Jesus also knew that Jesus needed to die for people's sins. This also fulfilled a prophecy of Isaiah (see: Isaiah 53:7). This made Pilate think that Jesus was not guilty of the things the Jewish leaders accused him.

See: Sin; Atonement (Atonement); Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy)

What was the feast about which Matthew spoke?

[27:15]

Matthew spoke about a feast known as the feast of the Passover.

See: Passover

Who did Pilate want the people to release from prison?

Pilate did not think Jesus was guilty. However, he did not want to anger the Jewish leaders. Therefore, he tried to get the people to set Jesus free. However, they did not want Jesus to live. Instead, they wanted Pilate to release a murderer. They told Pilate to kill Jesus.

What was the name of the prisoner?

[27:16]

In some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament, Matthew said the prisoner was named "Jesus Barabbas." In other

ancient copies of the Greek New Testament, Matthew said the prisoner was named “Barabbas.” Scholars think Matthew wrote “Jesus Barabbas.”

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Why were the Jewish leaders envious of Jesus?

Some scholars think the Jewish leaders were envious of Jesus because they wanted to be honored and loved by the people the way the people loved Jesus. Or perhaps they wanted to know as much about the Law of Moses as Jesus knew.

See: Law of Moses

Why was Jesus called the Christ?

[27:17]

Jesus was called the Christ because he was the Messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ)

What was a judgment seat?

[27:19]

Pilate’s judgment seat was a seat on a raised platform from which he decided certain things. He could punish people or set them free.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit); Punish (Punishment)

Why did Pilate release a prisoner?

[27:22, 27:23]

In ancient Israel, the Roman leader would release a prisoner during the Jewish passover festival. This helped there to be peace between the Romans and the Jews.

See: Passover

How was someone crucified?

[27:23]

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Pilate wash his hands?

[27:24]

Pilate washed his hands. This was a symbol. He wanted them to know that they were the reason that Jesus was going to die. He wanted to tell them that he was not guilty of Jesus’ death. The people were willing to be punished if they were wrong about Jesus because they wanted to see Jesus killed.

See: Symbol; Clean and Unclean; Blood; Punish (Punishment)

How many soldiers were in a company?

[27:27]

In a company, there were 600 soldiers.

Why did the soldiers dress Jesus the way they did?

[27:28]

The soldiers put a scarlet robe on Jesus. This is what a king would have worn. They put a crown on him. A king wore a crown. However, this crown was made of branches with thorns. It would have been painful to wear. Kings also had a staff. The soldiers did not think Jesus was a king. Instead, they insulted him and pretended that he was a king. They removed these pieces of clothes before they took him to be crucified.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

27:32-45

Where was Cyrene?

[27:32]

See Map: Cyrene

Why did Simon carry Jesus’ cross?

[27:32]

The soldiers made a man named Simon carry Jesus’ cross. This is because Jesus was not strong enough to carry it after he was beaten.

See: Cross

Where was Golgotha?

[27:33]

Golgotha was a place outside of the wall of the city of Jerusalem. In English, this place is often called “calvary.” It was a mound that looked like a person’s skull.

Why did the soldiers offer Jesus wine mixed with myrrh?

[27:34]

The soldiers offered Jesus something to drink. People thought that this would stop pain. However, he did not want to do this.

What was casting lots?

[27:35]

See: Cast Lots

Why did the soldiers make a sign?

[27:37]

The soldiers made a sign. This sign told people that he was killed for saying that he was the king of the Jews. When they did this, they mocked Jesus. However, they did not know that Jesus was the king of the Jews.

How did the people mock Jesus?

[29:39, 29:40]

People saw Jesus on the cross and they mocked him. Jesus prophesied that he would rebuild the temple in three days. They thought he was speaking about the temple in Jerusalem. This was a metaphor. He was speaking about dying and being resurrected. They told him to save himself. This was irony. He was dying to save them.

See: Cross; Prophecy (Prophesy) ; Temple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Irony; Atonement (Atonement); Son of God; Metaphor

How did the Jewish leaders mock Jesus?

[27:41, 27:42]

The Jewish leaders mocked Jesus in the same way the people did. They wanted Jesus to do something to prove he was the Messiah. However, he did not do this. Perhaps this is because they would not have believed in Jesus even if he did this. This was also an irony. They say he saved others, but he could not save himself. Jesus did save other people by dying for them. He saved those who believe in him by dying for their sins. They said God would save him if God sent him, but they did not know that God sent him to die. Jesus died obeying God.

See: Messiah (Christ); Irony; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Atonement (Atonement)

27:45-56

When was the sixth hour?

[27:45]

The sixth hour was about noon.

When was the ninth hour?

[27:46]

The ninth hour was about 3pm.

Why did Jesus say the things he did?

[27:46]

As Jesus died, people's sins were put on him in some way. He was separated from God for the first time. This is why he said that God forsook him.

See: Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

Why did people think Jesus was calling for Elijah?

[27:47]

When Jesus said, "Eli," the people thought they heard Jesus calling to Elijah.

Why did someone try to give Jesus sour wine?

[27:48]

One soldier tried to give Jesus sour wine. Perhaps he thought this would help to Jesus not be in as much pain. He tried to help Jesus. However, the other soldiers wanted to make Jesus live longer so they could see if Elijah came to help him. He did this to mock Jesus.

How did Jesus give up his spirit?

[27:50]

When Matthew said Jesus gave up his spirit, he was saying that Jesus died.

See: Spirit (Spiritual)

Why was the curtain in the temple split into two pieces?

[27:52]

In the temple, there was a curtain that separated the holiest place from everything else. It was the place where the high priest went once a year offer a sacrifice to God. God was in this place in a certain way. The curtain was so big and thick that it could not be torn. When Jesus died, it tore. This was a metaphor. When the curtain tore, it showed there was no longer anything that separated people from God.

See: Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); High Priest; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice; Metaphor; Temple; Presence of God

How were people resurrected?

[27:52]

Matthew wrote that there was an earthquake in Jerusalem. At this time, many dead people were resurrected. These were Jews who believed in God and were at peace with God. Some scholars think this happened to show that the death of Jesus broke the power of death itself.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Holy Ones

Why did the Roman soldier think that Jesus was the Son of God?

[27:54]

From the events that happened at Jesus' death, the Roman soldier believed Jesus was the Son of God. Some scholars think that the soldier declaring Jesus to be the Son of God showed Jesus' innocence and the guilt of the people. Other scholars think that he said that Jesus was a very great man whom God blessed. Matthew wanted people to think about how the Roman soldier believed the truth about Jesus and the Jewish leaders did not.

See: Son of God; Bless (Blessing)

Where was Galilee?

[27:55]

See Map: Galilee

Who were the sons of Zebedee?

[27:56]

See: Matthew 4:21

27:57-66

Where was Arimathea?

[27:57]

See Map: Arimathea

How was Joseph a disciple of Jesus?

[27:57]

Joseph was a pharisee and also a disciple of Jesus. That is, he believed in Jesus.

See: Disciple; Pharisees

Why did Joseph of Arimathea ask for Jesus' body?

[27:58]

Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for Jesus' body. He was a Jew. According to the Law of Moses, a dead body needed to be buried before the sun set, especially if the Sabbath was the next day.

See: Deuteronomy 21:23

See: Law of Moses; Sabbath

Why did Joseph wrap the body in clean linen cloth?

[27:59]

Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in clean linen cloth. He did this to prepare Jesus' body to be buried.

Why did Joseph put the body of Jesus in a new tomb?

[27:60]

Joseph put the body of Jesus in a new tomb because it honored Jesus. There was no odor of death or decay. Usually a tomb held several bodies. After a year, the bones were placed in a box.

See: Tomb

Who was the other Mary?

[27:61]

See: Matthew 27:56

What was the Day of Preparation?

[27:62]

The Day of Preparation was the time to prepare for the Sabbath. It was the day before the Sabbath. It began on Thursday evening and lasted until Friday evening. People cleaned houses, bought supplies, and cooked food so that they did no work on the Sabbath.

See: Sabbath

Who were the chief priests and pharisees?

[27:63]

See: Chief Priest; Pharisees

Who was the deceiver?

[27:63]

The Jewish leaders spoke about a deceiver. They were speaking about Jesus. They thought that Jesus deceived people. That is, he lied to people. The Jewish leaders thought the disciples would also try to steal Jesus' body so they could deceive people.

How was someone raised from the dead?

[27:64]

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Matthew 27:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus's trial before Pilate.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.
plotted against Jesus to put him to death

The Jewish leaders were planning how they could convince the Roman leaders to kill Jesus.

Matthew 27:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 27:3

General Information:

This event happened after Jesus's trial in front of the council of Jewish religious leaders, but we do not know if it happened before or during Jesus's trial before Pilate.

Connecting Statement:

The author has stopped telling the story of Jesus's trial so he can tell the story of how Judas killed himself.

Then when Judas

If your language has a way of showing that a new story is starting, you may want to use that here.

that Jesus had been condemned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the Jewish leaders had condemned Jesus"

the thirty pieces of silver

This was the money that the chief priests had given Judas to betray Jesus. See how you translated it in Matthew 26:15.

Matthew 27:4

innocent blood

This is an idiom that refers to the death of an innocent person. Alternate translation: "a person who does not deserve to die"

What is that to us?

The Jewish leaders use this question to emphasize that they do not care about what Judas said. Alternate translation: "That is not our problem!" or "That is your problem!"

Matthew 27:5

threw down the pieces of silver in the temple

Possible meanings are 1) he threw the pieces of silver while in the temple courtyard, or 2) he was standing in the temple courtyard, and he threw the pieces of silver into the temple.

Matthew 27:6

It is not lawful to put this

"Our laws do not allow us to put this"

put this

"put this silver"

the treasury

This is the place they kept the money they used to provide for things needed for the temple and the priests.

price of blood

This is an idiom that means money paid to a person who helped kill someone. Alternate translation: "money paid for a man to die"

Matthew 27:7

potter's field

This was a field that was bought to bury strangers who died in Jerusalem.

Matthew 27:8

that field has been called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people call that field"

to this day

This means to the time that Matthew is writing this book.

Matthew 27:9

General Information:

The author quotes Old Testament scripture to show that Judas's suicide was a fulfillment of prophecy.

Then that which had been spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"This fulfilled what the prophet Jeremiah spoke"

the price set on him by the sons of Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the price the sons of Israel set on him"

the sons of Israel

This refers to those among the people of Israel who paid to kill Jesus and speaks of them as though they were doing what all the people of Israel wanted them to do. Alternate translation: "some of the descendants of Israel" or "the leaders of Israel"

Matthew 27:10

directed me

Here "me" refers to Jeremiah.

Matthew 27:11

Connecting Statement:

This continues the story of Jesus's trial before Pilate, which began in Matthew 27:2.

Now

The word "Now" is used here to mark a return to the main events of the story.

the governor

"Pilate"

You say so

Possible meanings are 1) by saying this, Jesus implied that he is the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "Yes, as you said, I am" or "Yes. It is as you said" or 2) by saying this, Jesus was saying that Pilate, not Jesus, was the one calling him the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "You yourself have said so"

Matthew 27:12

But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"But when the chief priests and elders accused him"

Matthew 27:13

Do you not hear how many things they accuse you of?

Pilate asks this question because he is surprised that Jesus remains silent. Alternate translation: "I am surprised that you do not answer these people who accuse you of doing so many bad things!"

how many things they accuse you of

"how many things they testify against you about"

Matthew 27:14

did not answer even one word, so that the governor was greatly amazed

"did not say even one word; this greatly amazed the governor." This is an emphatic way of saying that Jesus was completely silent.

Matthew 27:15

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story so Matthew can give information to help the reader

understand what happens beginning in [Matthew 27:17]

the festival

This is the Passover celebration.
 prisoner chosen by the crowd
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "prisoner whom the crowd would choose"
 Matthew 27:16
 they had a notorious prisoner
 "there was a notorious prisoner"
 notorious
 well known for doing something bad
 Matthew 27:17
 they were gathered
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the crowd gathered"
 Jesus who is called Christ
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "whom some people call the Christ"
 Matthew 27:18
 they had handed Jesus over to him
 "the Jewish leaders had brought Jesus to him." They had done this so that Pilate would judge Jesus.
 Matthew 27:19
 While he was sitting
 "While Pilate was sitting"
 sitting on the judgment seat
 "sitting on the judge's seat." This is where a judge would sit while making a decision.
 sent word
 "sent a message"
 I have suffered much today
 "I have been very upset today"
 Matthew 27:20
 Now ... destroy Jesus
 Here "Now" is used to mark a pause in the story. Matthew tells background information about why the crowd chose Barabbas.
 they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus
 The phrase "ask for Barabbas" is an ellipsis for "ask Pilate to release Barabbas." The phrase "destroy Jesus" here is a euphemism for "kill Jesus," and because the people in the crowd would not kill Jesus themselves, it is a metonym or ellipsis for the crowd telling Pilate to have his soldiers kill Jesus. Alternate translation: "they should ask Pilate to release Jesus and tell him to have his soldiers kill Jesus"
 Matthew 27:21
 asked them
 "asked the crowd"
 Matthew 27:22
 who is called Christ
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "whom some people call the Christ"
 Matthew 27:23
 has he done
 "has Jesus done"
 they cried out
 "the crowd cried out"
 Matthew 27:24
 he was gaining nothing
 "he was doing no good" or "he was unable to convince the people"

washed his hands in front of the crowd
 Pilate does this as a sign that he is not responsible for Jesus's death.
 the blood
 Here "blood" refers to a person's death. Alternate translation: "the death"
 You see to it
 This is an idiom that means "This is your responsibility."
 Matthew 27:25
 May his blood be on us and our children
 Here "blood" is a metonym that stands for a person's death. The phrase "be on us and our children" is an idiom that means they accept the responsibility of what is happening. Alternate translation: "Yes! We and our descendants will be responsible for executing him"
 Matthew 27:26
 Then he set Barabbas free for them
 Possible meanings are 1) Pilate set Barabbas free because the crowd had asked him to or 2) Pilate released Barabbas and put him under the control of the crowd.
 he scourged Jesus and handed him over to be crucified
 It is implied that Pilate ordered his soldiers to scourge Jesus. Handing Jesus over to be crucified is a metaphor for ordering his soldiers to crucify Jesus. Alternate translation: "he ordered his soldiers to scourge Jesus and to crucify him" (See: and)
 scourged Jesus
 "beat Jesus with a whip" or "whipped Jesus"
 Matthew 27:27
 Connecting Statement:
 This begins the account of Jesus's crucifixion and death.
 company of soldiers
 "group of soldiers"
 Matthew 27:28
 stripped him
 "pulled off his clothes"
 scarlet
 bright red
 Matthew 27:29
 a crown of thorns
 "a crown from thorny branches" or "a crown from branches with thorns on them"
 a staff in his right hand
 They gave Jesus a stick to hold to represent a scepter that a king holds. They did this to mock Jesus.
 Hail, King of the Jews
 They were saying this to mock Jesus. They were calling Jesus "King of the Jews," but they did not really believe he was a king. And yet what they were saying was true.
 Hail
 "We honor you" or "May you live a long time"
 Matthew 27:30
 They spat on him
 The past tense of the verb "spit" can be either "spit" or "spat."
 Matthew 27:31
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 Matthew 27:32

As they came out
This means Jesus and the soldiers came out of the city.
Alternate translation: "As they came out of Jerusalem"
they found a man
"the soldiers saw a man"
whom they forced to go with them so that he might carry his cross
"whom the soldiers forced to go with them so that he could carry Jesus's cross"
Matthew 27:33
place called Golgotha
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"place that people called Golgotha"
Matthew 27:34
him wine to drink mixed with gall
Wine alone might have reduced the pain of crucifixion.
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"him wine, which they had mixed with gall"
gall
Gall is the bitter yellow liquid that bodies use in digestion.
The people were mocking Jesus by mixing it with the wine
and so making the wine undrinkable.
Matthew 27:35
his garments
These were the clothes Jesus had been wearing.
Matthew 27:36
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 27:37
the charge against him
"a written explanation of why he was being crucified"
Matthew 27:38
Two robbers were crucified with him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"The soldiers crucified two robbers with Jesus"
Matthew 27:39
shaking their heads
They did this to make fun of Jesus.
Matthew 27:40
If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross
They did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, so they
wanted him to prove it if it was true. Alternate translation:
"If you are the Son of God, prove it by coming down from
the cross"
the Son of God
This is an important title for the Christ that describes his
relationship to God.
Matthew 27:41
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 27:42
He saved others, but he cannot save himself
Possible meanings are 1) the Jewish leaders do not believe
that Jesus saved others or that he can save himself, or 2)
they believe he did save others but are laughing at him
because now he cannot save himself.
He is the King of Israel
The leaders are mocking Jesus. They call him "King of
Israel," but they do not really believe he is king. Alternate
translation: "He says that he is the King of Israel"

Matthew 27:43
Connecting Statement:
The Jewish leaders continue mocking Jesus.
For he even said, 'I am the Son of God.'
This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an
indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "For Jesus even
said that he is the Son of God."
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus that describes his
relationship to God.
Matthew 27:44
the robbers who were crucified with him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the
robbers that the soldiers crucified with Jesus"
Matthew 27:45
Now
This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.
from the sixth hour ... until the ninth hour
"from about noon ... for three hours" or "from about twelve
o'clock midday ... until about three o'clock in the afternoon"
darkness came over the whole land
The word "darkness" is an abstract noun. Alternate
translation: "it became dark over the whole land"
Matthew 27:46
Jesus cried
"Jesus called out" or "Jesus shouted"
Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani
These words are what Jesus cried out in his own language.
Translators usually leave these words as they are.
Matthew 27:47
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 27:48
one of them
Possible meanings are 1) one of the soldiers or 2) one of
those who stood by and watched.
sponge
This is a sea animal that is harvested and used to take up
and hold liquids. These liquids can later be pushed out.
gave it to him
"gave it to Jesus"
Matthew 27:49
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Matthew 27:50
gave up his spirit
Here "spirit" refers to that which gives life to a person. This
phrase is a way of saying that Jesus died. Alternate
translation: "he died, giving his spirit over to God" or "he
breathed his last breath"
Matthew 27:51
Connecting Statement:
This begins the account of the events that happened when
Jesus died.
Behold
The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the
surprising information that follows.
the curtain of the temple was split in two
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the

curtain of the temple tore in two" or "God caused the curtain of the temple to tear in two"

Matthew 27:52

The tombs were opened, and the bodies of the holy people who had fallen asleep were raised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God opened the tombs and made many godly people who had died become alive again"

the bodies of the holy people who had fallen asleep were raised

Here to raise is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God put life back into to the dead bodies of many godly people who had fallen asleep" fallen asleep

This is a polite way of referring to dying. Alternate translation: "died"

Matthew 27:53

They came out ... appeared to many

The order of the events that Matthew describes (beginning with the words "The tombs were opened" in verse 52) is unclear. After the earthquake when Jesus died and the tombs were opened 1) the holy people came back to life, and then, after Jesus came back to life, the holy people entered Jerusalem, where many people saw them, or 2) Jesus came back to life, and then the holy ones came back to life and entered the city, where many people saw them.

Matthew 27:54

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story. those who were watching Jesus

"those who were guarding Jesus." This refers to the other soldiers who were guarding Jesus with the centurion.

Alternate translation: "the other soldiers with him who were guarding Jesus"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

Matthew 27:55

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Matthew 27:56

the mother of the sons of Zebedee

"the mother of James and John" or "the wife of Zebedee"

Matthew 27:57

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus's burial.

Arimathea

This is the name of a city in Israel.

Matthew 27:58

Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Then Pilate ordered the soldiers to give the body of Jesus to Joseph"

Matthew 27:59

linen

a fine, costly cloth

Matthew 27:60

that he had cut into the rock

It is implied that Joseph had workers who cut the tomb into the rock.

Then he rolled a large stone

Most likely Joseph had other people there to help him roll the stone.

Matthew 27:61

opposite the tomb

"across from the tomb"

Matthew 27:62

the Preparation

This is the day that people got everything ready for the Sabbath.

were gathered together with Pilate

"met with Pilate"

Matthew 27:63

when that deceiver was alive

"when Jesus, the deceiver, was alive"

he said, 'After three days will I rise again.'

This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "he said that after three days he will rise again." or "he said that after three day he would rise again."

Matthew 27:64

command that the tomb be made secure

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"command your soldiers to guard the tomb"

the third day

"day number three." This refers to the day after two nights have passed.

his disciples may come and steal him

"his disciples may come and steal his body"

his disciples may ... say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and This has a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "his disciples may ... tell the people that he has risen from the dead, and" from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

and the last deception will be worse than the first

The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "and if they deceive people by saying that, it will be worse than the way he deceived people before when he said that he was the Christ"

Matthew 27:65

a guard

This consisted of four to sixteen Roman soldiers.

Matthew 27:66

sealing the stone

Possible meanings are 1) they put a cord around the stone and attached it with seals to the rock wall on either side of the entrance to the tomb or 2) they put seals between the stone and the wall.

placing the guard

"telling the soldiers to stand where they could keep people from tampering with the tomb"

Matthew 28 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([Matthew 28:1](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

"Make disciples"

The last two verses ([Matthew 28:19-20](#)) are commonly known as "The Great Commission" because they contain a very important command given to all Christians. Christians are to "make disciples" by going to people, sharing the gospel with them and training them to live as Christians.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

An angel of the Lord

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing with the women at Jesus's tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels looked human. Two of the authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULB without trying to make the passages all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 28:1-2](#) and [Mark 16:5](#) and [Luke 24:4](#) and [John 20:12](#))

Links:

[Matthew 28:1 Notes](#)

Matthew 28

28:1-10

What was the Sabbath?

[28:1]

See: Sabbath

What day was the first day of the week?

[28:1]

The Sabbath began on Friday at sunset and ended Saturday at sunset. The day after the Sabbath was the first day of the week. This day began on Saturday at sunset and ended on Sunday at sunset.

See: Sabbath

Why did the angel roll away the stone?

[28:2]

The angel rolled away the stone because it was very large.

See: Angel; Heaven

Why did the angel look the way he did?

[28:3]

The angel looked the way he did because he was holy. White was a symbol of someone or something being holy.

See: Angel; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); White (symbol)

How was Jesus crucified?

[28:5]

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

How was Jesus resurrected?

[28:5, 28:6]

The man in the tomb said that Jesus was risen. That is, Jesus was resurrected.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Where was Galilee?

[28:7]

See Map: Galilee

What was worship?

[28:9]

See: Worship

28:11-20

Who were the chief priests and elders?

[28:11]

The chief priests and elders were Jewish leaders.

See: Chief Priest; Elder

Why did the Jewish leaders give money to the Roman soldiers?

[28:12]

The Jewish leaders gave money to the Roman soldiers to lie about what happened. They did not want people to know about what happened at the tomb.

Who were the eleven disciples?

[28:16]

Normally, there were twelve disciples. At this time, Judas was not a disciple anymore.

See: Disciple

What did God give to Jesus?

[28:18]

Jesus said that God gave him permission to do something. He gave him power to do things in heaven and on earth.

See: Heaven

How were the disciples to make disciples?

[28:19]

Jesus wanted the disciples to make other disciples. That is, he wanted them to tell people about Jesus and help them to believe in Jesus and to do things that honored God. They did this by going to different places, baptizing people who believed in Jesus, and teaching them how to live in a way that honored God.

See: Disciple; Baptize (Baptism)

How was Jesus with the disciples until the end of the age?

[28:20]

Jesus said that he would be with the disciples until the end of the age. Some scholars think Jesus would remain with them for a time on the earth after he was resurrected. He will help them to do the things he wanted them to do. Other scholars think Jesus wanted to say that he would be with every generation of Christians to help them do the things he wanted them to do.

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Generation

Matthew 28:1

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week

"After the Sabbath, as the sun began to come up Sunday morning"

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story.

the other Mary

"the other woman named Mary." This is Mary the mother of James and Joseph (Matthew 27:56).

Matthew 28:2

Behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows. Your language may have a way of doing this.

there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended ... and rolled away the stone

Possible meanings are 1) the earthquake happened because the angel came down and rolled away the stone or 2) all these events happened at the same time .

earthquake

a sudden and violent shaking of the ground

Matthew 28:3

His appearance

"The angel's appearance"

was like lightning

This is a simile that emphasizes how bright in appearance the angel was. Alternate translation: "was bright like

lightning"

his clothing as white as snow

This is a simile that emphasizes how bright and white the angel's clothes were. The verb "was" from the previous phrase can be repeated. Alternate translation: "his clothing was very white, like snow"

Matthew 28:4

became like dead men

This is a simile that means the soldiers fell down and did not move. Alternate translation: "fell to the ground and lay there like dead men"

Matthew 28:5

the women

"Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary"

who has been crucified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the people and the soldiers crucified" or "whom they crucified"

Matthew 28:6

was lying

This means that Jesus's body was lying on the flat surface inside the tomb, not that Jesus was saying things that were not true.

Matthew 28:7

tell his disciples, 'He has risen from the dead. See, he is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see him.'

This is a quotation within a quotation. It can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead and that Jesus has gone ahead of you to Galilee, where you will see him."

He has risen

"He has come back to life"

from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

going ahead of you ... you will see him

Here "you" is plural. It refers to the women and the disciples.

I have told you

Here "you" is plural and refers to the women.

Matthew 28:8

The women

"Mary Magdalene and the other woman named Mary"

Matthew 28:9

Behold

The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows. Your language may have a way of doing this.

Greetings

This is an ordinary greeting, much like "Hello" in English. took hold of his feet

"got down on their knees and held onto his feet"

Matthew 28:10

my brothers

This refers to Jesus's disciples.

Matthew 28:11

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of the reaction of the Jewish religious leaders when they heard of Jesus's resurrection.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story. the women

Here this refers to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. behold

This marks the beginning of another event in the larger story. It may involve different people than the previous events. Your language may have a way of doing this.

Matthew 28:12

discussed the matter with them

"decided on a plan among themselves." The priests and elders decided to give the money to the soldiers.

Matthew 28:13

Say to others, 'The disciples of Jesus came ... while we were sleeping.'

If your language does not allow quotations within quotations you may translate this as a single quote.

Alternate translation: "Tell others that Jesus' disciples came ... while you were sleeping."

Matthew 28:14

If this report reaches the governor

"If the governor hears that you were asleep when Jesus's disciples took his body"

the governor

"Pilate" (Matthew 27:2)

we will persuade him and take any worries away from you

"do not worry. We will talk to him so that he does not punish you."

Matthew 28:15

did as they had been instructed

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "did what the priests had told them to do"

This report spread widely among the Jews and continues even today

"Many Jews heard this report and continue to tell others about it even today"

even today

This refers to the time Matthew wrote the book.

Matthew 28:16

Connecting Statement:

This begins the account of Jesus meeting with his disciples after his resurrection.

Matthew 28:17

they worshiped him, but some doubted

Possible meanings are 1) they all worshiped Jesus even though some of them doubted, or 2) some of them worshiped Jesus, but others did not worship him because they doubted.

but some doubted

It can be stated explicitly what the disciples doubted.

Alternate translation: "some doubted that he was really Jesus and that he had become alive again"

Matthew 28:18

All authority has been given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My Father has given me all authority"

in heaven and on earth

Here "heaven" and "earth" are used together to mean everyone and everything in heaven and earth. The words "in heaven and on earth" can be translated as "over everyone and everything in heaven and on earth."

Matthew 28:19

of all the nations

Here "nations" refers to the people, and the saying is probably a hyperbole. Alternate translation: "of the people in every nation"

into the name

Here "name" refers to authority. Alternate translation: "by the authority"

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

Matthew 28:20

See

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

even to the end of the age

"until the end of this age" or "until the end of the world"

Introduction to the Gospel of Mark

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Mark

Introduction (1:1–13) The ministry of Jesus in

Galilee Early ministry (1:14–3:6) Jesus becomes more popular among the people (3:7–5:43) Moving away from Galilee and then returning (6:1–8:26)

Progress toward Jerusalem, repeated times when Jesus predicts his own death, the disciples misunderstand, and Jesus teaches them how difficult it will be to follow him (8:27–10:52) Last days of ministry and preparation for final conflict in Jerusalem (11:1–13:37) The death of Christ and the empty tomb (14:1–16:8)

What is the Book of Mark about?

The Gospel of Mark is one of four books in the New Testament that describe some of the life of Jesus Christ. The authors of the gospels wrote about different aspects of who Jesus was and what he did. Mark wrote much about how Jesus suffered and died on the cross. He did this to encourage his readers who were being persecuted. Mark also explained Jewish customs and some Aramaic words. This may indicate that Mark expected most of his first readers to be Gentiles.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "The Gospel of Mark" or "The Gospel according to Mark." They may also choose a title that may be clearer, such as "The Good News about Jesus that Mark wrote."

Who wrote the Book of Mark?

The book does not give the name of the author. However, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought that the author was Mark. Mark was also known as John Mark. He was a close friend of Peter. Mark may not have witnessed what Jesus said and did. But many scholars think that Mark wrote in his gospel what Peter told him about Jesus.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What were Jesus's teaching methods?

The people regarded Jesus as a rabbi. A rabbi is a teacher of God's law. Jesus taught in ways similar to those of other religious teachers in Israel. He had students who followed him wherever he went. These students were called disciples. He often told parables. Parables are stories that teach moral lessons. (See: lawofmoses and disciple and parable)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What are the Synoptic Gospels?

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because they have many similar passages. The word "synoptic" means to "see together."

The texts are considered "parallel" when they are the same or almost the same among two or three gospels. When translating parallel passages, translators should use the same wording and make them as similar as possible.

Why does Jesus refer to himself as the "Son of Man"?

In the gospels, Jesus calls himself the "Son of Man." It is a reference to Daniel 7:13-14. In this passage there is a person described as a "son of man." That means the person was someone who looked like a human being. God gave authority to the son of man to rule over the nations forever. And all the people will worship him forever.

Jews of Jesus's time did not use "Son of Man" as a title for anyone. Therefore, Jesus used it for himself to help them understand who he truly was. (See: sonofman)

Translating the title "Son of Man" can be difficult in many languages. Readers may misunderstand a literal translation. Translators can consider alternatives, such as "The Human One." It may also be helpful to include a footnote to explain the title.

Why does Mark frequently use terms indicating short periods of time?

The Gospel of Mark uses the word "immediately" forty-two times. Mark does this to make the events more exciting and vivid. It moves the reader quickly from one event to the next.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Mark?

The following verses are found in older versions of the Bible but are not included in most modern versions. Translators are advised not to include these verses. However, if in the translators' region there are older versions of the Bible that include one or more of these verses, the translators can include them. If they are included, they should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they were probably not original to Mark's Gospel.

"If any man has ears to hear, let him hear." (7:16) "where their worm never dies and the fire is not put out" (9:44) "where their worm never dies and the fire is not put out" (9:46) "And the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'He was counted with the lawless ones'" (15:28)

The following passage is not found in the earliest manuscripts. Most Bibles include this passage, but modern Bibles put it in brackets ([]) or indicate in some way that this passage may not have been original to Mark's Gospel. Translators are advised to do something similar to what is done in the modern versions of the Bible.

"Early on the first day of the week, after he arose, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those who were with him, while they were mourning and weeping. They heard that he was alive and that he had been seen by her, but they did not believe. After these things he appeared in a different form to two of them, as they were walking out into the country. They went and told the rest of the disciples, but they did not believe them. Jesus later appeared to the eleven as they were reclining at the table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who saw him after he rose from the dead. He said to them, 'Go into

all the world, and preach the gospel to the entire creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, and he who does not believe will be condemned. These signs will go with those who believe: In my name they will cast out demons. They will speak in new languages. They will pick up snakes with their hands, and if they drink anything deadly, it will not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will get well.' After the Lord had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. The disciples left and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that went with them." (16:9-20)

Chapter 1

Mark 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:2-3, which is a quotation from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

"You can make me clean"

Leprosy was a disease of the skin that made a person unclean and unable to properly worship God. Jesus is capable of making people physically "clean" or healthy as well as spiritually "clean" or right with God. (See: clean)

Prophecy

Mark begins this book about Jesus Christ with the words that the prophet Isaiah wrote long before that time. Then he tells how John the Baptist and Jesus Christ fulfilled that prophecy.

Repentance

Repent means stop sinning. John the Baptist taught people to repent so that God would forgive their sins. Jesus taught people to repent and to believe the good news about the kingdom of God.

The work of Jesus

Jesus went around preaching the good news of God, casting demons out of people, and healing people who were sick.

Links:

[Mark 1:1 Notes](#) [Mark intro](#)

Mark 1 Commentary

1:1-8

What is the gospel?

[1:1]

See: Gospel

How is Jesus the "son of God"?

[1:1]

See: Son of God

Who was John the Baptist?

[1:4]

Mark wrote about John the Baptist fulfilling a prophecy from the Old Testament. Three different prophets spoke about this prophecy (see: Exodus 23:20; Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1). Mark wanted people to know that God promised to do something, and it happened. God promised that a prophet would come before the messiah to tell people that the messiah was coming. John the Baptist was this promised prophet.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

How did John the Baptist serve God?

[1:4, 1:5]

John the Baptist served God by telling people that they needed to repent. They needed to worship and obey God. They were unclean because they disobeyed God. They needed to be made clean. John also served God by baptizing people who believed in God and repented of their sins.

See: Repent (Repentance); Sin; Clean and Unclean; Baptize (Baptism); Gentile; Confess (Confession)

Why was John's baptism different from all other baptisms?

[1:4, 1:5]

John's baptism was not like other baptisms. John's baptism helped people get ready for the messiah. People wanted to follow the messiah, so they confessed their sins. They were at peace with God for a time. This helped them to know the messiah when they heard him speak. In ancient Israel, other leaders might have baptized and preached repentance.

However, only John prepared the people in Judea and in Jerusalem for Jesus.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Preach (Preacher); Repent (Repentance); Clean and Unclean

See Map: Jerusalem; Judea

Where is Judea and Jerusalem?

[1:5]

See Map: Judea; Jerusalem

Why did Mark write about the clothes John the Baptist wore and the things he ate?

[1:6]

The Jews thought the prophet Elijah would come back to earth before the messiah (see: Malachi 4:5). Elijah was a prophet who wore a coat made of hair and a leather belt around his waist (see: 2 Kings 1:8). John dressed in the same way as Elijah.

Both Elijah and John lived in the wilderness. People who lived in the wilderness ate locusts and honey.

Mark wrote these things so everyone would know that John was the prophet who God promised to send before the messiah came. John told people that the messiah would be there soon.

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Locust; Wilderness

Why did John not want to untie Jesus' sandal?

[1:7]

In ancient Israel, people thought that feet were very dirty. Because of this, only servants or slaves would touch someone's feet. It dishonored someone to touch dirty feet. However, John thought that even touching Jesus' feet was a greater honor than John deserved.

Advice to translators: A sandal is a certain type of shoe. It does not cover the entire foot.

See: Clean and Unclean

How was Jesus' baptism different from John's baptism?

[1:8]

John's baptism was a way for people to show other people that they wanted to obey and honor God. They wanted to stop sinning. Jesus baptizes people with the Holy Spirit. That is, he did not just wash their body with water. They were baptized because they believed in Jesus.

See: Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:3-16; John 1:19-34; Acts 2

See: Baptize (Baptism); Holy Spirit; Spirit (Spiritual)

1:9-11

How were the heavens split open?

[1:10]

Mark wrote that the heavens were "split open" or tore and opened when Jesus came out of the water. Mark wrote the same word to write about God tearing the curtain of the temple from top to bottom when Jesus died on the cross (see: Mark 15:38). This was at the beginning and the end of Mark's gospel. Mark wanted people to know that Jesus is the Son of God. Mark wrote about the heavens opening because he wanted to say that God was allowing people to know more about God.

See: Temple; Cross; Gospel; Son of God; God; Heaven

Why did the voice say "You are my beloved Son. I am very pleased with you"?

[1:11]

The voice saying "You are my beloved Son" was saying that the messiah had come to earth. After this, Jesus began to do certain things to serve God and tell people that he was the messiah. God sent the Holy Spirit as a dove so people would know that God had anointed Jesus for ministry.

The words spoken by God the father made the readers think about Isaiah 42:1.

See: Psalms 2:7; Matthew 3:13-17; Luke 3:21-23

See: Son of God; God the Father; Holy Spirit; Messiah (Christ); Minister (Ministry); Anoint (Anointing)

1:12-13

Why did Jesus go to the wilderness after he was baptized?

[1:12]

Jesus went to the wilderness because the Holy Spirit wanted him to go there. Jesus completely obeyed the Holy Spirit and went to the wilderness.

See: Wilderness; Holy Spirit; Baptize (Baptism)

Why did God send Jesus into the wilderness?

[1:13]

God sent Jesus into the wilderness. This is because Satan was going to tempt him. Jesus was given choices to follow God or not. Jesus obeyed God because he trusted God. Jesus did not sin when he was tempted. He did not follow Satan. After the temptations, angels served Jesus because his body was weak.

See: Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13

See: Satan (The Devil); Tempt (Temptation); Angel

1:14-15

Why was John put into prison?

[1:14]

John was put in prison because he told Herod that he could not marry his brother's wife, Herodias. John said that Herod broke the law by marrying Herodias.

Where is Galilee?

[1:14]

See Map: Galilee

Why did Jesus say that the "kingdom of God" is near?

[1:15]

Jesus said that the kingdom of God was near. Some scholars think Jesus' kingdom was on the earth. He was the king of the earthly kingdom.

Other scholars think Jesus wanted to say the "kingdom of God" has started so that people did not have to sin any more.

God rules the things someone thinks and the things they do when they believe in Jesus and do the things he said to do.

Before, people could only do evil before Jesus came to earth. Now people can return to God and do the things that honor him.

Other scholars think Jesus was coming to offer to his kingdom to Israel. His kingdom was going to begin if they believed in him. Because they rejected him, his kingdom did not begin.

See: Matthew 4:12-17; Luke

See: Kingdom of God; Messiah (Christ); Proclaim (Proclamation)

1:16-20

Why did Jesus say they would be "fishers of men"?

[1:17]

Jesus used a metaphor when he said they would be "fishers of men." Peter, Andrew, John and James were all fishermen. They fished to earn money. Jesus said this to say that they were no longer going to catch fish for money. Instead, they would bring men to God by telling them about the gospel. Jesus wanted to tell them they would serve God in a different way.

See: Metaphor; Gospel

Why did Peter and Andrew follow Jesus immediately?

[1:18]

Andrew heard what John the Baptist said about Jesus (see: John 1:40). Andrew was ready to follow Jesus because of John. Andrew found his brother Peter. Peter was also ready to follow Jesus (see: John 1:41-42).

Why did Mark write about the hired men?

[1:20]

The disciples left their family, their work, and their homes to follow Jesus. They left everything that they had. Mark wrote that they did not leave their father to fish without help. He had hired men who would help him. They honored their father by making sure he was not alone.

See: Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:40-42

See: Disciple

See Map: Sea of Galilee

1:21-28

Where was Capernaum?

[1:21]

See Map: Capernaum

What was the Sabbath?

[1:21]

See: Sabbath

What was a synagogue?

[1:21]

See: Synagogue

How were the things Jesus taught different from other teachers?

[1:22]

In ancient Israel, teachers said what other teachers that came before them said. Jesus' teaching was different. He taught what God commanded. Jesus did not follow the things that other people taught because other people taught it. He only taught about what God said and the people were amazed.

Why did the unclean spirits cry out?

[1:23]

The unclean spirits cried out. That is, they were afraid. They knew that Jesus is God and will one day judge them and punish them.

See: Clean and Unclean; Demon

Where was Nazareth?

[1:24]

See Map: Nazareth

Who is the “holy one” of God?

[1:24]

Jesus is the holy one of God. That is, he is the messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus tell the demon to be quiet?

[1:25]

Jesus made others know that he had power over the demons when he told them to be quiet. They needed Jesus’ permission to speak.

See: Demon

Why were the people amazed?

[1:27]

The people were amazed because even the demons did what Jesus told them to do. He had power that they had never seen before.

See: Luke 4:31-37

1:29-31

Why did Mark write that the woman served Jesus after she was healed?

[1:31]

Mark wrote that Peter’s mother-in-law served Jesus so everyone would know that Jesus had completely healed her.

See: Matthew 8:14-15; Luke 4:38-39

1:32-39

How was someone possessed by a demon?

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why did Mark write that the people came to Jesus after sunset?

[1:32]

Mark wrote that people came to Jesus after sunset. The people wanted to follow the Law of Moses and not do any work on the Sabbath. The Jewish leaders taught that carrying a person who could not walk was work. Therefore, it was against the Law of Moses. The people waited until after the Sabbath was over at sunset to come to Jesus for healing.

See: Law of Moses; Sabbath

Why did Mark write Jesus woke up early and prayed in a quiet place alone?

[1:35]

Mark wrote about Jesus getting up early in the morning and praying. For Jesus, prayer was the most significant part of his day. He was able to talk and listen to God the father. God the father told Jesus what he needed to do while he prayed. This is the beginning of Jesus’ preaching and healing in Galilee.

See: God the Father; Preach (Preacher)

See Map: Galilee

1:40-45

What is leprosy?

[1:40]

See: Leprosy (Leper)

Why did Jesus touch the leper?

[1:41]

A person became unclean if they touched a leper. This is what is written in the Law of Moses. Mark wanted people to know that Jesus touched the leper. Jesus did not worry about being unclean because he leper was made clean and was healed of his leprosy when Jesus touched him.

See: Clean and Unclean; Law of Moses; Leprosy (Leper)

Why did Jesus warn the leper not to speak about being healed?

[1:44]

The Law of Moses required a leper to show himself to the priest. The priest would pronounce that he was clean. In this way, Jesus was following the Law of Moses. Mark wrote that Jesus healed three different people. He told each of them not to tell anyone (see: 1:44; 5:43; and 7:36). The leper who was cured did not obey Jesus. He told everyone. Crowds then came to be healed by Jesus instead of coming to hear Jesus teach. Because of the crowds, Jesus could no longer teach in the synagogues. He began to teach outside of the towns where no one lived.

See: Matthew 8:1-4; Luke 5:12-16

Mark 1:1

General Information:

The author of this book is Mark, also called John Mark. He was the son of one of the women named Mary mentioned in the four Gospels. He was also the nephew of Barnabas. This whole book is about Jesus Christ.

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Mark 1:2

General Information:

Mark begins this book with the words that the prophet Isaiah wrote long ago about a messenger who would come and tell the people to get ready for the Lord's coming. Verses 4-15 show how this prophecy was fulfilled by John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

before your face

This is an idiom that means "ahead of you."

your face ... your way

Here the word "your" refers to the Lord and is singular. the one

This refers to the messenger.

will prepare your way

Doing this represents preparing the people for the Lord's arrival. Alternate translation: "will prepare the people for your arrival"

Mark 1:3

Connecting Statement:

This verse tells how the messenger in verse 2 would prepare the Lord's way.

The voice of one crying out in the wilderness

This phrase can be expressed as a sentence. Alternate translation: "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness is heard" or "They hear the sound of someone crying out in the wilderness"

Make ready the way of the Lord ... make his paths straight

These two phrases mean the same thing.

Make ready the way of the Lord

"Get the road ready for the Lord." Doing this represents being prepared to hear the Lord's message when he comes. Alternate translation: "Prepare yourselves for the Lord to come" or "Be ready for the Lord when he comes"

Mark 1:4

General Information

The events in Mark 1:4-15 are a fulfillment of what Isaiah had prophesied. John was the "messenger" of verse 2 and "the one calling out in the wilderness" of verse 3.

John came

Translators can make it explicit that John's coming was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. Alternate translation: "So John came" or "In fulfillment of that prophecy, John came"

Mark 1:5

The whole country of Judea and all the people of Jerusalem

The words "The whole country" are a metonym for the people who live in the country and a generalization that refers to a great number of people, not to every single person. Alternate translation: "Many people from Judea and Jerusalem"

They were baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. They did these things at the same time. The people were baptized because they repented of their sins. Alternate translation: "When they repented of their sins, John baptized them in the Jordan River"

Mark 1:6

he ate locusts and wild honey

Locusts and wild honey were foods that John could find in the wilderness. Wild honey is honey that wild bees make.

Mark 1:7

He was preaching

"John was preaching"

the strap of his sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie

John was comparing himself to a servant to show how great the one to come would be. Alternate translation: "I am not even worthy to do the lowly task of removing his shoes"

the strap of his sandals

People often wore sandals that were made of leather and were tied to their feet with leather straps.

stoop down

"bend down"

Mark 1:8

but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit

John was contrasting how he was purifying people with water with how the one to come would purify people with the Holy Spirit. To baptize with the Holy Spirit is a metaphor meaning that that person would send the Holy Spirit to purify people. The Holy Spirit would then live in them and empower them to stop sinning and to obey God. If possible, use the same word for "baptize" here as you used for John's baptism.

Mark 1:9

It happened in those days

This marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

he was baptized by John

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "John baptized him"

Mark 1:10

the Spirit coming down on him like a dove

Possible meanings are 1) this is a simile, and the Spirit descended upon Jesus as a bird descends from the sky toward the ground or 2) the Spirit literally looked like a dove as he descended upon Jesus.

Mark 1:11

A voice came out of the heavens

This represents God speaking. Sometimes people avoid referring directly to God because they respect him.

Alternate translation: "God spoke from the heavens"

beloved Son

This is an important title for Jesus. The Father calls Jesus his "beloved Son" because of his eternal love for him.

Mark 1:12

Connecting Statement:

After Jesus's baptism, he is in the wilderness for 40 days and then goes to Galilee to teach and call his disciples.

compelled him to go out

"forced Jesus to go out"

Mark 1:13

He was in the wilderness

"He stayed in the wilderness"

forty days

"40 days"

He was with

"He was among"

Mark 1:14

after John was arrested

"after John was placed in prison." Mark is referring to when King Herod had John arrested. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after King Herod had John arrested" or "after soldiers arrested John"

proclaiming the gospel

"telling many people about the good news"

Mark 1:15

The time is fulfilled

"It is now time"

the kingdom of God is near

Possible meanings are 1) God was beginning to rule.

Alternate translation: "God is beginning to rule over all" or

2) God would soon rule over all. Alternate translation: "God is about to rule over all"

Mark 1:16

he saw Simon and Andrew

"Jesus saw Simon and Andrew"

casting a net in the sea

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "throwing a net into the water to catch fish"

Mark 1:17

Come, follow me

"Follow me" or "Come with me"

I will make you fishers of men

This metaphor means Simon and Andrew will teach people God's true message, so others will also follow Jesus.

Alternate translation: "I will teach you to gather men to me like you gather fish"

men

human beings, persons, people, not specifically males

Mark 1:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 1:19

in the boat

This was probably James and John's boat.

mending the nets

"repairing the nets"

Mark 1:20

called them

It may be helpful to state clearly why Jesus called to James and John. Alternate translation: "called them to come with him"

hired servants

"servants who worked for them"

they followed him

James and John went with Jesus.

Mark 1:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus teaches in the synagogue of the town of Capernaum on the Sabbath. By sending a demon out of a man he amazes the people in all the nearby area around Galilee.

came into Capernaum

"arrived at Capernaum"

Mark 1:22

for he was teaching them as someone who has authority and not as the scribes

The idea of "teach" can be stated clearly when talking about "someone who has authority" and "the scribes." Alternate translation: "for he was teaching them as someone who has authority teaches and not as the scribes teach"

Mark 1:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 1:24

What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth?

The demon asked this rhetorical question meaning that there was no reason for Jesus to interfere with him or any other demon. Alternate translation: "Jesus of Nazareth, leave us alone! There is no reason for you to interfere with us."

we ... us

These pronouns are exclusive. They refer to the demon inside the man and all other demons, but do not include the listener.

Have you come to destroy us?

The demon asked this rhetorical question to urge Jesus not to harm him or any other demon. Alternate translation: "Do not destroy us!"

Mark 1:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 1:26

threw him down

Here the word "him" refers to the demon-possessed man.

and went out from him while crying out with a loud voice

"and cried out with a loud voice as it went out from him"

Mark 1:27

so they asked each other, "What is this? ... they obey him!"

The people used a question to show how amazed they were.

It can be expressed as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "so they said to each other, 'This is amazing! ... they obey him!'"

A new teaching with authority!

The people used this exclamation to express their amazement at Jesus' teaching. It can also be expressed as a full sentence. Alternate translation: "He gives a new teaching, and he speaks with authority!" or "He teaches something new, and he has authority!"

He even commands the unclean spirits and they obey him!

This was evidence of Jesus' authority.

Mark 1:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 1:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 1:30

Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever
The word "Now" marks a pause in the story. In this sentence, Mark introduces Simon's mother-in-law to the story and gives background information about her.

Mark 1:31

raised her up

"caused her to stand" or "made her able to get out of bed"
the fever left her

You may want to make explicit who healed her. Alternate translation: "Jesus healed her of the fever"

she started serving them

You may want to make explicit that she served food.

Alternate translation: "she provided them with food and drinks"

Mark 1:32

they brought to him

"the people brought to Jesus"

all who were sick or possessed by demons

The word "all" is an exaggeration to emphasize the great number of people who came. Alternate translation: "many who were sick or possessed by demons"

Mark 1:33

The whole city gathered together at the door

The word "city" is a metonym for the people who lived in the city. Here the word "whole" is probably a generalization to emphasize that most people from the city gathered.

Alternate translation: "Many people from that city gathered outside the door"

Mark 1:34

He healed

"Jesus healed"

Mark 1:35

Connecting Statement:

Jesus takes time to pray in the midst of his time of healing people. He then goes to towns throughout Galilee to preach, heal, and cast out demons.

He got up

"Jesus got up"

a solitary place

"a place where he could be alone"

Mark 1:36

Simon and those who were with him

Here "him" refers to Simon. Also, those with him include Andrew, James, John, and possibly other people.

Mark 1:37

Everyone is looking for you

The word "Everyone" is an exaggeration to emphasize that many people were looking for Jesus. Alternate translation: "Many people are looking for you"

Mark 1:38

General Information:

Here the words "he" and "I" refer to Jesus.

Let us go elsewhere

"We need to go to some other place." Here Jesus uses the word "us" to refer to himself, along with Simon, Andrew, James, and John.

Mark 1:39

He went throughout all of Galilee

The words "throughout all" are an exaggeration used to

emphasize that Jesus went to many locations during his ministry. Alternate translation: "He went to many places in Galilee"

Mark 1:40

A leper came to him. He was begging him; he knelt down and said to him

"A leper came to Jesus. He knelt down and was begging Jesus and said"

If you are willing, you can make me clean

In the first phrase, the words "to make me clean" are

understood because of the second phrase. Alternate translation: "If you are willing to make me clean, then you can make me clean"

are willing

"want" or "desire"

you can make me clean

In biblical times, a person who had any of certain skin diseases was considered unclean until his skin had healed enough that he was no longer contagious. Alternate translation: "you can heal me"

Mark 1:41

Moved with compassion, Jesus

Here the word "moved" is an idiom meaning to feel emotion about another's need. Alternate translation:

"Having compassion for him, Jesus" or "Jesus felt compassion for the man, so he"

I am willing

It may be helpful to state what Jesus is willing to do.

Alternate translation: "I am willing to make you clean"

Mark 1:42

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 1:43

General Information:

The word "him" used here refers to the leper whom Jesus healed.

Mark 1:44

Be sure to say nothing to anyone

"Be sure to not say anything to anyone"

show yourself to the priest

Jesus told the man to show himself to the priest so that the priest could look at his skin to see if his leprosy was really gone. The law of Moses required people to present themselves to the priest if they had been unclean but were no longer unclean.

show yourself

The word "yourself" here represents the skin of the leper.

Alternate translation: "show your skin"

a testimony to them

It is best to use the pronoun "them," if possible, in your language. Possible meanings are 1) "a testimony to the priests" or 2) "a testimony to the people."

Mark 1:45

But he went out

The word "he" refers to the man Jesus healed.

began to declare it freely

Here "declare it freely" is a metaphor for telling people in many places about what had happened. Alternate translation: "began to tell people in many places about

what Jesus had done"

so much so that

The man spread the news so much that

that Jesus could no longer enter a town openly

This was the result of the man spreading the news so much.

Here "openly" is a metaphor for "publicly." Jesus could not enter the towns because many people would crowd around him. Alternate translation: "that Jesus could no longer enter

a town publicly" or "that Jesus could no longer enter the towns in a way that many people would see him"

remote places

"lonely places" or "places where no one lived"

from everywhere

The word "everywhere" is a hyperbole used to emphasize how very many places the people came from. Alternate translation: "from all over the region"

Chapter 2

Mark 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Sinners"

When the people of Jesus's time spoke of "sinners," they were talking about people who did not obey the law of Moses and instead committed sins like stealing or sexual sins. When Jesus said that he came to call "sinners," he meant that only people who believe that they are sinners can be his followers. This is true even if they are not what most people think of as "sinners." (See: sin)

Fasting and Feasting

People would fast, or not eat food for a long time, when they were sad or were showing God that they were sorry for their sins. When they were happy, like during weddings, they would have feasts, or meals where they would eat much food.

(See: fast)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

The Jewish leaders used rhetorical questions to show that they were angry because of what Jesus said and did and that they did not believe that he was God's Son

Links:

[Mark 2:1 Notes](#)

Mark 2

2:1-12

Whose home did Jesus go to?

[2:1]

Mark wrote that Jesus was "at home." He did not return to the place where his family lived. He went to Capernaum. Jesus left and returned there many times. Scholars think this was Simon and Andrew's home (see: Mark 1:29).

See Map: Capernaum

How did Jesus speak the word?

[2:2]

Mark wrote that Jesus "spoke the word." This was a metaphor. He wanted to write that Jesus taught things about God.

People needed to do the things he taught because they were the things God wanted them to do.

See: Metaphor

What did Mark want to write about the people who opened the roof?

[2:4]

Mark wanted people to know that these people were going to get their sick friend to Jesus no matter how hard it might be. In ancient Israel, homes usually had an outside stairway or ladder that went up to a flat roof. The roofs were made of slabs of burnt or dried clay. This was placed on supporting beams that stretched from one wall to another wall. The friends removed some of these slabs to make a hole in the roof. They then lowered the sick man into the room with Jesus. Advice to translators: A slab is something that is large and flat. It may be 1 to 3 meters long and wide, but only a few centimeters thick. A beam is a long piece of wood that is very strong.

Whose trust in God did Jesus see and reward?

Jesus saw these four friends trusted Jesus to heal the paralyzed man. These men worked very hard to bring the paralyzed man to Jesus so Jesus could heal him. Because they trusted Jesus, he rewarded them by healing the man and forgiving his sins.

Advice to translators: Someone who is paralyzed cannot walk.

See: Sin

Why were the teachers of the law angry that Jesus said: "your sins are forgiven"?

[2:5]

The teachers of the Law of Moses thought Jesus had insulted God when he said, “your sins are forgiven.” This is because only God can forgive sins. They believed God alone could forgive sins.

See: Law of Moses; Sin

What did Jesus say to the teachers of the law?

[2:8, 2:9]

Jesus knew what the teachers of the Law of Moses were thinking. He gave them something new to think about. Jesus asked them a question. He did not want them to answer. Anyone could say that a person’s sins were forgiven. This is because people would not know if this happened. However, if someone told someone to get up and walk but they did not get up and walk, then everyone could see this. People would know the person lied if the could not to heal the other person. However, Jesus healed this man by telling him to “Get up and walk.” People saw that the man got up and walked. Therefore, Jesus healed him. So when Jesus said that, “Your sins are forgiven,” he showed them that he had the power to forgive sins by healing the man.

See: Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 5:17-26

See: Law of Moses; Sin

Who is the “son of man”?

[2:10]

See: Son of Man

2:13-17

What was the lake about which Mark wrote?

[2:13]

Mark wrote about the Sea of Galilee

See Map: Sea of Galilee

How did Mark talk about Levi?

[2:14]

Mark called the tax collector Levi, son of Alphaeus. In the gospel of Matthew, Levi was named Matthew (see: Matthew 9:9-11).

Matthew was a tax collector. People in Israel hated the tax collectors. Tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Roman government. They paid the Romans so they could collect taxes from other people. If they collected more taxes than they paid the Roman government, then they were allowed to keep it. Because of this, many tax collectors became rich. The Jews thought a Jewish tax collector betrayed the Jewish people because they took money from the Jews and gave it to the Romans. They thought tax collectors were evil because they took money from people who honored God and gave it to people who rejected God.

Who were the people who followed Jesus?

[2:15]

The twelve disciples were certain people who believed in Jesus and followed him. In 2:15, Mark wrote about other people who followed Jesus. Some of them believed in Jesus and followed him. Others did not believe in Jesus, but they still followed him. They wanted to see the great miracles he did. However, they did not believe Jesus was the messiah.

See: Miracle; Messiah (Christ); Disciple

Why did the Pharisees ask Jesus’ followers “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

[2:16]

Pharisees wanted to follow the Law of Moses. They thought that eating with unclean people would make them unclean. This is not what the Law of Moses said. It is what the Pharisees taught. Because of this, they did not know why Jesus wanted to be near people who sinned. They were saying that Jesus had broken the Law of Moses. However, he was not breaking the Law of Moses.

See: Pharisees; Clean and Unclean; Law of Moses; Sin

What did Jesus say to the Pharisees?

[2:17]

Jesus told the Pharisees that he was a type of doctor. This was a metaphor. Doctors needed to be near sick people so that they could help them. Certain people knew they sinned and were not at peace with God. They knew they needed God to forgive them.

Jesus called the Pharisees “righteous.” This is because they were the teachers of the Law of Moses. They thought they did not sin and were at peace with God. They did not think they needed God to forgive them. However, everyone needs to be forgiven by God because everyone has sinned.

See: Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 5:27-32

See: Metaphor; Righteous (Righteousness); Sin

2:18-22

Why were people arguing about fasting?

[2:18]

The people argued because they did not see the disciples of Jesus fasting. In ancient Israel, people fasted often. They fasted when bad things happened (see: Ezra 8:23). They fasted when people died (see: 1 Samuel 31:13; 2 Samuel 1:12). They fasted when people were sick (see: 2 Samuel 1:16). They fasted when they repented (see: 1 Kings 21:27). Many Jews fasted two days every week when Jesus was on the earth (see: Luke 18:9-14).

See: Disciple; Fasting; Repent (Repentance)

How did Jesus answer the question of fasting?

[2:19]

The Pharisees asked Jesus a question about fasting. Jesus answered the question by asking a question. He asked if people needed to fast when good things happened. Jesus said that people did not fast when good things happened. People should have been very happy while Jesus was on earth. Therefore, they should not fast. Jesus prophesied that he would be killed. When this happens, people will be very sad. Then they will fast.

Jesus also used two metaphors. One metaphor was about clothes and the other was about wineskins. He wanted to say that people do things differently after something new happens. The disciples did something different because they were with Jesus, the messiah.

Advice to translators: A wineskin is a bag that holds wine. It was made of leather, that is, the skin of an animal.

See: Matthew 9:14-17; Luke 5:33-39

See: Pharisees; Fasting; Wedding; Marriage; Bride of Christ; Lamb of God; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Metaphor; Wine (Winepress); Messiah (Christ)

2:23-28

Why did the Pharisees say Jesus' followers broke the rules about the Sabbath?

[2:24]

According to the Law of Moses, one could work on the Sabbath. However, it does not say what people needed to stop doing. The Pharisees made many rules about what someone could and could not do on the Sabbath. However, this was not in the Law of Moses. The disciples picked small pieces of grain and rubbed them together so they could eat them. In the Law of Moses, people were allowed to do this when they went from one place to another place (see: Deuteronomy 23:25). However, the Pharisees taught that this was wrong. Jesus knew it was not wrong to break the Pharisees' rule.

See: Pharisees; Sabbath; Law of Moses

How did Jesus answer the Pharisees?

[2:25, 2:26, 2:27, 2:28]

Jesus told the Pharisees that eating was not breaking the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses had certain rules about the Sabbath. Jesus told them a story about David (see: 1 Samuel 21:2-6). David broke the Law of Moses. However, this was not evil. It was not evil to help people or to eat if you needed to eat. Jesus created the Sabbath. Therefore, if Jesus said they were not doing something evil, then they were not doing something evil.

Jesus wanted people to know that God cared more about people than the rules about the Sabbath. God made the Sabbath for people and it was a gift he gave to people.

See: Matthew 12:1-8; Luke 6:1-5

See: Pharisees; Law of Moses; Sabbath

Mark 2:1

Connecting Statement:

After preaching and healing people throughout Galilee, Jesus returns to Capernaum, where he heals and forgives the sin of a paralyzed man.

it was heard that he was at home

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people there heard that he was staying at his home"

Mark 2:2

So many gathered there

The word "there" refers to the house that Jesus stayed at in Capernaum. Alternate translation: "So many people gathered there" or "So many people came to the house"

there was no more space

This refers to there being no space inside the house.

Alternate translation: "there was no more room for them inside"

he spoke the word to them

"Jesus spoke his message to them"

Mark 2:3

four people were carrying him

"four of them were carrying him." It is likely that there were more than four people within the group that brought the man to Jesus.

were bringing a paralyzed man

"were bringing a man who was unable to walk or use his arms"

Mark 2:4

could not get near him

"could not get close to where Jesus was"

they removed the roof that was above Jesus, and after they made an opening, they lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. Houses where Jesus lived had flat roofs made of clay and covered with tiles. Alternate translation: "they removed the tiles from the part of the roof above where Jesus was. And when they had dug through the clay roof, they lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on" or "they made a hole in the roof above Jesus, and then they lowered the paralyzed man on the mat"

Mark 2:5

Seeing their faith

"Seeing the men's faith." Possible meanings are 1) that only

the men who carried the paralyzed man had faith or 2) that the paralyzed man and the men who brought him to Jesus all had faith.

Son

The word "Son" here shows Jesus cared for the man as a father cares for a son. Alternate translation: "My son" your sins are forgiven
Jesus did not clearly say who was forgiving the man's sins. Alternate translation: "your sins are gone" or "you do not have to pay for your sins" or "your sins do not count against you"

Mark 2:6

reasoned in their hearts

Here "their hearts" is a metonym for the people's thoughts. Alternate translation: "were thinking to themselves"

Mark 2:7

How can this man speak this way?

The scribes used this question to show their anger that Jesus said "Your sins are forgiven." Alternate translation: "This man should not speak this way!"

Who can forgive sins but God alone?

The scribes used this question to say that since only God can forgive sins, then Jesus should not say "Your sins are forgiven." Alternate translation: "Only God can forgive sins!"

Mark 2:8

in his spirit

"in his inner being" or "in himself"

they were thinking within themselves

Each of the scribes was thinking to himself; they were not talking to each other.

Why are you thinking this in your hearts?

Jesus uses this question to tell the scribes that what they are thinking is wrong. Alternate translation: "What you are thinking is wrong." or "Do not think that I am blaspheming."

this in your hearts

The word "hearts" is a metonym for their inner thoughts and desires. Alternate translation: "this inside yourselves" or "these things"

Mark 2:9

Which is easier, to say to the paralyzed man, ... take up your mat and walk?

Jesus uses this question to make the scribes think about what might prove whether or not he could really forgive sins. Alternate translation: "I just said to the paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven.' You may think that it is harder to say 'Get up, take up your mat and walk,' because the proof of whether or not I can heal him will be shown by whether or not he gets up and walks." or "You may think that it is easier to say to the paralyzed man 'Your sins are forgiven' than it is to say 'Get up, take up your mat and walk.'"

Mark 2:10

But in order that you may know

"But so that you may know." The word "you" refers to the scribes and the crowd.

that the Son of Man has authority

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man." Alternate translation: "that I am the Son of Man and I have authority"

Mark 2:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 2:12

in front of everyone

"while all the people there were watching"

Mark 2:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus is teaching the crowd beside the Sea of Galilee, and he calls Levi to follow him.

the lake

This is the Sea of Galilee, which is also known as the Lake of Gennesaret.

the crowd came to him

"the people went where he was"

Mark 2:14

Levi son of Alphaeus

Alpheus was Levi's father.

the tax collector's tent

We do not know what kind of a structure this was or what it was made of. It may have been a tent or booth. It probably included a table and some kind of protection from sun and rain.

Mark 2:15

Connecting Statement:

It is now later in the day, and Jesus is at Levi's house for a meal.

Levi's house

"the home of Levi"

sinners

In this verse, the word "sinners" refers to people who did not obey the law of Moses but committed what others thought were very bad sins

for there were many and they followed him

Possible meanings are 1) "for there were many tax collectors and sinful people who followed Jesus" or 2) "for Jesus had many disciples and they followed him."

Mark 2:16

Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?

The scribes and Pharisees asked this question to show they disapproved of Jesus's hospitality. This can be worded as a statement. Alternate translation: "He should not eat with tax collectors and sinners!"

Mark 2:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus responds to what the scribes had said to his disciples about his eating with tax collectors and sinful people.

he said to them

"he said to the scribes"

People who are strong in body do not need a physician; only people who are sick need one

Jesus used this proverb about sick people and doctors to teach them that only people who know that they are sinful realize that they need Jesus.

strong in body

"healthy"

I did not come to call righteous people, but sinners

Jesus expects his hearers to understand he came for those who want help. Alternate translation: "I came for people

who understand they are sinful, not for people who believe they are righteous"

but sinners

The words "I came to call" are understood from the phrase before this. Alternate translation: "but I came to call sinners"

Mark 2:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells parables to show why his disciples should not fast while he is with them.

the Pharisees were fasting ... the disciples of the Pharisees

These two phrases refer to the same group of people, but the second is more specific. Both refer to the followers of the Pharisee sect, but they do not focus on the leaders of the Pharisees. Alternate translation: "the disciples of the Pharisees were fasting ... the disciples of the Pharisees"

Some people

"Some men." It is best to translate this phrase without specifying exactly who these men are. If in your language you have to be more specific, the possible meanings are 1) these men were not among John's disciples or the disciples of the Pharisees or 2) these men were among John's disciples.

came and said to him

"came and said to Jesus"

Mark 2:19

Can the wedding attendants fast while the bridegroom is still with them?

Jesus uses this question to remind the people of something they already know and to encourage them to apply it to him and his disciples. Alternate translation: "Wedding attendants do not fast while the bridegroom is with them. Rather they celebrate and feast."

Mark 2:20

the bridegroom will be taken away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the bridegroom will go away"

away from them ... they will fast

The words "them" and "they" refer to the wedding attendants.

Mark 2:21

No one sews a piece of new cloth on an old garment

Sewing a piece of new cloth on an old garment will make the hole on an old garment worse if the piece of new cloth has not yet shrunk. Both the new cloth and old garment will be ruined.

Mark 2:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to tell another parable. This one is about putting new wine into old wineskins rather than into new wineskins.

new wine

"grape juice." This refers to wine that has not fermented yet. If grapes are unknown in your area, use the general term for fruit juice.

old wineskins

This refers to wineskins that have been used many times.

wineskins

These were bags made out of animal skins. They could also

be called "wine bags" or "skin bags."

the wine will burst the skins

New wine expands as it ferments. If it is put in new wineskins, the wineskins will stretch. But old wineskins are brittle and cannot stretch. If new wine is poured into old wineskins, the wineskins will tear open.

are lost

"will be ruined"

fresh wineskins

"new wineskins" or "new wine bags." This refers to wineskins that have never been used.

Mark 2:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus gives the Pharisees an example from scripture to show why the disciples were not wrong to pick grain on the Sabbath.

began picking heads of grain

The disciples were picking heads of grain to eat the kernels, or seeds, in them while they were walking. They were not harvesting the grain to take it home. Plucking grain in others' fields and eating it was not considered stealing. The question was whether it was lawful to do this on the Sabbath.

heads of grain

The "heads" are the topmost part of the wheat plant, which is a kind of tall grass. The heads hold the mature grain or seeds of the plant.

as they made their way

"as they walked along"

Mark 2:24

Connecting Statement:

The Pharisees ask a question about what the disciples were doing (verse 23).

doing something that is not lawful on the Sabbath day

Plucking grain in others' fields and eating it (verse 23) was not considered stealing. The question was whether it was lawful to do this on the Sabbath.

Look, why are they doing something that is not lawful on the Sabbath day?

The Pharisees ask Jesus a question to condemn him. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation:

"Look! They are breaking the Jewish law concerning the Sabbath."

Look

"Look at this" or "Listen." This is a word used to get the attention of someone to show them something. If there is a word in your language that is used to draw a person's attention to something, you could use that here.

Mark 2:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to scold the Pharisees by asking them a question.

He said to them

"Jesus said to the Pharisees"

Have you never read what David did

This question ends in 2:26. Jesus is reminding the scribes and Pharisees of something David did on the Sabbath. If this rhetorical question is translated as a statement or a

command, then the question mark in 2:26 should become a

period. Alternate translation: "You have read what David did" or "Remember what you read about what David did" read what David did
Jesus refers to reading about David in the Old Testament. This can be translated showing the implicit information. Alternate translation: "read in the scriptures what David did"

Mark 2:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes asking the question he began in verse 25.

how he went into the house of God ... to those who were with him?

This question began in 2:25. If you translated the rhetorical question as a statement or command in verse 25, then the question mark here should become a period. Alternate translation: "how he went into the house of God ... to those who were with him."

how he went into the house of God ... to those who were with him

This can be expressed as a statement separate from verse 25. If so, verse 25 should end with a period instead of a dash. Alternate translation: "He went into the house of God ... to those who were with him"

how he went

The word "he" refers to David.

the bread of the presence

This refers to the twelve loaves of bread that were placed on a golden table in the tabernacle or temple building as a sacrifice to God.

Mark 2:27

The Sabbath was made for mankind

Jesus makes clear why God established the Sabbath. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God made the Sabbath for mankind"

mankind

"man" or "people" or "the needs of people." This word refers to both men and women.

not mankind for the Sabbath

The words "was made" are understood from the previous phrase. They can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "mankind was not made for the Sabbath" or "God did not make mankind for the Sabbath"

Mark 2:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 3

Mark 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Sabbath

It was against the law of Moses to do work on the Sabbath. The Pharisees believed healing a sick person on the Sabbath was "work," so they said that Jesus did wrong when he healed a person on the Sabbath. (See: lawofmoses)

"Blasphemy against the Spirit"

No one knows for sure what actions people perform or what words they say when they commit this sin. However, they probably insult the Holy Spirit and his work. Part of the Holy Spirit's work is to make people understand that they are sinners and that they need to have God forgive them. Therefore, anyone who does not try to stop sinning is probably committing blasphemy against the Spirit. (See: blasphemy and holyspirit)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The twelve disciples

The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

Links:

[Mark 3:1 Notes](#)

Mark 3

3:1-6

To which Synagogue did Jesus return?

[3:1]

Jesus returned to a synagogue. Scholars think Jesus returned to the synagogue in Capernaum. (see: Mark 1:21).

See: Synagogue

See Map: Capernaum

What caused the man's hand to be withered?

[3:1]

Mark wrote about a man with a withered hand. That is, his hand was damaged or deformed. However, he was born with a normal hand. Scholars think the man got sick and the sickness damaged his hand.

Why did people watch to see if Jesus would heal this man on the Sabbath?

[3:2]

The Pharisees taught that it was wrong to heal someone on the Sabbath unless the person could die. If they were not going to die, then the Pharisees said you must wait to heal them. They thought that healing was a kind of work. The Law of Moses taught that people are not to work on the Sabbath. Certain people wanted to say Jesus did something evil by healing this man. However, it was not wrong for Jesus to heal this man. It was wrong for them to want to say Jesus did something evil. This was why Jesus was angry.

See: Mark 2:24

See: Pharisees; Sabbath; Law of Moses

Who were the Herodians?

[3:6]

The Herodians were Jewish teachers. They liked King Herod and the people that would rule after he did. The Roman government gave these men permission to rule Israel. They liked things and ideas that were from Greece and Rome. They did not think there was going to be a Jewish messiah and they did not like Jesus' teaching. The Pharisees needed help from these leaders so they could kill Jesus.

See: Matthew 12:9-14; Luke 6:6-11

See: Messiah (Christ)

See Map: Greece; Rome

3:7-12

Where is Galilee?

[3:7]

See Map: Galilee

Where is Idumea, Jordan, Tyre and Sidon?

[3:8]

Idumea was an area south of Israel. It was also called Edom. Tyre and Sidon were Gentile cities north of Israel.

See: Esau (Edom); Gentile

See Map: Jerusalem; Edom; Jordan; Tyre; Sidon; Israel

What was an unclean spirit?

[3:11]

See: Demon

Why did Jesus tell the unclean spirits to be silent?

[3:12]

The unclean spirits knew Jesus. They fell down to worship him. However, Jesus did not want them to tell people that he was the Son of God. Scholars think Jesus wanted people to tell other people that He was the Son of God and not the demons.

See: Mark 1:24-25, 34; Acts 16:17-18

See: Demon; Son of God

3:13-19

What were apostles?

[3:14]

See: Matthew 10:1-4; Luke 6:13-16

See: Apostle

What was the message they told others?

[3:14]

The apostles were going to tell other people a message. That message was the gospel.

See: Apostle; Gospel

3:20-30

Why did Jesus' family think Jesus was "out of his mind"?

[3:21]

Mark wrote that Jesus' family thought Jesus was "out of his mind." That is, they thought he was no longer able to think in a right way. Some scholars think that because Jesus was too busy to even eat, his family thought he was no longer

thinking rightly. Other scholars think Mark wrote that the crowd thought Jesus was “out of his mind.”

Who was Beelzebul?

[3:22]

Beelzebul was a name for Satan.

See: Matthew 12:24-32; Luke 11:17-23

See: Satan (The Devil)

How did the scribes think Jesus was able to remove demons from people?

[3:22]

The scribes said that Satan gave Jesus permission to remove demons from people.

See: Scribe; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon; Satan (The Devil)

What was a parable?

[3:23]

See: Parable

What did Jesus say to the scribes?

[3:23, 3:24]

Jesus spoke against what the Scribes said. Jesus said that he fought against Satan by casting out demons. If Jesus wanted to help Satan, then he would not fight against Satan. Jesus also fought against the things Satan ruled on earth. God allowed Satan to rule these things for a period of time. Jesus proved that he was stronger than Satan and could defeat Satan by casting out demons.

See: Scribe; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon; Satan (The Devil)

What was the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?

[3:29]

Jesus said that every sin could be forgiven except one. That was blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Scholars disagree about how someone blasphemes the Holy Spirit.

Some scholars think Jesus spoke about rejecting him. If someone does not believe in Jesus, then they will not be forgiven of their sins. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about someone seeing Jesus do miracles and saying that Satan gave him the power to do this. Therefore, people today cannot blaspheme the Holy Spirit. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about people who said that the Holy Spirit did not do the things that he did.

See: Sin; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Holy Spirit; Miracle

What was an unclean spirit?

[3:30]

An unclean spirit was a demon.

See: Demon; Clean and Unclean

3:31-34

Who were Jesus' family?

[3:32]

Mary was Jesus' mother. The names of four of Jesus' brothers were James, Joseph, Simon and Judas. Although Jesus had sisters, their names are not in the Bible.

See: Matthew 12:46-50; 13:55-56; Mark 6:3; Luke 8:19-21

See: Family of Jesus

Who else is Jesus' family?

[3:35]

Jesus talked about his family. But this was not his mother and brothers. He spoke about how Christians are children of God. Because of this, they are part of Jesus' family.

See: Children of God

What was the will of God?

[3:35]

See: Will of God

Mark 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath in the synagogue and shows how he feels about what the Pharisees had done with the Sabbath rules. The Pharisees and Herodians begin planning to put Jesus to death.

a man with a withered hand

"a man with a crippled hand"

Mark 3:2

Some people watched him closely to see if he would heal him

"Some people watched Jesus closely to see if he would heal the man with the withered hand"

Some people

"Some of the Pharisees." Later, in Mark 3:6, these people are identified as Pharisees.

so that they could accuse him

If Jesus were to heal the man that day, the Pharisees would accuse him of breaking the law by working on the Sabbath.

Alternate translation: "so that they could accuse him of wrongdoing" or "so that they could accuse him of breaking

the law"

Mark 3:3

in the middle of everyone

"in the middle of this crowd"

Mark 3:4

Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath ... or to kill?

Jesus said this to challenge them. He wanted them to acknowledge that it is lawful to heal people on the Sabbath. to do good on the Sabbath day or to do harm ... to save a life or to kill These two phrases are similar in meaning, except that the second is more extreme.

to save a life or to kill

It may be helpful to repeat "is it lawful," as that is the question Jesus is asking again in another way. Alternate translation: "is it lawful to save a life or to kill"

to save a life

"to save someone's life" or "to save someone from dying"

But they were silent

"But they refused to answer him"

Mark 3:5

He looked around

"Jesus looked around"

was grieved

"was deeply saddened"

by their hardness of heart

This metaphor describes how the Pharisees were unwilling to have compassion on the man with the withered hand. Alternate translation: "because they were unwilling to have compassion on the man"

Stretch out your hand

"Reach out with your hand"

his hand was restored

This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus restored his hand" or "Jesus made his hand the way it was before"

Mark 3:6

began to plot

"began to make a plan"

the Herodians

This is the name of an informal political party that supported Herod Antipas.

how they might put him to death

"how they might kill Jesus"

Mark 3:7

Connecting Statement:

A great crowd of people follows Jesus, and he heals many people.

the sea

This refers to the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 3:8

Idumea

This is the region, previously known as Edom, which covered the southern half of the province of Judea.

the things he was doing

This refers to the miracles Jesus was performing. Alternate translation: "the great miracles that Jesus was performing"

came to him

"came to where Jesus was"

Mark 3:9

General Information:

Verse 9 tells what Jesus asked his disciples to do because of the large crowd of people around him. Verse 10 tells why such a large crowd was around Jesus. The information in these verses can be reordered to present the events in the order they happened, as in the UDB.

He told his disciples to have a small boat ... not press against him

As the large crowd was pushing forward toward Jesus, he was in danger of being crushed by them. They would not crush him intentionally. It was just that there were so many people.

Mark 3:10

For he healed many, so that everyone ... to touch him

This tells why so many people were crowding around Jesus that he thought they might crush him. Alternate translation: "For, because Jesus had healed many people, everyone ... to touch him"

For he healed many

The word "many" refers to the large number of people Jesus had already healed. Alternate translation: "For he healed many people"

everyone who had afflictions eagerly approached him in order to touch him

They did this because they believed that touching Jesus would make them well. This can be expressed clearly.

Alternate translation: "all the sick people pushed forward eagerly trying to touch him so that they might be healed"

Mark 3:11

saw him

"saw Jesus"

they fell down ... cried out, and they said

Here "they" refers to the unclean spirits. It is they who are causing the people they possess to do things. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "they caused the people they were possessing to fall down before him and to cry out to him"

they fell down before him

The unclean spirits did not fall down before Jesus because they loved him or wanted to worship him. They fell down before him because they were afraid of him.

You are the Son of God

Jesus has power over unclean spirits because he is the "Son of God."

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Mark 3:12

He strictly ordered them

"Jesus strictly ordered the unclean spirits"

not to make him known

"not to reveal who he was"

Mark 3:13

General Information:

Jesus chooses the men he wants to be his apostles.

Mark 3:14

so that they might be with him and he might send them to proclaim the message

"so that they would be with him and he could send them to proclaim the message"

Mark 3:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 3:16

Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter

The author begins to list the names of the twelve apostles.

Simon is the first man listed.

Mark 3:17

to whom he gave

The phrase "to whom" refers to both James son of Zebedee and his brother John.

the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder

Jesus called them this because they were like thunder.

Alternate translation: "the name Boanerges, which means men who are like thunder" or "the name Boanerges, which means Thunder Men"

Mark 3:18

Thaddaeus

This is the name of a man.

Mark 3:19

who would betray him

"who would betray Jesus" The word "who" refers to Judas Iscariot.

Mark 3:20

Then he went home

"Then Jesus went to the house where he was staying."

they could not even eat bread

The word "bread" represents food. Alternate translation: "Jesus and his disciples could not eat at all" or "they could not eat anything"

Mark 3:21

they went out to seize him

Members of his family went to the house so that they could take hold of him and force him to go home with them.

for they said

Possible meanings for the word "they" are 1) his relatives or 2) some people in the crowd.

out of his mind

This idiom describes how they thought he was acting.

Alternate translation: "crazy" or "insane"

Mark 3:22

By the ruler of the demons he drives out demons

"By the power of Beelzebul, who is the ruler of the demons, Jesus drives out demons"

Mark 3:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus explains with a parable why it is foolish for people to think that Jesus is controlled by Satan.

Jesus called them to himself

"Jesus called the people to come to him"

How can Satan cast out Satan?

Jesus asked this rhetorical question in response to the scribes saying that he cast out demons by Beelzebul. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Satan cannot cast out himself!" or "Satan does not go against his own evil spirits!"

Mark 3:24

If a kingdom is divided against itself

The word "kingdom" is a metonym for the people who live in the kingdom. Alternate translation: "If the people who

live in a kingdom are divided against each other"

cannot stand

Here "stand" is a metaphor that means endure, or continue to exist. Alternate translation: "cannot endure" or "will end"

Mark 3:25

house

This is a metonym for the people who live in a house.

Alternate translation: "family" or "household"

Mark 3:26

If Satan has risen up against himself and is divided

The word "himself" is a reflexive pronoun that refers back to Satan, and it is also a metonym for his evil spirits.

Alternate translation: "If Satan and his evil spirits were fighting one another" or "If Satan and his evil spirits have risen up against each other and are divided"

is not able to stand

Here "stand" is a metaphor that means endure, or stay strong. Alternate translation: "cannot endure" or "cannot stay strong"

Mark 3:27

plunder

to steal a person's valuables and possessions

Mark 3:28

Truly I say to you

This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important.

the sons of men

"those who have been born of man." This expression is used to emphasize peoples' humanity. Alternate translation: "people"

utter

speak

Mark 3:29

will never have forgiveness

The idea in the noun forgiveness can be expressed with a phrase. Alternate translation: "will never be forgiven"

is guilty of an eternal sin

"Eternal sin" is a metonym for "a sin that will be eternally punished." Alternate translation: "is guilty of a sin that will be punished eternally"

Mark 3:30

they were saying

"the people were saying"

has an unclean spirit

This is an idiom that means to be possessed by an unclean spirit. Alternate translation: "is possessed by an unclean spirit"

Mark 3:31

Then his mother and his brothers came

"Then Jesus's mother and brothers came"

They sent for him, summoning him

"They sent someone inside to tell him that they were outside and to have him come out to them"

Mark 3:32

are looking for you

"are asking for you"

Mark 3:33

Who are my mother and my brothers?

Jesus uses this question to teach the people. Alternate

translation: "I will tell you who are really my mother and brothers."

Mark 3:34

here are my mother and my brothers

This is a metaphor that means Jesus's disciples belong to Jesus's spiritual family. This is more important than belonging to his physical family.

Mark 3:35

whoever does ... that person is

"those who do ... they are"

that person is my brother, and sister, and mother

This is a metaphor that means Jesus's disciples belong to Jesus's spiritual family. This is more important than belonging to his physical family. Alternate translation: "that person is like a brother, sister, or mother to me"

Chapter 4

Mark 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Mark 4:3-10 forms one parable. The parable is explained in 4:14-23.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 4:12, which is a quotation from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Parables

The parables were short stories that Jesus told so that people would easily understand the lesson he was trying to teach them. He also told the stories so that those who did not want to believe in him would not understand the truth.

Links:

[Mark 4:1 Notes](#)

Mark 4

4:1-9

Why did Jesus get into the boat?

[4:1]

Jesus got into the boat near the shore. By doing this, people could not get too close to him. Therefore, everyone could see him and could hear him.

What was a parable?

[4:2]

See: Parable

Why did Mark write about sowing seeds?

[4:3]

In this passage, Mark wrote about sowing seeds. This was a long metaphor. He wrote about the different types of people. However, scholars do not agree on who were the people about which Mark wrote.

See: Matthew 13:3-9; Luke 8:5-8

See: Sow (Plant); Metaphor

What was a thorny plant?

[3:7]

A thorny plant was a type of weed. Weeds are bad plants. They harm the good plants. These plants grew in places where people did not want them to grow. Farmers wanted to stop these plants from growing because they harmed the good plants that they wanted to grow.

Why did Jesus say, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear"?

[4:9]

When someone said "he who has ears to hear, let him hear," they wanted someone to really listen to what they said because they needed to hear it.

4:10-12

Who were the twelve?

[4:10]

Mark wrote about the twelve disciples when he wrote about the twelve.

See: Disciple

What was the mystery?

[4:11]

See: Mystery

Who was given the mystery of the kingdom of God?

[4:11]

Those who believed in Jesus were given the mystery of the kingdom of God. Anyone who rejected Jesus would not understand the things he taught. In 4:12, Jesus said that if they understood the things he taught, then they would have believed in him.

See: Mystery; Kingdom of God

4:13-20

What was the word?

[4:14]

Jesus explained the metaphor about sowing seeds. He said the sower sowed the word. That is, the things about which Jesus taught. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the gospel. Fewer scholars think Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God.

See: Sow (Plant); Metaphor; Word of God; Gospel; Kingdom of God

Who were the people who were like seeds sown beside the road?

[4:15]

Jesus used a metaphor to talk about what happened to people when they heard the gospel. Jesus talked about certain people who were like seeds sown beside the road. This was a place where seeds could not grow. Those seeds died because the dirt was too hard. Some scholars think that Jesus spoke about Christians. These people say they were Christians, but they did not do things that honored God. Therefore, they were not at peace with God.

Other scholars think that Jesus spoke about people who were not Christians. These people did not believe in the things Jesus taught. They did not believe in Jesus.

See: ; Gospel; Satan (The Devil); Metaphor

What people were like the seeds sown on rocky ground?

[4:16]

Jesus used a metaphor to talk about what happened to people when they heard the gospel. Jesus talked about certain people who were like seeds sown on rocky ground. On the rocky ground, the seed could begin to grow. But there was not enough dirt for it to grow very much, so it died.

Some scholars think that Jesus spoke about Christians. These people believed in Jesus, but they rejected Jesus when they were persecuted. Therefore, they are not at peace with God.

Other scholars think that Jesus spoke about people who were not Christians. These people said they were Christians, but rejected Jesus when they were persecuted. Therefore, they were not Christians.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Metaphor; Gospel

What people were like seeds sown with the thorns?

[4:18]

Jesus used a metaphor to talk about what happened to people when they heard the gospel. Jesus talked about certain people who were like seeds sown with the thorns. Thorn plants were bad plants. The thorn plants killed the good plants. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about Christians. These people believed in Jesus, but they made other things more significant than Jesus in their life. They did not honor God as much as they should have honored him.

Other scholars think Jesus spoke about people who were not Christians. They said they were Christians, but they cared more for the things they owned than they cared for Jesus. They were not Christians.

Advice to translators: Here, "thorns" is a type of plant that grows among other plants and kills them. It is also not good to be used for anything.

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Metaphor; Gospel

What people were like seeds sown on good soil?

[4:20]

Jesus used a metaphor to talk about what happened to people when they heard the gospel. Jesus talked about certain people who were like seeds sown on good soil. These people obeyed God and did things that honored God. They made fruit when they did this. That is, they did not live in the way they used to live. They helped others to believe in Jesus and did the things that honored Jesus.

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Metaphor

How did someone bear fruit?

[4:20]

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

4:21-29

Why did Jesus use a metaphor about light?

[4:21]

A lamp lights the entire room. It allows everything to be seen. God is light, and the word of God is light (see: Psalm 119:105; 1 John 1:5). Light made things known that were not known before. Jesus used a metaphor about the light.

Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God. He wanted people to know they could now know about the

kingdom of God.

Other scholars think Jesus spoke about himself. When people believe in Jesus, they should want to tell other people about him and the gospel.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Kingdom of God; Metaphor; Gospel

Why did Jesus say, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear"?

[4:23]

When someone said "he who has ears to hear, let him hear," they wanted someone to listen to what they said. This is why Jesus said it.

Why did Jesus say, "for the measure you use will be measured to you, and more will be added"?

[4:24]

Jesus said, "for the measure you use will be measured to you, and more will be added." He wanted to say that if the disciples listened to him and obeyed him, they would be rewarded. If they did not do this, they would be disciplined.

See: Disciple; Reward; Discipline (To Disciple)

How is the kingdom of God like a man who sows his seed on the ground?

[4:26]

Jesus said that the kingdom of God is like a man who sowed his seed on the ground. This was a metaphor. The seeds were the gospel. Christians sowed the seeds. That is, they spread the gospel by telling it to other people. However, they did not make the seeds grow. God made the seed grow. Jesus wanted to say that Christians could not make other people believe in Jesus.

See: Kingdom of God; Metaphor

4:30-34

How was the kingdom of God like a mustard seed?

[4:31]

Jesus said the kingdom of God was like a mustard seed. This was a metaphor. The mustard seed was very small seed. It was about 1 millimeter in size. A mustard tree was very large. Jesus wanted to say that the kingdom of God began very small, but became great.

See: Kingdom of God; Metaphor

What were the birds of heaven?

[4:32]

The birds of heaven were birds. Heaven was the sky.

See: Heaven

What was a parable?

[4:33]

See: Parable

4:35-41

Why did Jesus tell the wind to stop?

[4:39]

Jesus told the wind to stop. This allowed others to know that he controlled the weather. Only God could do this. In ancient times, people thought the sea could not be controlled. They were afraid of the seas.

Why were the disciples afraid?

[4:41]

The disciples believed in Jesus, but they did not understand who Jesus was. They knew he was the messiah, but they did not understand that he is God.

See: Disciple; Messiah (Christ)

Mark 4:1

Connecting Statement:

As Jesus teaches from a boat at the seaside, he tells them the parable of the soils.

the sea

This is the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 4:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 4:3

Listen!

"Pay attention!"

A farmer went out to sow his seed

This means that he tossed seeds onto the ground so they could grow.

Mark 4:4

some seed ... devoured it

"some seeds ... devoured them"

Mark 4:5

Other seed ... it did not have ... it sprang ... it did not have

"Other seeds ... they did not have ... they sprang ... they did not have"

it sprang up

"the seed that landed on the rocky ground began to grow quickly"

soil

This refers to the loose dirt on the ground in which you can plant seeds.

Mark 4:6

the plants were scorched

This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it scorched the young plants"

because they had no root, they dried up

"because the young plants had no roots, they dried up"

Mark 4:7

Other seed ... choked it ... it did not produce

"Other seeds ... choked them ... they did not produce"

Mark 4:8

yielding thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times

The amount of grain produced by each plant is being compared to the single seed from which it grew. Ellipsis is used here to shorten the phrases but they can be written out. Alternate translation: "Some plants bore thirty times as much as the seed that the man had planted, some produced sixty times as much grain, and some produced a hundred times as much grain"

thirty ... sixty ... a hundred

"30 ... 60 ... 100." These may be written as numerals.

Mark 4:9

Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has ears" is a metonym for being willing to understand and obey. Alternate translation: "Whoever is willing to listen, listen" or "Whoever is willing to understand, let him understand and obey"

Whoever has ... let him hear

Since Jesus wanted his audience to pay attention, this can also be expressed with the word "you." Alternate translation: "If you have ears to hear, then hear" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey"

Mark 4:10

When Jesus was alone

This does not mean that Jesus was completely alone; rather, it means that the crowds were gone and Jesus was only with the twelve and some of his other close followers.

Mark 4:11

To you is given

This can be stated in active form. "God has given you" or "I have given you"

to those outside

"to those outside our group" or "to those who are not among us." This refers to all the other people who were not among the twelve or Jesus's other close followers.

everything is in parables

It can be stated that Jesus gives the parables to the people. Alternate translation: "I have spoken everything in parables"

Mark 4:12

when they look ... when they hear

It is assumed that Jesus is speaking about the people looking at what he shows them and hearing what he tells them. Alternate translation: "when they look at what I am doing ... when they hear what I am saying"

they look, but do not see

Possible meanings are 1) the word "look" here refers to making an effort to see and "see" refers to actually being able to see what they have looked for and is a metaphor for "understand." Alternate translation: "they look, but they do not understand" Or 2) here the word translated "look" refers to seeing what one is looking at and the word translated "see" refers to understanding what they are seeing.

they would turn

"they would turn to God." Here "turn" is a metaphor for "repent." Alternate translation: "they would repent"

Mark 4:13

He said to them

"Then Jesus said to his disciples"

Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?

Jesus used these questions to show how sad he was that his disciples could not understand his parable. Alternate translation: "If you cannot understand this parable, think about how hard it will be for you to understand all the other parables."

Mark 4:14

General Information:

Jesus begins to explain the parable he told in [Mark 4:3-8]

The sower

"The farmer who sows his seed"

sows the word

Sowing God's word represents teaching it. Alternate

translation: "teaches people God's word" or "represents one who teaches God's word"

the word

The phrase "the word" represents God's message. Alternate translation: "God's message"

Mark 4:15

These are the ones beside the road

Here Jesus speaks about people. Alternate translation:

"These people are the seeds that fall beside the road" or

"These people are like seeds that fall beside a road"

When they hear

"When they hear the word"

Mark 4:16

these are the seed sown on the rocky ground

"These people are the seeds that fall on the rocky ground" or "These people are like seeds that fall on the rocky ground"

Mark 4:17

they do not have root in themselves

Having no root represents not fully understanding or believing God's word. Alternate translation: "they are like young plants that have no roots"

endure

In this parable, "endure" means "continue to believe."

Alternate translation: "continue in their belief"

tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word

The phrase "on account of the word" means "because they believe God's message. Alternate translation: "tribulation or persecution comes because they believe God's message"

they immediately fall away

In this parable, "fall away" means "stop believing God's

message"

Mark 4:18

Still others are the ones sown among the thorns

"Still other people are the seeds that fall among the thorns" or "And other people are like seeds that fall among the thorns"

Mark 4:19

the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word

The words "cares," "deceitfulness," and "desires" are spoken of as if they were weeds that wrap around plants and keep them from growing. Alternate translation: "the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke God's message in their lives like thorns that choke young plants"

the cares of the world

"the worries in this life" or "the concerns about this present life"

the deceitfulness of wealth

"the lie that wealth will make them happy" or "the lie that having many possessions will make them happy"

it is unproductive

"the word does not produce a crop in them." The word being unproductive means that it does not have an effect on the person's life.

Mark 4:20

Those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word, accept it and bear fruit

"The seeds that fall on the good soil represent people who hear the word, accept it and bear fruit"

and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much

Fruit represents the results or effect of God's word in a person's life. The numbers tell how much fruit there might be, or how great the results might be. Alternate translation: "and produce good results, like plants that bear thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much fruit as what was sown"

Mark 4:21

Jesus said to them

"Jesus said to the crowd"

Do you bring a lamp inside the house to put it under a basket or under the bed?

This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You certainly do not bring a lamp inside the house to put it under a basket, or under a bed!"

Mark 4:22

For nothing is hidden that will not be known ... come out into the open

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "For everything that is hidden will be made known, and everything that is secret will come out into to open"

nothing is hidden ... nothing is secret

"there is nothing that is hidden ... there is nothing that is secret" Both of the phrases have the same meaning. Jesus is emphasizing that everything that is secret will be made known.

Mark 4:23

If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "ears to hear" here is a metonym for

the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Mark 4:9]

If anyone ... let him hear

Since Jesus wanted his audience to pay attention, this can also be expressed with the word "you." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Mark 4:9]

Mark 4:24

He said to them

"Jesus said to the crowd"

for the measure you use

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is talking about a literal measure and giving generously to others or 2) this is a metaphor in which Jesus speaks of "understanding" as if it were "measuring."

will be measured to you, and more will be added to you.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will measure that amount for you, and he will add it to you"

Mark 4:25

to him will be given more ... even what he has will be taken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to him God will give more ... from him God will take away" or "God will give more to him ... God will take away from him"

Mark 4:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells the people parables to teach them about the kingdom of God. Later he explains the parables to his disciples.

like a man who sows his seed

When someone sows seed, he plants the seed by scattering it on the ground. Alternate translation: "like a farmer who plants his seed" or "like a farmer who scatters his seed"

Mark 4:27

He sleeps at night and gets up by day

This is something that the man habitually does. Alternate translation: "He sleeps each night and gets up each day" or "He sleeps each night and gets up the next day"

gets up by day

"is up during the day" or "is active during the day"

though he does not know how

"though the man does not know how the seed sprouts and grows"

Mark 4:28

the blade

the stalk or sprout

the ear

the head on the stalk or the part of the plant that holds the fruit

Mark 4:29

he immediately sends in the sickle

Here "the sickle" is a metonym that stands for the farmer or the people whom the farmer sends out to harvest the grain. Alternate translation: "he immediately goes into the field with a sickle to harvest the grain" or "he immediately sends people with sickles into the field to harvest the grain"

sickle

a curved blade or a sharp hook used to cut grain

because the harvest has come

Here the words "has come" are part of an idiom that means

it is time for something. Alternative translation: "because it is time for harvesting the grain" or "because the grain is ready to be gathered"

Mark 4:30

To what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use to explain it?

Jesus asked this question to cause his hearers to think about what the kingdom of God is like. Alternate translation: "With this parable I can explain what the kingdom of God is like."

Mark 4:31

when it is sown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when someone sows it" or "when someone plants it"

Mark 4:32

it forms large branches

The mustard tree is described as causing its branches to grow large. Alternate translation: "it has large branches"

Mark 4:33

he spoke the word to them

"Word" here is a synecdoche for "the message of God." The word "them" refers to the crowds. Alternate translation: "he taught them the message of God"

as much as they were able to understand

"and if they were able to understand some, he kept telling them more"

Mark 4:34

when he was alone

This means that he was away from the crowds, but his disciples were still with him.

he explained everything

Here "everything" refers to all his parables. Alternate translation: "he explained all his parables"

Mark 4:35

Connecting Statement:

As Jesus and his disciples take a boat to escape the crowds of people, a great storm arises. His disciples are afraid when they see that even the wind and the sea obey Jesus.

he said to them

"Jesus said to his disciples"

the other side

"the other side of the Sea of Galilee" or "the other side of the sea"

Mark 4:36

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 4:37

a violent windstorm arose

Here "arose" is an idiom for "began." Alternate translation: "a violent windstorm began"

the boat was almost full of water

It may be helpful to state that the boat was filling up with water. Alternate translation: "the boat was in danger of being filled with water"

Mark 4:38

the stern

The stern is the back part of the boat.

They woke him up

The word "they" refers to the disciples.

do you not care that we are about to die?

The disciples asked this question to show that they were in great danger and that they were upset that Jesus was not helping them. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "you need to pay attention to what is happening; we are all about to die!"

we are about to die

The word "we" includes the disciples and Jesus.

Mark 4:39

Peace! Be still!

These two phrases are similar and used to emphasize what Jesus wanted the wind and the sea to do.

a great calm

"a great stillness over the sea" or "a great calm over the sea"

Mark 4:40

Then he said to them

"And Jesus said to his disciples"

Why are you afraid? Do you still not have faith?

Jesus asks these questions to make his disciples consider why they are afraid when he is with them. These questions can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "You should not be afraid. You need to have more faith."

Mark 4:41

Who then is this, because even the wind and the sea obey him?

The disciples ask this question in amazement at what Jesus did. This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "This man is not like ordinary men; even the wind and the sea obey him!"

Chapter 5

Mark 5 General Notes

Possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Talitha, kum"

The words "Talitha, kum"

Links:

[Mark 5:1 Notes](#)

Mark 5

5:1-8

Where was Gerasenes?

[5:1]

See Map: Gerasenes

How did someone come out of the tombs?

[5:2]

A tomb was a place where dead people were buried. These were caves at the bottom of mountains. At that time, people possessed with demons lived in those tombs. The tombs were unclean.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Clean and Unclean

What was an unclean spirit?

[5:2]

Mark wrote about an unclean spirit. Here, he wrote about many demons who were in this man.

See: Demon; Clean and Unclean; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why could no one restrain the man?

[5:4]

When someone was restrained, they could not go from one place to another place or doing other things. This man could not be restrained. This is because the unclean spirit was very strong in the man.

See: Demon; Clean and Unclean; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why did the man cut himself?

[5:5]

The man was in so much pain that he cut himself. He did not want to live anymore. He would rather die than to live with this demon inside of him.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why did the man bow down before Jesus?

[5:6]

The unclean spirit knew Jesus is God. He knew Jesus was greater than he was. In ancient times, someone kneeled before someone who was greater. Or perhaps the unclean spirit was worshiping Jesus.

See: Demon; Clean and Unclean; Son of God

Why did the man ask Jesus not to torment him?

[5:7]

The man did not want Jesus to torment him. That is, he did not want Jesus to harm him in a severe way. He did not want Jesus to punish him and send him to hell to be punished forever. Some scholars think the man was talking here, not the demon living in the man. Other scholars think the demon was talking.

See: Demon; Hell

5:9-20

What was this demon's name?

[5:9]

The demon said his name was Legion. A legion was a Roman military word. It was a group of 6000 soldiers. So the demon said his name was legion because there were many demons in the man. However, it was possible to speak of this as one demon because they were all in one man.

See: Demon

Why did the demon want to enter into the pigs?

[5:12]

The demons did not want Jesus to make them leave the area. They wanted Jesus to allow them to go into the group of pigs. Some scholars think they wanted to remain in the same area where they could hurt more people. Other scholars think that they did not want Jesus to punish them and send them to hell.

See: Demon; Hell

Why did the pigs run down the cliffs and into the sea?

[5:13]

The pigs ran off the cliffs after the demons entered into them. Some scholars think the demons chose pigs because they were unclean according to the Law of Moses. Other scholars think they wanted to destroy the man, but when they were not able to do this, they wanted to destroy the pigs. Other scholars think the pigs were overwhelmed by the demons and the demons made the pigs run over the cliff and into the sea.

See: Demon; Clean and Unclean; Law of Moses

Why were the people afraid of Jesus?

[5:15]

The people in that region were afraid after seeing the things Jesus did.

Some scholars think the people were afraid because Jesus controlled the demons. Other scholars think the people were afraid because all of the pigs died. 2000 pigs were worth a lot of money. Perhaps they were afraid that they could lose a lot of money. Other scholars think that Jesus greatly punished evil. They were afraid that they would be punished too.

See: Demon

Why did the man want to go with Jesus?

[5:18]

The man wanted to be with Jesus. Some scholars think the man wanted to become a disciple of Jesus. However, Jesus wanted him to stay with the man's own people. This is because the man was a Gentile and lived in a Gentile area. He wanted this man to tell the Gentiles in Decapolis about Jesus.

See: Disciple; Gentile

See Map: Decapolis

Why did Jesus call himself "the Lord"?

[5:19]

See: Lord

5:21-43

What was a leader of the synagogue?

[5:22]

The leader of the synagogue was someone who helped lead people in worshipping God in the synagogue. He was not necessarily a pharisee or sadducee.

See: Synagogue; Pharisees; Sadducees

Why did Jairus fall at Jesus' feet?

5:22

Jairus fell at Jesus' feet to ask him for help. He was begging. He was desperate for help. He was not worshipping Jesus.

Why did this man want Jesus to lay his hands on his daughter?

[5:23]

This man thought that Jesus could heal his daughter by touching her. He did not know that Jesus could heal her without touching her. He also did not know that he could heal her after she died.

What was a flow of blood?

[5:25]

Women bleed for a few days every month if they are not pregnant. However, this woman bled continuously for 12 years.

This would have made her unclean.

See: Clean and Unclean

How did this woman "suffer much from many doctors"?

[5:26]

Mark wrote that the woman "suffered much from many doctors" because many doctors had tried to help her. However, instead of helping her, they actually harmed her more.

Why were the disciples surprised that Jesus asked who touched him?

[5:31]

The disciples were surprised that Jesus asked who touched him. That was because many people were touching him. They did not think he could know when someone specific touched him.

Why was this woman healed?

[5:29]

This woman was healed because she believed in Jesus.

What did Jesus say to the woman?

[5:34]

Jesus told the woman to go in peace and be healed from her suffering. He wanted her to live in a way that honored God. He also wanted her to know that he completely healed her. She was now clean and did not need to be separated from other people.

See: Clean and Unclean

Why were the people at the house crying?

[5:38]

The people at the house were crying because the little girl died.

Why did the people laugh at Jesus?

[5:40]

The people laughed at Jesus. The people did not know that Jesus had the power to make someone alive again.

Why did Jesus not want them to tell anyone about this?

[5:43]

Jesus did not want this girl's family to tell other people about Jesus healing her. Her father was a Jewish leader and many Jewish leaders rejected Jesus as the messiah. It was not time for them to fight against Jesus. So he did not want them to know what he was doing. Some scholars also think Jesus did not want people to begin bringing dead people to him to be made alive again.

See: Messiah (Christ); Messianic Secret

Why did the girl need to eat?

[5:43]

The girl needed to eat because she was alive again in the same way she was alive before she died. She was not resurrected. When someone is resurrected, they do not need to eat.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Mark 5:1

Connecting Statement:

After Jesus calms the great storm, he heals a man who has many demons, but the local people in Gerasa are not glad about his healing, and they beg Jesus to leave.

They came

The word "They" refers to Jesus and his disciples.

the sea

This refers to the Sea of Galilee.

Gerasenes

This name refers to the people who live in Gerasa.

Mark 5:2

with an unclean spirit

This is an idiom meaning that the man is "controlled" or "possessed" by the unclean spirit. Alternate translation: "controlled by an unclean spirit" or "that an unclean spirit possessed"

Mark 5:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 5:4

He had been bound many times

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "People had bound him many times"

his shackles were shattered

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "he shattered his shackles"

shackles

pieces of metal that people wrap around the arms and legs of prisoners and attach with chains to objects that do not move so the prisoners cannot move

No one had the strength to subdue him

The man was so strong that no one could subdue him.

Alternate translation: "He was so strong that no one was strong enough to subdue him"

subdue him

"control him"

Mark 5:5

cut himself with sharp stones

Often when a person is possessed by a demon, the demon will cause the person to do self-destructive things, such as cutting himself.

Mark 5:6

When he saw Jesus from a distance

When the man first saw Jesus, Jesus would have been getting out of the boat.

bowed down

This means that he knelt down before Jesus out of reverence and respect, not out of worship.

Mark 5:7

General Information:

The information in verses 7 and 8 may be reordered to

present the events in the order that they happened, as in the UDB.

He cried out

"The unclean spirit cried out"

What do I have to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?

The unclean spirit asks this question out of fear. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Leave me alone, Jesus, Son of the Most High God! There is no reason for you to interfere with me."

Jesus ... do not torment me

Jesus has the power to torment unclean spirits.

Son of the Most High God

This is an important title for Jesus.

I beg you by God himself

Here the unclean spirit is swearing by God as he makes a request of Jesus. Consider how this type of request is made in your language. Alternate translation: "I beg you before God" or "I swear by God himself and beg you"

Mark 5:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 5:9

He asked him

"And Jesus asked the unclean spirit"

He answered him, "My name is Legion, for we are many."

One spirit was speaking for many here. He spoke of them as if they were a legion, a Roman army unit of about 6,000 soldiers. Alternate translation: "And the spirit said to him, 'Call us an army, for many of us are inside the man.'"

Mark 5:10

He begged him

"The unclean spirit begged Jesus"

not to send them

"not to send him and the other unclean spirits"

Mark 5:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 5:12

they begged him

"the unclean spirits begged Jesus"

Mark 5:13

he allowed them

It may be helpful to state clearly what Jesus allowed them to do. Alternate translation: "Jesus allowed the unclean spirits to do what they asked permission to do"

into the sea, and about two thousand pigs drowned in the sea

You can make the words after the comma a separate sentence: "into the sea. There were about two thousand pigs, and they drowned in the sea"

about two thousand pigs

"about 2,000 pigs"

Mark 5:14

reported what had happened in the city and in the countryside
"told people in the city and in the countryside what had happened"

Mark 5:15

Legion

This was the name of the many demons that had been in the man. See how you translated this in Mark 5:9.

in his right mind

This is an idiom meaning that he is thinking clearly.

Alternate translation: "of a normal mind" or "thinking clearly"

they were afraid

The word "they" refers to the group of people who went out to see what had happened.

Mark 5:16

Those who had seen what happened

"The people who had witnessed what had happened"

Mark 5:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 5:18

the demon-possessed man

Though the man is no longer demon-possessed, he is still described in this way. Alternate translation: "the man who had been demon-possessed"

Mark 5:19

But Jesus did not permit him

What Jesus did not allow the man to do can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "But he did not allow the man to come with them"

Mark 5:20

Decapolis

This is the name of a region that means Ten Cities. It is located to the southeast of the Sea of Galilee.

everyone was amazed

It may be helpful to state why the people were amazed.

Alternate translation: "all the people who heard what the man said were amazed"

Mark 5:21

Connecting Statement:

After healing the demon-possessed man in region of the Gerasenes, Jesus and his disciples return across the lake to Capernaum where one of the leaders of the synagogue asks Jesus to heal his daughter.

the other side

This refers to the other side of the sea

beside the sea

"on the seashore" or "on the shore"

the sea

This is the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 5:22

Jairus

This is the name of a man.

Mark 5:23

lay your hands

"Laying on hands" refers to a prophet or teacher placing his hand on someone and imparting either healing or a blessing. In this case, Jarius is asking Jesus to heal his daughter.

that she may be made well and live

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"and heal her and make her live"

Mark 5:24

So he went with him

"So Jesus went with Jairus." Jesus's disciples also went with him. Alternate translation: "So Jesus and the disciples went with Jairus"

pressed close around him

This means they crowded around Jesus and pressed themselves together to be closer to Jesus.

Mark 5:25

Connecting Statement:

While Jesus is on his way to heal the man's little 12-year-old girl, a woman who has been sick for 12 years interrupts by touching Jesus for her healing.

Now a woman was there

The word "Now" is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here the author starts to tell a new part of the story with a new person. Consider how new people are introduced into a story in your language.

who had a flow of blood for twelve years

The woman did not have an open wound; rather, her monthly flow of blood would not stop. Your language may have a polite way to refer to this condition.

for twelve years

"for 12 years"

Mark 5:26

she grew worse

"her sickness got worse" or "her bleeding increased"

Mark 5:27

the reports about Jesus

She had heard reports about Jesus of how he healed people.

Alternate translation: "that Jesus healed people"

cloak

outer garment or coat

Mark 5:28

I will be healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it will heal me" or "his power will heal me"

Mark 5:29

she was healed from her affliction

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the sickness left her" or "she was no longer sick"

Mark 5:30

that power had gone out from him

When the woman touched Jesus, Jesus felt his power healing her. Jesus himself did not lose any of his power to heal people when he healed her. Alternate translation: "that his healing power had healed someone"

Mark 5:31

this crowd pressed around you

This means they crowded around Jesus and pressed themselves together to be closer to Jesus. See how you translated this in Mark 5:24.

Mark 5:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 5:33

fell down before him

"knelt down before him." She knelt down before Jesus as an act of honor and submission.

told him the whole truth

The phrase "the whole truth" refers to how she had touched him and had become well. Alternate translation: "told him the whole truth about how she had touched him"

Mark 5:34

Daughter

Jesus called the woman "Daughter." This was a kind way for a teacher to speak to a woman. Jesus showed that he cared about her.

your faith

"your faith in me"

Mark 5:35

While he was speaking

"While Jesus was speaking"

the synagogue leader

This refers to Jairus ([Mark 5:22](#)).

Why trouble the teacher any longer?

This question can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is useless to bother the teacher any longer" or "There is no need to bother the teacher any longer."

the teacher

This refers to Jesus.

Mark 5:36

the message that was spoken

This can be stated as in active form. Alternate translation: "the message that they told Jairus"

Just believe

If necessary, you can state what Jesus is commanding Jairus to believe. Alternate translation: "Just believe I can make you daughter live"

Mark 5:37

General Information:

In verses 37 and 38, the author gives background information about the Pharisees' washing traditions in order to show why the Pharisees were bothered that Jesus's disciples did not wash their hands before eating. If you need to reorder the events in these verses, it may be helpful to use a verse bridge, as in the UDB.

He did not permit anyone to accompany him except Peter ... James

This double negative emphasizes that Peter and the others were the only ones whom he permitted to accompany him. Alternate translation: "He only permitted Peter ... James to accompany him"

He did not permit

Jesus did not permit

to accompany him

"to come with him." It may be helpful to state where they were going. Alternate translation: "to accompany him to Jairus' house"

Mark 5:38

General Information:

In verses 37 and 38, the author gives background information about the Pharisees' washing traditions in order to show why the Pharisees were bothered that Jesus's disciples did not wash their hands before eating. If you need to reorder the events in these verses, it may be helpful to use a verse bridge, as in the UDB.

he saw

Jesus saw

Mark 5:39

he said to them

"Jesus said to the people who were weeping"

Why are you upset and why do you weep?

Jesus asked this question to help them see their lack of faith. This may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "This is not a time to be upset and crying."

The child is not dead but sleeps

Jesus uses the common word for sleep, and so should the translation.

Mark 5:40

They began to mock him

Jesus used the common word for sleep (verse 39). The reader should understand that the people who hear Jesus speak are laughing at him because they truly do know the difference between a dead person and a sleeping person and they think he does not.

put them all outside

"sent all the other people outside the house"

those who were with him

This refers to Peter, James, and John.

went in where the child was

It may be helpful to state where the child is. Alternate translation: "went into the room where the child was lying"

Mark 5:41

Talitha, kum

This is an Aramaic sentence that Jesus spoke to the little girl in her language. Write these words as they sound, using your alphabet.

Mark 5:42

she was twelve years of age

"she was 12 years old"

Mark 5:43

He strictly ordered them that no one should know about this. Then

This can be stated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "He ordered them strictly, 'No one should know about this!' Then" or "He ordered them strictly, 'Do not tell anyone about what I have done!' Then"

He strictly ordered them

"He strongly commanded them"

Then he told them to give her something to eat.

This can be stated as a direct quote. Alternate translation:

"And he told them, 'Give her something to eat.'"

Chapter 6

Mark 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Anointed with oil"

In the ancient Near East, people would try to heal sick people by putting olive oil on them.

Links:

[Mark 6:1 Notes](#)

Mark 6

6:1-6

Where did Jesus live when he was a child?

[6:1]

Jesus' family lived in Nazareth.

See Map: Nazareth

What was the Sabbath?

[6:2]

See: Sabbath

Why did the people want to know who taught Jesus?

[6:2]

In ancient Israel, many teachers learned from other teachers. They taught the same things their teachers taught. This is why they wanted to know who taught Jesus. He did not teach the same things any other teacher taught.

Why did the people ask questions about how Jesus performed miracles?

[6:2]

The people asked Jesus who gave Jesus the power to do miracles. They did not think God gave Jesus the power to do these miracles. They thought Satan gave him this power (see: Mark 3:22).

See: Miracle; Satan (The Devil)

Did Jesus have brothers and sisters?

[6:3]

Some scholars think that Mary and Joseph had other children after Jesus was born. These people were talking about Jesus' brothers and sisters. Fewer scholars think that Mary and Joseph did not have any more children after Jesus. They think these were Jesus' cousins.

See: Family of Jesus

Why did the people not like what Jesus said?

[6:3]

The people did not like what Jesus said because the people knew Jesus was Mary's son. They knew his brothers and sisters, they did not believe he was sent from God and was their messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ)

What did Jesus mean when he said, "a prophet is not without honor"?

[6:4]

When Jesus said that a prophet was "not without honor," he wanted to say that people respected or honored a prophet.

The only place that a prophet is not honored is in the place where he lived when he was a child. Jesus was a prophet.

Perhaps he was also thinking about how Israel would reject him as their messiah.

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

Why was Jesus unable to heal people?

[6:5]

Jesus was able to heal anyone in this place. Some scholars think Jesus was not free to heal people when the people did not believe in him. Jesus healed people so they would know that God sent him and that they will believe in him. The people in Nazareth did not believe in Jesus, even when they saw him heal people.

6:7-13

Who were the twelve?

[6:7]

The twelve were the twelve disciples.

See: Disciple

What did Jesus send the disciples to do?

[6:7]

Jesus sent the twelve disciples to tell other people about Jesus and to heal people who have unclean spirits living in them.

See: Disciple; Demon; Clean and Unclean; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why did Jesus not want the disciples to take anything with them?

[6:8, 6:9]

Jesus did not want the disciples to take anything with them when they traveled. That was because they were to go quickly and to know that God would give them everything they needed. They took only a staff to help them walk.

They were also not to have two tunics. A tunic was the main piece of clothing they wore. They wore a second tunic at night when it was cold. They carried the other tunic during the day. However, God would make sure they were warm at night.

See: Disciple

Why were the disciples to remain in one house?

[6:10]

The disciples were told to remain in one house. At this time it was a great honor to have someone stay in your home. Jesus did not want his disciples to dishonor a host by leaving that house.

See: Disciple

Why were the disciples to shake the dust off their feet?

[6:11]

If the people in a town rejected the disciples, the disciples were told to shake the dust off their feet when they left the town. According to the Law of Moses, the Jews needed to welcome people who were travelling. If they did not welcome the disciples, they disobeyed God. At this time, certain Jews shook the dust off their feet when leaving a place where Gentiles lived. This is because they thought they were leaving an unclean area.

See: Disciple; Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean; Gentile

Why should people repent?

[6:12]

See: Repent (Repentance)

Why did someone get anointed with oil?

[6:13]

In ancient Israel, it was common to anoint someone with oil who was sick so that they might be healed. They poured oil on their head or where they were hurt. It was a way of asking God to help this person.

See: Anoint (Anointing)

6:14-20

Who was King Herod?

[6:14]

See: King Herod

Why did people think John the Baptist was made alive again?

[6:14]

Scholars do not know why people thought Jesus was John the Baptist made alive again. These people did not know that these two men lived at the same time. Both Jesus and John were prophets who honored God.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Prophet

Why did people think Jesus was Elijah?

[6:15]

In ancient Israel, people thought Elijah would return to the earth. This is because he never died. Instead, he went straight to heaven. The prophet Malachi wrote about Elijah returning (see: Malachi 4:5).

See: Prophet; Heaven

What was a prophet?

[6:15]

See: Prophet

Why did Herod arrest John the Baptist?

[6:17]

John the Baptist spoke against King Herod. He said the things King Herod did were evil. He said it was wrong for Herod to marry Herodias because his brother Philip was still alive. This made Herod angry. Herod wanted to kill John. However, Herod worried about what people would do if he killed John. Therefore, he put him into prison.

See: Leviticus 20:21

Who was Herodias?

[6:17]

Herodias was the wife of King Herod. Before Herod married her, Herodias was married to Herod's brother Philip.

Why was it difficult for Herod to kill John the Baptist?

[6:20]

The people of Israel thought John the Baptist was a prophet. Therefore they thought it was very wrong to harm John. Herod feared what people would do if he killed a prophet. Some scholars also think he feared John because John was a man who honored God while Herod did not honor God.

See: Prophet

6:21-29

What day was this dinner?

[6:21]

In this passage, it was Herod's birthday. Many different leaders who served him went to the dinner feast he made for his birthday.

Advice to translators: A birthday is a celebration of the day someone was born. Every year on the same day someone was born people celebrate that person.

Who was the girl?

[6:22]

Herodias sent her daughter to dance for Herod. She danced in a way that made men have sexual thoughts about her. She was the daughter of Herodias and Philip. She was Herod's niece and step-daughter.

What was an oath?

[6:22]

See: Swear (Oath)

Why did this make Herod sad?

[6:26]

Herod did not want to kill John the Baptist. He knew John was a man who honored God. However, he did not want people to see him break his oath. Therefore, he had John killed. This made Herod very sad.

See: Swear (Oath)

Why did the disciples place John's body in a tomb?

[6:29]

According to the Law of Moses, a person needed to be buried before the end of the day. Therefore, the disciples buried John's body to obey the Law of Moses.

See: Disciple; Law of Moses

6:30-44

Who went away in the boat?

[6:32]

The apostles and Jesus went away in the boat.

See: Apostle

What happened in verse 33?

[6:33]

The people saw Jesus and the apostles leaving. Many of the people knew who were Jesus and the apostles. The people ran there together on foot from all the towns. Many of them arrived there before Jesus and the apostles did.

See: Apostle

How were the people like sheep without a shepherd?

[6:34]

Jesus said that the people were like sheep without a shepherd. This was a metaphor. This meant the people did not have a leader to follow.

See: Metaphor

What did Mark mean when he wrote the "hour was late"?

[6:35]

Mark wrote that it was late in the day and they needed to eat and find a place to sleep.

What was a loaf?

[6:38]

Bread is made in a loaf. In ancient times, a person needed at least one loaf a day to live. For a meal, five loaves and two fish fed 2 or 3 small families.

Why did Jesus "bless" the bread?

[6:41]

When Jesus blessed the bread, he thanked God for giving them the bread.

How many people ate the bread and fish?

[6:44]

Mark wrote that 5000 men ate the bread and fish. There were also women and children who ate of the bread and fish. Therefore, more than 5000 people ate.

6:45-56

Where was Bethsaida?

[6:45]

See Map: Bethsaida

How were the disciples "straining against the oars"?

[6:48]

Mark wrote that the disciples were "straining against the oars, for the wind was against them." That is, they were working

hard to row to keep their boat from sinking because of the bad weather.

See: Disciple

When was the fourth watch of the night?

[6:48]

The fourth watch of the night was a time after midnight.

What was a ghost?

[6:49]

A ghost is the spirit of a dead person trapped on earth. Ghosts are not real because people must either go to heaven or hell after they die. Spirits do not get trapped on earth when a person dies.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Heaven; Hell

What did the loaves mean?

[6:52]

Mark wrote about what the loaves meant. Mark wrote about Jesus walking on the water and feeding 5000 men. These were both miracles. He wanted people to know that Jesus could do miracles because he is God.

See: Miracle

Where was Gennesaret?

[6:53]

See Map: Gennesaret

Mark 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus returns to his hometown, where he is not accepted.
his hometown

This refers to the town of Nazareth, where Jesus grew up and where his family lived. This does not mean that he owned land there.

Mark 6:2

What is this wisdom that has been given to him?

This question can be asked in active form. Alternate translation: "What is this wisdom that he has gained?"
that he does with his hands

This phrase emphasizes that Jesus himself does the miracles. Alternate translation: "that he himself works"

Mark 6:3

Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are his sisters not here with us?

These questions can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "He is just an ordinary carpenter! We know him and his family. We know Mary his mother. We know his younger brothers James, Joses, Judas and Simon. And his younger sisters also live here with us."

Mark 6:4

to them

"to the crowd"

A prophet is not without honor, except

This sentence uses a double negative to emphasize the positive. Alternate translation: "A prophet is always honored, except" or "People always honor prophets, except those"

Mark 6:5

to lay his hands on a few sick people

Prophets and teachers would put their hands on people in order to heal them or bless them. In this case, Jesus was healing people.

Mark 6:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus sends his disciples out in sets of two to preach and to heal.

he called the twelve

Here the word "called" means that he summoned the twelve to come to him.

two by two

"2 by 2" or "in pairs"

Mark 6:8

General Information:

Jesus's instructions in verses 8 and 9 can be reordered to separate what he told the disciples to do from what he told them not to do, as in the UDB.

to take nothing for their journey, except a staff

This double negative emphasizes that a staff is the only thing that they were to take. Alternate translation: "to take only a staff for their journey"

no bread

Here "bread" is a synecdoche for food in general. Alternate translation: "no food"

Mark 6:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:10

He said to them

"Jesus said to the twelve"

remain until you go away from there

Here "remain" represents daily going back to that house to eat and sleep there. Alternate translation: "eat and sleep in that house until you leave that area"

Mark 6:11

as a testimony to them

"as a testimony against them." The testimony can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "as a testimony that they did not welcome you" or "to show them that they did wrong when they did not welcome you"

Mark 6:12

They went out

The word "They" refers to the twelve and does not include Jesus. Also, it may be helpful to state that they went out to various towns. Alternate translation: "They went out to

various towns"

repent

"stop sinning"

Mark 6:13

They cast out many demons

It may be helpful to state that they cast the demons out of people. Alternate translation: "They cast many demons out of people"

Mark 6:14

Connecting Statement:

Before this time, Herod commanded that John the Baptist be killed. When Herod hears about Jesus's miracles, he worries, thinking that someone has raised John the Baptist from the dead.

King Herod heard this

The word "this" refers to everything that Jesus and his disciples had been doing in various towns, including casting out demons and healing people.

Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised

Some people thought that Jesus was John the Baptist. This can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "Some people were saying, 'He is John the Baptist, who has been raised'"

John the Baptist has been raised from the dead

"Raised from the dead" is an idiom that means "caused to live again." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has raised John the Baptist from the dead" or "John the Baptist has become alive again"

Mark 6:15

Some others said, "He is Elijah."

It may be helpful to state why some people thought he was Elijah. Alternate translation: "Some others said, 'He is Elijah, whom God promised to send back again.'"

Mark 6:16

whom I beheaded

Herod said "I beheaded" because he had commanded his soldier to behead John. Alternate translation: "whom I commanded my soldier to behead"

has been raised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "has risen" or "has become alive again"

Mark 6:17

General Information:

Here the author begins to give background information about Herod and why he beheaded John the Baptist.

Herod sent to have John arrested and he had him bound in prison

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Herod sent his soldiers to arrest John and to bind him in prison"

on account of Herodias

"because of Herodias"

his brother Philip's wife

"the wife of his brother Philip." Herod's brother Philip is not the same Philip who was an evangelist in the book of Acts or the Philip who was one of Jesus's twelve disciples.

because he had married her

"because Herod had married her"

Mark 6:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:19

Herodias held on to anger against him

"Herodias continued to be angry at John"

and wanted to kill him

Herodias wanted someone to kill John. Alternate translation: "and she wanted someone to kill him" but she could not

What she could not do can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "but she could not kill him" or "but she could not have him killed"

Mark 6:20

for Herod feared John; he knew

These two clauses can be linked differently to show more clearly why Herod feared John. Alternate translation: "for Herod feared John because he knew"

he knew that he was a righteous

"Herod knew that John was a righteous"

Listening to him

"Listening to John"

Mark 6:21

Connecting Statement:

The author continues to give background information about Herod and the beheading of John the Baptist.

an opportunity came

"a convenient day" or "there was an opportune time." This was a time when Herodias could finally do something so that John the Baptist would be killed.

he made a dinner for his officials ... of Galilee

This means that he invited those people to a special dinner to celebrate his birthday with him. Alternate translation:

"he had a banquet for his officials ... of Galilee" or "he invited his officials ... of Galilee to eat and celebrate with him"

a dinner

a formal meal or banquet

Mark 6:22

Herodias herself

The word "herself" is a reflexive pronoun used to emphasize that it was significant that it was Herodias's own daughter who danced at the dinner.

came in

"came into the room"

Mark 6:23

Whatever you ask ... my kingdom

"I will give you whatever you ask me to give to you, even half of what I own and rule, if you ask for that"

Mark 6:24

went out

"went out of the room"

Mark 6:25

on a wooden platter

"on a board" or "on a large wooden dish"

Mark 6:26

because of the oath he had made

The oath was what Herod swore to the girl in verse 23.

Alternate translation: "because of what he had sworn to the girl" or "because he had sworn to give the girl whatever she asked for"

and because of his dinner guests

This can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "and because his dinner guests had heard his oath"

Mark 6:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:28

on a platter

"on a tray"

Mark 6:29

When his disciples

"When John's disciples"

Mark 6:30

Connecting Statement:

After the disciples return from preaching and healing, they go somewhere to be alone, but there are many people who come to hear Jesus teach. When it becomes late, he feeds the people and then sends everyone away while he prays alone.

Mark 6:31

a deserted place

a place where there are no people

many were coming and going

This means that people were continually coming to the apostles and then going away from them.

they did not even

The word "they" refers to the apostles.

Mark 6:32

So they went away

Here the word "they" includes both the apostles and Jesus.

Mark 6:33

they saw them leaving and many recognized them, and they ran there together on foot from all the towns, and they arrived there before them. The people saw Jesus and the apostles leaving, and many of the people recognized Jesus and the apostles, and the people ran there together on foot from all the towns, and the people arrived there before Jesus and the apostles did. on foot

The people are going on foot by land, which contrasts with how the disciples went by boat.

Mark 6:34

When they came ... on them because they were like ... to teach them

When Jesus and the disciples came ... on the people in the crowd because the people in the crowd were like ... to teach the people in the crowd

they were like sheep without a shepherd

Jesus compares the people to sheep who are confused when they do not have their shepherd to lead them.

Mark 6:35

When the hour was late

This means it was late in the day. Alternate translation:

"When it was getting late" or "Late in the afternoon"

a deserted place

This refers to a place where there are no people. See how you translated this in Mark 6:31.

Mark 6:36

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:37

But he answered and said to them

"But Jesus answered and said to his disciples"

Can we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give it to them to eat?

The disciples ask this question to say that there is no way they could afford to buy enough food for this crowd.

Alternate translation: "We could not buy enough bread to feed this crowd, even if we had two hundred denarii!"

two hundred denarii

"200 denarii." The singular form of the word "denarii" is "denarius." A denarius was a Roman silver coin worth one day's wages.

Mark 6:38

loaves

lumps of bread dough that have been shaped and baked

Mark 6:39

green grass

Describe the grass with the color word used in your language for healthy grass, which may or may not be the color green.

Mark 6:40

in groups of hundreds and fifties

This refers to the number of people in each of the groups.

Alternate translation: "with about fifty people in some groups and about a hundred people in other groups"

Mark 6:41

looking up to heaven

This means that he looked up toward the sky, which is associated with the place where God lives.

he blessed

"he spoke a blessing" or "he gave thanks"

He also divided the two fish among them all

"he divided the two fish so that everyone could have some"

Mark 6:42

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:43

They took up

Possible meaning are 1) "The disciples took up" or 2) "The people took up."

broken pieces of bread, twelve baskets full

"twelve baskets full of broken pieces of bread"

twelve baskets

"12 baskets"

Mark 6:44

There were five thousand men who ate the loaves

Telling the number of men in the crowd hints at how large the crowd was. The women and children also ate. Alternate translation: "So many people ate the loaves of bread; the number of just the men was five thousand"

five thousand men

"5,000 men"

Mark 6:45

to the other side

This refers to the Sea of Galilee. This can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "to the other side of the Sea of Galilee"

Bethsaida

This is a town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 6:46

After taking leave of them

"After saying goodbye to them" or "After they had left." Use the common words your language uses for a time when friends leave each other and expect to see each other after a few hours or days.

Mark 6:47

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:48

Connecting Statement:

A storm arises while the disciples are trying to cross the lake. Seeing Jesus walking on the water terrifies them. They do not understand how Jesus can calm the storm.

fourth watch

This is the time between 3 a.m. and sunrise.

Mark 6:49

a ghost

the spirit of a dead person or some other kind of spirit

Mark 6:50

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:51

They were completely amazed

If you need to be more specific, it can stated what they were amazed by. Alternate translation: "They were completely amazed at what he had done"

Mark 6:52

what the loaves meant

Here the phrase "the loaves" refers to when Jesus multiplied the loaves of bread. Alternate translation: "what it meant when Jesus multiplied the loaves of bread" or "what it meant when Jesus caused the few loaves to become many"

their hearts were hardened

Having a hard heart represents being too stubborn to understand. Alternate translation: "they were too stubborn to understand"

Mark 6:53

Connecting Statement:

When Jesus and his disciples arrive at Gennesaret in their boat, people see him and bring people for him to heal. This happens wherever they go.

Gennesaret

This is the name of the region to the northwest of the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 6:54

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 6:55

they ran throughout the whole region

It may be helpful to state why they ran through the region.

Alternate translation: "they ran throughout the whole district in order to tell others that Jesus was there"

they ran ... they heard

The word "they" refers to the people who recognized Jesus, not to the disciples.

the sick

This phrase refers to people. Alternate translation: "the sick people"

Mark 6:56

Wherever he entered

"Wherever Jesus entered"

they would put

Here "they" refers to the people. It does not refer to Jesus's disciples.

the sick

This phrase refers to people. Alternate translation: "the sick people"

They begged him

Possible meanings are 1) "The sick begged him" or 2) "The people begged him."

let them touch

The word "them" refers to the sick.

the edge of his garment

"the hem of his robe" or "the edge of his clothes"

as many as

"all those who"

Chapter 7

Mark 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 7:6-7, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hand washing

The Pharisees washed many things that were not dirty because they were trying to make God think that they were good. They washed their hands before they ate, even when their hands were not dirty, though the law of Moses did not say that they had to do it. Jesus told them that they were wrong and that people make God happy by thinking and doing the right things. (See: lawofmoses and clean)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Ephphatha"

This is an Aramaic word. Mark wrote it the way it sounds using Greek letters and then explained what it means.

Links:

[Mark 7:1 Notes](#)

Mark 7

7:1-23

Why did the Pharisees and scribes come from the region of Galilee to Jerusalem?

[7:1]

The Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to see what Jesus and the disciples were doing. Scholars think the Pharisees and Scribes were searching for ways to accuse Jesus of not following the Law of Moses.

See: Pharisees; Scribe; Disciple; Law of Moses

See Map: Galilee

Why did people not eat without washing their hands?

[7:2]

In ancient Israel, the Jews did not eat unless they washed their hands in a certain way. The Jews washed their hands in the way the religious leaders taught. Mark called the rules made by the religious leaders the “traditions of the elders.” They taught that Jews needed to wash their hands after they went to the marketplace. They needed to wash because they were around Gentiles. Gentiles were unclean. These rules were not in the Law of Moses.

Advice to Translators: A marketplace is a place where people go to get food, clothing, and other things they need to live.

See: Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean; Gentile

Why did the Pharisees bathe themselves?

[7:4]

The Pharisees bathed themselves after they went to the marketplace. The religious teachers taught that people needed to wash their hands after they went to the marketplace. However, the Pharisees washed their whole body. They did this because they were near Gentiles and Gentiles were unclean. None of this was in the Law of Moses.

Advice to Translators: A marketplace is a place where people go to get food, clothing, and other things they need to live.

See: Pharisees; Gentile; Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean

Why did the Pharisees wash everything?

[7:4]

The Law of Moses taught that certain things were unclean and needed to be washed. The religious teachers and the Pharisees thought that even more things needed to be washed than what the Law of Moses said to wash. Mark wanted to write that the Pharisees and other religious teachers taught certain things were sins. However, those things were not taught in the Law of Moses. These were rules made by men, not God.

See: Law of Moses; Pharisees; Clean and Unclean; Sin

What did Jesus say to the Pharisees?

[7:6, 7:7]

Jesus said that the Pharisees were hypocrites. The Pharisees said they were honoring God. They did things so that other people would think they were honoring God. However, they really did not want to honor God. Instead, they only wanted people to think they honored God.

The Pharisees were like the people Isaiah prophesied about. They obeyed men and the rules made by men. However, they did not obey God and the rules he made.

See: Pharisees; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Hypocrisy (Hypocrite)

What did Mark say about honoring your father and mother?

[7:10, 7:11, 7:12]

In the Law of Moses, children were to honor their father and mother. However, the religious teachers in Israel taught something different. Children could promise something to God that normally would be given to their parents. If they did this, they did not need to give it to help their parents. Neither did they need to use it in a certain way or to give it to a priest. Jesus said this did not obey the Law of Moses about honoring your father and mother.

See: Law of Moses; Sin

What defiled someone?

[7:15]

Jesus said that things going into a person did not make them unclean. Instead, it was things that came out of people that made them unclean. That is, the wrong things a person thought and did made them unclean.

See: Clean and Unclean

Advice to translators: Something that is defiled has been made unclean.

Why do some translations not have verse 16?

[7:16]

Most of the ancient copies of the New Testament in Greek do not have the words in verse 16. Therefore, scholars think Mark did not write these words. However, the person who made separated the passages into verses did this with a copy of the New Testament in Greek that had those words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible)

Which parable did the disciples ask Jesus about?

[7:17]

The disciples asked about a parable. The parable was about what Jesus said in verse 15.

See: Disciple; Parable

What did Jesus want to teach when he used this parable?

[7:18, 7:19, 7:20, 7:21, 7:22, 7:23]

The disciples did not understand what Jesus wanted to teach them when Jesus used this parable. He wanted them to know that God cared more about what people did than what people ate.

Some scholars think Jesus changed the Law of Moses. He could do this because he made the Law of Moses. Christians were now able to eat any food. Food was no longer clean or unclean. Other scholars do not think Jesus changed the Law of Moses. Instead, Jesus wanted people to know that the Law of Moses was going to be fulfilled in Jesus. Believing in Jesus would now be how Christians could now follow the Law of Moses.

See: Matthew 5:21-48; Acts 10; Acts 15

See: Disciple; Parable; Clean and Unclean; Law of Moses

7:24-36

Where were Tyre and Sidon?

[7:24]

Tyre and Sidon were cities outside of Israel.

See Map: Tyre and Sidon

Why did Jesus not want people to know where he was?

[7:24]

Scholars think Jesus was searching for a place to rest. He wanted to have time alone with his disciples.

See: Disciple

What was an unclean spirit?

[7:25]

See: Demon; Clean and Unclean; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why did the woman fall down at Jesus' feet?

[7:25]

The women begged Jesus to do something when she fell down at his feet. She did not do this to worship him.

Where was Syrophenicia?

[7:26]

See Map: Syrophenicia

Why did Jesus talk about dogs?

[7:27]

Jesus talked about a dog who ate food that fell off the table. This was a metaphor.

Some scholars think he talked about the disciples when he talked about the children. He talked about the Gentiles when he talked about the dogs. He talked about something he gave them when he talked about the bread. He wanted to say that he needed to teach the disciples before he taught her.

Other scholars think that he talked about Israel when he talked about the children. He was talking about the Gentiles when he talked about the dogs. He talked about the gospel message and the blessings of Jesus' miracles when he talked about bread. He wanted to say that he taught the gospel to the Jews before he taught the gospel to the Gentiles.

See: Metaphor; Disciple; Gentile; Gospel; Miracle

Why did Jesus heal this woman's daughter?

[7:29]

The woman made it known that she believed in Jesus by her reply to Jesus. Jesus healed her daughter because the woman believed in Jesus.

Where was the Sea of Galilee?

[7:31]

See Map: Sea of Galilee

Where was Decapolis?

[7:31]

See Map: Decapolis

What was the laying on of hands?

[7:32]

See: Laying on of Hands

Why did Jesus spit and touch the man's tongue?

[7:33]

Jesus spit and touched the man's tongue. This was a symbol. However, he did not say what was the meaning of the symbol.

Some scholars think Jesus spat onto the ground.
Other scholars think Jesus spat into his hand and then touched the man's tongue.
See: Symbol

What did Mark mean when he said the man's "tongue was released"?

[7:35]

Jesus healed a man that was not able to hear or speak. Mark said that the man's "tongue was released." That is, the man was now able to speak. The man was healed instantly.

Why did Jesus not want them to tell anyone?

[7:36]

See: Messianic Secret

Mark 7:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and scribes.

gathered around him

"gathered around Jesus"

Mark 7:2

They saw

"The Pharisees and the scribes saw"

that is, unwashed

The word "unwashed" explains why the disciples' hands were defiled. It can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "that is, with hands that they had not washed" or "that is, they had not washed their hands"

Mark 7:3

General Information:

In verses 3 and 4, the author gives background information about the Pharisees' washing traditions in order to show why the Pharisees were bothered that Jesus's disciples did not wash their hands before eating. If you need to reorder the events in these verses, it may be helpful to use a verse bridge, as in the UDB.

For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands carefully

The words "do not" and "unless" are a double negative. This can be stated in a positive way. Alternate translation: "For the Pharisees and all the Jews eat only after they wash their hands carefully"

unless they wash their hands carefully

This kind of hand washing was an important ceremonial or religious act, not just an act of making ones hands clean physically. The Jews washed their hands carefully to obey all religious traditions and rules about cleanness. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "unless they make their hands ceremonially clean"

elders

Jewish elders were leaders in their communities and were also judges for the people.

Mark 7:4

they hold to many other things they have received

The words "things they have received" refers to traditions that they learned from their elders. Alternate translation: "they follow many other traditions" or "they do many other things that they were taught to do"

copper vessels

"copper kettles" or "metal containers"

the couches upon which they eat

"benches" or "beds." At that time, the Jews would recline when eating.

Mark 7:5

Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with unclean hands?

Here "walk according to" is a metaphor for "obey." The Pharisees and scribes asked this question to challenge Jesus's authority. This can be written as a statement.

Alternate translation: "Your disciples should not disobey the traditions of our elders by eating their bread with unclean hands."

unclean

The hands were ritually unclean because the disciples had not performed the ceremonial washing. The Pharisees were not accusing them of eating with physical dirt on their hands.

bread

This is a synecdoche, representing food in general.

Alternate translation: "food"

Mark 7:6

General Information:

Here Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah, who had written scripture many years earlier.

with their lips

Here "lips" is a metonym for speaking. Alternate translation: "by what they say"

but their heart is far from me

Here "heart" refers to a person's thoughts or emotions. This is a way of saying the people are not truly devoted to God.

Alternate translation: "but they do not really love me"

Mark 7:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 7:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to rebuke the scribes and Pharisees.

You abandon the commandment of God

"You refuse to obey the commandment of God"

hold on to

This phrase is a metaphor for strictly obeying. Alternate translation: "strictly obey"

Mark 7:9

How well you reject the commandment ... keep your tradition

Jesus uses this ironic statement to rebuke his listeners for forsaking God's commandment. Alternate translation: "You think you have done well in how you have rejected the commandment of God so you may keep your own traditions, but what you have done is not good at all"

How well you reject

"How skillfully you reject"

Mark 7:10

He who speaks evil of his father or mother will surely be put to death
This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"The authorities must execute a person who speaks evil about his father or mother"

who speaks evil of
"who curses"

Mark 7:11

General Information:

In verses 11 and 12, Jesus shows how the Pharisees teach people that they do not have to obey God's commandment to honor their parents. In verse 11 Jesus tells what the Pharisees allow people to say about their possessions, and in verse 12 he tells how that affects what people do for their parents.

is Corban

"Corban" is a Hebrew word that refers to things that people promise to give to God. Translators normally transliterate it using the target language alphabet. Some translators translate its meaning, and then leave out Mark's explanation of the meaning that follows. Alternate translation: "is a gift to God" or "belongs to God"

Whatever help you would have received from me is Corban

A person might say this so that he would not have to give anything to help his parents. This can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "I will not help you, because whatever help you would have received from me is Corban"

a Gift

This phrase explains the meaning of the Hebrew word "Corban." Mark explained the meaning so that his non-Jewish readers could understand what Jesus said. This seems to have been the proper name of a sacrifice. You may need to make explicit who the gift was given to. Alternate translation: "a Gift to God"

Mark 7:12

then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother

Possible meanings are that by telling people that they could say that their possessions are Corban, 1) the Pharisees did not allow people to help their parents, or 2) the Pharisees allowed people to refuse to help their parents. Alternate translation: "then you permit him to do nothing for his father or his mother"

then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother

Here "do anything" refers to helping his parents by giving to them. This can be translated as "then you no longer permit him to give anything to his father or his mother" or "then you permit him to give nothing to his father or his mother"

Mark 7:13

the word of God

Jesus is speaking specifically of the command to love father and mother. Alternate translation: "God's command"

void

canceled or done away with

many similar things you do

"you are doing many other things similar to this"

Mark 7:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus tells a parable to the crowd to help them understand what he has been saying to the scribes and Pharisees.

He called

"Jesus called"

Listen to me, all of you, and understand

The words "Listen" and "understand" are related. Jesus uses them together to emphasize that his hearers should pay close attention to what he is saying.

understand

It may be helpful to state what Jesus is telling them to understand. Alternate translation: "try to understand what I am about to tell you"

Mark 7:15

nothing from outside of a person

Jesus is speaking about what a person eats. This is in contrast to "what comes out of the person." Alternate translation: "nothing from outside a person that he can eat"

It is what comes out of the person

This refers to the things a person does or says. This is in contrast to what is "outside a person that ... enters into him." Alternate translation: "It is what comes out of a person that he says or does"

Mark 7:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 7:17

Connecting Statement:

The disciples still do not understand what Jesus has just said to the scribes, Pharisees, and crowds. Jesus explains his meaning more thoroughly to them.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story. Jesus is now away from the crowd, in a house with his disciples.

Mark 7:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach his disciples by asking a question.

Are you also still without understanding?

Jesus uses this question to express his disappointment that they do not understand. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "After all I have said and done, I would expect you to understand."

Mark 7:19

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes asking the question he is using to teach his disciples.

because ... latrine?

This is the end of the question that begins with the words "Do you not see" in verse 18. Jesus uses this question to teach his disciples something they should already know. It can be expressed as a statement. "You should already understand that whatever enters into a person from outside cannot defile him, because it cannot go into his heart, but it goes into his stomach and then passes out into the latrine."

it cannot go into his heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being or

mind. Here Jesus means that food does not affect a person's character. Alternate translation: "it cannot go into his inner being" or "it cannot go into his mind"

because it

Here "it" refers to what goes into a person; that is, what a person eats.

all foods clean

It may be helpful to explain clearly what this phrase means. Alternate translation: "all foods clean, meaning that people can eat any food without God considering the eater defiled"

Mark 7:20

He said

"Jesus said"

It is that which comes out of the person that defiles him

"What defiles a person is what comes out of him"

Mark 7:21

out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being or mind. Alternate translation: "out of the inner being, come evil thoughts" or "out of the mind, come evil thoughts"

Mark 7:22

sensuality

not controlling one's lustful desires

slander

or blasphemy

Mark 7:23

come from within

Here the word "within" describes a person's heart.

Alternate translation: "come from within a person's heart" or "come from within a person's thoughts"

Mark 7:24

Connecting Statement:

When Jesus goes away to Tyre, he heals the daughter of a Gentile woman who has extraordinary faith.

Mark 7:25

had an unclean spirit

This is an idiom meaning that she was possessed by the unclean spirit. Alternate translation: "was possessed by an unclean spirit"

fell down

"knelt." This is an act of honor and submission.

Mark 7:26

Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by descent

The word "Now" is used here to mark a pause in the story, as the author gives us background information about the woman.

Syrophenician

This is the name of the woman's nationality. She was born in the Phoenician region in Syria.

Mark 7:27

Let the children first be fed. For it is not proper ... throw it to the dogs

Here Jesus speaks about the Jews as if they are children and the Gentiles as if they are dogs. Alternate translation: "Let the children of Israel first be fed. For it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the Gentiles, who are like dogs"

Let the children first be fed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We must first feed the children of Israel"

proper

morally right

bread

This refers to food in general. Alternate translation: "food"

dogs

This refers to small dogs kept as pets.

Mark 7:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 7:29

you are free to go

Jesus was implying that she no longer needed to stay to ask him to help her daughter. He would do it. Alternate translation: "you may go now" or "you may go home in peace"

The demon has gone out of your daughter

Jesus has caused the unclean spirit to leave the woman's daughter. This can be expressed clearly. Alternate translation: "I have caused the evil spirit to leave your daughter"

Mark 7:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 7:31

Connecting Statement:

After healing people in Tyre, Jesus goes to the Sea of Galilee. There he heals a deaf man, which amazes the people.

went out again from the region of Tyre

"left the region of Tyre"

up into the region

Possible meanings are 1) "in the region" as Jesus is at the sea in the region of the Decapolis or 2) "through the region" as Jesus went through the region of the Decapolis to get to the sea.

Decapolis

This is the name of a region that means Ten Cities. It is located to the southeast of the Sea of Galilee. See how you translated this in [Mark 5:20]

Mark 7:32

They brought

"And people brought"

who was deaf

"who was not able to hear"

they begged him to lay his hand on him

Prophets and teachers would put their hands on people in order to heal them or bless them. In this case, people are begging Jesus to heal a man. Alternate translation: "they begged Jesus to put his hand on the man to heal him"

Mark 7:33

Then taking him ... privately, he

"Then Jesus took the man ... privately, and he"

he put his fingers into his ears

Jesus is putting his own fingers in the man's ears.

then he spit and touched his tongue

It may be helpful to state that Jesus spit on his fingers.

Alternate translation: "then he spit on his fingers and touched the man's tongue with them"

Mark 7:34

looked up to heaven

This means that he looked up toward the sky, which is associated with the place where God lives.

sighed

This means that Jesus groaned or that he let out a long deep breath that could be heard.

said to him

"said to the man"

Ephphatha

This is an Aramaic word. It should be copied into your language using your alphabet.

Mark 7:35

his ears were opened

This means he was able to hear. Alternate translation: "his ears were opened and he was able to hear" or "he was able to hear"

the bond of his tongue was released

This metaphor speaks of the man's tongue as if it were bound by a rope or chain that kept the man from speaking and that Jesus broke or loosened so the man could speak.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Jesus released the bond of his tongue" or "Jesus set his tongue free" or "Jesus enabled the man to speak"

Mark 7:36

But the more he ordered them, the more abundantly they proclaimed it

The refers to him ordering them not to tell anyone about

what he had done. Alternate translation: "But though he continually ordered them not to tell anyone, they

continually proclaimed it"

the more abundantly

"the more widely" or "the more"

Mark 7:37

were extremely astonished

"were utterly amazed" or "were exceedingly astonished" or

"were astonished beyond all measure"

the deaf hear and the mute speak

These refer to people. Alternate translation: "the deaf people hear and the mute people speak" or "people who cannot hear, hear, and people who cannot speak, speak"

Chapter 8

Mark 8 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Bread

When Jesus worked a miracle and provided bread for a large crowd of people, they probably thought about when God miraculously provided food for the people of Israel when they were in the wilderness.

Yeast is the ingredient that causes bread to become larger before it is baked. In this chapter, Jesus uses yeast as a metaphor for things that change the way people think, speak, and act.

"Adulterous generation"

When Jesus called the people an "adulterous generation," he was telling them that they were not faithful to God. (See: faithful and peopleofgod)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Jesus used many rhetorical questions as a way of both teaching the disciples

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus uses a paradox when he says, "Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" ([Mark 8:35-37](#)).

Links:

[Mark 8:1 Notes](#)

Mark 8

8:1-21

What were "those days"?

[8:1]

Mark wrote about the time when Jesus was in Decapolis when he wrote about "those days."

See Map: Decapolis

Why did the people not have anything to eat?

[8:2]

Mark does not write why the people did not have anything to eat.

How were they in a deserted place?

[8:4]

The disciples spoke about being in a deserted place. That is they were in a place where they could not get any food. Perhaps they were in the wilderness or desert.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus give thanks?

[8:6]

Jesus gave thanks to God before they ate. He thanked God for giving them their food. This was common in ancient Israel.

Why did Mark write about how much fish and bread remained uneaten?

[8:8]

Mark wrote there were 7 large baskets of uneaten food after everyone ate. There was more food that remained than the food with which they started. This was a miracle.

See: Miracle

Where was Dalmanutha?

[8:10]

See Map: Dalmanutha

Why did the Pharisees want a sign from heaven?

[8:11]

The Pharisees wanted Jesus to give them a sign from heaven. They wanted Jesus to prove that God gave Jesus the power and permission to do these miracles. They thought that Satan gave Jesus the power and permission to do these things (see: Mark 3:22)

See: Pharisees; Sign; Heaven; Miracle; Satan (The Devil)

Why did Jesus talk about yeast?

[8:15]

Jesus used the metaphor of yeast. He did this to talk about people doing evil things. In the same way a small amount of yeast goes through the whole lump of dough, so evil things would make other people want to do more evil things.

See: Yeast (Leaven); Metaphor

Why did Jesus ask the disciples many questions?

[8:17, 8:18, 8:19, 8:20, 8:21]

Jesus asked his disciples many different questions. They did not understand what Jesus was saying about who he is and why he did these things. They knew Jesus fed 5000 people through a miracle. They forgot he could do this. They worried that the people would not have food to eat (see: Mark 8:4).

Some scholars think Jesus rebuked them. That is, he spoke to them in a way that they would know they did something wrong.

Other scholars think Jesus was trying to help them understand (see: Matthew 16:11-12).

See: Disciple; Miracle

8:22-38

Where was Bethsaida?

[8:22]

See Map: Bethsaida

Why did the people want Jesus to touch the blind man?

[8:22]

The people wanted Jesus to touch the blind man because they believed that this would heal the man.

Why did Jesus take the man outside of the village?

[8:23]

Jesus took the man outside of the village because he did not want other people to see what he was doing.

See: Messianic Secret

Why did Jesus spit on the man's eyes?

[8:23]

It was a symbol when Jesus spat on the man's eyes. However, Mark does not write about what was this symbol. Perhaps Jesus spat on the man's eyes because then the man could feel what Jesus was doing.

See: Symbol

Why did the man see men who looked like walking trees?

[8:24]

The man saw people and said they looked like walking trees. This is because his eyes were not yet completely healed.

Jesus tried to teach the disciples something by not healing the man completely the first time. This was because seeing was a metaphor. People often spoke about understanding something as if they were seeing it. In the same way the man saw more clearly after Jesus touched his eyes again, so the disciples understood Jesus more clearly when he explained the things he taught.

See: Disciple; Metaphor

Why did Jesus not want this man to enter into the village?

[8:26]

Jesus told this man not to enter into the village. He did this because he did not want the man to tell other people about

what Jesus did.

See: Messianic Secret

Where was Caesarea Philippi?

[8:27]

See Map: Caesarea Philippi

Why did Jesus ask, “who do people say that I am”?

[8:27]

Jesus asked, “who do people say that I am.” Scholars think Jesus wanted his disciples to be prepared for the next question he asked. That is, he asked them “but who do you say that I am”?

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus not want the disciples to tell people that he is the messiah?

[8:30]

See: Messianic Secret; Disciple; Messiah (Christ)

What is the Son of Man?

[8:31]

Jesus spoke about himself when he spoke about the Son of Man. He prophesied about things that would happen to him.

See: Son of Man; Prophecy (Prophecy)

Who were the elders, chief priests, and scribes?

[8:31]

Mark wrote about older men in Israel who lead the people in some way when he wrote about elders. Together the scribes, the chief priests, and the elders helped to lead Israel to worship and obey God.

See: Chief Priest; Scribe

How would Jesus rise up after three days?

[8:31]

Jesus said he would rise up after three days. That is he would be made alive again through his resurrection.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Peter rebuke Jesus?

[8:32]

Peter rebuked Jesus. He said that what Jesus said must be wrong. Peter thought that the messiah would not suffer and die in the way Jesus said. However, Jesus rebuked Peter. He said Peter spoke wrongly. The things he said were the things that Satan wanted Peter to say. Peter did not yet understand the things Jesus was supposed to do on earth.

See: Satan (The Devil); Messiah (Christ)

What did it mean for people to “take up their cross”?

[8:34]

The words “take up your cross” were a metaphor. Jesus died on a cross. He obeyed God even though he suffered for obeying God. He wanted people to do the same thing. He wanted them to obey God even if they suffered because they obeyed God.

See: Metaphor; Cross

How does someone save their life?

[8:35]

Jesus talked about “life” in two ways in this passage. He spoke about the life a person has before they die and the life they have after they die. He said people needed to obey God before they die if they want to live with God forever. In the same way, people who die on Earth because they obeyed God will still live with God forever after they die.

See: Heaven; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

How was this generation sinful and adulterous?

[8:38]

Jesus called the people living in Israel sinful and adulterous. This was a metaphor. Jesus meant the people were not faithful to God because they did not believe in Jesus.

Sin; Adultery

How will Jesus be ashamed of people when he comes with the glory of his father?

[8:38]

Jesus talked about people being ashamed of him. That is, he talked about the people who rejected him. They did not believe in him. Jesus will reject everyone who rejected him when he returns. They will live in hell forever.

See: Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Hell; Glory (Glorify); Angel

Mark 8:1

Connecting Statement:

A great, hungry crowd is with Jesus. He feeds them using

only seven loaves and a few fish before Jesus and his disciples get in a boat to go to another place.

In those days

This phrase is used to introduce a new event in the story.

Mark 8:2

they continue to be with me already for three days and have nothing to eat

"this is this third day these people have been with me, and they have nothing to eat"

Mark 8:3

they may faint

Possible meanings are 1) literal, "they may lose consciousness temporarily" or 2) hyperbolic exaggeration, "they may become weak."

Mark 8:4

Where can we get enough loaves of bread in such a deserted place to satisfy these people?

The disciples are expressing surprise that Jesus would expect them to be able to find enough food. Alternate translation: "This place is so deserted that there is no place here for us to get enough loaves of bread to satisfy these people!"

loaves of bread

Loaves of bread are lumps of dough that have been shaped and baked.

Mark 8:5

He asked them

"Jesus asked his disciples"

Mark 8:6

He commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground.

This can be written as a direct quote. "Jesus commanded the crowd, 'Sit down on the ground.'"

sit down

Use your language's word for how people customarily eat when there is no table, whether sitting or lying down.

Mark 8:7

They also had

Here the word "they" is used to refer to Jesus and his disciples.

he gave thanks for them

"Jesus gave thanks for the fish"

Mark 8:8

They ate

"The people ate"

they picked up

"the disciples picked up"

the remaining broken pieces, seven large baskets

This refers to the broken pieces of fish and bread that were left over after the people ate. Alternate translation: "the remaining broken pieces of bread and fish, which filled seven large baskets"

Mark 8:9

Then he sent them away

It may be helpful to clarify when he sent them away.

Alternate translation: "After they ate, Jesus sent them away"

Mark 8:10

they went into the region of Dalmanutha

It may be helpful to clarify how they got to Dalmanutha.

Alternate translation: "they sailed around the Sea of Galilee to the region of Dalmanutha"

Dalmanutha

This is the name of a place on the northwestern shore of

the Sea of Galilee.

Mark 8:11

Connecting Statement:

In Dalmanutha, Jesus refuses to give the Pharisees a sign before he and his disciples get in a boat and leave.

They sought from him

"They asked him for"

a sign from heaven

They wanted a sign that would prove that Jesus's power and authority were from God. Possible meanings are 1) The word "heaven" is a metonym for God. Alternate translation: "a sign from God" or 2) the word "heaven" refers to the sky. Alternate translation: "a sign from the sky"

to test him

The Pharisees tried to test Jesus to make him prove that he was from God. Some information can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "to prove that God had sent him"

Mark 8:12

He sighed deeply in his spirit

This means that he groaned or that he let out a long deep breath that could be heard. It probably shows Jesus's deep sadness that the Pharisees refused to believe him. See how you translated this in Mark 7:34.

in his spirit

"in himself"

Why does this generation seek for a sign?

Jesus is scolding them. This question may be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "This generation should not seek a sign."

this generation

When Jesus speaks of "this generation," he is referring to the people who lived at that time. The Pharisees are included in this group. Alternate translation: "you and the people of this generation"

no sign will be given

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will not give a sign"

Mark 8:13

he left them, got into a boat again

Jesus's disciples went with him. Some information can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "he left them, got into a boat again with his disciples"

to the other side

This describes the Sea of Galilee, which can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "to the other side of the sea"

Mark 8:14

Connecting Statement:

While Jesus and his disciples are in a boat, they have a discussion about the lack of understanding among the Pharisees and Herod, though they had seen many signs.

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story. Here the author tells background information about the disciples forgetting to bring bread.

no more than one loaf

The negative phrase "no more" is used to emphasize how small an amount of bread they had. Alternate translation: "only one loaf"

Mark 8:15

Keep watch and be on guard

These two terms have a common meaning and are repeated here for emphasis. They can be combined. Alternate translation: "Keep watch"

the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod

Here Jesus is speaking to his disciples in a metaphor they do not understand. Jesus is comparing the Pharisees' and Herod's teachings to yeast, but you should not explain this when you translate it because the disciples themselves did not understand it.

Mark 8:16

no bread

The word "no" is an exaggeration. The disciples did have one loaf of bread

Mark 8:17

Why are you arguing about having no bread?

Here Jesus is mildly rebuking his disciples because they should have understood what he had been talking about. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not be thinking that I am talking about actual bread."

Do you still not see or understand?

These questions have the same meaning and are used together to emphasize that they do not understand. This can be written as one question or as a statement. Alternate translation: "Do you not yet understand?" or "You should perceive and understand by now the things I say and do." Do you have hardened hearts?

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind and "hardened" is a metaphor for not being able or willing to understand something. Jesus uses a question to scold the disciples. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are so slow to understand what I mean!" or "You are unwilling to understand what I mean!"

Mark 8:18

You have eyes; do you not see? You have ears; do you not hear? Do you not remember?

Jesus continues to mildly rebuke his disciples. These questions can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "You have eyes, but you do not understand what you see. You have ears, but you do not understand what you hear. You should remember."

Mark 8:19

the five thousand

This refers to the 5,000 people Jesus fed. Alternate translation: "the 5,000 people"

how many baskets full of broken pieces of bread did you take up

It may be helpful to state when they collected the baskets of pieces. Alternate translation: "how many baskets full of broken pieces of bread did you collect after everyone finished eating"

Mark 8:20

the four thousand

This refers to the 4,000 people Jesus fed. Alternate translation: "the 4,000 people"

how many basketfuls of broken pieces of bread did you take up

It may be helpful to state when they collected these. Alternate translation: "how many baskets full of broken pieces of bread did you collect after everyone finished

eating"

Mark 8:21

Do you not yet understand?

Jesus is mildly rebuking his disciples for not understanding.

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation:

"You should understand by now the things I say and do."

Mark 8:22

Connecting Statement:

When Jesus and his disciples get out of their boat at Bethsaida, Jesus heals a blind man.

Bethsaida

This is a town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

See how you translated the name of this town in [Mark 6:45]

to touch him

It may be helpful to state why they wanted Jesus to touch the man. Alternate translation: "to touch him in order to heal him"

Mark 8:23

When he had spit on his eyes ... he asked him

"When Jesus had spit on the man's eyes ... Jesus asked the man"

Mark 8:24

He looked up

"The man looked up"

I see men who look like walking trees

The man sees men walking around, yet they are not clear to him, so he compares them to trees. Alternate translation:

"Yes, I see people! They are walking around, but I cannot see them clearly. They look like trees"

Mark 8:25

Then he again

"Then Jesus again"

and the man opened his eyes, his sight was restored

The phrase "his sight was restored" can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "restoring the man's sight, and then the man opened his eyes"

Mark 8:26

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 8:27

Connecting Statement:

Jesus and his disciples talk on their way to the villages of Caesarea Philippi about who Jesus is and what will happen to him.

Mark 8:28

They answered him and said

"They answered him, saying,"

John the Baptist

The disciples answer that this was who some people said Jesus was. This can be shown more clearly. Alternate translation:

"Some people say that you are John the Baptist"

Others say ... others

The word "others" refers to other people. This refers to their responses to Jesus's question. Alternate translation:

"Other people say you are ... other people say you are"

Mark 8:29

He asked them

"Jesus asked his disciples"

Mark 8:30

Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus did not want them to tell anyone that he was the Christ. This can be made more explicit. This can also be written as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "Jesus warned them not to tell anyone that he is the Christ." or "Jesus warned them, 'Do not tell anyone that I am the Christ.'"

Mark 8:31

Son of Man

This is an important title for Jesus.

would be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and would be killed, and after three days rise up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the elders and the chief priests and the scribes would reject him, and that men would kill him, and that after three days he would rise up"

Mark 8:32

He spoke that message openly

Possible meanings are 1) "He said this so that people could hear him" or 2) "He said this in a way that was easy to understand."

began to rebuke him

Peter rebuked Jesus for saying the things he said would happen to the Son of Man. This can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "began to rebuke him for saying these things"

Mark 8:33

Connecting Statement:

After rebuking Peter for his not wanting Jesus to die and rise, Jesus tells both his disciples and the crowd how to follow him.

Get behind me, Satan

Jesus means that Peter is acting like Satan because Peter is trying to prevent Jesus from accomplishing what God sent him to do. Alternate translation: "Get behind me, because you are acting like Satan"

Get behind me

"Get away from me"

Mark 8:34

follow me

Following Jesus here represents being one of his disciples.

Alternate translation: "be my disciple" or "be one of my disciples"

must deny himself

"must not give in to his own desires" or "must forsake his own desires"

take up his cross, and follow me

"carry his cross and follow me." The cross represents suffering and death. Taking up the cross represents being willing to suffer and die. Alternate translation: "must obey me even to the point of suffering and dying"

follow me

Following Jesus here represents obeying him. Alternate translation: "obey me"

Mark 8:35

For whoever wants

"For anyone who wants"

life

This refers to both physical life and spiritual life.

for my sake and for the gospel

"because of me and because of the gospel." Jesus is talking about people who lose their lives because they follow Jesus and the gospel. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "because he follows me and tells others the gospel"

Mark 8:36

What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and then forfeit his life?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation:

"Even if a person gains the whole world, it will not benefit him if he forfeits his life."

to gain the whole world and then forfeit his life

This can also be expressed as a condition starting with the word "if." Alternate translation: "if he gains the whole world and then forfeits his life"

to gain the whole world

The words "the whole world" are an exaggeration for great riches. Alternate translation: "to gain everything he ever wanted"

forfeit

To forfeit something is to lose it or to have another person take it away.

Mark 8:37

What can a person give in exchange for his life?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation:

"There is nothing a person can give in exchange for his life." or "No one can give anything in exchange for his life."

What can a person give

If in your language "giving" requires someone to receive what is given, "God" can be stated as the receiver. Alternate translation: "What can a person give to God"

Mark 8:38

ashamed of me and my words

"ashamed of me and my message"

in this adulterous and sinful generation

Jesus speaks of this generation as "adulterous," meaning that they are unfaithful in their relationship with God.

Alternate translation: "in this generation of people who have committed adultery against God and are very sinful" or "in this generation of people who are unfaithful to God and are very sinful"

the Son of Man will be ashamed

Jesus speaks of himself in the third person. Alternate

translation: "I, the Son of Man, will be ashamed"

when he comes

"when he comes back"

in the glory of his Father

When Jesus returns he will have the same glory as his Father.

with the holy angels

"accompanied by the holy angels"

Mark 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"transfigured"

Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. Mark says in this chapter that Jesus's clothing shone with this glorious light so that his followers could see that Jesus truly was God's Son. At the same time, God told them that Jesus was his Son. (See: glory and fear)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Hyperbole

Jesus said things that he did not expect his followers to understand literally. When he said, "If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off" ([Mark 9:43](#)), he was exaggerating so they would know that they should stay away from anything that caused them to sin, even if it was something they loved or thought they needed.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Elijah and Moses

Elijah and Moses suddenly appeared to Jesus, James, John, and Peter, and then they disappeared. All four of them saw Elijah and Moses, and because Elijah and Moses spoke with Jesus, the reader should understand that Elijah and Moses appeared physically.

"Son of Man"

Jesus referred to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus used a paradox when he said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all" ([Mark 9:35](#)).

Links:

[Mark 9:1 Notes](#)

Mark 9

9:1-13

Did Jesus say that certain people would still be alive when the kingdom of God came?

[9:1]

Jesus said that certain people would not "taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power." That is, they will not die before they saw this. However, scholars disagree about what they would see.

Some scholars think Jesus spoke about what was about to happen. That is, Jesus would be transfigured. Perhaps Mark wanted to write that Jesus himself was the kingdom of God. Or perhaps the things the disciples saw were similar to how Jesus would appear when he begins to rule on the earth. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about something the Holy Spirit would do. He would begin to live in Christians forever (see: Acts 2). Some scholars think Jesus spoke about dying and being resurrected.

See: Kingdom of God; Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Transfigure (Transfiguration)

How was Jesus transfigured?

[9:2]

Mark wrote that Jesus was transfigured. That is, Jesus was changed in some way. The disciples did not see Jesus as he was, they saw him as he will be when he returns to the earth.

See: Transfigure (Transfiguration); Disciple; Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Peter, James, and John see Elijah and Moses?

[9:4]

Peter, James, and John saw Elijah and Moses. Elijah and Moses were in heaven. Scholars think this was a symbol. It symbolized that Jesus was the messiah for whom people were waiting.

See: Heaven; Symbol; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Peter call Jesus "rabbi"?

[9:5]

Peter called Jesus "rabbi." Rabbi was the Hebrew word for teacher. Peter did not understand what was happening. If he did, then he would have called Jesus the messiah, not simply a teacher.

See: Messiah (Christ)

Why did Peter want to make three shelters?

[9:5]

Peter wanted to make three shelters. One for Jesus, one for Elijah, and one for Moses. Scholars disagree about why he did this.

Some scholars think Peter wanted to build three tents of meeting. That is, he wanted to build a place where God could talk to men once again. He did not know that God was already talking to people through Jesus. They did not need to meet in a tent to learn what God said to them. Some scholars think Peter wanted to build three shelters (see: Leviticus 23:34-44). Perhaps he thought this was for the Feast of Shelters when the messiah came to rule over the world (see: Zechariah 14:16)

See: Tent of Meeting; Festival of Shelters; Messiah (Christ)

Why was Peter terrified?

[9:6]

Peter was terrified because he thought the time was coming for God to judge the world. He did not understand that this was not what was happening. Some scholars think Peter, James, and John did not have fear, but had great awe in seeing Jesus, Elijah, and Moses together on the mountain.

See: Awe (Awesome)

Who spoke from the cloud?

[9:7]

God the Father spoke from the cloud. In the Bible, heaven is often spoken about as if it is in the clouds.

See: Heaven

Why did Jesus tell the disciples not to say anything until the Son of man had “risen from the dead”?

[9:9]

Jesus spoke about the Son of Man rising from the dead. He spoke about himself. He would be resurrected. However, the disciples did not understand that Jesus would be resurrected. Some scholars think Jesus knew the disciples would understand after he was resurrected. Certain Jewish teachers even taught that no one would be made alive again after they died. This was why they talked about what Jesus said among themselves.

See: Son of Man; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Disciple

What did the scribes teach about Elijah?

[9:11]

The scribes taught that Elijah must return to the earth before the messiah came. He would tell Israel to repent and be ready for the messiah. It is not known whether they taught that Elijah would come back to the earth or that there would be a prophet who was like Elijah.

See: Scribe; Messiah (Christ); Repent (Repentance); Prophet

Who was Jesus talking about when he said that Elijah has come?

[9:13]

Jesus told them that the scribes were right about Elijah. A prophet like Elijah did help Israel to be ready for the messiah.

Jesus spoke about John the Baptist when he spoke about Elijah.

See: Malachi 3:1; 4:5

See: Scribe; Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Repent (Repentance); Sin

9:14-29

Why were the scribes arguing with the disciples?

[9:14]

The scribes were arguing with the disciples. However, Mark did not write what they were arguing about. Some scholars think the scribes were arguing with the disciples because the disciples could not make the demon leave the boy.

See: Scribe; Disciple; Demon

Why were the disciples not able to make the demon leave the boy?

[9:18]

Scholars think the disciples were not able to make the demon leave the boy because they forgot to ask God for help. That is, they forgot to pray. They were not able to make the demon leave without God.

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that these demons could only come out through “prayer and fasting.” However, scholars think Mark did not write “and fasting.”

See: Disciple; Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Pray (Prayer); Fasting

Why did Jesus rebuke the “unbelieving generation”?

[9:19]

Jesus rebuked the “unbelieving generation.” That is, he said that the people of Israel were evil for not believing in him. He did not speak about everyone in Israel. Some people believed in him. Jesus spoke about the people of Israel in general. Perhaps Jesus said this because he wanted the disciples to know that they did the same things that people who did not believe in him did.

What did the spirit do when it saw Jesus?

[9:20]

The demon made the boy shake violently when it saw Jesus. Mark did not write why the demon did this.

See: Demon

Why did Jesus say, “all things are possible for the one who believes”?

[9:23]

Jesus said, “all things are possible for the one who believes.” He did not say that people who believe in him can do anything they wanted to do. Instead, he said that when someone obeys God, they can do things they did not think possible to do. God can make anything happen. He can use people to make anything happen that he wants to happen.

9:30-37

Where was Galilee?

[9:30]

See Map: Galilee

Why did Jesus not want people to know where they were?

[9:30]

Jesus did not want people to know where they were because he was teaching the disciples. He did not want people to interrupt them.

See: Disciple

What did Jesus teach the disciples about the Son of Man?

[9:31]

Jesus taught the disciples about what must happen to the Son of Man. The Son of Man must die and be resurrected. The disciples did not understand that Jesus is the Son of Man. They did not want other people to know they did not understand this, so they did not say anything.

See: Disciple; Son of Man; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Where was Capernaum?

[9:33]

See Map: Capernaum

Why were the disciples silent when Jesus asked them a question?

[9:34]

The disciples were silent when Jesus asked them a question because they were ashamed of the things the spoke about to one another.

See: Disciple

What did Jesus teach his disciples?

[9:35, 9:36, 9:37]

Jesus said, “if anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all and “servant of all.” He wanted to say that the person who was the greatest was the one who obeyed God. A person who obeyed God served other people in the same way Jesus served other people. This person also did not think he was greater than he was really. He knew God gave him everything that he had.

Jesus helped the disciples to understand what he said by talking about a child. At this time, people did not think they should spend their time teaching and helping children. He wanted the disciples to help people who wanted to believe in Jesus and follow Jesus, even if they did not think they were significant enough to teach. They served Jesus by serving these people. They also honored God, who sent Jesus to the Earth.

See: Disciple; Serve

9:38-50

Why did John call Jesus “teacher”?

[9:38]

In ancient Israel, people often followed someone who taught them. They called them “rabbi” or “teacher.” When he said this, it did not mean that John did not think Jesus was the messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ)

How was someone driving out demons in Jesus name?

[9:38]

John said that someone was driving out demons in Jesus’ name. The disciples made this man stop because he was not one of Jesus’ followers. Some scholars think this man was not currently following Jesus, but they think he might have been one of the 70 people he sent out to preach the gospel (see: Luke:10:1). Jesus told the disciples that they did the wrong thing. This was because the man was honoring Jesus. Because Jesus knows everything, he also knew what the man was doing and gave him permission to do this. This man followed Jesus even though he was not with Jesus and the disciples.

See: Matthew 12:30

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Disciple

Who will be rewarded?

[9:41]

Jesus said that anyone who does something to honor Jesus will be rewarded. However, anyone who does something that caused someone to sin will be punished. That is, if they cause someone to want to do something that dishonored God or

stops them from doing something that honored God, then they will be punished. In ancient times, people were punished by having a very large stone tied around their necks. They were thrown into the water which caused them to drown. He wanted to say that it was better to be punished while on earth than to lose your reward in heaven or to go to hell.

See: Reward; Sin; Heaven; Hell

Should people harm themselves?

[9:42, 9:43, 9:45]

Jesus said that it would be better for people to harm themselves than to go to hell. Jesus did not want people to harm themselves. However, he wanted them to know that it would be much better to suffer on the earth than to be punished forever in hell.

See: Hell; Fire; Kingdom of God

Did Mark write the words in verse 44?

[9:44]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words in verse 44. However, more of the ancient Greek copies do not have the words from verse 44. Mark probably did not write the words that are in verse 44.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Did Mark write the words in verse 46?

[9:46]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words in verse 46. However, more of the ancient Greek copies do not have the words from verse 46. Mark probably did not write the words that are in verse 46.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

How was someone salted with fire?

[9:49]

Scholars do not know why Jesus said that someone was "salted with fire." Perhaps he wanted to say that some people will be punished by going to hell, being burned with fire forever. Other people would be made clean by fire. This is a metaphor. They will be made clean so they can be with God forever.

See: Leviticus 2:13

See: Hell; Fire; Metaphor; Clean and Unclean

Why did Jesus speak about salt?

[9:50]

Jesus spoke about salt as a metaphor. In the ancient world, salt was used to keep food from going bad. At this time, the salt could spoil or go bad. It was useless after this happened. Jesus wanted to say that the disciples needed to do things differently than other people. Then people would want to believe in Jesus and follow Jesus if they did this. However, if they do the same things that other people do, then people will not want to follow Jesus.

See: Disciple

Mark 9:1

He said to them

"Jesus said to his disciples"

the kingdom of God come with power

The kingdom of God coming represents God showing himself as king. Alternate translation: "God show himself with great power as king"

Mark 9:2

alone by themselves

The author uses the reflexive pronoun "themselves" here to emphasize that they were alone and that only Jesus, Peter, James, and John went up the mountain.

he was transfigured

"Transfigure" means for a person's outward appearance to change. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his appearance had changed" or "he appeared very different"

before them

"in front of them"

Mark 9:3

radiantly brilliant

"shining" or "glowing." Jesus's garments were so white they were emitting or giving off light.

extremely

"very"

whiter than any bleacher on earth could bleach them

Bleaching describes the process of making natural white wool even whiter by using chemicals like bleach or ammonia. Alternate translation: "whiter than any person on earth could whiten them"

Mark 9:4

Elijah with Moses appeared

It may be helpful to state who these men are. Alternate translation: "two prophets who had lived long ago, Elijah and Moses, appeared"

they were talking

The word "they" refers to Elijah and Moses.

Mark 9:5

Peter answered and said to Jesus

"Peter said to Jesus." Here the word "answered" is used to introduce Peter into the conversation. Peter was not answering a question.

it is good for us to be here

It is not clear whether "us" refers only to Peter, James, and John, or if it refers to everyone there, including Jesus, Elijah, and Moses. If you can translate so that both options are possible, do so.

shelters

simple, temporary places in which to sit or sleep

Mark 9:6

For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified

This parenthetical sentence tells background information about Peter, James, and John.

they were terrified

"they were very frightened" or "they were very afraid"

Mark 9:7

came and overshadowed

"appeared and covered"

Then a voice came out of the cloud

Here "a voice came out" is a metonym for someone speaking. It can also be stated clearly who spoke. Alternate translation: "Then someone spoke from the cloud" or "Then God spoke from the cloud"

This is my beloved Son. Listen to him

God the Father expresses his love for his "beloved Son," the Son of God.

beloved Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

Mark 9:8

when they looked

Here "they" refers to Peter, James, and John.

Mark 9:9

he commanded them to tell no one ... until the Son of Man had risen

This implies that he was permitting them to tell people about what they had seen after he rose from being dead.

risen from the dead

"risen from among the dead." This speaks of becoming alive again. The phrase "the dead" refers to "dead people" and is a metonym for death. Alternate translation: "risen from death"

Mark 9:10

rising from the dead

"to rise from among the dead." This speaks of becoming alive again. The phrase "the dead" refers to "dead people" and is a metonym for death. Alternate translation: "rising from death"

So they kept the matter to themselves

Here "kept the matter to themselves" is an idiom that means they did not tell anyone about what they had seen.

Alternate translation: "So they did not tell anyone about what they had seen"

Mark 9:11

Connecting Statement:

Though Peter, James, and John wondered what Jesus might mean by "rising from the dead," they asked him instead about Elijah's coming.

They asked him

The word "they" refers to Peter, James, and John.

Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?

Prophecy foretold that Elijah would come again from heaven. Then the Messiah, who is the Son of Man, would come to rule and reign. The disciples are confused about how the Son of Man could die and rise again. Alternate translation: "Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come before the Messiah comes?"

Mark 9:12

Elijah does come first to restore all things

By saying this, Jesus affirms that Elijah would come first.

Why then is it written ... be despised?

Jesus uses this question to remind his disciples that the scriptures also teach that the Son of Man must suffer and be despised. This may be expressed as a statement.

Alternate translation: "But I also want you to consider what is written about the Son of Man. The scriptures say that he must suffer many things and be hated."

be despised

This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"people would hate him"

Mark 9:13

they did whatever they wanted to him

It may be helpful to state what people did to Elijah.

Alternate translation: "our leaders treated him very badly, just as they wanted to do"

Mark 9:14

Connecting Statement:

When Peter, James, John, and Jesus came down from the mountain, they found the scribes arguing with the other disciples.

When they came to the disciples

Jesus, Peter, James, and John returned to the other disciples who had not gone with them up the mountain.

they saw a great crowd around them

"Jesus and those three disciples saw a great crowd around the other disciples"

scribes were arguing with them

The scribes were arguing with the disciples who had not gone with Jesus.

Mark 9:15

was amazed

It may be helpful to state why they were amazed. Alternate translation: "was amazed that Jesus had come"

Mark 9:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 9:17

He has a spirit

This means the boy is possessed by an unclean spirit. "He has an unclean spirit" or "He is possessed by an unclean spirit"

Mark 9:18

down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes

A convulsion, or seizure, can cause a person to have trouble breathing or swallowing. This causes white foam to come out of the mouth. If your language has a way to describe that, you could use it. Alternate translation: "down, and bubbles come out of his mouth, and he grinds his teeth and becomes"

becomes rigid

"becomes stiff" or "his body becomes rigid"

they could not

This refers to the disciples not being about to drive the spirit out of the boy. Alternate translation: "they could not drive it out of him"

Mark 9:19

He answered them

Though it was the boy's father who made a request of Jesus,

Jesus responds to the whole crowd. This can be made clear.
Alternate translation: "Jesus responded to the crowd"
Unbelieving generation
"You unbelieving generation." Jesus calls the crowd this as he begins to respond to them.
how long will I have to stay with you? How long will I bear with you?
Jesus uses these questions to express his frustration. Both questions have the same meaning. They can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "Your unbelief tires me! I wonder how long I must bear with you."
bear with you
"endure you" or "put up with you"
Bring him to me
"Bring the boy to me"
Mark 9:20
spirit
This refers to the unclean spirit. See how you translated this in Mark 9:17.
convulsion
This is the violent shaking of a person's body that can occur when that person has no control over his body.
Mark 9:21
For how much time
"How long"
Since childhood
"Since he was a small child." It may be helpful to state this as a full sentence. Alternate translation: "He has been like this since he was a small child"
Mark 9:22
have pity
"have compassion"
Mark 9:23
'If you are able?'
Jesus repeated what the man had said to him. Alternate translation: "Do you say to me 'If you are able?'" or "Why do you say 'If you are able?'"
'If you are able?'
Jesus used this question to rebuke the man's doubt. It can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not say to me, 'If you are able.'" or "You ask me if I am able. Of course I am able."
All things are possible for the one who believes
"God can do anything for people who believe in him"
for the one
"for the person" or "for anyone"
believes
This refers to belief in God. Alternate translation: "believes in God"
Mark 9:24
Help my unbelief
The man is asking Jesus to help him overcome his unbelief and increase his faith. Alternate translation: "Help me when I do not believe" or "Help me have more faith"
Mark 9:25
the crowd running to them
This means that more people were running toward where Jesus was and that the crowd there was growing larger.
You mute and deaf spirit
The words "mute" and "deaf" can be explained. Alternate

translation: "You unclean spirit, you who are causing the boy to be unable to speak and unable to hear"
Mark 9:26
It cried out
"The unclean spirit cried out"
convulsed the boy greatly
"shook the boy violently"
came out
It is implied that the spirit came out of the boy. Alternate translation: "came out of the boy"
The boy looked like one who was dead
The boy's appearance is compared to that of a dead person. Alternate translation: "The boy appeared dead" or "The boy looked like a dead person"
so that many
"so that many people"
Mark 9:27
took him by the hand
This means that Jesus grasped the boy's hand with his own hand. Alternate translation: "grasped the boy by the hand"
lifted him up
"helped him get up"
Mark 9:28
privately
This means they were alone.
cast it out
"cast the unclean spirit out." This refers to casting the spirit out of the boy. Alternate translation: "cast the unclean spirit out of the boy"
Mark 9:29
This kind cannot be cast out except by prayer
The words "cannot" and "except" are both negative words. In some languages it is more natural to use a positive statement. Alternate translation: "This kind can be cast out only by prayer"
This kind
This describes unclean spirits. Alternate translation: "This kind of unclean spirit"
Mark 9:30
Connecting Statement:
After he heals the demon-possessed boy, Jesus and his disciples leave the house where they are staying. He takes time to teach his disciples alone.
They went out from there
"Jesus and his disciples left that region"
passed through
"traveled through" or "passed by"
Mark 9:31
for he was teaching his disciples
Jesus was teaching his disciples privately, away from the crowd. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "for he was teaching his disciples privately"
The Son of Man will be given over
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone will give the Son of Man over"
The Son of Man
Here Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man. This is an important title for Jesus. "I, the Son of Man,"
into the hands of men

Here "hands" is a metonym for control. Alternate translation: "into the control of men" or "so that men will be able to control him"

When he has been put to death, after three days he

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After they have put him to death and three days have passed, he"

Mark 9:32

they were afraid to ask him

They were afraid to ask Jesus what his statement meant. Alternate translation: "they were afraid to ask him what it meant"

Mark 9:33

Connecting Statement:

When they come to Capernaum, Jesus teaches his disciples about being humble servants.

they came to

"they arrived at." The word "they" refers to Jesus and his disciples.

were you discussing

"were you discussing with one another"

Mark 9:34

they were silent

They were silent because they were ashamed to tell Jesus what they had been discussing. Alternate translation: "they were silent because they were ashamed"

who was the greatest

Here "the greatest" refers to "the greatest" among the disciples. Alternate translation: "who was the greatest among them"

Mark 9:35

If anyone wants to be first, he must be last of all

Here the words "first" and "last" are opposites of one another. Jesus speaks of being the "most important" as being "first" and of being the "least important" as being "last." Alternate translation: "If anyone wants God to consider him to be the most important person of all, he must consider himself to be the least important of all"

of all ... of all

"of all people ... of all people"

Mark 9:36

in their midst

"among them." The word "their" refers to the crowd.

He took him in his arms

This means that he hugged the child or picked him up and placed him on his lap.

Mark 9:37

such a child

"a child like this"

in my name

This means to do something because of love for Jesus.

Alternate translation: "because he loves me" or "for my sake"

the one who sent me

This refers to God, who has sent him to earth. Alternate translation: "God, who has sent me"

Mark 9:38

John said to him

"John said to Jesus"

driving out demons

"sending away demons." This refers to casting demons out of people. Alternate translation: "driving demons out of people"

in your name

Here "name" is associated with Jesus's authority and power.

Alternate translation: "by the authority of your name" or

"by the power of your name"

he does not follow us

This means that he is not among their group of disciples.

Alternate translation: "he is not one of us" or "he does not walk with us"

Mark 9:39

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 9:40

is not against us

"is not opposing us"

is for us

It can be explained clearly what this means. Alternate

translation: "is trying to achieve the same goals that we are"

Mark 9:41

gives you a cup of water to drink in my name because you belong to Christ

Jesus speaks about giving someone a cup of water as an example of how one person may help another. This is a metaphor for helping someone in any way.

not lose

This negative sentence emphasizes the positive meaning. In some languages, it is more natural to use a positive statement. Alternate translation: "definitely receive"

Mark 9:42

millstone

a large, round stone used for grinding grain into flour

Mark 9:43

If your hand causes you to stumble

Here "hand" is a metonym for desiring to do something

sinful that you would do with your hand. Alternate translation: "If you want to do something sinful with one of your hands"

to enter into life maimed

"to be maimed and then to enter into life" or "to be maimed before entering into life"

to enter into life

Dying and then beginning to live eternally is spoken of as entering into life. Alternate translation: "to enter into eternal life" or "to die and begin to live forever"

maimed

missing a body part as a result of having it removed or being injured. Here it refers to missing a hand. Alternate translation: "without a hand" or "missing a hand"

into the unquenchable fire

"where the fire cannot be put out"

Mark 9:44

General Information:

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Mark 9:45

If your foot causes you to stumble

Here the word "foot" is a metonym for desiring to do

something sinful that you would do with your feet, such as going to a place you should not go. Alternate translation: "If you want to do something sinful with one of your feet" to enter into life lame
"to be lame and then to enter into life" or "to be lame before entering into life"

to enter into life

Dying and then beginning to live eternally is spoken of as entering into life. Alternate translation: "to enter into eternal life" or "to die and begin to live forever"

lame

"unable to walk easily." Here it refers not being able to walk well because of missing a foot. Alternate translation: "without a foot" or "missing a foot"

be thrown into hell

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for God to throw you into hell"

Mark 9:46

General Information:

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Mark 9:47

If your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out

Here the word "eye" is a metonym for either 1) desiring to sin by looking at something. Alternate translation: "If you want to do something sinful by looking at something, tear your eye out" or 2) Desiring to sin because of what you have looked at. Alternate translation: "If you want to do something sinful because of what you look at, tear your eye out"

to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes

This refers to the state of a person's physical body when he dies. A person does not take his physical body with him into eternity. Alternate translation: "to enter into the kingdom of God after having lived on earth with only one eye than to

have lived on earth with two eyes"

to be thrown into hell

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "for God to throw you into hell"

Mark 9:48

where their worm does not die

The meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "where worms that eat people there do not die"

Mark 9:49

everyone will be salted with fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will salt everyone with fire" or "Just as salt purifies a sacrifice, God will purify everyone by allowing them to suffer"

will be salted with fire

Here "fire" is a metaphor for suffering, and putting salt on people is a metaphor for purifying them. So "will be salted with fire" is a metaphor for being purified through suffering. Alternate translation: "will be made pure in the fire of suffering" or "will suffer in order to be purified as a sacrifice is purified with salt"

Mark 9:50

its saltiness

"its salty taste"

how can you make it salty again?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "you cannot make it salty again."

salty again

"taste salty again"

Have salt among yourselves

Jesus speaks of doing good things for one another as if good things were salt that people possess. Alternate translation: "Do good to each other, like salt adds flavor to food"

Chapter 10

Mark 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 10:7-8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Jesus's teaching about divorce

The Pharisees wanted to find a way to make Jesus say that it is good to break the law of Moses, so they asked him about divorce. Jesus tells how God originally designed marriage to show that the Pharisees taught wrongly about divorce.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Metaphors are pictures of visible objects that speakers use to explain invisible truths. When Jesus spoke of "the cup which I will drink," he was speaking of the pain he would suffer on the cross as if it were a bitter, poisonous liquid in a cup.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Jesus used a paradox when he said, "Whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant" ([Mark 10:43](#)).

Links:

[Mark 10:1 Notes](#)

Mark 10

10:1-12

Where was the area beyond the Jordan River?

[10:1]

Jesus left Capernaum to go to Judea. This was a place past the Jordan River. Judea was on the west side of the Jordan River. This was an area where Jews lived. Mark wrote about the area east of the Jordan river when he wrote about beyond the Jordan River. This was a place where Gentiles lived.

See: Gentile

See Map: Capernaum; Jordan River; Judea

How did the Pharisees test Jesus?

[10:2]

Mark wrote that the Pharisees tested Jesus. That is, they wanted to get him to say something that made people angry. It would make certain people angry if he said people could not get divorced. It would make certain other people angry if he said that people could get divorced.

See: Pharisees; Test; Divorce

What did Moses teach about divorce?

[10:3, 10:4]

Moses taught about divorce in the Law of Moses. The Pharisees thought that Moses said a man could divorce his wife. However, they did not think that a woman could divorce her husband. Some Pharisees taught that a man could only divorce his wife if she committed adultery or did evil things. Other Pharisees taught that any man could divorce his wife if he wanted to, even if she did not do anything wrong.

When a man wrote his wife a “certificate of divorce,” he divorced her and gave her something written that said she did not commit adultery. This would help her to marry another man.

See: Deuteronomy 24:1-4

See: Divorce; Pharisees; Law of Moses; Adultery

What did Jesus teach about divorce?

[10:5, 10:6, 10:7, 10:8, 10:9]

Jesus told the Pharisees what the Law of Moses actually said. Moses did not want people to get divorced because God did not want people to get divorced. Instead, Moses knew that some people had hard hearts. That is, they did not want to listen to God’s will about divorce. Moses allowed people to be divorced because of this. However, a certificate of divorce must be written.

Jesus told them about the marriage between Adam and Eve (see: Genesis 1:27; 2:24). A husband and wife became one flesh. That is, it was as if they shared one body. This could not be separated without hurting both the husband and the wife. Therefore, marriage was not simply a contract between two people. It was the joining together of two bodies.

Advice to translators: A contract is a written agreement between two people. They promised something to each other. If they did not do what they promised, they would promise to be punished in a certain way. When marriage is spoken about as a contract, it is written agreement they give to the government. They can easily end this agreement by giving the government another written agreement, that is, a divorce.

See: Divorce; Pharisees; Law of Moses; Sin; Will of God

10:13-16

Why did people want their children to have Jesus touch them?

[10:13]

The people brought their children to have Jesus touch them. They thought that if they did this, Jesus would bless the children. He did this by putting his hands on them and saying a blessing.

See: Bless (Blessing)

Why were the disciples angry with the people bringing their children to have Jesus touch them?

[10:13]

The disciples were angry with the people bringing their children to have Jesus touch them. Scholars think the disciples thought Jesus needed to be doing other things. Perhaps they thought that Jesus should be teaching adults instead.

See: Disciple

What did Jesus teach the disciples about the kingdom of God?

[10:14, 10:15]

Jesus told the disciples they were wrong for being angry with these people. Jesus wanted to have the little children come to him. This was because many adults rejected Jesus. They thought they knew more about the messiah than they did.

However, the children were willing to learn and did not reject Jesus.

After this, Jesus taught the disciples about the kingdom of God. If people wanted to have the kingdom of God, they needed to believe in Jesus the same way children believed in Jesus. That was because children often trusted someone completely, but adults often only trusted someone who has earned it.

See: Disciple; Messiah (Christ); Kingdom of God

10:17-31

What was inheriting eternal life?

[10:17]

This man spoke about having peace with God and living with him forever when he spoke about inheriting eternal life.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Heaven

How was someone good?

[10:17, 10:18]

Jesus spoke about someone who always did the right thing when he talked about someone who was “good.” Some scholars think because only God is good, that Jesus said that he is God also. The man did not understand what it meant to be “good” and to obey God perfectly.

What were these commandments?

[10:20]

Jesus talked about some of the 10 commandments in the Law of Moses.

See: Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5

See: Ten Commandments; Law of Moses

Why did Jesus want this man to sell everything he had?

[10:21]

The man called Jesus teacher. He thought that Jesus was just a teacher. He did not believe that Jesus was the messiah or that he was God. Jesus knew that the man wanted money more than anything else. He did not trust in God. He trusted in the things he had. Because of this, he rejected Jesus.

All people do not need to sell everything they have to be Christians. This was not a command for all people to follow. Jesus knew the man's money kept him from believing in Jesus.

See: Messiah (Christ)

What was treasure in heaven?

[10:21]

Jesus spoke about some rewards people will get after they die when he spoke about treasure in heaven.

See: Reward; Heaven

Can the rich enter the kingdom of God?

[10:23]

In ancient Israel, people thought that God blessed people who obeyed him. Therefore, God also blessed rich people. This was not what Jesus said. When people put their trust in themselves and their money they will not be able to enter into God's kingdom. Jesus used the metaphor of a camel. A camel would never fit through the eye of a needle, which is less than one millimeter. This made other people know how difficult it was for people to trust in Jesus when they had great riches and trusted in those riches instead of God.

See: Bless (Blessing); Kingdom of God; Metaphor

Advice to translators: Someone who has a lot of money is rich. They have riches.

What did Jesus want to teach the disciples?

[10:23, 10:24, 10:25, 10:27]

Here, Jesus wanted to teach his disciples that there was only one way to have peace with God and to enter into his kingdom. That was to trust in Jesus. People should not trust in anything or anyone else.

See: Disciple; Kingdom of God

How will people be given “a hundred times” as much as they left behind?

[10:30]

Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the many homes that would be opened for the servants of God. The brothers and sisters were those who believed in Jesus and became brothers and sisters in Christ. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about spiritual blessings that replaced the homes and families that were left behind. The blessings might be considered “a hundred times” better than what they left behind.

See: Family of God; Children of God; Spirit (Spiritual); Bless (Blessing)

10:32-45

Why were the disciples amazed and the people afraid?

[10:32]

Jesus went to Jerusalem knowing that he would die in Jerusalem. He taught this to people. The people were afraid that what he said was true and that he would be killed in Jerusalem. So they were amazed that he still wanted to go to Jerusalem if he was going to die.

See: Disciple

See Map: Jerusalem

What did Jesus tell the disciples would soon happen?

[10:33]

Jesus told the disciples that he was going to die and would be made alive again. That is, he will be resurrected.

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Who is the Son of Man?

[10:33]

See: Son of Man

Why will the chief priests and scribes give Jesus over to the Gentiles?

[10:33]

At this time, the Jews were not able to kill a criminal. Only their Roman leaders could do this. They were Gentiles. Jesus wanted to say that the Jewish leaders would get the Gentile leaders to kill Jesus.

See: Chief Priest; Scribe; Gentile

Why did James and John want to sit at Jesus' right and left hand?

[10:37]

James and John wanted to sit at Jesus' right and left hand. That is, they wanted to sit next to him in heaven. To be seated at the right and left hand of the throne were places of honor. They wanted to be honored.

See: Heaven; Throne

What will happen to Jesus?

[10:38]

Jesus spoke about drinking the cup he was about to drink and enduring the baptism he was about to endure. These were metaphors. He was asking them if they would suffer and die to obey him. If they did this, it would be a type of offering to God. Eventually, James would be killed for believing in Jesus (see: Acts 12:2).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Metaphor; Offer (Offering)

Who will sit at Jesus' right and left side in heaven?

[10:40]

Jesus will sit at God the Father's right hand in heaven. Therefore, God is at Jesus' left hand side in heaven. However, God the Father is the one who decides who will sit at the right hand of Jesus (see: Matthew 20:23).

See: God the Father; Heaven

Why were the disciples angry with James and John?

[10:41]

Some scholars think the other disciples were angry with James and John because they asked Jesus to honor them in a special way. Other scholars think the other disciples were jealous or afraid James and John might be honored over them.

See: Disciple

Who will be honored in heaven?

[10:43]

Jesus taught the disciples that certain people will be honored in heaven. Just as Jesus came to serve, so Christians who serve other people will be honored in heaven.

See: Disciple; Heaven

How did Jesus give his life as a ransom for many?

[10:45]

Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many. That is, he died so that people would be at peace with God. Mark spoke about Jesus dying as a price to be paid for their sin. By dying, Jesus set them free from being slaves to their own sinful desires.

See: Atone (Atonement); Sin

10:46-52

Where is Jericho?

[10:46]

See Map: Jericho

Who was Jesus the Nazarene?

[10:47]

Jesus was Jesus the Nazarene. He was Jesus from Nazareth.

See Map: Nazareth

How was Jesus the Son of David?

[10:47]

The blind man called Jesus the "Son of David." David was one of Jesus' ancestors. He called him this because the messiah was to be one of David's descendants. He was to fulfill the covenant God made with David.

See: Son of David; Messiah (Christ); Covenant with David

Why did the people rebuke the blind man?

[10:48]

People told the blind man that he was wrong. Some scholars think the people wanted to get to Jerusalem quickly, so they

did not want Jesus to stop when the blind man cried out. Other scholars think the people were not ready to hear that Jesus is the Son of David, that is, the Messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ)

Why did the man call Jesus rabbi?

[10:51]

In ancient Israel, people called certain teachers "rabbi." People followed the teacher, obeyed the things he taught, and called him rabbi. The Greek word can also be used to call someone "master."

Why was this man healed?

[10:52]

Jesus healed this man because he believed in Jesus.

Mark 10:1

Connecting Statement:

After Jesus and his disciples leave Capernaum, Jesus reminds the Pharisees, as well as his disciples, what God really expects in marriage and divorce.

Jesus left that place

Jesus's disciples were traveling with him. They were leaving Capernaum. Alternate translation: "Jesus and his disciples left Capernaum"

and to the area beyond the Jordan River

"and to the land on the other side of the Jordan River" or "and to the area east of the Jordan River"

He was teaching them again

The word "them" refers to the crowds.

he was accustomed to do

"was his custom" or "he usually did"

Mark 10:2

General Information:

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Mark 10:3

What did Moses command you

Moses gave the law to their ancestors, which they now were also supposed to follow. Alternate translation: "What did Moses command your ancestors about this"

Mark 10:4

a certificate of divorce

This was a paper saying that the woman was no longer his wife.

Mark 10:5

"It was because ... this law," Jesus said to them.

In some languages speakers do not interrupt a quote to say who is speaking. Rather they say who is speaking at the beginning or end of the complete quote. Alternate translation: "Jesus said to them, 'It was because ... this law.'"

because of your hard hearts that he wrote you this law

Long before this time, Moses wrote this law for the Jews and their descendants because they had hard hearts. The Jews of Jesus's time also had hard hearts, so Jesus included them by using the words "your" and "you." Alternate translation: "because your ancestors had hard hearts like yours that he wrote this law"

your hard hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's inner being or mind. The phrase "hard hearts" is a metaphor for "stubbornness." Alternate translation: "your stubbornness"

Mark 10:6

God made them

"God made people"

Mark 10:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to quote what God said in the book of Genesis.

For this reason

"Therefore" or "Because of this"

be united to his wife

"join with his wife"

Mark 10:8

and the two ... one flesh

Jesus finishes quoting what God said in the book of Genesis. they are no longer two, but one flesh

This is a metaphor to illustrate their close union as husband and wife. Alternate translation: "the two people are like one person" or "they are no longer two, but together they are one body"

Mark 10:9

Therefore what God has joined together, let no man tear apart

The phrase "what God has joined together" refers to any married couple. Alternate translation: "Therefore since God has joined together husband and wife, let no one tear them apart"

Mark 10:10

When they were

"When Jesus and his disciples were"

were in the house

Jesus's disciples were speaking to him privately. Alternate translation: were alone in the house"

asked him again about this

The word "this" refers to the conversation that Jesus had just had with the Pharisees about divorce.

Mark 10:11

Whoever

"Anyone who"

commits adultery against her

Here "her" refers to the first woman he was married to.

Mark 10:12

she commits adultery

In this situation she commits adultery against her previous husband. Alternate translation: "she commits adultery against him" or "she commits adultery against the first man"

Mark 10:13

Connecting Statement:

When the disciples rebuke the people for bringing their little children to Jesus, he blesses the children and reminds the disciples that people must be as humble as a child to enter the kingdom of God.

Then they brought
 "Now people were bringing." This is the next event in the story.
 he might touch them
 This means that Jesus would touch them with his hands and bless them. Alternate translation: "he might touch them with his hands and bless them" or "he might lay his hands on them and bless them"
 rebuked them
 "rebuked the people"
 Mark 10:14
 Jesus noticed it
 The word "it" refers to the disciples rebuking the people who were bringing the children to Jesus.
 was angry
 Jesus was angry with the disciples.
 Permit the little children to come to me, and do not forbid them
 These two clauses have similar meanings, repeated for emphasis. In some languages it is more natural to emphasize this in another way. Alternate translation: "Be sure to allow the little children to come to me"
 do not forbid
 "allow"
 for the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like them
 The kingdom belonging to people represents the kingdom including them. Alternate translation: "the kingdom of God includes people who are like them" or "because only people like them are members of the kingdom of God"
 Mark 10:15
 whoever will not receive ... child will definitely not enter it
 "if anyone will not receive ... child, he will definitely not enter it"
 as a little child
 Jesus is comparing how people must receive the kingdom of God to how little children would receive it. Alternate translation: "in the same manner as a little child would"
 will not receive the kingdom of God
 "will not accept God as their king"
 definitely not enter it
 The word "it" refers to the kingdom of God.
 Mark 10:16
 he took the children into his arms
 "he hugged the children"
 Mark 10:17
 to inherit eternal life
 Here the man speaks of "receiving" as if it were "inheriting." This metaphor is used to emphasize the importance of receiving. Also, "inherit" here does not mean that someone has to die first. Alternate translation: to receive eternal life"
 Mark 10:18
 Why do you call me good?
 Jesus asks this question to remind the man that no man is good the way God is good. Alternate translation: "You do not understand what you are saying when you call me good."
 No one is good except God alone
 This double negative emphasizes that God is the only one who is good. Alternate translation: "The only one who is

good is God"
 Mark 10:19
 do not testify falsely
 "do not testify falsely against anyone" or "do not lie about someone in court"
 Mark 10:20
 General Information:
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 Mark 10:21
 One thing you lack
 "There is one thing you are missing." Here "lack" is a metaphor for needing to do something. Alternate translation: "One thing you need to do" or "There is one thing you have not yet done" or
 give it to the poor
 Here the word "it" refers to the things he sells and is a metonym for the money he receives when he sells them. Alternate translation: "give the money to the poor"
 the poor
 This refers to poor people. Alternate translation: "poor people"
 treasure
 wealth, valuable things
 Mark 10:22
 had many possessions
 "owned many things"
 Mark 10:23
 How difficult it is
 "It is very difficult"
 Mark 10:24
 Jesus said to them again
 "Jesus said to his disciples again"
 Children, how
 "My children, how." Jesus is teaching them as a father would teach his children. Alternate translation: "My friends, how"
 how hard it is
 "it is very hard"
 Mark 10:25
 It is easier for a camel ... kingdom of God
 It is impossible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Jesus uses an exaggeration to emphasize how very difficult it is for rich people to get into the kingdom of God.
 It is easier for a camel
 This speaks of an impossible situation. If you cannot state this in this way in your language, you can use the word "would." Alternate translation: "It would be easier for a camel"
 the eye of a needle
 Here "the eye" refers to the small hole in one end of a sewing needle. The thread goes through this hole and ties to the needle. Alternate translation: "the hole of a needle"
 Mark 10:26
 They were
 "The disciples were"
 Then who can be saved?
 This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "If that is so, then no one will be saved!"
 Mark 10:27

With people it is impossible, but not with God

The understood information may be supplied. Alternate translation: "It is impossible for people to save themselves, but God can save them"

Mark 10:28

Look, we have left everything and have followed you

Here the word "Look" is used to draw attention to the words that come next. Similar emphasis can be expressed in other ways. Alternate translation: "We have left everything and have followed you"

have left everything

"have left everything behind"

Mark 10:29

Truly I say to you, there is no one

This sentence ends in verse 30. It can be stated in positive form. If so, in verse 30, "who will not receive" would become "will receive." Alternate translation: "Truly I say to you, everyone"

or lands

"or plots of ground" or "or the land that he owns"

for my sake

"for my cause" or "for me"

for the gospel

"to proclaim the gospel"

Mark 10:30

who will not receive

This sentence began in verse 29. If you the sentence was stated in positive form in verse 29, verse 30 would be changed to positive form also. Alternate translation: "will receive"

this age

"the world as you know it" or "this present age"

brothers and sisters and mothers and children

Like the list in verse 29, this describes the family in general.

The word "fathers" is missing in verse 30, but it does not significantly change the meaning.

with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life

This can be reworded so that the ideas in the abstract noun "persecution" are expressed with the verb "persecute."

Because the sentence is so long and complicated, "will receive" can be repeated. Alternate translation: "and even though people persecute them, in the world to come, they will receive eternal life"

in the world to come

"in the future world" or "in the future"

Mark 10:31

are first will be last, and the last first

Here the words "first" and "last" are opposites of one another. Jesus speaks of being the "important" as being "first" and of being the "unimportant" as being "last." Alternate translation: "are important will be unimportant, and those who are unimportant will be important"

the last first

The phrase "the last" refers to people who are "last." Also, the understood verb in this clause may be supplied.

Alternate translation: "those who are last will be first"

Mark 10:32

They were on the road ... and Jesus was going ahead of them

"Jesus and his disciples were walking on the road ... and

Jesus was in front of his disciples"

those who were following behind

"those who were following behind them." Some people were walking behind Jesus and his disciples.

Mark 10:33

See

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

the Son of Man will

Jesus is speaking about himself. This can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will"

the Son of Man will be given over to

The words "given over" mean "betrayed" or "put into the power of." This can be stated in active form. Alternate

translation: "someone will hand the Son of Man to" or "they will hand the Son of Man over to"

They will condemn

The word "They" refers to the chief priests and the scribes. give him over to the Gentiles

"betray him to the Gentiles" or "put him under the control of the Gentiles"

Mark 10:34

They will mock

"People will mock"

put him to death

"kill him"

he will rise

This refers to rising from the dead. Alternate translation:

"he will rise from being dead"

Mark 10:35

we ... us

These words refer only to James and John.

Mark 10:36

General Information:

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Mark 10:37

in your glory

"when you are glorified." The phrase "in your glory" refers to when Jesus is glorified and rules over his kingdom.

Alternate translation: "when you rule in your kingdom"

Mark 10:38

You do not know

"You do not understand"

drink the cup which I will drink

Here "cup" refers to what Jesus must suffer. Suffering is often referred to as drinking from a cup. Alternate

translation: "drink the cup of suffering that I will drink" or "drink from the cup of suffering that I will drink from"

be baptized with the baptism with which I will be baptized

Here "baptism" and being baptized represent suffering. Just as water covers a person during baptism, suffering will overwhelm Jesus. Alternate translation: "endure the baptism of suffering which I will suffer"

Mark 10:39

We are able

They respond this way, meaning that they are able to drink the same cup and endure the same baptism.

you will drink

"you will drink as well"

Mark 10:40

But who is to sit at my right hand or at my left hand is not mine to give
"But I am not the one who allows people to sit at my right hand or my left hand"

but it is for those for whom it has been prepared

"but those places are for those for whom they have been prepared." The word "it" refers to the places to his right hand and to his left hand.

it has been prepared

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has prepared it" or "God has prepared them"

Mark 10:41

heard about this

The word "this" refers to James and John asking to sit at Jesus's right and left hands.

Mark 10:42

Jesus called them

"Jesus called his disciples"

those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) people in general consider these people the rulers of the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "those whom people consider to be the rulers of the Gentiles" or 2) the Gentiles consider these people their rulers. Alternate translation: "those whom the Gentiles think of as their rulers"

dominate

have control or power over

exercise authority

"flaunt their authority." This means that they show or use their authority in an overbearing way.

Mark 10:43

But it is not this way among you

This refers back to the previous verse about the Gentile rulers. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "But do not be like them"

become great

"be highly respected"

Mark 10:44

to be first

This is a metaphor for being the most important. Alternate translation: "to be the most important"

Mark 10:45

For the Son of Man did not come to be served

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:

"For the Son of Man did not come to have people serve him"

to be served, but to serve

"to be served by people, but to serve people"

for many

"for many people"

Mark 10:46

Connecting Statement:

As Jesus and his disciples continue walking toward Jerusalem, Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus, who then walks with them.

the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar

"a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus."

Bartimaeus is the name of a man. Timaeus is his father's name.

Mark 10:47

When he heard that it was Jesus

Bartimaeus heard people saying that it was Jesus. Alternate

translation: "When he heard people saying that it was Jesus"

Son of David

Jesus is called the Son of David because he is a descendant of King David. Alternate translation: "You who are the Messiah descended from King David"

Mark 10:48

Many rebuked

"Many people rebuked"

all the more

"even more"

Mark 10:49

commanded him to be called.

This can be translated in active form or as a direct quote.

Alternate translation: "commanded others to call him." or

"commanded them, 'Call him to come over here.'"

They called

The word "They" refers to the crowd.

Be brave

"Have courage" or "Do not be afraid"

He is calling for you

"Jesus is calling for you"

Mark 10:50

sprang up

"jumped up"

Mark 10:51

answered him

"answered the blind man"

to receive my sight

"to be able to see"

Mark 10:52

Your faith has healed you

This phrase is written this way to place emphasis on the

man's faith. Jesus heals the man because he believes that

Jesus can heal him. This can be made explicit. Alternate

translation: "I am healing you because you have believed in me"

he followed him

"he followed Jesus"

Chapter 11

Mark 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 11:9-10, 17, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal. In this way he was like a king who came into a city after he had won an important battle. Also, the kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on donkeys. Other kings rode on horses. So Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel and that he was not like other kings.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about this event. Matthew and Mark wrote that the disciples brought Jesus a donkey. John wrote that Jesus found a donkey. Luke wrote that they brought him a colt. Only Matthew wrote that there were both a donkey and a colt. No one knows for sure whether Jesus rode the donkey or the colt. It is best to translate each of these accounts as it appears in the ULB without trying to make them all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 21:1-7](#) and [Mark 11:1-7](#) and [Luke 19:29-36](#) and [John 12:14-15](#))

Links:

[Mark 11:1 Notes](#)

Mark 11

11:1-10

Where were Bethany, Bethpage, and the Mount of Olives?

[11:1]

See Map: Bethany; Bethpage; Mount of Olives

How did Jesus enter into Jerusalem?

[11:2]

Jesus entered Jerusalem in the same way a king returned home after a great victory in a war. Often, they rode on horses or in a chariot. Jesus entered Jerusalem on a colt because he told people that he was the messiah and the king of the Jews (see: Zechariah 9:9). He also had a great victory. He lived the perfect life and was about to die so that people could have peace with God.

See: Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19

See: Messiah (Christ); Atonement (Atonement); Chariot

What was a colt?

[11:2]

A colt was a young donkey. This colt was with its mother, a donkey (see: Matthew 21:2). No one had ever ridden this colt. In the Old Testament, an animal that had never been used had special value for religious purposes (see: Numbers 19:2; Deuteronomy 21:3; 1 Samuel 6:7).

Why did Jesus say, “the Lord has need of it”?

[11:3]

Some scholars think that Jesus said, “the Lord has need of it” to say that God needed it for God’s purpose. Other scholars think Jesus said this because he was calling himself Lord. That is, he was calling himself God. Still other scholars think the owner of the colt was traveling with Jesus, and Jesus said the owner had need of the colt.

See: Jesus is God

Why did the disciples put their cloaks on the colt?

[11:7]

The disciples put their cloaks on the colt to make it easier for Jesus to ride on it. A cloak was a coat. It was a piece of clothing used to make someone warm. It was put on over other clothes. This coat covered the whole body with a single piece of thick cloth.

See: Disciple

Why did the people put things on the road?

[11:8]

The road on which Jesus rode the colt was dirty. The people honored Jesus by putting things on the road so that he would not get dirty. In ancient times, people did this to welcome a new king (see: 2 Kings 9:13).

Why did the people shout “hosanna”?

[11:9]

The people shouted “Hosanna” because they wanted God to save them. They said that Jesus came “in the name of the Lord.” That is, God gave Jesus power and permission to serve him. They believed Jesus was the messiah who came to begin the kingdom promised to David.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Heaven; Bless (Blessing); Messiah (Christ); Covenant with David

11:11-26

Why did Jesus look around the temple?

[11:11]

Jesus went to Jerusalem. He walked around the temple. Scholars think Jesus looked at the things happening in the temple. Many forbidden things were happening. They think Jesus planned what he would do the next day.

See: Temple

See Map: Jerusalem

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree?

[11:13, 11:14]

Jesus saw a fig tree. It did not have fruit. He cursed it. He did not do this because he was hungry or angry. It was a metaphor. In the same way a fig tree produced figs, so God wanted Israel to produce fruit. That is, he wanted Israel to serve and obey him. However, they did not do this. Therefore, they made themselves useless to God.

See: Curse; Fruit (Metaphor); Metaphor

Why did Jesus make people leave the temple?

[11:15]

Jesus made certain people leave the temple. He made people who sold things in the temple leave. He made people who bought things in the temple leave. He did not want people there to make money. He only wanted people to go to the temple to worship God. People from every nation were to go to the temple to pray (see: Isaiah 56:7). However, the Jews did not want other people to go to the temple to worship God. Instead, they used the area God made for the Gentiles worship God as a market to make money.

Jesus said the temple was made into a “den of robbers.” That is, a place where people who robbed other people lived (see: Jeremiah 7:11). Some scholars think Jesus quoted Jeremiah so everyone would know that the people did not honor the temple.

Before, Jesus also made people leave the temple earlier (see: John 2:13-22).

See: Temple; Gentile

Why did the chief priests and scribes want to kill Jesus?

[11:18]

The chief priests and scribes wanted to kill Jesus because of what he did. Some scholars think the chief priests and the scribes made money from the things sold in the temple. Jesus stopped them from making money in the temple. Other scholars think Jesus made others know that he was greater than the high priest and he ruled the temple by doing the things he did there.

See: Temple; High Priest; Chief Priest; Scribe

Why did Peter call Jesus “rabbi”?

[11:21]

See: Mark 9:5

Why did Jesus speak about a mountain?

[11:23]

Jesus spoke about a mountain to teach his disciples. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say they could do great things if they trusted in God. They were not actually going to move a mountain. This was hyperbole. However, God did many miracles through these disciples after Jesus was made alive again. God would do things that no person could ever do if they asked God for something in prayer that God wanted to happen. Jesus wanted them to trust in God when they prayed. Jesus also wanted the disciples to forgive other people. God forgave their sins. So they should forgive other people. Some scholars think Jesus told the disciples to forgive others because God heard their prayers. They think there is a kind of separation between God and the person praying when they do not forgive other people.

See: Disciple; Metaphor; Miracle; Hyperbole; Will of God; Sin

Did Mark write the words in 11:26?

[11:26]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have the words in 11:26. Fewer ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words in 11:26. Some English Bibles were translated from a copy of the Greek New Testament that had 11:26. However, scholars think Mark did not write these words.

11:27-33

Who were the elders?

[11:27]

The elders were the Jewish leaders who were older men. Why did the leaders want to know who gave Jesus permission to do the things he did?

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus who gave him permission to do the things he did. They did not think God gave him permission to do the things he did. They thought Satan gave him permission to do these things. Some scholars think the leaders really wanted to have Jesus say that God sent him. They thought that the Law of Moses said they could kill him if he did this. However, God sent Jesus.

See: Satan (The Devil); Law of Moses

Why did Jesus ask the leaders about the baptism of John?

[11:29, 11:30]

Jesus asked the leaders about who gave John the Baptist permission to do the things he did. The people in Israel loved John the Baptist. They thought God sent him. John the Baptist said that Jesus was the messiah. The leaders were afraid of

saying that God sent John because they would also have to say that God sent Jesus. However, the people would be angry with these leaders and reject them if they said that God did not send John.
See: Baptize (Baptism); Messiah (Christ)

Mark 11:1

Now as they came to Jerusalem, they were close to Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives

"When Jesus and his disciples came near to Jerusalem, they came to Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives" They have come to Bethphage and Bethany in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

Bethphage

This is the name of a village.

Mark 11:2

opposite us

"ahead of us"

a colt

This refers to a young donkey that is large enough to carry a man.

that has never been ridden

This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "that no one has ever ridden"

Mark 11:3

Why are you doing this

It can be written clearly what the word "this" refers to.

Alternate translation: "Why are you untying and taking the colt"

has need of it

"needs it"

will immediately send it back here

Jesus will send it back promptly when he is finished using it. Alternate translation: "will immediately send it back when he no longer needs it"

Mark 11:4

They went

"The two disciples went"

colt

This refers to a young donkey that is large enough to carry a man. See how you translated this in Mark 11:2.

Mark 11:5

What are you doing, untying that colt?

The people wanted to know why the two men were untying the colt. They may have been concerned that the two men were doing something they should not have been doing. Alternate translation: "Why are you untying that colt?"

Mark 11:6

They spoke

"They responded"

as Jesus told them

"as Jesus had told them to respond." This refers to how Jesus had told them to respond to people's questions about taking the colt.

let them go their way

This means that they allowed them to continue doing what they were doing. Alternate translation: "let them take the donkey with them"

Mark 11:7

They brought the colt to Jesus

The word "They" refers to the two disciples.

threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it

"laid their cloaks on its back and Jesus sat on it." It is easier to ride a colt or a horse when there is a blanket or something similar on its back. In this case, the disciples put their cloaks on it.

cloaks

"coats" or "robes"

Mark 11:8

Many people spread their garments on the road

It was a tradition to lay garments on the road in front of important people to honor them. This can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "Many people spread their garments on the road to honor him"

others spread branches they had cut from the fields

It was a tradition to lay palm branches on the road in front of important people to honor them. Alternate translation: "others spread on the road branches that they had cut from the fields to honor him"

Mark 11:9

who followed

"who followed him"

Hosanna

This word means "save us," but people also shouted it joyfully when they wanted to praise God. You can translate it according to how it was used, or you can write "Hosanna" using your language's way of spelling that word. Alternate translation: "Praise God"

Blessed is the one

This is referring to Jesus. This can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "Blessed are you, the one"

in the name of the Lord

This is a metonym for the Lord's authority. Alternate translation: "with the authority of the Lord"

Blessed is

"May God bless"

Mark 11:10

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David

"Blessed is our father David's coming kingdom." This refers to Jesus coming and ruling as king. The word "blessed" can be translated as an active verb. Alternate translation: "Blessed be the coming of your kingdom" or "May God bless you as you rule your coming kingdom"

of our father David

Here David's descendant who will rule is referred to as David himself. Alternate translation: "of the greatest descendant of our father David" or "that David's greatest descendant will rule"

Hosanna in the highest

Possible meanings are 1) "Praise God who is in heaven" or 2) "Let those who are in heaven shout 'Hosanna'."

the highest

Here heaven is spoken of as "the highest." Alternate translation: "the highest heaven" or "heaven"

Mark 11:11

the time being late

"because it was late in the day"
 he went out to Bethany with the twelve
 "he and his twelve disciples left Jerusalem and went to Bethany"
 Mark 11:12
 he was hungry
 "Jesus was hungry"
 Mark 11:13
 Connecting Statement:
 This happens while Jesus and his disciples are walking to Jerusalem.
 if he could find any fruit on it
 "if there was any fruit on it"
 he found nothing but leaves
 This means that he did not find any figs. Alternate translation: "he found only leaves and no figs on the tree" the season
 "the time of year"
 Mark 11:14
 He said to it, "No one will ever eat fruit from you again
 Jesus speaks to the fig tree and curses it. He speaks to it so that his disciples hear him.
 his disciples heard it
 The word "it" refers to what Jesus said.
 Mark 11:15
 They came
 "Jesus and his disciples came"
 began to cast out the sellers and the buyers in the temple
 Jesus is driving these people out of the temple. This can be written clearly. Alternate translation: "began to drive the sellers and buyers out of the temple"
 the sellers and the buyers
 "the people who were buying and selling"
 Mark 11:16
 to carry anything through the temple that could be sold
 "to carry anything that could be sold through the temple"
 Mark 11:17
 General Information:
 God had said earlier in his word, through the prophet Isaiah, that his temple would be a house of prayer for all the nations.
 Is it not written, 'My house will be called ... the nations'?
 Jesus is rebuking the Jewish leaders for their misuse of the temple. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is written in the scriptures that God said, 'I want my house to be called a house where people from all nations may pray.'"
 But you have made it a den of robbers
 Jesus compares the people to robbers and the temple to a robbers' den. Alternate translation: "But you are like robbers who have made my house into a robbers' den"
 a den of robbers
 "a cave where robbers hide"
 Mark 11:18
 they looked for a way
 "they sought a way" or "they tried to find a way"
 to destroy him
 "to kill him"
 Mark 11:19

When evening came
 "In the evening"
 they left the city
 "Jesus and his disciples left the city"
 Mark 11:20
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus uses the example of the fig tree to remind the disciples to have faith in God.
 walked by
 "were walking along the road"
 they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots
 Translate this statement to clarify that the tree died.
 Alternate translation: "they saw that the fig tree had withered away down to its roots and died"
 withered away
 "dried up"
 Mark 11:21
 Peter remembered
 It may be helpful to state what Peter remembered.
 Alternate translation: "Peter remembered what Jesus had said to the fig tree"
 Mark 11:22
 Jesus answered them
 "Jesus replied to his disciples"
 Mark 11:23
 Truly I say to you
 "I tell you the truth." This phrase adds emphasis to what Jesus says next.
 if he does not doubt in his heart but believes
 Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "if he truly believes in his heart" or "if he does not doubt but believes"
 God will do
 "God will make happen"
 Mark 11:24
 Therefore I say to you
 "So I tell you"
 it will be yours
 It is understood that this will happen because God will provide what you ask for. This can be stated clearly.
 Alternate translation: "God will give it to you"
 Mark 11:25
 When you stand and pray
 It is common in Hebrew culture to stand when praying to God. Alternate translation: "When you pray"
 whatever you have against anyone
 "whatever grudge you have against anyone." Here the word "whatever" refers to any grudge you hold against someone for sinning against you or any anger you have against someone.
 Mark 11:26
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 Mark 11:27
 Connecting Statement:
 The next day when Jesus returns to temple, he gives the chief priests, scribes, and elders an answer to their question about his casting the money changers out of the temple area, by asking them a question that they were not

willing to answer.

They came to

"Jesus and his disciples came to"

Jesus was walking in the temple

This means that Jesus was walking around inside of the temple; he was not walking into the temple.

Mark 11:28

They said to him

The word "They" refers to the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.

By what authority do you do these things, and who gave you the authority to do them?

Possible meanings: 1) Both of these questions have the same meaning and are asked together to strongly question Jesus's authority and so can be combined. Alternate translation: "Who gave you authority to do these things?" 2) They are two separate questions, the first asking about the nature of the authority and the second about who gave it to him.

you do these things

The words "these things" refer to Jesus turning over the sellers' tables in the temple and speaking against what the chief priests and scribes taught. Alternate translation:

"things like those you did here yesterday"

Mark 11:29

Tell me

"Answer me"

Mark 11:30

The baptism of John

"The baptism that John performed"

was it from heaven or from men

"was it authorized by heaven or by men"

from heaven

Here "heaven" refers to God. Alternate translation: "from

God"

from men

"from people"

Mark 11:31

If we say, 'From heaven,'

This refers to the source of the baptism of John. Alternate translation: "If we say, 'It was from heaven,'"

From heaven

Here "heaven" refers to God. See how you translated this in [Mark 11:30]

not believe him

The word "him" refers to John the Baptist.

Mark 11:32

But if we say, 'From men,'

The religious leaders imply that they will suffer from the people if they give this answer. This refers to the source of the baptism of John. Alternate translation: "But if we say, 'The baptism of John was from men,'" or "But if we say, 'From men,' that would not be good." or "But we do not want to say that it was from men."

From men

"It came from a person"

They were afraid of the people

The author, Mark, explains why the religious leaders did not want to say that John's baptism was from men. This can be stated clearly. "They said this to each other because they were afraid of the people" or "They did not want to say that John's baptism was from men because they were afraid of the people"

Mark 11:33

We do not know

This refers to the baptism of John. This understood information may be supplied. Alternate translation: "We do not know where the baptism of John came from"

Chapter 12

Mark 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 12:10-11, 36, which is from the Old Testament.

Links:

[Mark 12:1 Notes](#)

Mark 12

12:1-6

What was a parable?

[12:1]

Jesus used a parable about a vineyard. He did this to talk about Israel. In the same way a farmer makes and protects a vineyard, so God made and protects the nation of Israel. God gave certain leaders permission to care for Israel. He sent prophets to Israel to help the Israelites obey God. However, they did not do what these prophets said to do. Finally, God sent Jesus. That is, he sent his son. Then the Jewish leaders had him killed.

See: Parable; Prophet; Son of God

What was a vineyard?

[12:1]

A vineyard was a place where people grew grapes. The man put up plants around the field to protect it from animals. He also built a watchtower. This is a tall tower where people could see far away.

At this time, scholars think the vineyard was owned by a Gentile who did not live in this area. Instead, he had made people pay him money to use his land.

See: Wine (Winepress); Gentile

See: Isaiah 5:1-2

Why did the owner of the vineyard send servants?

[12:2]

The owner of the vineyard sent his servants to get what they promised to the owner for using his land. They promised him a certain part of what they grew.

Why did the men beat the servants?

[12:3]

These men did not want to give the servant what they promised to give to the owner of the land. Therefore, they beat the servants. They wanted the owner to know they were not going to give him anything and that he should not send any more servants.

12:7-12

What was an inheritance?

[12:7]

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

What scripture said these words?

[12:10]

See: Psalm 118:22-23

Why did the Jewish leaders want to arrest Jesus?

[12:12]

The Jewish leaders wanted to arrest Jesus after they heard what he said. That is, they wanted to catch him so they could kill him. This is because they knew he was speaking about them. Jesus knew the Jewish leaders wanted to kill him.

Why were the Jewish leaders afraid of the crowd?

[12:12]

Mark wrote that the Jewish leaders did not try to arrest Jesus. They feared all the people there. Many people thought Jesus was a great man. However, Mark wanted people to know that the Jewish leaders feared the people more than they feared God. They thought they were obeying God by killing Jesus. However, they were not obeying God.

12:13-17

What was a pharisee?

[12:13]

See: Pharisees

What was a Herodian?

[12:13]

A Herodian was someone who served King Herod. He was the leader of the Jews and served the Romans.

How did the Jewish leaders try to trap Jesus?

[12:13]

The Jewish leaders tried to trap Jesus. That is, they tried to get Jesus to say something that would cause someone to be angry with him. They wanted Jesus to speak against the leader of the Roman Empire. Or they wanted Jesus to say something that made the Jew.

The Jewish leaders said several things to Jesus.

The Jewish leaders did not believe the things Jesus said. However, they said he spoke truth when they really thought he lied. The Jewish leaders said Jesus did not care what anyone thinks. That is, Jesus will say true things. He will not stop saying these things because someone does not want him to say these things. He did not say things so that people would like him. Jesus does not show partiality. That is, Jesus did not favor one person over another. Jesus taught the way of God. That is, he taught them about the way God wanted them to live. The Jewish leaders did not believe this. They would have obeyed Jesus if they had believed this.

Because of this, Jesus said the Jewish leaders were hypocrites. That is, they said one thing, but they did not believe it. Or they said something and did not do it.

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus about paying taxes. The Romans made the Jews pay taxes to them every year. The Jews had to pay the Romans to rule them. The Jews did not like having to pay this tax. The Jews would have been angry if Jesus said that the Jews should pay this tax to the Romans. The Romans would be angry if Jesus said that the Jews should not pay this tax to the Romans.

What did Jesus say to the Jewish leaders?

[12:15]

Jesus told the Jewish leaders to give him a Roman coin. This coin had the face of the Roman emperor on it. This man was called Caesar. The coin also had certain words on it. These words said that Caesar was God.

Jesus said that the Jews needed to obey Caesar, but they also needed to obey God more. Jesus wanted people to know that Caesar was not God and that God gave permission to Caesar to rule. He also wanted people to know that he did not think that Caesar was God.

See: Romans 13:1-7

What was a denarius?

[12:15]

See: Denarius

12:18-27

What did the Sadducees think happened when people died?

[12:18]

The Sadducees did not think that people would be resurrected. That is, they did not think people would go to heaven or hell when they died. They did not believe in many things taught in the Bible.

See: Sadducees; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Heaven; Hell

Why did the Sadducees ask Jesus this question?

[12:19, 12:20, 12:21, 12:22, 12:23]

The Law of Moses taught the people of Israel how to care for a woman whose husband died. In ancient Israel, a woman became very poor when her husband died and she had no children. Therefore, the Law of Moses said that the husband's brother would marry her. He would care for her. They had children who would inherit the dead husband's land.

The Sadducees tried to trap Jesus by asking this question. They wanted Jesus to say something that would make people angry. They thought their question proved that no one would be resurrected.

See: Law of Moses; Sadducees; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Resurrect (Resurrection)

How did Jesus answer the Sadducees?

[12:24, 12:25]

Jesus told the Sadducees that they thought the wrong things. They did not know the Scriptures because they only believed God gave Israel the first five books of the Old Testament. They did not understand many things about God. Jesus told them that people were married on the earth. God wanted them to do this. They had children and helped each other. However, in heaven, people will worship God. They do not need to be married. Therefore, people will be like the angels who do not get married.

See: Sadducees; Heaven; Worship; Angel

Why did Jesus speak about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

[12:26]

The Sadducees believed that God only gave Israel the first five books of the Old Testament. Here, Jesus said the same thing God said to Moses. When God said these words, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead. However, God spoke about them in the same way he would speak about someone who is alive. The Sadducees did not understand the parts of the Bible in which they believed.

See: Exodus 3:6

12:28-34

Why did the scribe ask Jesus about the greatest commandment?

[12:28]

The scribe heard what Jesus said to the Sadducees. Therefore, he wanted to know how Jesus would answer his question. At this time, scholars asked each other about which of the commandments was the greatest. However, they did not agree which was the greatest.

See: Scribe; Command (Commandment); Sadducees

Why did Jesus say that these two commandments were the greatest?

[12:29, 12:30]

Jesus told the scribes that the two greatest commandments were to love God and to love other people. A person will be doing all of the other things God commands people to do if they do these two things.

See: Scribe; Command (Commandment)

Why did the Scribes call Jesus teacher?

[12:32]

In ancient Israel, many people called Jesus "teacher." They believed that he was a teacher. However, they would know that Jesus was much more than a teacher if they believed in him.

How is God one?

[12:32]

God is one because there is only one God. There is nothing or no one else like him.

See: Trinity

What were burnt offerings and sacrifices?

[12:33]

See: Burnt Offering; Sacrifice

Why did Jesus say that the Scribe was “not far from the kingdom of God”?

[12:34]

Jesus said this man “was not far from the kingdom of God.” That is, he was close to believing in Jesus and becoming part of God’s kingdom.

See: Scribe; Kingdom of God

Why did people stop asking Jesus questions?

[12:34]

Mark wrote that people stopped asking Jesus questions. People tried to trap Jesus by asking him questions. They wanted Jesus to say something that made people angry. However, they knew they could not trap Jesus by asking him questions because of the way Jesus answered them.

12:35-44

What was a temple court?

[12:35]

See: Temple Courts

Why did Jesus ask this question?

[12:35]

Jesus asked people about something the scribes said while he was in the temple. The messiah was the “son of David.” That is, he would be a descendant of King David (see: 2 Samuel 7). However, David said that the messiah was his master (see: Psalm 110). He knew people would not know how this would happen.

See: Temple; Scribe; Messiah (Christ); Covenant with David

What did David say?

[12:36]

David said, “the Lord said to my lord.” That is, God said to the one who ruled David. He will sit at God’s right hand. That is, God will honor him. God will also make the messiah’s enemies his footstool. That is, one day God will defeat all of the messiah’s enemies.

See: Messiah (Christ); Trinity

Why did Jesus warn people about the Scribes?

[12:38]

Jesus warned people about the scribes. They only did things so that people honored them. However, they did not honor God. God gave them permission to care for the Jewish people. However, they did not do this. Therefore, God will punish them more severely than those people who are not leaders.

See: Scribe

What was an offering box?

[12:41]

An offering box was a place in the temple where people put money. The people serving in the temple used this money. People worshipped God by giving money in this way.

See: Offer (Offering); Temple; Worship

Why was the woman’s offering better than the offering of rich people?

[12:43, 12:44]

Giving money to the temple was an offering to God. Jesus told them that God did not care who gave the most money. The woman gave more to God because she gave everything she had to God. The rich people only gave a part of what they had to God. They kept most of what they had for themselves. However, the woman gave all she had for her to live.

See: Temple; Offer (Offering)

Mark 12:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus speaks this parable against the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.

Then Jesus began to teach them

The word “them” here refers to the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders to whom Jesus had been talking in the previous chapter.

put a hedge around it

He put a barrier around the vineyard. It could have been a row of shrubs, a fence, or a stone wall.

dug a pit for a winepress

This means that he carved a pit on the rock, which would be the bottom part of the winepress used for collecting the

squeezed grape juice. Alternate translation: “carved a pit into rock for the winepress” or “he made a vat to collect the juice from the winepress”

leased the vineyard to vine growers

The owner still owned the vineyard, but he allowed the vine growers to take care of it. When the grapes became ripe, they were to give some of them to the owner and keep the rest.

Mark 12:2

At the right time

This refers to the time of harvest. This can be made clear.

Alternate translation: “When the time came to harvest the grapes”

Mark 12:3

But they took him
 "But the vine growers took the servant"
 empty-handed
 This means that they did not give him any of the fruit.
 Alternate translation: "without any grapes"
 Mark 12:4
 he sent to them
 "the owner of the vineyard sent to the vine growers"
 they wounded him in the head
 This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation:
 "they beat that one on the head, and they hurt him terribly"
 Mark 12:5
 yet another ... many others
 These phrases refer to other servants. Alternate translation:
 "yet another servant ... many other servants"
 They treated many others in the same way
 This refers to servants that the owner sent. The phrase "in
 the same way" refers to them being mistreated. This can be
 written clearly. Alternate translation: "They also mistreated
 many other servants whom he sent"
 Mark 12:6
 a beloved son
 It is implied that this is the owner's son. Alternate
 translation: "his beloved son"
 Mark 12:7
 the heir
 This is the owner's heir, who would inherit the vineyard
 after his father died. Alternate translation: "the owner's
 heir"
 the inheritance
 The tenants are referring to the vineyard as "the
 inheritance." Alternate translation: "this vineyard"
 Mark 12:8
 They seized him
 "The vine growers seized the son"
 Mark 12:9
 Therefore, what will the owner of the vineyard do?
 Jesus asks a question and then gives the answer to teach the
 people. The question may be written as a statement.
 Alternate translation: "So I will tell you what the owner of
 the vineyard will do."
 Therefore
 Jesus has finished telling the parable and is now asking the
 people what they think will happen next.
 destroy
 kill
 will give the vineyard to others
 The word "others" refers to other vine growers who will
 care for the vineyard. Alternate translation: "he will give
 the vineyard to vine growers to care for it"
 Mark 12:10
 General Information:
 This scripture was written long before in God's word.
 Have you not read this scripture?
 Jesus reminds the people of a scripture passage. He uses a
 rhetorical question here to rebuke them. This can be
 written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you
 have read this scripture." or "You should remember this
 scripture."

has been made the cornerstone
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the
 Lord made into the cornerstone"
 Mark 12:11
 This was from the Lord
 "The Lord has done this"
 it is marvelous in our eyes
 Here "in our eyes" stands for seeing, which is a metaphor
 for the people's opinion. Alternate translation: "we have
 seen it and think that it is marvelous" or "we think that it is
 wonderful"
 Mark 12:12
 sought a way
 "wanted to find a way"
 they were afraid of the crowd
 They were afraid of what the crowd would do to them if
 they arrested Jesus. This can be made clear. Alternate
 translation: "but they feared what the crowd would do if
 they arrested him"
 against them
 "to accuse them"
 Mark 12:13
 Connecting Statement:
 In an effort to trap Jesus, some of the Pharisees and
 Herodians, and then the Sadducees, come to Jesus with
 questions.
 Then they sent
 "Then the Jewish leaders sent"
 the Herodians
 This was the name of an informal political party that
 supported Herod Antipas.
 to trap him
 Here the author describes tricking Jesus as trying to "trap
 him." Alternate translation: "to trick him"
 Mark 12:14
 When they came, they said
 Here "they" refers to those sent from among the Pharisees
 and the Herodians.
 what people think is not a concern to you
 The abstract noun "concern" may be translated as a verb.
 Alternate translation: "you are not concerned about what
 people think of you" or "you do not try to win people's
 favor"
 you do not show partiality to anyone
 "you do not judge people by how they look" or "you judge
 people by what is in their hearts"
 Mark 12:15
 Jesus knew their hypocrisy
 They were acting hypocritically. This can be explained
 more clearly. Alternate translation: "Jesus knew that they
 did not really want to know what God wanted them to do"
 Why do you test me?
 Jesus rebukes the Jewish leaders because they were trying
 to trick him. This can be written as a statement. Alternate
 translation: "I know you are trying to make me say
 something wrong so you can accuse me."
 denarius
 This coin was worth a day's wages.
 Mark 12:16

They brought one
 "The Pharisees and the Herodians brought a denarius"
 likeness and inscription
 "picture and name"
 They said, "Caesar's
 Here "Caesar's" refers to his likeness and inscription.
 Alternate translation: "They said, 'They are Caesar's likeness and inscription'"
 Mark 12:17
 Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's
 Jesus is teaching that his people must respect the government by paying taxes. This figure of speech can be clarified by changing Caesar to Roman government.
 Alternate translation: "Give to the Roman government the things that belong to the Roman government"
 and to God
 The understood verb may be supplied. Alternate translation: "and give to God"
 They marveled at him
 They were amazed at what Jesus had said. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "They marveled at him and at what he had said"
 Mark 12:18
 who say there is no resurrection
 This phrase explains who the Sadducees were. This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation: "who say there is no resurrection from the dead"
 Mark 12:19
 Moses wrote for us, 'If a man's brother dies ... brother.'
 The Sadducees are quoting what Moses had written in the law. Moses's quote can be expressed as an indirect quote.
 Alternate translation: "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies ... brother."
 wrote for us
 "wrote for us Jews." The Sadducees were a group of Jews. Here they use the word "us" to refer to themselves and all Jews.
 the man should take the brother's wife
 "the man should marry his brother's wife"
 raise up children for his brother
 "have a son for his brother." The man's first son would be considered to be the dead brother's son, and the son's descendants would be considered to be the dead brother's descendants. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "have a son who will be considered to be the dead brother's son"
 Mark 12:20
 There were seven brothers
 The Sadducees tell Jesus a story because they want to ask him a question about it to test him. The story is not about things that really happened. Alternate translation:
 "Suppose there were seven brothers"
 the first
 the first brother
 the first took a wife
 "the first brother married a woman." Here marrying a woman is spoken of as "taking" her.
 Mark 12:21
 the second ... the third

These numbers refer to each of the brothers and can be expressed as such. Alternate translation: "the second brother ... the third brother"
 the second took her
 "the second married her." Here marrying a woman is spoken of as "taking" her.
 the third in the same way
 "the third brother married her as his other brothers had done, and he also died leaving no children"
 Mark 12:22
 The seven
 This refers to all the brothers. Alternate translation: "The seven brothers"
 The seven left no children
 Each of the brothers married the woman and then died before he had any children with her. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Eventually all seven brothers married that woman one by one, but none of them had any children with her, and one by one they died"
 Mark 12:23
 In the resurrection, when they rise again, whose wife will she be?
 The Sadducees are testing Jesus by asking this question. If your readers can only understand this as a request for information, this can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Now tell us whose wife she will be in the resurrection, when they all rise again."
 Mark 12:24
 Is this not the reason you are mistaken, because ... power of God?
 Jesus rebukes the Sadducees because they are mistaken about God's law. This may be written as a statement.
 Alternate translation: "You are mistaken because ... power of God."
 you do not know the scriptures
 This means that they do not understand what is written in the Old Testament scriptures.
 the power of God
 "how powerful God is"
 Mark 12:25
 For when they rise
 Here the word "they" refers to the brothers and the woman from the example.
 rise
 Waking and getting up from sleep is a metaphor for becoming alive after having been dead.
 from the dead
 The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again. Alternate translation: "from among all those who have died"
 they neither marry nor are given in marriage
 "they do not marry, and they are not given in marriage"
 nor are given in marriage
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and no one gives them in marriage"
 heaven
 This refers to the place where God lives.
 Mark 12:26
 that are raised
 This can be expressed with an active verb. Alternate

translation: "who rise" or "who rise to live again"

the book of Moses

"the book that Moses wrote"

the account about the bush

This refers to the part of the book of Moses that tells about when God spoke to Moses out of a bush that was burning but that did not burn up. Alternate translation: "the passage about the burning bush" or "the words about the fiery bush"

the bush

This refers to a shrub, a woody plant that is smaller than a tree.

how God spoke to him

"about when God spoke to Moses"

I am the God of Abraham ... Isaac ... Jacob

This means that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob worship God. These men have died physically, but they are still alive spiritually and still worship God.

Mark 12:27

not the God of the dead, but of the living

Here "the dead" refers to people who are dead, and "the living" refers to people who are alive. Also, the words "the God" can be stated clearly in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "not the God of dead people, but the God of living people"

the living

This includes people who are alive physically and spiritually.

You are quite mistaken

It may be helpful to state what they are mistaken about.

Alternate translation: "When you say that dead people do not rise again, you are quite mistaken"

quite mistaken

"completely mistaken" or "very wrong"

Mark 12:28

He asked him

"The scribe asked Jesus"

Mark 12:29

The most important is

"The most important" refers to the most important commandment. Alternate translation: "The most important commandment is"

Hear, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one

"Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord"

Mark 12:30

with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength

Here "heart" and "soul" are metonyms for a person's inner being. These four phrases are used together to mean "completely" or "earnestly."

Mark 12:31

love your neighbor as yourself

Jesus uses this simile to compare how people are to love each other with the same love as they love themselves.

Alternate translation: "love your neighbor as much as you love yourself"

than these

Here the word "these" refers to the two commandments that Jesus had just told the people.

Mark 12:32

Good, Teacher

"Good answer, Teacher" or "Well said, Teacher"

God is one

This means that there is only one God. Alternate translation: "there is only one God"

that there is no other

The word "God" is understood from the previous phrase.

Alternate translation: "that there is no other God"

Mark 12:33

with all the heart ... all the understanding ... all the strength

Here "heart" is a metonym for person's thoughts, feelings, or inner being. These three phrases are used together to mean "completely" or "earnestly."

to love one's neighbor as oneself

This simile compares how people are to love each other with the same love that they love themselves. Alternate translation: "to love your neighbor as much as you love yourself"

is even more than

This idiom means that something is more important than something else. In this case, these two commandments are more pleasing to God than burnt offering and sacrifices. This may be written clearly. Alternate translation: "is even more important than" or "is even more pleasing to God than"

Mark 12:34

You are not far from the kingdom of God

This can be stated in positive form. Here Jesus speaks of the man being ready to submit to God as king as being physically close to the kingdom of God, as if it were a physical place. Alternate translation: "You are close to submitting to God as king"

no one dared

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "everyone was afraid"

Mark 12:35

While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he said

Some time has passed and Jesus is now in the temple. This is not part of the previous conversation. Alternate translation: "Later, while Jesus was teaching in the temple area, he said to the people"

How is it that the scribes say the Christ is the son of David?

Jesus uses this question to get the people to think deeply about the Psalm he is about to quote. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Consider why the scribes say the Christ is the son of David."

the son of David

"a descendant of David"

Mark 12:36

David himself

This word "himself" refers to David and is used to place emphasis on him and what he said. Alternate translation: "It was David who"

in the Holy Spirit

This means that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit. That is, the Holy Spirit directed David in what he said. Alternate translation: "inspired by the Holy Spirit"

said, 'The Lord said to my Lord'

Here David calls God "The Lord" and calls the Christ "my Lord." This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation: "said about the Christ, 'The Lord God said to my Lord'"

Sit at my right hand

Jesus is quoting a psalm. Here God is speaking to the Christ. To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

until I put your enemies under your feet

In this quote, God speaks of defeating enemies as putting them under the feet of the victor. Alternate translation: "until I completely defeat your enemies"

Mark 12:37

calls him 'Lord,'

Here the word "him" refers to the Christ.

so how can the Christ be David's son?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "so consider how the Christ can be a descendant of David"

Mark 12:38

be greeted in the marketplaces

This can be expressed with an active form. These greetings showed that the people respected the scribes. Alternate translation: "to have people greet them respectfully in the marketplaces"

Mark 12:39

the most important seats ... the places of honor

You may want to make explicit that the scribes liked to sit in these places. Alternate translation: "to sit in the most important seats ... to have people seat them in the places of honor"

Mark 12:40

They also devour widows' houses

Here Jesus describes the scribes' cheating of widows and stealing of their houses as "devouring" their houses.

Alternate translation: "They also cheat widows in order to steal their houses from them"

widows' houses

The words "widows" and "houses" are synecdoches for helpless people and all of a person's important possessions, respectively. Alternate translation: "everything from helpless people"

These men will receive greater condemnation

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will certainly punish them with greater condemnation" or "God will certainly punish them severely"

will receive greater condemnation

The word "greater" implies a comparison. Here the comparison is to other men who are punished. Alternate translation: "will receive greater condemnation than other people"

Mark 12:41

Connecting Statement:

Still in the temple area, Jesus comments on the value of the widow's offering.

an offering box

This box, which everyone could use, held temple offerings.

Mark 12:42

two mites

"two small copper coins." These were the least valuable coins available.

worth about a penny

"worth very little." A penny is worth very little. Translate "penny" with the name of the smallest coin in your language if you have one that is worth very little.

Mark 12:43

General Information:

In verse 43 Jesus says that the widow put more money in the offering than the rich people put in, and in verse 44 he tells his reason for saying that. The information can be reordered so that Jesus tells his reason first and then says that the widow put in more, as in the UDB.

He called

"Jesus called"

Truly I say to you

This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.

all of them who contributed to

"all the other people who put money into"

Mark 12:44

abundance

much wealth, many valuable things

her poverty

"lack" or "the little she had"

to live on

"to survive on"

Chapter 13

Mark 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 13:24-25, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The return of Christ

Jesus said much about what would happen before he returned ([Mark 13:6-37](#)). He told his followers that bad things would happen to the world and bad things would happen to them before he returned, but they needed to be ready for him to return at any time.

Links:

[Mark 13:1 Notes](#)

Mark 13

13:1-13

Why did the disciples talk about the buildings with Jesus?

[13:1]

The disciples were amazed by the buildings that made the temple in Jerusalem. Jesus saw that the people used the temple to make money. He also saw that the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus. Therefore, he prophesied about the temple being destroyed. The destruction of the temple happened about 40 years after Jesus returned to heaven. However, it was not completely destroyed. There is one wall that still remains from the temple in Jerusalem.

See: Disciple; Temple; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Heaven

See Map: Jerusalem; Mount of Olives

What was a sign?

[13:4]

See: Sign

What did Jesus teach about his return to earth?

[13:5, 13:6, 13:7, 13:8]

Jesus told his disciples about things that would happen when he returned to the earth. However, the disciples did not know that he would die. They did not know it would be a long period of time before these things happened. Therefore, Jesus warned them. Many people will say that they are Jesus. Many people will believe these people who say that they are Jesus. However, Jesus talked about certain things that must happen before he returns to the earth.

There will be wars and rumors of wars. That is, people will worry about wars and there will be many wars. There will be many earthquakes and famines. Jesus said these are “birth pains.” This was a metaphor to say that difficult things will happen before he returns to earth. People and the whole world will be judged and punished before the earth is made new again. People who worship Jesus will be persecuted. The gospel will be told to all nations. Some scholars think this means that every person will hear the gospel. Other scholars think this means that someone from every nation will hear the gospel. People will have their children, brothers, sisters, and parents killed because their family are Christians.

See: Disciple; Jesus' Return to Earth; Messiah (Christ); Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution); Gospel

What will happen when Christians are persecuted?

[13:9]

Jesus warned the disciples that Christians will be persecuted before he returns to the earth. The Holy Spirit will help Christians when they are persecuted. He will tell them what to say to leaders and those who persecute them.

See: Disciple; Persecute (Persecution) ; Jesus' Return to Earth; Holy Spirit

How will the person who is persecuted be saved?

[13:13]

Jesus said that the person who endures to the end when persecuted will be saved. Scholars think Jesus was talking about different things when he said these words.

Some Christians reject Jesus when they are persecuted. Some scholars think when they do this, they are no longer at peace with God and will not live with him forever. Some Christians reject Jesus when they are persecuted. Other scholars think when they do this, God will save them. That is, God will rescue them from persecution and they will go to be with God. Some people say they are Christians, but they reject Jesus when persecuted. Other scholars think when they do this, they prove they were never truly Christians.

See: Persecute (Persecution); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Heaven

13:14-23

What is the abomination of desolation?

[13:14]

Jesus talked about an “abomination of desolation.” This was when someone who rejected God did something that greatly dishonored God. Daniel also wrote about this (see: Daniel 7:27; 11:31; 12:11). Some scholars think Daniel wrote about a Gentile leader who sacrificed an unclean animal on the altar in the temple. Some scholars think Jesus talked about a time when the antichrist would sacrifice something in the temple or claim to be God in the temple. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about a time when people would no longer go to the temple. Other scholars think it is some type of idolatry. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about a time 40 years after he returned to heaven. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about a time near to his return to the earth (see: Revelation 4-19).

See: Gentile; Sacrifice; Clean and Unclean; Altar; Temple; Antichrist; Idolatry (Idol); Heaven

What did Jesus want people to do when they saw the abomination of desolation?

[13:14, 13:15, 13:16]

Jesus wanted people to flee and go away from Jerusalem when people saw the abomination of desolation. Jesus warned them. He wanted them to know that he will judge people at this time. He warned people by telling them that they will not

want to be alive when these things happen.

See: Woe; Tribulation

Who will Jesus save?

[13:20]

Jesus warned people about a time of great tribulation. That is a time when there will be great trouble because God will judge people. At this time, if God did not stop punishing people, no one would be saved. That is, everyone would die. When he said this, he was not talking about being separated from God forever. He was talking about someone dying on the earth, both Christians and non-Christians.

See: Elect (Election); Tribulation

Why should people not believe that Jesus returned?

[13:21]

Jesus warned about a time when many people would say they are the messiah or that they are Jesus who returned to earth. However, everyone will know that Jesus has returned to earth when he returns (see: Matthew 24:23-27). Therefore, people should not believe other people who say this even if they do miracles and signs. However, many Christians will believe these false messiahs and false prophets.

See: Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth; Prophet; Sign; Miracle

13:24-37

When are the days of tribulation?

[13:24]

Jesus spoke about certain days of tribulation or trouble. Some scholars think he spoke about the difficult times that happened soon after he returned to earth. Other scholars think he spoke about the time near his return to the earth.

See: Tribulation; Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Jesus talk about things that happen in the sky?

[13:24, 13:25]

Jesus spoke about certain things people could see in the sky. Some scholars think these things will actually happen just before Jesus returns to the earth. Other scholars think this was a metaphor. Just as the stars will fall from the sky, so the rulers of the world will be destroyed. Jesus said these things to warn people.

See: Joel 2:10; 3:15; Ezekiel 32:7-8)

See: Metaphor

What will people see?

[13:26]

The people will see the Son of Man coming to the earth with glory. Jesus would return to the earth and everyone would know that he is God.

See: Son of Man; Glory (Glorify); Jesus is God; Jesus' Return to Earth

What will Jesus do when he returns to the earth?

[13:27]

When Jesus returns to the earth, he will bring angels who serve him. He will gather all Christians from all over the world and bring them to himself.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Angel

Why did Jesus talk about a fig tree?

[13:28]

Jesus talked about a fig tree to help people understand the things he said. This was a metaphor. When a fig tree does certain things, people know that the seasons are changing. He wanted people to know that he was going to return to the earth soon when the things he spoke about happened.

See: Metaphor; Hebrew Calendar (Seasons in Israel)

When did these things happen?

[13:30]

Jesus prophesied that these things happened before the people listening to him died. Some scholars think that these things happened 40 years after he said these things. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about people in the future who lived when they saw the things he spoke about in this passage. Once these things happened, Jesus would return to the earth in a few years.

Jesus said that heaven and earth will end, but his words will not change. The apostle spoke about heaven and earth ending (see: Revelation 21). However, these things must happen.

Jesus said that he did not know when these things would happen. Only God the Father knew these things will happen.

See: Prophecy (Prophesy) ; Jesus' Return to Earth; Heaven; God the Father; Apostle

What did Jesus tell people to do?

[13:33]

In some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament, Jesus told people to "watch." In fewer ancient copies of the Greek

New Testament, Jesus told people to “watch and pray.”
Why did Jesus talk about a man going on a journey?
[13:34]

Jesus spoke about a man going on a journey. This was a metaphor. He wanted people to be ready for him to return to the earth. When he returns, Jesus’ followers will need to tell Jesus about the things they did while they were waiting for him to return. Jesus wanted Christians to serve him. He wanted them to tell other people about Jesus and the gospel. He wanted Christians to do things that honor God.
See: Jesus’ Return to Earth; Metaphor; Gospel

Mark 13:1

General Information:

As they leave the temple area, Jesus tells his disciples what will happen to the wonderful temple that Herod the Great has built.

the wonderful stones and wonderful buildings

The “stones” refer to the stones that the buildings were built with. Alternate translation: “the wonderful buildings and the wonderful stones that they are made of”

Mark 13:2

Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone

This question is used to draw attention to the buildings.

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation:

“Look at these great buildings! Not one stone” or “You see these great buildings now, but not one stone”

Not one stone will be left on another which will not be torn down

It is implied that enemy soldiers will tear down the stones.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

“Not one stone will remain on top of another, for enemy soldiers will come and destroy these buildings”

Mark 13:3

Connecting Statement:

In answer to the disciples’ questions about the temple’s destruction and what is going to happen, Jesus tells them what was going to take place in the future.

As he sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter

It can be expressed clearly that Jesus and his disciples had walked to the Mount of Olives. Alternate translation: “After arriving at the Mount of Olives, which is opposite the temple, Jesus sat down. Then Peter”

privately

when they were alone

Mark 13:4

these things happen ... are about to happen

This refers to what Jesus had just said will happen to the stones of the temple. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: “these things happen to the buildings of the temple ... are about to happen to the temple buildings”

when all these things

“that all these things”

Mark 13:5

to them

“to his disciples”

leads you astray

Here “leads you astray” is a metaphor for “persuades you to believe what is not true.” Alternate translation: “deceives you”

Mark 13:6

lead many astray

Here “lead many astray” is a metaphor “persuades many to

believe what is not true.” Alternate translation: “deceive many people”

in my name

This is metonym. Possible meanings are 1) Alternate translation: “claiming my authority” or 2) Alternate translation: “claiming that God sent them.”

I am he

“I am the Christ”

Mark 13:7

hear of wars and rumors of wars

“hear of wars and reports about wars.” Possible meanings are 1) “hear the sounds of wars close by and news of wars far away” or 2) “hear of wars that have started and reports about wars that are about to start”

but the end is not yet

“but it is not yet the end” or “but the end will not happen until later” or “but the end will be later”

the end

This probably refers to the end of the world.

Mark 13:8

will rise against

This idiom means to fight against one another. Alternate translation: “will fight against”

kingdom against kingdom

The words “will rise” are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: “kingdom will rise against kingdom” or “the people of one kingdom will fight against the people of another kingdom”

These are the beginnings of birth pains

Jesus speaks of these disasters as the beginnings of birth pains because more severe things will happen after them. Alternate translation: “These events will be like the first pains a woman suffers when she is about to bear a child”

Mark 13:9

Be on your guard

“Be ready for what people will do to you”

will give you over to councils

“take you and put you under the control of councils”

you will be beaten

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

“people will beat you”

You will stand before

This means to be put on trial and judged. Alternate translation: “You will be put on trial before” or “You will be brought to trial and judged by”

for my sake

“because of me” or “on account of me”

as a testimony to them

This means they will testify about Jesus. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: “and testify to them about me”

or "and you will tell them about me"

Mark 13:10

But the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations

Jesus is still speaking about things that must happen before the end comes. This can be made clear. Alternate

translation: "But the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations before the end will come"

Mark 13:11

hand you over

Here this means to put people under the control of the authorities. Alternate translation: "give you over to the authorities"

but the Holy Spirit

The words "who will speak" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "but the Holy Spirit, who will speak through you"

Mark 13:12

Brother will deliver up brother to death

"One brother will put another brother under the control of people who will kill him" or "Brothers will put their brothers under the control of people who will kill them."

This will happen many times to many different people.

Jesus is not speaking of just one person and his brother.

Brother ... brother

This refers to both brothers and sisters. Alternate translation: "People ... their siblings"

a father his child

The words "will deliver up to death" are understood from the previous phrase. This means that some fathers will betray their children, and this betrayal will cause their children to be killed. Alternate translation: "fathers will deliver up their children to death" or "fathers will betray their children, handing them over to be killed"

Children will rise up against their parents

This means that children will oppose their parents and betray them. Alternate translation: "Children will oppose their parents"

cause them to be put to death

This means that the authorities will sentence the parents to be put to death. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "cause the authorities to sentence the parents to die" or "the authorities will kill the parents"

Mark 13:13

You will be hated by everyone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Everyone will hate you"

because of my name

Jesus uses the metonym "my name" to refer to himself.

Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because you believe in me"

whoever endures to the end, that person will be saved

This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whoever endures to the end, God will save that person" or "God will save whoever endures to the end"

whoever endures to the end

Here "endures" represents continuing to be faithful to God even while suffering. Alternate translation: "whoever suffers and stays faithful to God to the end"

to the end

Possible meanings are 1) "to the end of his life" or 2) "to the end of that time of trouble"

Mark 13:14

the abomination of desolation

This phrase is from the book of Daniel. Jesus's audience would have been familiar with this passage and the prophecy about the abomination entering the temple and defiling it. Alternate translation: "the shameful thing that defiles the things of God"

standing where it should not be standing

Jesus's audience would have known that this refers to the temple. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "standing in the temple, where it should not be standing"

let the reader understand

Mark added this to get the readers' attention, so that they would think about what Jesus meant when he spoke about the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be standing. Alternate translation: "may everyone who reads this understand what it means"

Mark 13:15

on the housetop

Housetops where Jesus lived were flat, and people could stand on them.

Mark 13:16

not return

This refers to returning to his house. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "not return to his house"

to take his cloak

"to get his cloak"

Mark 13:17

those who are nursing infants

women who give babies breast milk

Mark 13:18

Pray that it

"Pray that these times" or "Pray that these things"

the winter

"the cold season" or "the cold, rainy season." This refers to the time of year when it is cold and unpleasant and difficult to travel.

Mark 13:19

such as has not been from the beginning

"greater than there has ever been since the beginning of the world." This describes how great and terrible the tribulation will be. There has never been a tribulation as terrible as this one will be.

the beginning of creation, which God created

the beginning of creation, when God created the world

no, nor ever will be again

"and greater than there will ever be again" or "and after that tribulation, there will never again be a tribulation like it"

Mark 13:20

Unless the Lord had shortened the days

The writer uses past tense to describe a future event.

Alternate translation: "If the Lord had not decided that he would shorten those days"

had shortened the days

"had shortened the time." It may be helpful to specify which "days" are referred to. Alternate translation: "had reduced

the days of suffering" or "had shortened the time of suffering"

no flesh would be saved

The word "flesh" refers to people, and "saved" refers to physical salvation. Alternate translation: "no one would be saved" or "everyone would die"

for the sake of the elect

"in order to help the elect"

the elect, those whom he chose

The phrase "those whom he chose" means the same thing as "the elect." Together, they emphasize that God chose these people.

Mark 13:21

General Information:

In verse 21 Jesus gives a command, and in 22 he tells the reason for the command. This can be reordered with the reason first, and the command second, as in the UDB.

Mark 13:22

false Christs

"people who claim they are Christ"

so as to deceive

"in order to deceive" or "hoping to deceive" or "trying to deceive"

so as to deceive, if possible, even the elect

The phrase "even the elect" implies that the false Christs and false prophets will expect to deceive some people, but they will not know if they will be able to deceive the elect. Alternate translation: "in order to deceive people, and even deceive the elect, if that is possible"

the elect

"the people whom God has chosen"

Mark 13:23

Be on guard

"Be watchful" or "Be alert"

I have told you all these things ahead of time

Jesus told them these things to warn them. Alternate translation: "I have told you all these things ahead of time to warn you"

Mark 13:24

the sun will be darkened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the sun will become dark"

the moon will not give its light

Here the moon is spoken of as if it were alive and able to give something to someone else. Alternate translation: "the moon will not shine" or "the moon will be dark"

Mark 13:25

the stars will fall from the sky

This does not mean that they will fall to earth but that they will fall from where they are now. Alternate translation: "the stars will fall from their places in the sky"

the powers that are in the heavens will be shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the powers in the heavens will shake" or "God will shake the powers that are in the heavens"

the powers that are in the heavens

"the powerful things in the heavens." These words could refer to 1) the sun, moon, and stars or 2) powerful spiritual beings

in the heavens

"in the sky"

Mark 13:26

Then they will see

"Then people will see"

with great power and glory

"powerfully and gloriously"

Mark 13:27

he will gather

The word "he" refers to God and is a metonym for his angels, as they are the ones who will gather the elect.

Alternate translation: "they will gather" or "his angels will gather"

the four winds

The whole earth is spoken of as "the four winds," which refer to the four directions: north, south, east, and west.

Alternate translation: "the north, south, east, and west" or "all parts of the earth"

from the ends of the earth to the ends of the sky

These two extremes are given to emphasize that the elect will be gathered from the entire earth. Alternate

translation: "from every place on earth"

Mark 13:28

Connecting Statement:

Jesus gives two short parables here to remind people to be aware when the things that he has been explaining happen.

the branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves

The phrase "the branch" refers to the branches of the fig tree. Alternate translation: "its branches become tender and put out their leaves"

tender

"green and soft"

puts out its leaves

Here the fig tree is spoken of as if it were alive and able to willingly cause its leaves to grow. Alternate translation: "its leaves begin to sprout"

summer

the warm part of the year or the growing season

Mark 13:29

these things

This refers to the days of tribulation. Alternate translation: "these things I have just described"

recognize that he is near

Many modern translations read, "you recognize" or "you know." It is not clear whether Jesus is stating a fact or issuing a command.

he is near

"the Son of Man is near"

close to the gates

This idiom means that he is very near and has almost arrived, referring to a traveler being close to arriving at the city gates. Alternate translation: "and is almost here"

Mark 13:30

Truly I say to you

This indicates that the statement that follows is especially important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.

will not pass away

"Pass away" is a polite way of saying "die." Alternate translation: "will not die" or "will not end"

until all of these things

The phrase "these things" refers to the days of tribulation.
Mark 13:31

Heaven and earth

The two extremes are given to refer to all of the sky, including the sun, moon, stars, and planets, and all of the earth. Alternate translation: "The sky, the earth, and everything in them"

will pass away

"will cease to exist." Here this phrase refers to the world ending.

my words will never pass away

Jesus speaks of words not losing their power as if they were something that will never physically die. Alternate translation: "my words will never lose their power"

Mark 13:32

that day or that hour

This refers to the time that the Son of Man will return.

Alternate translation: "that day or that hour that the Son of Man will return" or "the day or the hour that I will return"

no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father

These words specify some of those who do not know when the Son of Man will return, different from the Father, who does know. Alternate translation: "no one knows—neither the angels in heaven nor the Son know—but the Father" or "neither the angels in heaven nor the Son know; no one knows but the Father"

the angels in heaven

Here "heaven" refers to the place where God lives.
but the Father

It is best to translate "Father" with the same word that your language naturally uses to refer to a human father. Also, this is an ellipsis, stating that the Father knows when the Son will return. Alternate translation: "but only the Father knows"

Mark 13:33

what time it is

It can be stated clearly what "time" refers to here. Alternate translation: "when all these events will happen"

Mark 13:34

each one with his work

"telling each one what work he should do"

Mark 13:35

it could be in the evening

"he could return in the evening"

rooster crows

The rooster is a bird that "crows" very early in the morning by making a loud call.

Mark 13:36

find you sleeping

Here Jesus speaks of not being ready as "sleeping."

Alternate translation: "find you not ready for his return"

Mark 13:37

General Information:

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Chapter 14

Mark 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 14:27, 62, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The eating of the body and blood

[Mark 14:22-25](#) describes Jesus's last meal with his followers. At this time, Jesus told them that what they were eating and drinking were his body and his blood. Nearly all Christian churches celebrate "the Lord's Supper," the "Eucharist," or "Holy Communion" to remember this meal.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Abba, Father

"Abba" is an Aramaic word that the Jews used to speak to their fathers. Mark writes it as it sounds and then translates it. "Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[Mark 14:1 Notes](#)

Mark 14

14:1-11

What was Passover?

[14:1]

See: Passover

What was the Festival of Unleavened Bread?

[14:1]

See: Festival of Unleavened Bread

Why did the Jewish leaders want to "stealthily arrest" Jesus?

[14:1]

The chief priests and scribes wanted to “stealthily” arrest Jesus. That is, they wanted to arrest Jesus when no one would know that they were doing it. They did not want to make people angry with them.

See: Chief Priest; Scribe

Where was Bethany?

[14:3]

See Map: Bethany

What was a leper?

[14:3]

See: Leprosy (Leper)

Why was Jesus reclining at the table?

[14:3]

In ancient Israel, people ate by laying down sideways at a table. Jesus did this because he had eaten.

What did this woman have?

[14:3]

The woman had a jar with a certain oil that smelled very good. Some people called this perfume. She opened this jar and poured it on Jesus head and feet to honor him. Jesus also said that she anointed him. This prepared his body to be buried.

In ancient Israel, people poured these types of oils on a dead person before they buried them.

See: John 12:3

See: Anoint (Anointing)

Why did the disciples not want this woman to do this?

[14:4]

The disciples did not want this woman to pour this expensive oil on Jesus. This was because it would only smell good for a short time. However, it could be sold for the same amount of money that someone could make from working for one year. This could be used to help many poor people. Jesus said they were wrong. This was because what she did was a metaphor. That is, she anointed Jesus as a way to prepare him to die for people's sins so they could be at peace with God. This was greater than helping poor people.

See: Metaphor; Anoint (Anointing)

Why did Judas go to the chief priests?

[14:10]

Judas went to the chief priests to help them arrest Jesus. Scholars do not agree why he did this. The priests gave Judas a large amount of money to help them.

See: Matthew 26:15; Exodus 21:32; Zechariah 11:12

See: Chief Priest

14:12-21

When was the first day of unleavened bread?

[14:12]

The first day of unleavened bread was also the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread. This was the day they sacrificed a lamb for the passover.

See: Festival of Unleavened Bread; Sacrifice; Passover

Why did the disciples need to prepare for the passover meal?

[14:12]

The disciples needed to prepare for the passover meal. This was because they needed to become clean so they could eat this meal. They also needed to get certain foods ready to eat for this meal.

See: Disciple; Passover; Clean and Unclean

Why did Jesus say that one of the disciples would betray him?

[14:18]

After travelling with these twelve disciples for three years, Jesus had one last meal with them. During this meal, he told them that one of the disciples would betray him. This was to fulfill a prophecy spoken about the messiah (see: Psalm 41:9). The man that betrayed Jesus would be punished for what he did. He would live forever in hell and be punished there forever. That was why Jesus said it would be better for that man to have not been born than to be punished forever in hell.

See: Disciple; Hell; Son of Man; Woe; Prophecy (Prophecy)

14:22-31

What did Jesus say to the disciples during the passover meal?

[14:22]

Jesus told the disciples about the eating of bread and drinking of wine during this last meal. Some scholars called this the last supper or the Lord's supper. From that time on, Christians ate bread and drank wine at certain times in order to

remember that Jesus died for Christians (see: 1 Corinthians 11:23-25).

See: Disciple; Lord's Supper; Covenant; Kingdom of God; Passover; Atonement

What was a hymn?

[14:26]

A hymn was a song that was sung to worship God.

Where was the Mount of Olives?

[14:26]

See Map: Mount of Olives

Why did Jesus say that "all of you will fall away"?

[14:27]

Jesus said that the disciples would "fall away." That is, they would fall away from Jesus. He said this would fulfill what Zechariah prophesied (see: Zechariah 13:7). This was a metaphor. Jesus was the shepherd and the disciples were the sheep. The disciples would not want people to know they followed Jesus when Jesus died. However, this did not last for very long.

Peter said that he would never do this. However, he said that he did not know Jesus three times that night.

See: Disciple; Fall (Fall Away, Stand); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Metaphor

14:32-42

Where was Gethsemane?

[14:32]

See Map: Gethsemane

What is a soul?

[14:33]

See: Soul

Why was Jesus distressed?

[14:33]

Jesus was distressed when he prayed. That is he had a feeling of great sadness and pain in his soul while he prayed. He knew he was about to die. He was not afraid to die because he knew why he had to die. However, he was distressed because he knew that he was about to be separated from God the Father in some way. He knew separation from God was part of the punishment from God for the sins of all people.

See: Atonement (Atonement); Sin; God the Father; Soul

Why did Jesus want the hour to pass?

[14:36]

Jesus asked God the Father if it was possible for the hour to pass. That is, he asked God the Father not to make him die. He wanted God to remove the cup. This is a metaphor. He wanted to not have to be punished for all people. However, he was willing to die to obey God.

See: Metaphor; Will of God

Why did Jesus want Peter to pray not to enter into temptation?

[14:38]

Jesus wanted Peter to pray. However, Peter could not pray for one hour without falling asleep. Jesus told Peter to pray and ask not to enter into temptation. That is, that he would not be tempted. Peter was about to be tempted to say that he did not know Jesus.

See: Tempt (Temptation)

How was the spirit willing but the flesh weak?

[14:38]

Jesus said that the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak. That is, the disciples wanted to stay awake and pray, but their bodies were too tired to remain awake. They could only do these things with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit wanted to help Peter. Peter just needed to ask for help (see: Psalm 51:12).

See: Holy Spirit; Flesh

How has the hour come?

[14:41]

Jesus said the hour has come. That is, the things he talked about things that were about to happen.

Who were the sinners?

[14:41]

Jesus said that he was betrayed to sinners. That is, someone would give him to the people who wanted to kill him. These sinners were the Jewish leaders. They were supposed to help people worship God. Instead, they did evil. He knew Judas was about to betray him.

See: Sin

14:43-52

Who were the chief priests, scribes, and elders?

[14:43]

See: Chief Priest; Scribe; Elder

How did Judas kiss Jesus?

[14:44, 14:45]

Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek. In ancient Israel, people often greeted each other in this way.

What was a rabbi?

[14:45]

See: Rabbi

Why did someone cut off this man's ear?

[14:47]

Peter tried to stop the Jewish leaders from arresting Jesus (see: John 18:10-11). He did this by cutting off someone's ear with a sword or knife.

See: High Priest

What scriptures does this fulfill?

[14:49]

Jesus said that certain prophecies were fulfilled when the Jewish leaders arrested him. These were prophecies spoken by Isaiah (see: Isaiah 53) and Zechariah (see: Zechariah 13:7).

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

Why did Mark talk about this young man?

[14:51, 14:52]

Scholars think Mark wrote about this young man running away naked because Mark was this young man. He was there when Jesus was arrested. Other scholars think the young man symbolises all people who ran after Jesus' arrest. This was a fulfillment of prophecy (see: Amos 2:16).

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Symbol; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

14:53-65

What was the courtyard of the high priest?

[14:54]

The Jewish leaders took Jesus to the high priest. They wanted the high priest to say Jesus had done something wrong so Jesus could be killed. They took him to the courtyard of the high priest. This was outside of where the high priest lived.

See: High Priest

What was testimony against Jesus?

[14:55]

The Jewish leaders wanted testimony against Jesus. They wanted people to say Jesus had done something wrong. They wanted them to say that he broke the Law of Moses in a way that he needed to be put to death.

See: Law of Moses; Testify (Testimony)

Why did Mark write that the people's testimony did not agree?

[14:56]

People said that Jesus said things or did things that were wrong in the Law of Moses. However, Mark wrote that what the people said about Jesus did not agree with one another. Mark wrote this because someone could not be punished for something they did wrong unless two people had seen this person doing this wrong thing.

See: Numbers 35:30; Deuteronomy 17:6

See: Law of Moses; Testify (Testimony)

What did the high priest do?

[14:60]

The high priest asked Jesus two questions. He asked Jesus if Jesus was going to say anything. The high priest wanted Jesus to say something because he wanted Jesus to say the wrong thing. He also asked Jesus if he was going to say something about what people said about Jesus. The high priest thought Jesus did something written in the Law of Moses that people should not do. However, the high priest did something written in the law of Moses that he should not do. He said that Jesus did something wrong without the testimony of two people agreeing with one another.

See: High Priest; Law of Moses; Testify (Testimony)

Why did the high priest ask Jesus if he was the messiah, the son of the blessed one?

[14:61]

The high priest asked Jesus if he was the messiah, the son of the blessed one. He wanted Jesus to say that this was true.

The high priest would then say that Jesus blasphemed.

See: High Priest; Messiah (Christ); Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

What did Jesus say to the high priest?

[14:62]

Jesus told the high priest, "I am." He said that he is God when he said this. He then told the high priest that the high priest will see Jesus again when he is next to God in heaven when Jesus returns to the earth to judge the world. The high priest tore his clothes because he thought Jesus blasphemed God. This was what the high priest did when someone blasphemed. According to the Law of Moses, blasphemy was punished by killing the person who blasphemed. See: High Priest; Jesus is God; Yahweh (I am); Right Hand; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Heaven; Law of Moses

Why did the people ask Jesus to prophesy?

[14:65]

Many people hit Jesus at the same time. They mocked Jesus. That is, they insulted him. So they asked him to prophesy and tell them which person hit Jesus.

See: Prophecy (Prophesy)

14:66-72

Why did Peter say that he did not know Jesus?

[14:68]

Peter followed the soldiers who arrested Jesus. However, he did not go near Jesus. He did not want anyone to know he was a disciple of Jesus. He feared being arrested. This is why he said he did not know Jesus.

See: Disciple

What did Mark write in 14:68?

[14:68]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words, "then the rooster crowed." Other, older ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. However, Matthew, Luke, and John said that the rooster crowed (see: Matthew 26:74; Luke 22:60; John 18:27). Therefore, the rooster crowed whether or not Mark wrote these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

What was a Galilean?

[14:70]

The people in Jerusalem spoke in a different way than the people in Galilee. Because of this, the girl knew Peter lived in Galilee. This was the same place where Jesus and his disciples lived.

See: Disciple

See Map: Galilee

Why did Peter begin to curse and swear?

[14:71]

Peter wanted this girl to think he was not a disciple of Jesus. He then swore and cursed himself. That is, he said that God needed to curse him if Peter was lying. He swore to her in the same way someone swears an oath to a judge.

See: Disciple; Swear (Oath); Curse

Mark 14:1

Connecting Statement:

Just two days before the Passover, the chief priests and scribes are secretly plotting to kill Jesus.

stealthily

without people noticing

Mark 14:2

For they were saying

The word "they" refers to the chief priests and the scribes.

Not during the festival

This refers to them not arresting Jesus during the festival.

Alternate translation: "We must not do it during the festival"

Mark 14:3

Connecting Statement:

Though some were angry that the oil was used to anoint Jesus, Jesus says that the woman has anointed his body for burial before he will die.

Simon the leper

This man previously had leprosy but was no longer ill. This is a different man than Simon Peter and Simon the Zealot.

he was reclining at the table

In Jesus's culture, when people gathered to eat, they reclined on their sides, propping themselves up on pillows beside a low table.

alabaster jar

This is a jar made from alabaster. Alabaster is a very expensive yellow-white stone. Alternate translation: "beautiful white stone jar"

of very expensive perfume, which was pure nard

"that contained expensive, fragrant perfume called nard."

Nard is a very expensive, sweet-smelling oil used to make perfume.

on his head

"on Jesus's head"

Mark 14:4

What is the reason for the waste of this perfume?

They asked this question to show that they disapproved of the woman pouring the perfume on Jesus. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is terrible that she wasted that perfume!"

Mark 14:5

This perfume could have been sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We could have sold this perfume" or "She could have sold this perfume"

three hundred denarii

"300 denarii." Denarius is the singular form of denarii. A denarius is a roman silver coin and it is worth one day's wage.

given to the poor

The phrase "the poor" refers to poor people. This refers to giving the money from the sale of the perfume to the poor. Alternate translation: "the money given to poor people"

Mark 14:6

Why are you troubling her?

Jesus rebukes the guests for questioning this woman's action. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not trouble her!"

Mark 14:7

the poor

This refers to poor people. Alternate translation: "poor people"

Mark 14:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 14:9

Truly I say to you

This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.

wherever the gospel is preached

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "wherever my followers preach the gospel"

what this woman has done will be spoken of

"what this woman has done will also be spoken of"

Mark 14:10

Connecting Statement:

After the woman anoints Jesus with perfume, Judas promises to deliver Jesus to the chief priests.

so that he might give him over to them

Judas did not deliver Jesus over to them yet, rather he went to make arrangements with them. Alternate translation: "in order to arrange with them that he would give Jesus over to them"

give him over

"bring him to them so they could capture him" or "put him in their power" or "betray him"

Mark 14:11

When the chief priests heard it

It may be helpful to state clearly what the chief priests heard. Alternate translation: "When the chief priests heard what he was willing to do for them"

to give him money

"to give him silver coins"

give him over to them

"put them in their power" or "betray him to them"

Mark 14:12

Connecting Statement:

Jesus sends two of the disciples to prepare the Passover meal.

when they sacrificed the Passover lamb

At the beginning of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, it was customary to sacrifice a lamb. Alternate translation: "when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb"

eat the Passover

Here the "Passover" refers to the Passover meal. Alternate translation: "eat the Passover meal"

Mark 14:13

bearing a pitcher of water

"carrying a large jar full of water"

Mark 14:14

The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room ... with my disciples?"

This can be written as an indirect quote. Translate this so that it is a polite request. Alternate translation: "Our Teacher would like to know where the guest room is where he may eat the Passover with his disciples."

guest room

a room for visitors

Mark 14:15

Make the preparations for us there

They were to prepare the meal for Jesus and his disciples to eat. Alternate translation: "Prepare the meal for us there"

Mark 14:16

The disciples left

"The two disciples left"

as he had said

"as Jesus had said"

Mark 14:17

Connecting Statement:

That evening as Jesus and the disciples eat the Passover meal, Jesus tells them that one of them will betray him.

he came with the twelve

It may be helpful to state where they came to. Alternate translation: "he came with the twelve to the house"

Mark 14:18

lying down at the table

In Jesus's culture, when people gathered to eat, they lay down on their sides, propping themselves up on pillows beside a low table.

Truly I say to you

This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.

Mark 14:19

one by one

This means that "one at a time" each disciple asked him.

Surely not I?

Possible meanings are 1) this was a question for which the disciples expected the answer to be no or 2) this was a rhetorical question that did not require a response.

Alternate translation: "Surely I am not the one who will betray you!"

Mark 14:20

It is one of the twelve, the one now

"He is one of the twelve of you, the one now"

dipping bread with me in the bowl

In Jesus's culture, people would often eat bread, dipping it in a shared bowl of sauce or of oil mixed with herbs.

Mark 14:21

For the Son of Man will go as it is written about him

Here Jesus refers to the scriptures prophesying about his death. If you have a polite way to talk about death in your language, use it here. Alternate translation: "For the Son of Man will die in the way that the scriptures say"

it is written

"the scripture says" or "as they wrote in the scripture"

through whom the Son of Man is betrayed

This can be stated more directly. Alternate translation:
"who betrays the Son of Man"

Mark 14:22

bread

This was a flat loaf of unleavened bread, which was eaten as part of the Passover meal.

broke it

This means that he broke the bread into pieces for the people to eat. Alternate translation: "broke it into pieces"

Take this. This is my body

"Take this bread. It is my body." Though most understand this to mean that the bread is a symbol of Jesus's body and that it is not actual flesh, it is best to translate this statement literally.

Mark 14:23

He took a cup

Here "cup" is a metonym for wine. Alternate translation:

"He took the cup of wine"

Mark 14:24

This is my blood of the covenant, the blood that is poured out for many
The covenant is for the forgiveness of sins. This can be written more explicitly. Alternate translation: "This is my blood that confirms the covenant, the blood that is poured out so that many may receive the forgiveness of sins"

This is my blood

"This wine is my blood." Though most understand this to mean that the wine is a symbol of Jesus's blood and that it is not actual blood, it is best to translate this statement literally.

Mark 14:25

Truly I say to you

This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.

fruit of the vine

"wine." This is a descriptive way to refer to wine.

new

Possible meanings are 1) "again" or 2) "in a new way"

Mark 14:26

hymn

A hymn is a type of song. It was traditional for them to sing an Old Testament psalm.

Mark 14:27

Jesus said to them

"Jesus said to his disciples"

will fall away

This is an idiom that means leave. Alternate translation:

"will leave me"

I will strike

"kill." Here "I" refers to God.

the sheep will be scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will scatter the sheep"

Mark 14:28

I am raised up

This idiom means that God will cause Jesus to become alive again after he has died. This can be written in active form. Alternate translation: "God raises me from the dead" or "God makes me alive again"

I will go ahead of you

"I will go before you"

Mark 14:29

all fall away

"everyone else falls away" or "everyone else leaves you"

Mark 14:30

Truly I say to you

This indicates that the statement that follows is especially true and important. See how you translated this in Mark 3:28.

rooster crows

The rooster is a male bird that calls out loudly very early in the morning. When he makes that sound he "crows."

twice

two times

you will deny me

"you will say that you do not know me"

Mark 14:31

said emphatically

"said insistently" or "said strongly"

If I must die

"Even if I must die"

They all made the same promise

This means that all of the disciples said the same thing that Peter said.

Mark 14:32

Connecting Statement:

When they go to Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, Jesus encourages three of his disciples to stay awake while he prays. Twice he awakens them, and the third time he tells them to wake up because it is time for the betrayal.

They came to the place

The word "they" refers to Jesus and his disciples.

Mark 14:33

distressed

overwhelmed with sorrow

deeply troubled

The word "deeply" refers to Jesus being greatly troubled in his soul. Alternate translation: "extremely troubled"

Mark 14:34

My soul is

Jesus speaks of himself as his "soul." Alternate translation: "I am"

even to the point of death

Jesus is exaggerating because he feels so much distress and sorrow that he feels like he is about to die, though he knows he will not die until after the sun rises.

watch

The disciples were to stay alert while Jesus prayed. This does not mean that they were supposed to watch Jesus pray.

Mark 14:35

if it were possible

This means that if God would allow it to happen. Alternate translation: "if God would allow it"

the hour might pass

Here "this hour" refers to Jesus's time of suffering, both now in the garden and later. Alternate translation: "that he would not have to go through this time of suffering"

Mark 14:36

Abba
a term used by Jewish children to address their father.
Since it is followed by "Father," it is best to transliterate this word.

Father
This is an important title for God.

Remove this cup from me
Jesus speaks of the suffering that he must endure as if it were a cup.

But not my will, but yours
Jesus is asking God to do what he wants to be done and not what Jesus wants. Alternate translation: "But do not do what I want, do what you want"

Mark 14:37
found them sleeping
The word "them" refers to Peter, James, and John.
Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch for one hour?
Jesus rebukes Simon Peter for sleeping. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Simon, you are asleep when I told you to stay awake. You could not even stay awake for one hour."

Mark 14:38
that you do not enter into temptation
Jesus speaks of being tempted as if it were entering into a physical place. Alternate translation: "that you are not tempted"

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak
Jesus warns Simon Peter that he is not strong enough to do what he wants to do in his own strength. Alternate translation: "You are willing in your spirit, but you are too weak to do what you want to do" or "You want to do what I say, but you are weak"

The spirit ... the flesh
These refer to two different aspects of Peter. "The spirit" is his inmost desires. "The flesh" is his human ability and strength.

Mark 14:39
used the same words
"prayed again what he prayed before"

Mark 14:40
found them sleeping
The word "them" refers to Peter, James, and John.
for their eyes were heavy
Here the author speaks of a sleepy person having a hard time keeping his eyes open as having "heavy eyes."
Alternate translation: "for they were so sleepy they were having a hard time keeping their eyes open"

Mark 14:41
He came the third time
Jesus had gone and prayed again. Then he returned to them a third time. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Then he went and prayed again. He returned the third time"

Are you still sleeping and taking your rest?
Jesus rebukes his disciples for not staying awake and praying. You can translate this rhetorical question as a statement if needed. Alternate translation: "You are still sleeping and resting!"

The hour has come

The time of Jesus's suffering and betrayal is about to begin.

Look!
"Listen!"

The Son of Man is being betrayed
Jesus warns his disciples that his betrayer is approaching them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am being betrayed"

Mark 14:42
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 14:43
one of the twelve
"one of the twelve disciples"

Mark 14:44
General Information:
Here Mark gives background information about how Judas had arranged with the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus.
his betrayer
This refers to Judas.

The one I kiss is the man
Here "the man" refers to the man that Judas was going to identify. Alternate translation: "The man I kiss is the one you want"

Mark 14:45
he kissed him
"Judas kissed him"

Mark 14:46
laid hands on him and seized him
These two phrases have the same meaning to emphasize that they seized Jesus. Alternate translation: "grabbed Jesus and seized him" or "seized him"

Mark 14:47
who stood by
"who was standing nearby"

Mark 14:48
Jesus said to them
"Jesus said to the crowd"

Do you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to arrest me?
Jesus is rebuking the crowd. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "It is ridiculous that you come here to seize me with swords and clubs, as if I were a robber!"

Mark 14:49
But this was done that
"But this has happened so that"

Mark 14:50
All those with Jesus
This refers to the disciples.

Mark 14:51
linen
cloth made from the fibers of a flax plant
that was wrapped around him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that he had wrapped around himself"

When the men seized him
"When the men seized that man"

Mark 14:52
he left the linen garment

Because the man was trying to run away, the others would have grabbed at his clothing, trying to stop him.

Mark 14:53

Connecting Statement:

After the crowd of the chief priests, scribes, and elders lead Jesus to the high priest, Peter watches nearby while some stand to give false testimony against Jesus.

There were gathered with him all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes

This can be reordered so that it is easier to understand. "All of the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes had gathered there together"

Mark 14:54

Now

This word is used here to mark a change in the story as the author tells us about Peter.

as far as the courtyard of the high priest

As Peter followed Jesus, he stopped at the high priest's courtyard. This can be written clearly. Alternate translation: "and he went as far as the courtyard of the high priest"

He sat among the officers

Peter sat with the officers who were working at the courtyard. Alternate translation: "He sat in the courtyard among the officers"

the officers

These were probably the servants of the "the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes" (Mark 14:54).

Mark 14:55

Now

This word is used here to mark a change in the story as the author returns to telling us about Jesus being put on trial.

they might put him to death

They were not the ones who would execute Jesus; rather, they would order someone else to do it. Alternate translation: "they might have Jesus executed" or "they might have someone execute Jesus"

But they did not find any

They did not find testimony against Jesus with which they could convict him and have him put to death. Alternate translation: "But they did not find any testimony with which to convict him"

Mark 14:56

brought false testimony against him

Here speaking false testimony is described as if it were a physical object that someone can carry. Alternate translation: "accused him by speaking false testimony against him"

their testimony did not agree

"they contradicted each other"

Mark 14:57

brought false testimony against him

Here speaking false testimony is described as if it were a physical object that someone can carry. Alternate translation: "accused him by speaking false testimony against him"

Mark 14:58

We heard him say

"We heard Jesus say." The word "we" refers to the people

who brought false testimony against Jesus and does not include the people to whom they are speaking.

made with hands ... made without hands

Here "hands" refers to men. Alternate translation: "made by men ... without man's help" or "built by men ... without man's help"

in three days

"within three days." This means that the temple would be built within a three-day period.

will build another

The word "temple" is understood from the previous phrase. It may be repeated. Alternate translation: "will build another temple"

Mark 14:59

their testimony did not agree

"these witnesses contradicted each other"

Mark 14:60

Connecting Statement:

When Jesus answers that he is the Christ, the high priest and all of the leaders there condemn him as one who deserves to die.

stood up among them

Jesus stands up in the middle of the angry crowd to speak to them. Translate this to show who was present when Jesus stood up to speak. Alternate translation: "stood up among the chief priests, scribes, and elders"

Have you no answer? What is it these men testify against you?

The chief priest is not asking Jesus for information about what the witnesses said. He is asking Jesus to prove what the witnesses said is wrong. Alternate translation: "Are you not going to reply? What do you say in response to the testimony these men are speaking against you?"

Mark 14:61

the Son of the Blessed One

Here God is called "the Blessed One." It is best to translate "Son" with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a "son" of a human father. Alternate translation: "the Son of God"

Mark 14:62

I am

This likely has a double meaning: 1) to respond to the high priest's question and 2) to call himself "I Am," which is what God called himself in the Old Testament.

he sits at the right hand of power

Here "power" is a metonym that represents God. To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "he sits in the place of honor beside the all-powerful God"

comes with the clouds of heaven

Here the clouds are described as accompanying Jesus when he returns. Alternate translation: "when he comes down through the clouds in the sky"

Mark 14:63

tore his garments

The high priest tore his clothes purposefully to show his outrage and horror at what Jesus has said. Alternate translation: "tore his garments in outrage"

Do we still need witnesses?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation:

"We certainly do not need any more people who will testify against this man!"

Mark 14:64

You have heard the blasphemy

This refers to what Jesus said, which the high priest called blasphemy. Alternate translation: "You have heard the blasphemy he has spoken"

They all

all the people in the room

Mark 14:65

Some began to

some of the people in the room

to cover his face

They covered his face with a cloth or blindfold, so he could not see. Alternate translation: "to cover his face with a blindfold"

Prophecy

They mocked him, asking him to prophesy who was hitting him. Alternate translation: "Prophecy who hit you"

officers

men who guarded the governor's house

Mark 14:66

Connecting Statement:

As Jesus had predicted, Peter denies Jesus three times before the rooster crows.

below in the courtyard

"outside in the courtyard"

one of the servant girls of the high priest

The servant girls worked for the high priest. Alternate translation: "one of the servant girls who worked for the high priest"

Mark 14:67

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 14:68

denied

This means to claim that something is not true. In this case, Peter was saying that what the servant girl said about him was not true.

neither know nor understand what you are talking about

Both "know" and "understand" have the same meaning here. The meaning is repeated to add emphasis to what Peter is saying. Alternate translation: "I really do not understand what you are talking about"

Mark 14:69

the servant girl

This is the same servant girl who identified Peter previously.

one of them

The people were identifying Peter as one of Jesus's disciples. This can be made clearer. Alternate translation: "one of Jesus's disciples" or "one of those who have been with that man they arrested"

Mark 14:70

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 14:71

to put himself under curses

If in your language you have to name the person who curses someone, state God. Alternate translation: "to say for God to curse him"

Mark 14:72

rooster immediately crowed

The rooster is a male bird that calls out loudly very early in the morning. If he has made that sound he has "crowed."

a second time

"Second" here is an ordinal number.

he broke down

This idiom means that he was overwhelmed with grief and lost control of his emotions. Alternate translation: "he was overwhelmed with grief" or "he lost control of his emotions"

Chapter 15

Mark 15 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The curtain of the temple was split in two"

The curtain in the temple was an important symbol that showed that people needed to have someone speak to God for them. They could not speak to God directly because all people are sinful and God hates sin. God split the curtain to show that Jesus's people can now speak to God directly because Jesus has paid for their sins.

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([Mark 15:46](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Sarcasm

Both by pretending to worship Jesus ([Mark 15:19](#)) and by pretending to speak to a king ([Mark 15:18](#)), the soldiers and the Jews showed that they hated Jesus and did not believe that he was the Son of God. (See: and mock)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?

This is a phrase in Aramaic. Mark transliterates its sounds by writing them using Greek letters. He then explains its meaning.

Links:

[Mark 15:1 Notes](#)

Mark 15

15:1-15

What was the Jewish council?

[15:1]

See: Jewish Council (sanhedrin); Chief Priest; Elder; Scribe

Why did the Jewish leaders take Jesus to Pilate?

[15:1]

Pilate was a Roman leader of Jerusalem. At this time, the Jews were not allowed to kill someone if the person was guilty of a crime. Therefore, the Jewish leaders needed permission from Pilate to have Jesus killed.

Why did Pilate ask Jesus if Jesus was the king of the Jews?

[15:2]

The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus because they said he spoke blasphemy against God (see: Matthew 27:1-2; Luke 22:66-71). However, the Jewish leaders did not tell Pilate that Jesus was blaspheming God. Instead, they said that Jesus said he was the king of the Jews. Blasphemy of God was not wrong for the Romans. However, they killed people who rebelled against the Romans.

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

Why did Jesus not answer Pilate?

[15:5]

Jesus did not answer Pilate because he did not do anything wrong. He also knew he needed to die for people's sins. This also fulfilled a prophecy of Isaiah (see: Isaiah 53:7). This made Pilate think that Jesus was not guilty of the things the Jewish leaders said he did.

See: Sin; Atonement (Atonement); Fulfill (Fulfillment)

What was the feast?

[15:6]

Mark wrote about a feast. This was the passover festival.

See: Passover

Why did Pilate release a prisoner?

[15:6]

In ancient Israel, the Roman leader released a prisoner during the Jewish passover festival. This helped make peace between the Romans and the Jews.

See: Passover

Who did Pilate want the people to release from prison?

[15:9]

Pilate did not think Jesus was guilty. However, he did not want to make the Jewish leaders angry. Therefore, he tried to get the people to free Jesus. However, they did not want Jesus to live. They told Pilate to kill Jesus.

How was someone crucified?

[15:13]

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

How was Jesus scourged?

[15:15]

Pilate told soldiers scourge Jesus. That is, they beat him very badly. Some scholars think that scourging a person made them die faster after they were crucified. Other scholars think Pilate had Jesus scourged so the Jewish leaders would have pity for Jesus. He hoped the Jews would not want Jesus crucified after this (see: John 19:1-15).

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

15:16-21

Where did the soldiers take Jesus?

[15:16]

The soldiers took Jesus to the courtyard where a Roman leader lived. The courtyard was a large area outside of a home where many people gathered.

How many soldiers are a cohort?

[15:16]

There were about 600 soldiers in a cohort.

How did the soldiers mock Jesus?

[15:20]

The soldiers placed a purple robe on Jesus. They did this to mock Jesus. In ancient times, kings wore purple clothes. This was because it was very expensive to make purple clothes. They also put a crown on Jesus. They also did this to mock Jesus. Kings wore crowns. However, this crown had large thorns, so it hurt Jesus. The soldiers also mocked Jesus by saluting him in the way they saluted a king. They also hit Jesus with a staff. Kings held a special staff. They also bowed to Jesus in the same way they would have bowed to their king.

Where was Cyrene?

[15:21]

See Map: Cyrene

15:22-32

Where was Golgotha?

[15:22]

Golgotha was a place outside of the wall of the city of Jerusalem. In English, this place is often called “calvary.” It was a hill that looked like a person’s skull.

Why did the soldiers give Jesus wine mixed with myrrh?

[15:23]

The soldiers gave Jesus something to drink. People thought that this would stop pain. However, Jesus did not want to drink the mixed wine.

What is casting lots?

[15:24]

See: Cast Lots

Why did the soldiers make a sign?

[15:26]

The soldiers made a sign. This sign told people that Jesus was killed for saying that he was the king of the Jews.

Did Mark write the words found in verse 28?

[15:28]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words found in 15:28. A greater number of older copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. Therefore, most translations do not have these words.

How did the people insult Jesus?

[15:29]

The people insulted Jesus while he died. They mocked him because they did not know what he said when he said that he would destroy and rebuild the temple. They thought he spoke about the temple building. However, it was a metaphor. He wanted people to know that he would die and be resurrected in three days. They also mocked Jesus and told him to come off the cross if he was God. They spoke against Jesus because they did not believe he was the Son of God.

See: Metaphor; Temple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Cross; Son of God

How did the Jewish leaders mock Jesus?

[15:31]

The Jewish leaders mocked Jesus in the same way people mocked him. They wanted Jesus to do something so they would know that he was the messiah. However, he did not listen to them. Jesus knew that his death on the cross was part of the work that God the Father sent him to do.

See: Messiah (Christ); Cross; Atone (Atonement)

15:33-37

When was the sixth hour?

[15:33]

The sixth hour was about 12pm.

When was the ninth hour?

The ninth hour was about 3pm.

Why did Jesus cry out about God had forsaken him?

[15:34]

As Jesus died, people’s sins were placed on him in some way. He was separated from God in some way for the first time. Jesus fulfilled prophecy with these words. In Psalm 22, David cried out to God. Jesus quoted the beginning of this Psalm so the people would know that he was the fulfillment of this prophecy.

See: Sin; Atone (Atonement); Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy)

Why did people think Jesus was calling for Elijah?

[15:35]

When Jesus said, “Eli,” the people thought they heard Jesus calling to Elijah to help him.

15:38-47

Why did the temple curtain split into two pieces?

[15:38]

In the temple, there was a curtain that separated the most holy place from everything else. It was the place where the high priest went once a year to give a sacrifice to God. God was in this place in a certain way. The curtain was so big and thick that it could not be torn. When Jesus died, it tore. This was a metaphor. It allowed everyone to know that nothing separated people from God anymore after Jesus died.

See: Temple; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); High Priest; Sacrifice; Metaphor; Atonement (Atonement)

Why did the Roman soldier think Jesus was the son of God?

[15:39]

The Roman soldier thought Jesus was the son of God. Some scholars think the soldier believed that Jesus was God. More scholars think that he said that Jesus was a very great man whom God blessed. Mark wanted people to think about how the Roman soldier believed the truth about Jesus even though the Jewish leaders did not.

See: Son of God; Jesus is God; Bless (Blessing)

Where was Galilee?

[15:41]

See Map: Galilee

Why did Jesus need to be buried before the sun went down?

[15:42]

According to the Law of Moses, a dead body needed to be buried before the sun set.

See: Deuteronomy 21:23

See: Law of Moses

How was Joseph of Arimathea waiting for the kingdom of God?

[15:43]

Joseph of Arimathea was a pharisee, but he believed in Jesus (see: John 19:38). He believed what Jesus taught about the kingdom of God.

See: Pharisees; Kingdom of God

Why was Pilate amazed that Jesus was dead?

[15:44]

Pilate was amazed that Jesus was dead because he died very fast. Jesus was beaten and very weak when he was placed on the cross. When most people were put on a cross it took a long time for them to die, sometimes two or three days.

See: Cross

Why did Joseph wrap Jesus' body in a linen cloth and put it into a tomb?

[15:46]

Joseph of Arimathea wrapped Jesus' body in linen cloth to prepare him to be buried. At that time, people wrapped a body in linen cloths with strong smelling spices. When Jesus' body was ready to be buried, it was put into a tomb. This honored the person who had died.

Why did Joseph place a large stone in front of the entrance to the tomb?

[15:46]

Joseph placed a very large stone in front of the entrance to the tomb. This kept people and animals out of the tomb.

Mark 15:1

Connecting Statement:

When the chief priests, the elders, the scribes, and the council give Jesus over to Pilate, they accuse Jesus of doing many bad things. When Pilate asks if what they had said is true, Jesus does not answer him.

they bound Jesus and led him away

They commanded for Jesus to be bound, but it would have been the guards who actually bound him and led him away. Alternate translation: "they commanded for Jesus to be bound and then he was led away" or "they commanded the guards to bind Jesus and then they led him away"

They handed him over to Pilate

They had Jesus led to Pilate and transferred control of Jesus over to him.

Mark 15:2

You say so

Possible meanings are 1) by saying this, Jesus was saying that Pilate, not Jesus, was the one calling him the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "You yourself have said so"

or 2) by saying this, Jesus implied that he is the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "Yes, as you said, I am" or "Yes. It is as you said"

Mark 15:3

were accusing him of many things

"were saying that Jesus had done many bad things"

Mark 15:4

Pilate again asked him

"Pilate asked Jesus again"

Do you give no answer

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Do you have an answer"

See

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

Mark 15:5

that amazed him

It surprised Pilate that Jesus did not reply and defend himself.

Mark 15:6

Connecting Statement:

Pilate, hoping the crowd will choose Jesus, offers to release a prisoner, but the crowd asks for Barabbas instead.

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the story as the author tells background information about Pilate's tradition of releasing a prisoner at feasts and about Barabbas.

Mark 15:7

General Information:

The writer continues giving background information that will enable the reader to understand the part of the story that follows.

the rebels who had committed murder during the rebellion

The writer writes as though he believes that the readers know which rebels and which rebellion he is talking about, not as though he is introducing new participants to the story.

Mark 15:8

to do for them as he had done in the past

This refers to Pilate releasing a prisoner at feasts. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "to release a prisoner to them as he had done in the past"

Mark 15:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 15:10

For he knew that it was because of envy ... Jesus over to him

This is background information about why Jesus was handed over to Pilate.

it was because of envy that the chief priests

They envied Jesus, probably because so many people were following him and becoming his disciples. Alternate translation: "the chief priests were envious of Jesus. This is why they" or "the chief priests were envious of Jesus's popularity among the people. This is why they"

Mark 15:11

stirred up the crowd

The author speaks of the chief priests rousing or urging the crowd as if the crowd were a bowl of something that they were stirring. Alternate translation: "roused the crowd" or "urged the crowd"

released instead

They requested Barabbas to be released instead of Jesus.

Alternate translation: "released instead of Jesus"

Mark 15:12

Connecting Statement:

The crowd asks for Jesus's death, so Pilate turns him over to the soldiers, who mock him, crown him with thorns, strike him, and lead him out to crucify him.

What then should I do with the King of the Jews

Pilate asks what he should do with Jesus if he releases Barabbas to them. This can be written clearly. Alternate translation: "If I release Barabbas, what then should I do with the King of the Jews"

Mark 15:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 15:14

Pilate said to them

"Pilate said to the crowd"

Mark 15:15

to satisfy the crowd

"make the crowd happy by doing what they wanted him to do"

He scourged Jesus

Pilate did not actually scourge Jesus but rather his soldiers did.

scourged

"flogged." To "scourge" is to beat with an especially painful whip.

then handed him over to be crucified

Pilate told his soldiers to take Jesus away to crucify him.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"told his soldiers to take him away and crucify him"

Mark 15:16

the courtyard (which is the government headquarters)

This was where the Roman soldiers in Jerusalem lived, and where the governor stayed when he was in Jerusalem.

Alternate translation: "the courtyard of the soldiers' barracks" or "the courtyard of the governor's residence"

the whole company of soldiers

"the whole unit of soldiers" "the whole cohort of soldiers"

Mark 15:17

They put a purple robe on Jesus

Purple was a color worn by royalty. The soldiers did not believe that Jesus was king. They clothed him this way to mock him because others said that he was the King of the Jews.

a crown of thorns

"a crown made of thorny branches"

Mark 15:18

began to salute him

The reader should understand that they were mocking Jesus by pretending to salute him.

Hail, King of the Jews

The greeting "Hail" with a raised hand was only used to greet the Roman emperor. The soldiers did not believe that Jesus was the king of the Jews. Rather they said this to mock him.

Mark 15:19

a reed

"a stick" or "a staff"

went to their knees

"kneeled" or "knelt" or "got on their knees"

Mark 15:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 15:21

Simon ... Alexander ... Rufus

These are names of men.

Cyrene

This is the name of a place.

from the country

"from outside the city"

he was the father of Alexander and Rufus

This is background information about the man whom the soldiers forced to carry Jesus's cross.

they forced him to carry his cross

According to Roman law, a soldier could force a man he came upon along the road to carry a load. In this case, they forced Simon to carry Jesus's cross.

Mark 15:22

Connecting Statement:

The soldiers bring Jesus to Golgotha, where they crucify him with two others. Many people mock him.

Place of a Skull

"Skull Place" or "Place of the Skull." This the name of a place. It does not mean that there are lots of skulls there.

Skull

A skull is the head bones, or a head without any flesh on it.

Mark 15:23

wine mixed with myrrh

It may be helpful to explain that myrrh is a pain-relieving medicine. Alternate translation: "wine mixed with a medicine called myrrh" or "wine mixed with a pain-relieving medicine called myrrh"

Mark 15:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 15:25

the third hour

"Third" here is a ordinal number. This refers to nine o'clock in the morning. Alternate translation: "nine o'clock in the morning"

Mark 15:26

On a sign

The soldiers attached this sign to the cross above Jesus.

Alternate translation: "They attached to the cross above Jesus's head a sign on which"

the charge against him

"the crime they were accusing him of doing"

Mark 15:27

one on the right of him and one on his left

This can be written more clearly. Alternate translation:

"one on a cross on the right side of him and one on a cross on the left side of him"

Mark 15:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 15:29

shaking their heads

This action showed that the people disapproved of Jesus.

Aha!

This is a exclamation of mockery. Use the appropriate exclamation in your language.

You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days

The people refer to Jesus by what he earlier prophesied that he would do. Alternate translation: "You who said you would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days"

Mark 15:30

General Information:

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Mark 15:31

In the same way

This refers to the way that the people who were walking by Jesus were mocking him.

were mocking him with each other

"were saying mocking things about Jesus among themselves"

Mark 15:32

Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down

The leaders did not believe that Jesus is the Christ, the King of Israel. Alternate translation: "He calls himself the Christ and the King of Israel. So let him come down" or "If he is really the Christ and the King of Israel, he should come down"

believe

The means to believe in Jesus. Alternate translation:

"believe in him"

insulted

mocked, slandered

Mark 15:33

the sixth hour

This refers to noon or 12 p.m.

darkness came over the whole land

Here the author describes it becoming dark outside as if the darkness were a wave that moved over the land. Alternate translation: "the whole land became dark"

Mark 15:34

At the ninth hour

This refers to three o'clock in the afternoon. Alternate translation: "At three o'clock in the afternoon" or "In the middle of the afternoon"

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani

These are Aramaic words that should be copied as is into your language with similar sounds.

is interpreted

"means"

Mark 15:35

Some of those standing by heard his words and said

It can be stated clearly that they misunderstood what Jesus said. Alternate translation: "When some of those standing there heard his words, they misunderstood and said"

Mark 15:36

sour wine

"vinegar"

reed staff

"stick." This was a staff made from a reed.

gave it to him

"gave it to Jesus." The man held up the staff so that Jesus could drink wine from the sponge. Alternate translation: "held it up to Jesus"

Mark 15:37

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 15:38

The curtain of the temple was split in two

Mark is showing that God himself split the temple curtain.

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God split the curtain of the temple in two"

Mark 15:39

the centurion

This is the centurion who supervised the soldiers who crucified Jesus.

who stood and faced Jesus

Here "faced" is an idiom that means to look towards someone. Alternate translation: "who stood in front of Jesus"

that he had died in this way

"how Jesus had died" or "the way Jesus had died"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Mark 15:40

looked on from a distance

"watched from far away"

(the mother of James ... and of Joses)

"who was the mother of James ... and of Joses." This can be written without the parentheses.

James the younger

"the younger James." This man was referred to as "the younger" probably to distinguish him from another man named James.

Joses

This Joses was not that same person as the younger brother of Jesus. See how you translated the same name in [Mark 6:3]

Salome

Salome is the name of a woman.

Mark 15:41

When he was in Galilee, they followed him ... with him to Jerusalem

"When Jesus was in Galilee, these women followed him ... with him to Jerusalem." This is background information about the women who watched the crucifixion from a distance.

came up with him to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for people to speak of going up to Jerusalem and going down from it.

Mark 15:42

Connecting Statement:

Joseph of Arimathea asks Pilate for the body of Jesus, which he wraps in linen and puts in a tomb.

evening had come

Here evening is spoken of as if it were something that is able to "come" from one place to another. Alternate translation: "it had become evening" or "it was evening"

Mark 15:43

Joseph of Arimathea came there. He was a respected

The phrase "came there" refers to Joseph coming to Pilate, which is also described after the background information is given, but his coming is referenced before for emphasis and to help introduce him to the story. There may be a

different way to do this in your language. Alternate translation: "Joseph of Arimathea was a respected"

Joseph of Arimathea

"Joseph from Arimathea." Joseph is the name of a man, and Arimathea is the name of the place he is from.

He was a respected member of the council ... for the kingdom of God

This is background information about Joseph.

went in to Pilate

"went to Pilate" or "went in to where Pilate was"

asked for the body of Jesus

It can be stated clearly that he wanted to get the body so that he could bury it. Alternate translation: "asked for permission to get the body of Jesus in order to bury it"

Mark 15:44

Pilate was amazed that Jesus was already dead; he called the centurion

When Pilate heard that Jesus was dead, he was surprised, so he asked the centurion if it was true. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Pilate was amazed when he heard that Jesus was already dead, so he called the centurion"

Mark 15:45

he gave the body to Joseph

"he permitted Joseph to take Jesus's body"

Mark 15:46

linen

Linen is cloth made from the fibers of a flax plant. See how you translated this in Mark 14:51.

He took him down ... Then he rolled a stone

You may need to make explicit that Joseph probably had help from other people when he took Jesus's body down from the cross, prepared it for the tomb, and closed the tomb. Alternate translation: "He and others took him down ... Then they rolled a stone"

a tomb that had been cut out of a rock

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a tomb that someone had previously cut out of solid rock"

a stone against

"a huge flat stone in front of"

Mark 15:47

Joses

This Joses was not that same person as the younger brother of Jesus. See how you translated the same name in [Mark 6:3]

the place where Jesus was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place where Joseph and the others buried Jesus's body"

Chapter 16

Mark 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([Mark 15:46](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

A young man dressed in a white robe

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing with the women at Jesus's tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels were in human form. Two of the authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULB without trying to make the passages all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 28:1-2](#) and [Mark 16:5](#) and [Luke 24:4](#) and [John 20:12](#))

Links:

[Mark 16:1 Notes](#)

Mark 16

16:1-11

What was the Sabbath?

[16:1]

See: Sabbath

Why did these women bring spices to anoint the body?

[16:1]

The women brought spices to anoint Jesus' body. In ancient Israel, people did this to someone after they died. They did not think Jesus would be made alive again. The spices were used to stop the body from smelling bad. People did this for people they loved when the person died.

See: Anoint (Anointing)

What day was the first day of the week?

[16:2]

The Sabbath began on Friday at sunset and ended Saturday at sunset. The day after the sabbath was the first day of the week. This day began on Saturday at sunset and ended on Sunday at sunset.

See: Sabbath

Why did the women need someone to roll the stone away?

[16:3]

The stone in front of Jesus' tomb was very large. It was so large three women could not move it. Therefore, they needed several men to move it.

Who was the man in the tomb?

[16:5]

The man in the tomb was an angel.

See: Angel; White (symbol)

Where was Nazareth?

[16:6]

See Map: Nazareth

How was Jesus crucified?

[16:6]

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

How was Jesus resurrected?

[16:6]

The man in the tomb said that Jesus was risen. That is, Jesus was resurrected and was alive again.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Where was Galilee?

[16:7]

See Map: Galilee

Why did the man say, "just as he told you"?

[16:7]

The man said that Jesus was resurrected, "just as he told you." Jesus told people that he was going to be resurrected after he died. He also said he would go to Galilee (see: 14:28). They did not understand what he said. Or perhaps they did not believe it when he said it.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

See Map: Galilee

Did Mark write the words of 16:9-20?

[16:9]

The oldest copies of the Greek New Testament do not have the words written in Mark 16:9-20. Other ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do have these words. Therefore, some scholars do not think Mark wrote these words. They think some ancient scholars added these words to the ending of Mark's gospel. Perhaps they did this to make the gospel end in a different way. That is, so the gospel would tell people about Jesus' resurrection. Other scholars think Mark wrote these

words. Perhaps an early copy of Mark's gospel lost its last page and people made copies of this without the last page.

See: Gospel; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

How did Jesus cast out demons?

[16:9]

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why were people mourning and weeping?

[16:10]

People were mourning and weeping because they were sad. They were sad that Jesus died. They did not know that he promised to be resurrected. They also did not know that he was resurrected. When they heard that Jesus was alive, they did not believe the women. They thought the women lied because people did not become alive after they died.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

16:12-20

How did Jesus appear in a different form?

[16:12]

Jesus joined two people walking. Scholars think these people saw Jesus before he died. However, Jesus looked different from the first time they saw him. So they did not know it was Jesus (see: Luke 24:13-32).

Why were the disciples called the eleven?

[16:14]

People called the disciples the eleven. This is because Judas Iscariot was not a disciple anymore.

See: Disciple

Why did the disciples recline at the table?

[16:14]

The disciples reclined at the table because they were eating.

See: Disciple

What did Jesus tell the disciples to do?

[16:15]

Jesus wanted the disciples to go tell everyone they could that Jesus was made alive again. He wanted them to tell everyone about the gospel. When Jesus said "the entire creation," he wanted everyone in the world to know these things.

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Gospel

How is someone who is baptized saved?

[16:16]

Jesus said that whoever believes in him and is baptized will be saved. When someone believes in Jesus, they are at peace with God and will live with him forever. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about being baptized by the Holy Spirit. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about being baptized with water.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Heaven

How is someone who does not believe in Jesus condemned?

[16:16]

People who do not believe in Jesus are condemned. That is, they are punished and will live forever in hell.

See: Hell

What is casting out demons?

[16:17]

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

How will Christians be able to speak in new languages?

[16:17]

See: Speaking in Tongues

Were Christians able to be poisoned without getting sick?

[16:18]

Jesus talked about Christians being poisoned. He said that Christians will be poisoned or bitten by poisonous snakes, but they will not die. The apostles did many miracles. These were signs so that other people would know that what they said came from God. Jesus did not talk about all Christians at all times.

See: Apostle; Miracle; Sign

Why is Jesus at the right hand of God in heaven?

[16:19]

See: Right Hand; Heaven

How did Jesus help the disciples when they preached?

[16:20]

The disciples went many places and told people about Jesus. Jesus helped them through the Holy Spirit. He also gave them the power to do miracles. These were signs that the things they taught were from God.

Mark 16:1

Connecting Statement:

On the first day of the week, women come early because they expect to use spices to anoint Jesus's body. They are surprised to see a young man who tells them Jesus is alive, but they are afraid and do not tell anyone.

When the Sabbath day was over

That is, after the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, had ended and the first day of the week had begun.

Mark 16:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 16:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 16:4

the stone had been rolled away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"someone had rolled away the stone"

Mark 16:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 16:6

He is risen!

The angel is emphatically stating that Jesus has risen from the dead. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "He arose!" or "God raised him from the dead!" or "He raised himself from the dead!"

Mark 16:7

General Information:

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Mark 16:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 16:9

Connecting Statement:

Jesus appears first to Mary Magdalene, who tells the disciples, then he appears to two others as they walk in the country, and later he appears to the eleven disciples.

on the first day of the week

"on Sunday"

Mark 16:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 16:11

They heard

"They heard Mary Magdalene say"

he had been seen by her

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Mary Magdalene had seen him" or "she had seen him"

Mark 16:12

he appeared in a different form to two of them

The "two of them" saw Jesus, but he looked different from how he had looked previously.

two of them

"two of his disciples"

Mark 16:13

they did not believe them

The rest of the disciples did not believe what the two who had been walking in the country said.

Mark 16:14

Connecting Statement:

When Jesus meets with the eleven, he rebukes them for their unbelief and tells them to go out into all the world to preach the gospel.

the eleven

These are the eleven apostles who remain after Judas has left them.

they were reclining at the table

This is a metonym for eating, which was the usual way people in that day ate meals. Alternate translation: "they were eating a meal"

reclining

In Jesus's culture, when people gathered to eat, they lay down on their sides, propping themselves up on pillows beside a low table.

hardness of heart

Jesus is rebuking his disciples because they would not believe in him. Translate this idiom so it is understood that the disciples were not believing Jesus. Alternate translation: "refusal to believe"

Mark 16:15

Go into all the world

Here "the world" is a metonym for the people in the world.

Alternate translation: "Go everywhere there are people"

the entire creation

This is an exaggeration and a metonym for people everywhere. Alternate translation: "absolutely everybody"

Mark 16:16

He who believes and is baptized will be saved

The word "He" refers to anyone. This sentence can be made active. Alternate translation: "God will save all people who believe and allow you to baptize them"

he who does not believe will be condemned

The word "he" refers to anyone. This clause can be made active. Alternate translation: "God will condemn all people who do not believe"

Mark 16:17

These signs will go with those who believe

Mark speaks of miracles as though they were people going along with the believers. Alternate translation: "People watching those who believe will see these things happen and know that I am with the believers"

In my name they

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is giving a general list: "In my name they will do things like these: They" or 2) Jesus is giving an exact list: "These are the things they will do in my name: They."

In my name

Here "name" is associated with Jesus's authority and power. See how "in your name" is translated in [Mark 9:38]

Mark 16:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Mark 16:19

he was taken up into heaven and sat

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God took him up into heaven, and he sat"

sat down at the right hand of God

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "sat in the place of honor beside God"

Mark 16:20

worked with them

worked together with them, helped them as they worked

confirmed the word

This idiom means they proved that their message was true.

Alternate translation: "showed that his message, which they were speaking, was true"

by the signs that went with them

"by enabling them wherever they went to do miracles that showed that they truly were his disciples"

Introduction to the Gospel of Luke

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Luke

Introduction and purpose for writing (1:1-4) Birth of Jesus and his preparation for his ministry (1:5-4:13) Jesus's ministry in Galilee (4:14-9:50) Jesus's journey to

Jerusalem Discipleship (9:51-11:13) Conflict and Jesus's grief (11:14-14:35) Parables about things that are lost and found.

Parables about honesty and dishonesty (15:1-16:31) Kingdom of God (17:1-19:27) Jesus's entry into Jerusalem (19:28-44)

Jesus in Jerusalem (19:45-21:4) Jesus's teaching about his second coming (21:5-36) Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection (22:1-24:53)

What is the Gospel of Luke about?

The Gospel of Luke is one of four books in the New Testament that describe some of the life of Jesus Christ. The authors of the gospels wrote about different aspects of who Jesus was and what he did. Luke wrote his gospel for a person named Theophilus. Luke wrote an accurate description of the life of Jesus so that Theophilus would be certain of what is true.

However, Luke expected the gospel to encourage all believers, not just Theophilus.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "The Gospel of Luke" or "The Gospel according to Luke." Or they may choose a title that may be clearer, for example, "The Good News about Jesus that Luke wrote."

Who wrote the Book of Luke?

This book does not give the name of the author. The same person who wrote this book also wrote the Book of Acts. In parts of the Book of Acts, the author uses the word "we." This indicates that the author traveled with Paul. Most scholars think that Luke was this person traveling with Paul. Therefore, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought Luke was the author of both the Book of Luke and the Book of Acts.

Luke was a medical doctor. His way of writing shows that he was an educated man. He was probably a Gentile. Luke himself probably did not witness what Jesus said and did. But he said that he talked to many people who did.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What are the roles of women in the Gospel of Luke?

Luke described women in a very positive way in his gospel. For example, he often showed women being more faithful to God than most men. (See: faithful)

Why does Luke write so much about the final week of Jesus's life?

Luke wrote much about Jesus's final week. He wanted his readers to think deeply about Jesus's final week and his death on the cross. He wanted people to understand that Jesus willingly died on the cross so that God could forgive them for sinning against him. (See: sin)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What are the Synoptic Gospels?

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels because they have many similar passages. The word "synoptic" means to "see together."

The texts are considered "parallel" when they are the same or almost the same among two or three gospels. When translating parallel passages, translators should use the same wording and make them as similar as possible.

Why does Jesus refer to himself as the "Son of Man"?

In the gospels, Jesus called himself the "Son of Man." It is a reference to Daniel 7:13-14. In this passage there is a person described as a "son of man." That means the person was someone who looked like a human being. God gave authority to the son of man to rule over the nations forever. And all the people will worship him forever.

Jews of Jesus's time did not use "Son of Man" as a title for anyone. Therefore, Jesus used it for himself to help them understand who he truly was. (See: sonofman)

Translating the title "Son of Man" can be difficult in many languages. Readers may misunderstand a literal translation.

Translators can consider alternatives, such as "The Human One." It may also be helpful to include a footnote to explain the title.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Luke?

The following verses are not in the earliest manuscripts. The ULB and UDB include these verses, but some other versions do not.

"Then an angel from heaven appeared to him, strengthening him. Being in agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." (22:43-44) "Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (23:34)

The following verse is not included in many modern versions. Some versions put it into square brackets. Translators are advised not to translate this verse. However, if in the translators' region there are older versions of the Bible that include this verse, the translators can include it. If they are translated, it should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that it was probably not original to Luke's Gospel.

"For he was required to release one prisoner during the feast" (23:17)

Chapter 1

Luke 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:46-55, 68-79.

Special concepts in this chapter

"He will be called John"

Most people in the ancient Near East would give a child the same name as someone in their family. People were surprised that Elizabeth and Zechariah named their son John, because there was no one else in their family with that name.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Luke's language is simple and straightforward. He does not use many figures of speech.

Links:

[Luke 1:1 Notes](#) [Luke intro](#)

Luke 1 Commentary

1:1-4

How did Luke begin his gospel?

[1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 1:4]

The first four verses of the Gospel of Luke introduce his gospel. Luke began his gospel in the same way that other people in ancient times began to write their own books. Like them, Luke said why he wrote his gospel, and how he wrote it.

See: Gospel

Who was Theophilus?

[1:3]

Luke wrote his gospel to someone named Theophilus. Luke called him "most excellent," so he showed that he respected him. Some scholars think that Theophilus was a government official. Some scholars have said that his name is perhaps a metaphor, because his name means "lover of God" or "friend of God." These scholars believe that his name showed that Luke wrote his gospel to anyone who wanted to love God or be a friend of God.

Luke did not call Theophilus a brother, so some scholars think that he was not a Christian. However, someone had taught Theophilus about Jesus. Perhaps Luke considered him to be in the group of Christians whom he called "us" in verses 1-2. Scholars do not know anything else about Theophilus.

See: Name

Folktales are stories that people tell to one another. They are passed down from parents to children, even though they know that these stories did not actually happen. How did Luke describe the events that actually happen? Luke spoke about things that actually happened. These things did not come from folktales. People could find out that the things that Luke wrote about were true because they did happen. People who saw these things happen told other people about them. It was from these people, the ones who saw these things, that Luke learned much about what Jesus did.

In ancient times, when Jews thought about why some nations became strong, and other nations became weak, they wanted to know what God did to make these things happen. The Gentiles thought in the same way. They were always thinking about what their gods made happen.

However, it is not the same today. Today, if someone says that God makes things happen in the world, many people think that that person is not telling the truth. However, the men who wrote the Old Testament wrote what the Holy Spirit told them to write. They showed that God did many things for the Israelites in ancient times.

When Luke wrote his gospel, he was thinking in the same way. He told about the wonderful things that God did. Luke wrote many things everywhere in his gospel, and in Acts, about what the Holy Spirit did.

See: Acts 1:1-4

How did Luke write?

[1:3, 1:4]

Luke wrote “order”(καθεξής/g2517) in verse three in order to tell how he wrote his gospel. Perhaps he wanted to say that he thought much about the things he wrote about.

Perhaps Luke wanted to say that he wrote first about the things that happened first. However, sometimes he wrote about later things first. For example, in 3:19-20, Luke wrote about why John the Baptist went into prison. He wrote this before he wrote that John baptized Jesus. However, John went into prison some time after he baptized Jesus.

See: Luke 3:19-20; Acts 18:24-28; 19:1-7

1:5-25

When was John the Baptist born?

[1:5]

Luke said that John was born when Herod was king of Judea. The Old Testament writers also said who was king when something happened. In this way, Luke wrote as the Old Testament writers wrote (see: Isaiah 1:1).

King Herod ruled Judea for the Romans between the years 40 B.C. and 4 or 5 B.C. Scholars think that he was close to dying when the first things that Luke wrote about happened.

The Jews knew that Herod was very cruel. He murdered many people. But he did rebuild the Jewish temple. Luke begins his story by telling about something that happened in this temple.

See: Isaiah 1:1

See: King Herod

What did Zechariah's and Elizabeth's names mean?

[1:5]

Zechariah's name meant, “The Lord remembers.” His wife Elizabeth's name meant, “My God is an oath or a promise.”

This was because they had no children, and they were too old to have any. Why did God punish Zechariah? God punished Zechariah for not thinking that the angel Gabriel was telling him the truth (see: Luke 1:20). Zechariah should have remembered that God healed many women in the Old Testament who could not have children.

Instead, Zechariah was not able to speak until God made what he told Gabriel happen. Since Elizabeth was unable to have children, people thought that God had punished her and humiliated her. However, this did not happen because she had sinned.

See: Romans 3:21-31

See: Angel; Gospel; Sin

Why did Luke write Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous and blameless?

[1:6]

Luke wrote Zechariah and Elizabeth “lived in a way that honored God or lived the right way”(δίκαιος/g1342) and “innocent, blameless, or obeyed the rules”(ἄμεμπτος/g0273). Luke meant that Zechariah and Elizabeth honored God completely and did their best to obey him. Luke wanted his readers to think that God was pleased with Zechariah and Elizabeth because they did so.

Luke also wrote about people who lived in a way that honored God in verse seventeen. He said that John the Baptist helped many people to become wise like other people who honor God.

However, there were many other Jews who did not know God's law and who did not care about obeying it. These Jews were the people that the Pharisees called “sinners or people who sinned”(ἁμαρτωλός/g0268). The Pharisees said that Jesus was a “sinner” because they thought that he did not obey the law, even though he did (see: John 9:24).

However, when the Apostle Paul wrote about people who lived rightly and sinners, he meant something different. Paul wanted to show everyone that they have all sinned, and that they needed for Jesus Christ to die for them. He showed that God considers righteous anyone who believes in Jesus, even if that person still sins (see: Romans 3:21-31).

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Blameless; Pharisees; Sin

Why did Luke write about the Jewish temple?

[1:9]

About one thousand years before Jesus lived, King David ordered the priests to serve in different divisions or groups at the temple. After the Jews returned to Jerusalem from Babylon and rebuilt the temple, the priests served in these divisions again.

Zechariah belonged to the division of Abijah. The priests in each division served at the temple two weeks every year.

There were about 18,000 priests, so not all priests got the chance to serve at the temple even one time their whole life. The leaders of the priests cast lots to choose which priests would burn incense at the morning and evening sacrifice that happened each day.

Luke began telling about what happened before Jesus was born. He began in this chapter by telling about what Zechariah

the priest saw in the temple. Luke ended the next chapter by writing about what Jesus did in the temple when he was twelve years old. It is in this way that words about the temple begin and end this part of Luke's gospel.

See: 1 Chronicles 24

See: Temple

What did John the Baptist succeed in doing by serving God?

[1:16, 1:17]

John the Baptist had to get the people ready to receive the Messiah. He did this by telling them to repent because they sinned.

Gabriel repeated some words the prophet Malachi wrote (see: Malachi 4:6). These words were about bringing the fathers' hearts back to their children. This was a prophecy about John the Baptist. Perhaps Luke was also thinking about what Malachi said right after that, and to bring back "the heart of the children to their fathers." When people "repent" (μετανοέω/g3340), fathers begin to love their children again, and children love their fathers.

Malachi also said that if this did not happen, God would curse the land of Israel. However, Gabriel did not say anything about this. So perhaps Gabriel was thinking that after the people "repented", God would do for Israel everything he had promised to do in his covenant with Israel.

See: Serve; Repent (Repentance); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Curse; Covenant

How did Zechariah's son come with the spirit and power of Elijah?

[1:17]

Some scholars note that about eight hundred years earlier, some prophets said Elisha also had the spirit of Elijah because Elisha did powerful miracles like the ones that Elijah did (see: 2 Kings 2:15). This meant that Elisha did his work in the way that Elijah had done his. God caused Elisha to continue to serve him as Elijah had done. Much later, God caused John the Baptist to do the same kind of work as Elijah. This is what Malachi said would happen (see: Malachi 4:5-6).

Later in this chapter, when the angel told Mary that she would have a son (see: Luke 1:35), the angel said that the Holy Spirit and God's power would come upon her. Also, in Luke 4:14, Luke said that Jesus came out of the wilderness with the power of the Holy Spirit.

In verse fifteen, Luke said that the Holy Spirit would fill John even before he was born. Here in verse seventeen, when the angel told Zechariah that John the Baptist would come in the spirit and power of Elijah, perhaps the angel was talking about the Holy Spirit. However, most scholars think that the angel was saying that John would think and act in the same way that Elijah had done. This is how John would serve God.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Why did Elizabeth hide herself for five months?

[1:24]

When Zechariah and Elizabeth returned to their house in Judea, Elizabeth decided to stay in her house for five months without coming out. Scholars give reasons for this.

She was afraid of having a miscarriage. She was afraid people would not believe she was really pregnant, so she wanted to wait until everyone was able to see she was pregnant. She wanted to pray. She wanted to follow her husband's example of not spreading this good news. She wanted to be sure that Mary would be the first person to know she was pregnant.

See Map: Judea

1:26-38

How the angel Gabriel greet Mary?

[1:28]

Most scholars believe the angel Gabriel greeted Mary in a way that the Jews usually greeted each other (see: Luke 1:28).

They think the angel said that God favored Mary. This was why he chose her to bear the baby Jesus and to raise him.

These scholars also say that in the Old Testament, some people greeted other people like this. When they greeted a person like this, they meant that God had chosen this person to do something very good for him.

Fewer scholars think the angel meant that Mary was able to show favor to other people and help them in this way. These scholars think this because of an old translation of scripture that said Mary is 'full of grace.' These scholars also believe that Mary never sinned in her whole life.

See: Exodus 33:16; Proverbs 12:2

See: Grace; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

See Map: Galilee

Advice to Translators: Translate "the house of Jacob" as you did in your local version of the gospel of Luke.

How will Jesus make come true what God had promised King David that he would do?

[1:32]

The angel Gabriel described Jesus, then he said what Jesus would do (see: Luke 1:32-33). Jesus would become king and rule forever over Israel, the "house of Jacob." This is what God said he would make happen to King David. He made this happen by means of Jesus (see: 2 Samuel 7:14).

However, some scholars think that God has now made these things happen. They say that he made these things happen

when Jesus was born. This is because Jesus began to rule over the hearts of those who believed in him. Other scholars think that God will make these things happen when Jesus returns to earth. They say that this will happen when Jesus becomes king.

Still other scholars say that both of these things are true. They think that God made some of these things happen when Jesus was born, and that God will make the rest of them happen when Jesus comes back to earth.

Advice to Translators: Translate “the son of the Most High” here as you did in your local version of the gospel of Luke. The angel Gabriel called Jesus “the Son of the Most High.” This shows that Jesus, the Messiah who is a descendant of King David, is also God. It was God who gave King David the power to rule over Israel. But after the Babylonians took the Jews to their own country as prisoners, the Israelites never had a king again. However, the Israelites will once again prosper because Jesus, a descendant of King David, will rule over them.

In the Old Testament, the Israelites had many kings, one after another. They were descendants of King David. But now Jesus the Messiah, also a descendant of David, will rule forever.

Why did Mary have to be a virgin when she became pregnant?

[1:34]

It was necessary for Mary to be a virgin when she became pregnant with Jesus. This meant that God was Jesus’ father, not any man. God was Jesus’ father, so Jesus was born without wanting to sin in any way.

When God created Adam and Eve, they did not sin at first, either. God was Jesus’ father, so when Mary gave birth to Jesus, Jesus did not sin. However, after Adam and Eve sinned for the first time, all people have been born wanting to sin. All men and women pass this desire on to their children. Every person who was born after Adam, God considered to be guilty of sin because they were born wanting to sin. When a person wants to sin, this is wrong and it is a sin. But God was Jesus’ father, so Jesus never sinned, and He was not born wanting to sin. Therefore, God did not consider Jesus guilty of wanting to sin.

See: Isaiah 7:14; Psalm 51:5; 71:6; Romans 5:12

See: Virgin; Sinful Nature

Did God sleep with Mary?

[1:35]

The Holy Spirit came upon Mary to make her pregnant with Jesus. But when God gave Mary this baby, he did not sleep with her.

Jesus, the Son of God, has always been the son of God the Father. When Mary gave birth to Jesus, this was the same Son of God, but he became a human being when Mary became pregnant with him. But he did not stop being God. This is why Jesus is called the “God-Man,” that is, the man who is also God, and God who is also man. It is because he is human, even though he is also God.

See: Incarnation; Son of God

Mary asked Gabriel a different question from what Zechariah asked him. How was it different?

[1:34, 1:38]

Luke wrote that both Mary and Zechariah asked the angel Gabriel a question. However, Luke showed that they thought differently. Zechariah wanted Gabriel to do something that would make him think he was saying the truth (see: Luke 1:18). This was because Zechariah did not believe Gabriel. But Luke made his readers know that Mary believed what Gabriel told her (see: Luke 1:38). Also, Mary’s cousin Elizabeth knew that Mary had believed what Gabriel said to her (see: Luke 1:45). Mary even called herself a servant of God, ready to do anything that God commanded her to do (see: Luke 1:20).

1:39-45

How was Mary the mother of Elizabeth’s “Lord” in Luke 1:43?

[1:43]

Elizabeth called Mary the mother of my “Lord”(κύριος/g2962). This word can mean “master” or “God.” Some scholars think that Elizabeth knew that Mary’s baby would be God because God was referred to as the “Lord.” However, other scholars think that Elizabeth called the baby my “Lord” because she knew that the baby would become someone very great. So when she said “my Lord,” she was showing respect for the baby.

In some places the New Testament called Mary the mother of Jesus (see: John 2:1). Today, some people call Mary the mother of God. However, Mary is not as great as Jesus.

See: Love

See Map: Judah

1:46-56

What was Mary’s Song?

[1:46]

This section of poetry is called “Mary’s Song.” After Elizabeth greeted Mary, Mary praised God with this song. Mary knew the Old Testament, and during her journey of two or three days to visit Elizabeth, Mary probably thought about people in the Old Testament whom God had helped, and people to whom God had sent angels.

In her song, Mary repeated words from two Psalms. She was probably thinking about Hannah, whom God enabled to have a son, and also about how God had brought the Israelites out of Egypt. In the first part of her song, Mary sang about herself. In the second part, she sang about Israel. This song shows that Mary was thinking much about being a servant of God, giving him honor, and about God giving her more than she deserved.

See: Psalms 103:17; 107:9; 1 Samuel 2:1-10; Exodus 6:6

Why did Mary call herself “a low condition”?

[1:48]

Mary said that she was a humble servant of God. She knew that she was not great. She belonged to the village of Nazareth, a place that no one in the Old Testament even spoke about. But she said that many, many people would come to honor her because she obeyed God. Mary was thinking of Psalm 103:17. She was not thinking about all Jewish people who were not yet born, but of all the Christians everywhere in the world who would later honor her.

See Map: Nazareth

Advice to Translators: Everything in Greek in these verses that Mary said seemed to be about things that God had already done. However, many translations make it seem that God is now doing these things, or that he will do them in the future. Translators must decide if they want to use this entry or not.

Mary talked as if God had already had mercy on Israel. Why did she talk this way?

[1:50]

In verses 51-55 (see: Luke 1:51-55) Mary said that God had already done all these things for Israel. However, she meant that God was going to do them, not that he had already done them.

In the Old Testament, prophets often spoke about what would happen later as if it had already happened. They thought that those things were certain to happen, so they spoke of them as if they had happened. Mary said that God would one day defeat all of Israel's enemies and set the nation free from those who were ruling over it.

1:57-66

How did people in Israel choose what names to give to their children?

[1:59]

Israelite parents usually named their children when they were born. Usually these were names that others in their family had, or they gave certain names because of something that happened when they were born (see: Genesis 29:32-35).

Sometimes they waited one week after the babies were born (see: 2 Samuel 12; Luke 2:21). God also changed Abram's name when he was circumcised (see: Genesis 17).

Zechariah and Elizabeth waited one week to name their child. They named him when he was circumcised. They surprised people by giving him a name that was different from the names of all the other people in their own family. In this way, they helped them to know that God was going to make this boy do great things.

The angel Gabriel had told Zechariah (see: Luke 1:20) that he must name the boy “John,” which means, “the Lord has mercy.” When Zechariah began to speak and praise God, this also made what the angel had said to him come true.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision)

1:67-79

What does Luke mean by being “filled with the Holy Spirit”?

[1:67]

The Gospel of Luke is the only gospel with the words “filled” (πλήρη/g4130) with the Holy Spirit.” Luke almost always wrote “fill” when he wrote about the Holy Spirit coming on people. He never shortened “Holy Spirit” to “Spirit” when using “fill”.

In this chapter, many people were “filled” with the Holy Spirit. Gabriel said that the Spirit is holy and would give John the power to serve God (see: Luke 1:15,17). For Elizabeth and Zechariah, when the Holy Spirit filled Elizabeth, she blessed Mary and Mary's child right away. When the Spirit filled Zechariah, right away he praised God and said what God would do for Israel.

Luke used different words to tell how the Holy Spirit would come upon Mary. This was probably because she was going to bear the baby Jesus, something that no one else would ever do. When Luke said this, he called the Holy Spirit the power from the “Most High” God (see: Luke 1:35). When the Holy Spirit filled people, one thing most of them did was immediately say things that the Spirit enabled them to say.

See: Acts 13:52

Advice to Translators: Some versions use ideas different from “filled with the Holy Spirit.” Translators should choose what ideas in this entry to translate.

What was Zechariah's prophecy?

[1:68]

This poetic section is called “Zechariah's prophecy.” In this section, Zechariah answered the question that the people asked in verse 66 (see: Luke 1:66). Zechariah was a priest, so he knew the Old Testament. During the time that he could not speak, he was probably thinking about things that people in the Old Testament had wrote.

He repeated some words from a psalm (see: Psalm 106:10), and from what the prophets Malachi (see: Malachi 3:1) and

Isaiah (see: Isaiah 9:2) had written. He was also thinking about things that other people in the Old Testament had said. Zechariah spoke two kinds of things. In the first part, he spoke about the Messiah. He did this when he spoke about the family of King David.

In the second part, Zechariah began talking to his newborn son about how he would serve God. Zechariah spoke much about how God was helping the Israelites, how God was giving them more than they deserved and how God would rescue them from their enemies.

See: Priest (Priesthood)

How did Zechariah think that God will save people?

[1:71]

Some scholars say that Zechariah spoke about how God would rescue Israel from its enemies in the first part of his song. They say that then he spoke in the second part about how God would rescue the Israelites by forgiving their sins.

However, if a person thinks about everything together that Zechariah said, then it is easier to understand Zechariah's song. In verse 71, Zechariah repeated words from Psalm 106:10. Those words were about the time when God rescued the Israelites from the people of Egypt. When Zechariah talked about "the 'horn'(κέρας/g2768) of salvation" in verse 69, he was thinking about Psalm 132:17. There "horn of salvation" meant the power of King David, who defeated the enemies of Israel. In verses 72-74, Zechariah talked about the covenant that God had made with Abraham, the ancestor of the Israelites. In that covenant, God promised Abraham that he would defeat Israel's enemies and rescue the Israelites so Israel could worship him.

In the second part of his prophecy, Zechariah stopped speaking about what God did for Israel in the past. He began speaking about what the Messiah was going to do, and about what his own son John would do to get the people ready to believe in the Messiah.

Zechariah was no longer speaking about Israel's enemies. Now he was saying that God would forgive the Israelites and make them live in peace (see: 1:78-79). Some scholars also say that Zechariah was thinking that Jesus would heal people and rescue them from evil spirits.

See: Covenant; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

1:80

How did John the Baptist grow up "in spirit"?

[1:80]

Most scholars think when Luke wrote "in spirit," he meant John's mind and heart. However, some scholars think that Luke was talking about the Holy Spirit. Perhaps Luke meant both at the same time (see: Ephesians 3:16). Where did John the Baptist grow up? John the Baptist was in the wilderness until he began to preach to the Israelites, so some scholars think he may have been among some more radical religious people. Other scholars do not think he did this. This is because these radical, religious people rejected the temple and its priests. But John's family had priests who served in the temple. Luke did not say what part of the wilderness John lived in.

See: Zeal (Zealous, Zealot)

Luke 1:1

General Information:

Luke explains why he writes to Theophilus.

of the things that have been accomplished among us

"about those things that have happened among us" or

"about those events that have happened among us"

among us

No one knows for sure who Theophilus was. If he was a Christian, the word "us" here would include him and so be inclusive, and if not, it would be exclusive.

Luke 1:2

were eyewitnesses and servants of the word

An "eyewitness" is a person who saw something happen, and a servant of the word is a person who serves God by telling people God's message. You may need to make it clear how they were servants of the word. Alternate translation: "saw what had happened and served God by telling people his message"

servants of the word

The word "word" is a synecdoche for a message made up of many words. Alternate translation: "servants of the message" or "servants of God's message"

Luke 1:3

accurately investigated

"carefully researched." Luke was careful to find out exactly what happened. He probably talked to the different people who saw what happened to make sure that what he wrote down about these events was correct.

most excellent Theophilus

Luke said this to show honor and respect for Theophilus. This may mean that Theophilus was an important government official. This section should use the style that your culture uses to address people of high status. Some people may prefer to also put this greeting at the beginning and say, "To most excellent Theophilus" or "Dear most excellent Theophilus."

most excellent

"honorable" or "noble"

Theophilus

This name means "friend of God." It may describe this man's character or it may have been his actual name. Most translations have it as a name.

Luke 1:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 1:5

General Information:

Zechariah and Elizabeth are introduced. Verses 5-7 give background information about them.

Connecting Statement:

The angel prophesies the birth of John.

In the days of Herod, king of Judea

The phrase "In the days of" is used to indicate a new event.

Alternate translation: "During the time that King Herod ruled over Judea"

there was a certain

"there was a particular" or "there was a." This is a way of introducing a new character in a story. Consider how your language does this.

division

It is understood that this refers to the priests. Alternate

translation: "division of priests" or "group of priests"

of Abijah

"who descended from Abijah." Abijah was an ancestor of this group of priests and all of them were descended from Aaron, who was the first Israelite priest.

Luke 1:6

before God

"in God's sight" or "in God's opinion"

all the commandments and statutes of the Lord

"all that the Lord had commanded and required"

Luke 1:7

But

This contrast word shows that what follows here is the opposite of what is expected. People expected that if they did what was right, God would allow them to have children. Although this couple did what was right, they did not have any children.

they were both advanced in their days

This is a euphemism that says that they were very old.

Alternate translation: "they had both lived many days" or

"they had both lived many years" or "they were both very old"

Luke 1:8

Now it came about

This phrase is used to mark a shift in the story from the background information to the participants.

Zechariah was in God's presence, carrying out the priestly duties

It is implied that Zechariah was in God's temple and that these priestly duties were part of worshipping God.

in the order of his division

"when it was his group's turn" or "when the time came for his group to serve"

Luke 1:9

According to the customary way of choosing which priest would ... burn incense

This sentence gives us information about priestly duties.

the customary way

"the traditional method" or "the usual way"

chosen by lot

A lot was a marked stone that was thrown or rolled on the ground in order to decide something. The priests believed that God guided the lot to show them which priest he wanted them to choose.

to burn incense

The priests were to burn sweet-smelling incense as an offering to God each morning and evening on a special altar inside the temple.

Luke 1:10

The whole crowd of people

"A large number of people" or "Many people"

outside

The courtyard was the enclosed area surrounding the temple. Alternate translation: "outside the temple building" or "in the courtyard outside the temple"

at the hour

"at the set time." It is unclear if this was the morning or evening time for the incense offering.

Luke 1:11

Connecting Statement:

While Zechariah does his duty in the temple, an angel comes from God to give him a message.

Now

This word marks the beginning of the action in the story.

appeared to him

"suddenly came to him" or "was suddenly there with Zechariah." This expresses that the angel was present with Zechariah, and not simply a vision.

Luke 1:12

Zechariah ... was troubled ... fear fell on him

These two phrases mean the same thing, and emphasize how afraid Zechariah was.

When Zechariah saw him

"When Zechariah saw the angel." Zechariah was afraid because the appearance of the angel was frightening. He had not done anything wrong, so he was not afraid that the angel would punish him.

fear fell on him

Fear is described as if it was something that attacked or overpowered Zechariah.

Luke 1:13

Do not be afraid

"Stop being afraid of me" or "You do not need to be afraid of me"

your prayer has been heard

This can be stated in active form. It is implied that God will give Zechariah what he has asked for. Alternate translation:

"God has heard your prayer and will give you what you have asked for"

bear you a son

"have a son for you" or "give birth to your son"

Luke 1:14

You will have joy and gladness

The words "joy" and "gladness" mean the same thing and are used to emphasize how great the joy will be. Alternate translation: "you will have great joy" or "you will be very glad"

at his birth

"because of his birth"

Luke 1:15

For he will be great

"This is because he will be great." Zechariah and the "many" will rejoice because John will be "great in the sight of the Lord." The rest of verse 15 tells how God wants John

to live.

he will be great in the sight of the Lord

"he will be a very important person for the Lord" or "God will consider him to be very important"

he will be filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit will empower him" or "the Holy Spirit will guide him" Make sure it does not sound similar to what an evil spirit might do to a person.

from his mother's womb

"even while he is in his mother's womb" or "even before he is born"

Luke 1:16

Many of the descendants of Israel will be turned to the Lord their God Here "be turned" is a metaphor for a person repenting and worshiping the Lord. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He will cause many of the people of Israel to repent and worship the Lord their God"

Luke 1:17

will go before the face of the Lord

Before the Lord comes, he will go and announce to the people that the Lord will come to them.

the face of the Lord

Here "the face of" someone can be an idiom that refers to the that person's presence. It is sometimes omitted in translation. Alternate translation: "the Lord"

in the spirit and power of Elijah

"with the same spirit and power that Elijah had." The word "spirit" either refers to God's Holy Spirit or to Elijah's attitude or way of thinking. Make sure that the word "spirit" does not mean ghost or evil spirit.

turn the hearts of the fathers to the children

"persuade fathers to care about their children again" or "cause fathers to restore their relationships with their children"

turn the hearts

The heart is spoken of as if it were something that could be turned to go in a different direction. This refers to changing someone's attitude toward something.

the disobedient

Here this refers to people who do not obey the Lord.

make ready for the Lord a people prepared for him

What the people will be prepared to do can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "make ready for the Lord a people who are prepared to believe his message"

Luke 1:18

How can I know this?

"How can I know for sure that what you said will happen?" Here, "know" means to learn by experience, suggesting Zechariah was asking for a sign as proof. Alternate translation: "What can you do to prove to me that this will happen?"

my wife is advanced in her days

This is a euphemism that says that she was very old. See how you translated similar words in [Luke 1:7]

Luke 1:19

I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God

This is stated as a rebuke to Zechariah. The presence of Gabriel, coming directly from God, should be enough proof

for Zechariah.

who stands

"who serves"

I was sent to speak to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God sent me to speak to you"

Luke 1:20

Behold

"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important"

silent, unable to speak

These mean the same thing, and are repeated to emphasize the completeness of his silence. Alternate translation:

"completely unable to speak" or "not able to speak at all"

not believe my words

"not believe what I said"

at the right time

"at the appointed time"

Luke 1:21

Now

This marks a shift in the story from what happened inside the temple to what happened outside. Alternate translation:

"While that was happening" or "While the angel and Zechariah were talking"

Luke 1:22

They realized that he had seen a vision while he was in the temple. He kept on making signs to them and remained silent

These things probably happened at the same time, and Zechariah's signs helped the people understand that he had had a vision. It might be helpful to your audience to change the order to show that. Alternate translation: "He kept on making signs to them and remained silent. So they realized that he had seen a vision while he was in the temple"

a vision

The earlier description indicated that Gabriel actually came to Zechariah in the temple. The people, not knowing that, assumed Zechariah saw a vision.

Luke 1:23

It came about

This phrase moves the story ahead to when Zechariah's service was ended.

he went to his house

Zechariah did not live in Jerusalem, where the temple was located. He traveled to his home town.

Luke 1:24

After these days

The phrase "these days" refers to the time Zechariah was serving in the temple. It is possible to state more clearly what this refers to. Alternate translation: "After Zechariah's time of serving at the temple"

his wife

"Zechariah's wife"

kept herself hidden

"did not leave her house"

Luke 1:25

This is what the Lord has done for me

This phrase refers to the fact that the Lord allowed her to become pregnant.

This is what

This is a positive exclamation. She is very happy with what the Lord has done for her.

looked at me with favor

"to look at" here is an idiom that means "to treat" or "to deal with." Alternate translation: "regarded me kindly" or "had pity on me"

my shame

This refers to the shame she felt when she was not able to have children.

Luke 1:26

In the sixth month

"in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy." It may be necessary to state this clearly if it would be confused with the sixth month of the year.

the angel Gabriel was sent from God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God told the angel Gabriel to go"

Luke 1:27

a virgin engaged to ... Joseph

Mary's parents had agreed that Mary would marry Joseph. Though they had not had sexual relations, Joseph would have thought and spoken of her as his wife.

who was a descendant of David

"he belonged to the same tribe as King David"

the virgin's name was Mary

This introduces Mary as a new character in the story.

Luke 1:28

He came to her

"The angel came to Mary"

Greetings

This was a common greeting. It means: "Rejoice" or "Be glad."

you who are highly favored!

"you who have received great grace!" or "you who have received special kindness!"

The Lord is with you

"with you" here is an idiom that implies support and acceptance. Alternate translation: "The Lord is pleased with you"

Luke 1:29

she was very confused by his words, and she wondered what kind of greeting this could be

Mary understood the meaning of the individual words, but she did not understand why the angel said this amazing greeting to her.

Luke 1:30

Do not be afraid, Mary

The angel does not want Mary to be afraid of his appearance, because God sent him with a positive message. you have found favor with God

The idiom "to find favor" means to be positively received by someone. The sentence can be altered to show God as the actor. Alternate translation: "God has decided to give you his grace" or "God is showing you his kindness"

Luke 1:31

you will conceive in your womb and bear a son ... Jesus

Mary will bear "a son" who will be called "the Son of the Most High." Jesus is therefore a human son born of a human mother, and he is also the Son of God. These terms

should be translated very carefully.

Luke 1:32

the Son of the Most High

Mary will bear "a son" who will be called "the Son of the Most High." Jesus is therefore a human son born of a human mother, and he is also the Son of God. These terms should be translated very carefully.

will be called

Possible meanings are 1) "people will call him" or 2) "God will call him"

Son of the Most High

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

give him the throne of his ancestor David

The throne represents the king's authority to rule. Alternate translation: "give him authority to rule as king as his ancestor David did"

Luke 1:33

there will be no end to his kingdom

The negative phrase "no end" emphasizes that it continues forever. It could also be stated with a positive phrase.

Alternate translation: "his kingdom will never end"

Luke 1:34

How will this happen

Though Mary did not understand how it could happen, she did not doubt that it would happen.

I have not known any man

Mary used this polite expression to say that she had not engaged in sexual activity. Alternate translation: "I am a virgin"

Luke 1:35

The Holy Spirit will overshadow you

The process of Mary's conception would begin with the Holy Spirit coming to her.

the power of the Most High

It was God's "power" that would supernaturally cause Mary to become pregnant even while she still remained a virgin. Make sure this does not imply any physical or sexual union—this was a miracle.

will overshadow you

"will cover you like a shadow"

So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So the holy one who will be born they will call the Son of God" or "So the baby that will be born will be holy, and people will call him the Son of God"

the holy one

"the holy child" or "the holy baby"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Luke 1:36

See, your relative

"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: your relative"

your relative Elizabeth

If you need to state a specific relationship, Elizabeth was probably Mary's aunt or great-aunt.

has also conceived a son in her old age

"Elizabeth has also become pregnant with a son even though she is already very old" or "Elizabeth, even though

she is old, has also become pregnant and will bear a son." Make sure it does not sound as though both Mary and Elizabeth were old when they conceived.

the sixth month for her

"the sixth month of her pregnancy"

Luke 1:37

For nothing

"Because nothing" or "This shows that nothing"

nothing will be impossible for God

Elizabeth's pregnancy was proof that God was able to do anything—even enable Mary to become pregnant without her sleeping with a man. The double negatives in this statement can be stated with positive terms. Alternate translation: "everything will be possible for God" or "God can do anything"

Luke 1:38

See, I am the female servant

"Here I am, the female servant" or "I am glad to be the female servant." She is responding humbly and willingly.

I am the female servant of the Lord

Choose an expression that shows her humility and obedience to the Lord. She was not boasting about being the Lord's servant.

Let it be for me

"Let this happen to me." Mary was expressing her willingness for the things to happen that the angel had told her were about to happen.

Luke 1:39

Connecting Statement:

Mary goes to visit her relative Elizabeth, who is going to give birth to John.

arose

This idiom means she not only stood up, but also "got ready." Alternate translation: "started out" or "got ready"

the hill country

"the hilly area" or "the mountainous part of Israel"

Luke 1:40

She went

It is implied that Mary finished her journey before she went in to Zechariah's house. This could be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "When she arrived, she went"

Luke 1:41

Now it happened

The phrase is used to mark a new event in this part of the story.

in her womb

"in Elizabeth's womb"

jumped

moved suddenly

Luke 1:42

cried out with a loud shout and said

The phrases "cried out" and "loud shout" mean the same thing and are used to emphasize how excited Elizabeth was. You may want to combine them into one phrase. Alternate translation: "exclaimed loudly"

Blessed are you among women

The idiom "among women" means "more than any other woman"

the fruit of your womb

Mary's baby is spoken of as if it is the fruit that a plant produces. Alternate translation: "the baby in your womb" or "the baby you will bear"

Luke 1:43

Why has it happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Elizabeth is not asking for information. She was showing how surprised and happy she was that the mother of the Lord had come to her. Alternate translation: "How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!"

the mother of my Lord

It can be made clear that Elizabeth was calling Mary "the mother of my Lord" by adding the word "you." Alternate translation: "you, the mother of my Lord"

Luke 1:44

For see

This phrase alerts Mary to pay attention to Elizabeth's surprising statement that follows.

when the sound of your greeting came to my ears

Hearing a sound is spoken of as if the sound came to the ears. Alternate translation: "when I heard the sound of your greeting"

jumped for joy

"moved suddenly with joy" or "turned forcefully because he was so happy"

Luke 1:45

Blessed is she who believed ... that were told her from the Lord

Elizabeth is talking about Mary to Mary. Alternate

translation: "Blessed are you who believed ... that were told you from the Lord"

Blessed is she who believed

The passive verb can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless her because she believed"

there would be a fulfillment of the things

"the things would actually happen" or "the things would come true"

the things that were told her from the Lord

The word "from" is used here instead of "by" because it was the angel Gabriel whom Mary actually heard speak

Luke 1:46

General Information:

Mary begins a song of praise to the Lord her Savior.

My soul praises

The word "soul" refers to the spiritual part of a person.

Mary is saying that her worship comes from deep inside her. Alternate translation: "My inner being praises" or "I praise"

Luke 1:47

my spirit has rejoiced

Both "soul" and "spirit" refer to the spiritual part of a person. Mary is saying that her worship comes from deep inside her. Alternate translation: "my heart has rejoiced" or "I rejoice"

has rejoiced in

"has felt very joyful about" or "was very happy about"

God my Savior

"God, the One who saves me" or "God, who saves me"

Luke 1:48

For he
 "This is because he"
 looked at
 "looked at with concern" or "cared about"
 low condition
 "poverty." Mary's family was not rich.
 For see
 This phrase calls attention to the statement that follows.
 from now on
 "now and in the future"
 all generations
 "the people in all generations"
 Luke 1:49
 the Mighty One has
 "God, the Powerful One, has"
 his name
 Here "name" refers to the entire person of God. Alternate translation: "he"
 Luke 1:50
 His mercy
 "God's mercy"
 from generation to generation
 "from one generation to the next generation" or
 "throughout every generation" or "to people in every time period"
 Luke 1:51
 displayed strength with his arm
 Here "his arm" is a metonym that stands for God's power. Alternate translation: "shown that he is very powerful"
 has scattered those ... hearts
 "has caused those ... hearts to run away in different directions"
 who were proud about the thoughts of their hearts
 Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's inner beings. Alternate translation: "who were proud in their thoughts" or "who were proud"
 Luke 1:52
 He has thrown down princes from their thrones
 A throne is a chair that a ruler sits on, and it is a symbol of his authority. If a prince is brought down from his throne, it means he no longer has the authority to reign. Alternate translation: "He has taken away the authority of princes" or "He has made rulers stop ruling"
 raised up those of low condition
 In this word picture, people who are important are higher than people who are less important. Alternate translation: "has made humble people important" or "has given honor to people whom others have not honored"
 of low condition
 "in poverty." See how you translated this in Luke 1:48.
 Luke 1:53
 He has filled the hungry ... the rich he has sent away empty
 The contrast between these two opposite actions should be made clear in the translation if possible.
 filled the hungry with good things
 Possible meanings are 1) "given the hungry good food to eat" or 2) "given the needy good things."
 Luke 1:54
 General Information:

The information in verses 54 and 55 can be rearranged, as in the UDB, to make the meaning clearer.
 He has given help to
 "The Lord has helped"
 Israel his servant
 If readers confuse this with the man named Israel, it could be translated as "his servant, the nation of Israel" or "Israel, his servants."
 so as to
 "in order to"
 to remember
 God cannot forget. When God "remembers," it is an idiom that means God acts upon his earlier promise.
 Luke 1:55
 General Information:
 The information in verses 54 and 55 can be rearranged, as in the UDB, to make the meaning clearer.
 as he said to our fathers
 "just as he promised our ancestors he would do." This phrase supplies background information about God's promise to Abraham. Alternate translation: "because he promised our ancestors he would be merciful"
 his descendants
 "Abraham's descendants"
 Luke 1:56
 returned to her house
 "Mary returned to her (Mary's) house" or "Mary returned to her own house"
 Luke 1:57
 Now
 This word marks the beginning of the next event in the story.
 deliver her baby
 "give birth to her baby"
 Luke 1:58
 Her neighbors and her relatives
 "Elizabeth's neighbors and relatives"
 shown his great mercy to her
 "been very kind to her"
 Luke 1:59
 Now it happened
 This phrase is used here to mark a change in the main story. Here Luke starts to tell a new part of the story.
 on the eighth day
 Here "eighth day" refers to the time after the birth of the baby, counted from the first day, which was the day he was born. Alternate translation: "on the eighth day of the baby's life"
 they came to circumcise the child
 This was often a ceremony where one person circumcised the baby and friends were there to celebrate with the family. Alternate translation: "they came for the baby's circumcision ceremony"
 They would have called him
 "They were going to name him" or "They wanted to give him the name"
 after the name of his father
 "his father's name"
 Luke 1:60

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 1:61

by this name

"by that name" or "by the same name"

Luke 1:62

They

This refers to the people who were there for the circumcision ceremony.

made signs

"motioned." Either Zechariah was unable to hear, as well as unable to speak, or the people assumed that he could not hear.

to his father

"to the baby's father"

how he wanted him to be named

"what name Zechariah wanted to give the baby"

Luke 1:63

His father asked for a writing tablet

Since he could not speak, it may be helpful to state this differently. Alternate translation: "His father indicated that he wanted them to give him a writing tablet" or "His father showed that he wanted a writing tablets"

a writing tablet

"something on which to write"

astonished

greatly surprised or amazed

Luke 1:64

his mouth was opened ... his tongue was freed

These two phrases are word pictures that together emphasize that Zechariah was suddenly able to speak.

his mouth was opened and his tongue was freed

These phrases can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God opened his mouth and freed his tongue"

Luke 1:65

Fear came on all who lived around them

"All who lived around Zechariah and Elizabeth were afraid." It may be helpful to state clearly why they were afraid. Alternate translation: "All who lived around them were in awe of God because he had done this to Zechariah"

all who lived around them

The word "all" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "those who lived around them" or "many who lived in that area"

All these matters were spread throughout all the hill country of Judea

The phrase "these matters were spread" is a metaphor for people talking about them. The passive verb here can also be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "All these matters were talked about by people throughout all the hill country of Judea" or "People throughout the hill country of Judea talked about all these matters"

Luke 1:66

All who heard them

"All who heard about these matters"

stored them in their hearts

People carefully remembering things so that they can think about them later is spoken of as if they were putting those things safely in their hearts. Alternate translation: "kept them in mind" or "thought carefully about these matters" or

"thought a lot about these events"

hearts, saying

"hearts. They asked"

What then will this child become?

"What kind of great person will this baby grow up to be?" It is also possible that this question was meant to be a statement of their surprise at what they had heard about the baby. Alternate translation: "What a great man this child will be!"

the hand of the Lord was with him

The phrase "the hand of the Lord" refers to the Lord's power. Alternate translation: "the Lord's power was with him" or "the Lord was working in him powerfully"

Luke 1:67

Connecting Statement:

Zechariah tells what will happen with his son John.

His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The Holy Spirit filled his father Zechariah, and Zachariah prophesied"

His father

John's father

prophesied, saying

Consider natural ways of introducing direct quotes in your language. Alternate translation: "prophesied and said" or "prophesied, and this is what he said"

Luke 1:68

the God of Israel

"Israel" here refers to the nation of Israel. The relationship between God and Israel could be stated more directly.

Alternate translation: "the God who reigns over Israel" or "the God whom Israel worships"

his people

"God's people"

Luke 1:69

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David

The horn of an animal is a symbol of its power to defend itself. To raise up here is to bring into existence or to enable to act. The Messiah is spoken of as if he were a horn with the power to save Israel. Alternate translation: "He has brought to us someone who is in the house of his servant David with the power to save us"

in the house of his servant David

David's "house" here represents his family, specifically, his descendants. Alternate translation: "in the family of his servant David" or "who is a descendant of his servant David"

Luke 1:70

as he spoke

"just as God said"

he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from long ago

God speaking by the prophets' mouths represents God causing his prophets to say what he wanted them to say.

Alternate translation: "he caused his holy prophets who lived long ago to say"

Luke 1:71

salvation from our enemies

The abstract noun "salvation" can be expressed with the

verbs "save" or "rescue." Alternate translation: "who will save us from our enemies"

our enemies ... all who hate us

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are repeated to emphasize how strongly their enemies are against them.

hand

The hand is a metonym for the power that the person uses the hand to exercise. Alternate translation: "power" or "control"

Luke 1:72

to show mercy to

"to be merciful to" or "to act according to his mercy toward" remember

Here the word "remember" means to keep a commitment or fulfill something.

Luke 1:73

the oath that he swore

These words refer to "his holy covenant" (Luke 1:72).

Luke 1:74

to grant to us

"to make it possible for us"

that we, having been delivered out of the hand of our enemies, would serve him without fear

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that after he rescued us from the hand of our enemies we would serve him without fear"

out of the hand of our enemies

Here "hand" refers to the control or power a person. This could be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "from the control of our enemies"

without fear

This refers back to the fear of their enemies. Alternate translation: "without being afraid of our enemies"

Luke 1:75

in holiness and righteousness

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "holiness" and "righteousness." Possible meanings are 1) we would serve God in holy and righteous ways. Alternate translation: "doing what is holy and righteous" or 2) we would be holy and righteous. Alternate translation: "being holy and righteous"

before him

This is an idiom which means "in his presence"

Luke 1:76

Yes, and you

Zechariah uses this phrase to begin his direct address to his son. You may have a similar way to direct speech in your language.

you, child, will be called a prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as for you, child, people will know that you are a prophet" of the Most High

These words are a euphemism for God. Alternate translation: "who serves the Most High" or "who speaks for God Most High"

will go before the face of the Lord

Before the Lord comes, he will go and announce to the people that the Lord will come to them. See how you

translated this in Luke 1:17.

the face of the Lord

"the face of" someone can be an idiom that refers to the that person's presence. It is sometimes omitted in translation. Alternate translation: "the Lord" See how you translated this in [Luke 1:17]

to prepare his paths

This is a metaphor that means that John will prepare the people to listen to and believe the Lord's message.

Luke 1:77

to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins

The phrase "give knowledge" is a metaphor for teaching. The abstract nouns "salvation" and "forgiveness" can be expressed with the verbs "save" and "forgive." Alternate translation: "to teach his people salvation through the forgiveness of their sins" or "to teach his people how God saves people by forgiving their sins"

Luke 1:78

because of the tender mercy of our God

It might be helpful to state that God's mercy helps people. Alternate translation: "because God is compassionate and merciful to us"

the sunrise from on high

Light is often a metaphor for truth. Here, the Savior giving spiritual truth to people is spoken of as if he were a sunrise that shines light on the earth. Alternate translation: "the Savior, who is like a sunrise, will come from on high"

from on high

"from heaven"

Luke 1:79

to shine

Light is often a metaphor for truth. Here, the spiritual truth that the Savior will provide is spoken of as if it is a sunrise that lights up the earth

shine on

"give knowledge to" or "give spiritual light to"

those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death

Darkness is here a metaphor for the absence of spiritual truth. Here, people who lack spiritual truth are spoken of as if they are sitting in darkness. Also "shadow of death"

represents the threat of death. Alternate translation: "those who do not know the truth and are in spiritual darkness and fear dying"

guide our feet into the path of peace

Here "guide" is a metaphor for teaching, and "path of peace" is a metaphor for living at peace with God. The phrase "our feet" is a synecdoche that represents the whole person. Alternate translation: "teach us how to live at peace with God"

Luke 1:80

General Information:

This tells briefly about John's growing years.

Now

This word is used here to mark a change in the main story. Luke quickly moves from the birth of John to the beginning of his ministry as an adult.

became strong in spirit

"became spiritually mature" or "strengthened his

relationship with God"

was in the wilderness

"lived in the wilderness." Luke does not say at what age John began to live in the wilderness.

until

This does not necessarily mark a stopping point. John continued to live out in the desert even after he started

preaching publicly.

the day of his public appearance

"when he began to preach in public"

the day

This is used here in the general sense of "the time" or "the occasion."

Chapter 2

Luke 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 2:14, 29-32.

Links:

[Luke 2:1 Notes](#)

Luke 2

2:1-7

When did this census occur?

[2:1]

It is often important for a government to count its people. This is called a "census." Near the time when Jesus was born, the Roman emperor began a census. This census required people to go to where they were born or where their family was from. During this census, the Roman emperor was Augustus and the governor of the province of Syria was Quirinius. However, some scholars do not think that the Romans held a census at that time. They believe that Quirinius did not become governor of Syria until A.D. 6. This was at least ten years after Jesus was born. Despite this, other scholars believe that Quirinius became governor before A.D. 6. Scholars have given different explanations concerning Quirinius and the census.

Quirinius was governor of Syria at two different times. Or he had been an administrator in Syria when he ordered a census before A.D. 6, before he became governor (see: Acts 5:37). The word "first" in verse two meant "before." If it meant "before" here, then the census was held before Quirinius was governor of Syria. An earlier governor of Syria began the census and Quirinius completed it. The emperor in Rome had ordered the census and it took several years to complete. Because of some things in the past, scholars think the Romans held many censuses. However, there is little that is known about these censuses.

Why did the Romans hold this census?

[2:1, 2:3]

The Romans held a census to collect taxes and enlist men to serve as soldiers. However, God used this census to cause Mary to go to the place where the Messiah would be born, in the way the Old Testament prophets had said centuries before. In this way, God used the Roman emperor, the most powerful ruler in the world at that time, to fulfill Micah's prophecy (See: Micah 5:2; Acts 4:27-28).

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)

Why was Bethlehem called the "city of David"?

[2:4]

Here, "city of David" referred to Bethlehem. Bethlehem had been the hometown of King David. Luke called Bethlehem the "city of David" in order to say that both David and the Messiah were born in the same place. This was not always the "city of David." In the Old Testament, the "city of David" was Jerusalem.

See: 2 Samuel 5:7,9; 2 Samuel 20:6

See Map: Judah; Bethlehem

Why did Mary put the infant Jesus into a feeding trough?

[2:7]

Mary put the infant Jesus into a "trough" (φάτνη/g5336) for feeding animals. Because of the census, many people travelled to Bethlehem at this time. Therefore, Luke explained there was no room for Mary and Joseph in the "inn" (κατάλυμα/g2646).

What was the "inn"?

[2:7]

Scholars give different ideas of what the "inn" was.

A room for guests in someone's home. A stopping place for travelers. A stable for animals.

See: Luke 9:58; 7:44-46; 9:52-53

2:8-20

What season was Jesus born?

[2:8]

Most people believe that Jesus was in the winter. However, some scholars do not think that Jesus was born in the winter. This is because it would have been too cold for sheep to stay in pastures. However, other scholars believe that the winters in ancient Israel were warm enough for the sheep to be outdoors. Luke did not say what season Jesus was born.

Advice to Translators: For languages that do not speak of four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter), the idea of winter can be expressed as “the cold season.”

How did Luke write the word “today”?

[2:11]

Luke wrote the word “today” (see: Luke 2:11) many times in his gospel (see: Luke 4:21; 5:26; 19:9; 23:43). Some scholars think that he wrote this word to show that something fulfilled a prophecy. However, other scholars think that “today” did not have any special meaning. They think that in this verse “today” means simply the day of Jesus’ birth.

Advice to Translators: The sentence below about fulfilling a prophecy can be restructured as, “Some scholars think that Luke writes ‘today’ when he is showing that a message from a prophet in the past came true in his gospel.”

What did the angel call the baby Jesus at his birth?

[2:11]

The angel called Jesus three different things when he was born.

The angel called Jesus “Savior” (σωτήρ/g4990). People who worshiped many gods sometimes called their gods “savior”, and the people of Rome sometimes called their leaders “savior”. However, here “Savior” refers to Zechariah’s prophecy that Jesus would save people from their sins (see: Luke 1:77). The angel called Jesus the “Christ” (Χριστός/g5547). That is, Jesus is the “anointed one” whom God chose to be Israel’s Messiah. The angel called Jesus “Lord” (κύριος/g2962). This word is usually translated “Lord,” but God the Father is called “Lord” in the Greek Old Testament. Scholars say when the angel called Jesus this same thing, he meant that Jesus is himself God.

When the angel called Jesus “Savior,” “Christ,” and “Lord,” perhaps he was explaining what the angel Gabriel said to Mary (see: Luke 1:32-35).

See: Angel; Incarnation; Messiah (Christ); Savior

What were “signs”?

[2:12]

The angel told the shepherds that the newborn baby would be wrapped in cloths and lying in a feeding trough. He said that this would be a “sign” (σημεῖον/g4952) for them. Signs are things that show people that God has power, or that he is telling the truth about something.

When the shepherds saw the baby in a feeding trough, they would know that this was the child of which the angel had spoken. They would also know that the angel had told them the truth. Luke often wrote about signs. He wrote about signs in the sky (see: Luke 21:25), and signs that King Herod wanted to see Jesus do (see: Luke 23:8). Even though Luke did not call it a sign, some scholars believe the judgment on Zechariah was a sign (see: Luke 1:20).

See: Sign

Advice to Translators: Some languages prefer to use a verb instead of a noun such as “sign.” For example, instead of translating, “This will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths, lying in a feeding trough,” some languages will want to translate, “This is how you will know what I am talking about: You will find a baby....” In the same way, instead of writing, “Signs are things that show people that God has power....,” some languages will prefer to say, “God uses things to show people that he has power....”

What did the angels mean when spoke about peace on earth?

[2:14]

The angels either promised or wished that God would give peace to certain people on earth. They did not speak, as many believe, of God giving general peace to everyone on earth. Here, “peace” meant complete well-being. It means more than just not worrying, or just not fighting with other people.

See: Luke 7:50; 8:48

Did the angels say “among people with whom God is pleased” or “among people who please God”?

[2:14]

The oldest Greek copies disagreed about whether the angels said “among people whom God ‘favors’” (εὐδοκία/g2017) or “among people who please God”. The difference of meaning is whether God choose people because of his “favor”, or whether he gave peace to people who had “favor” for God, that is, who loved God.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

2:21-40

Why did the parents of Jesus take him to the temple in Jerusalem?

[2:22]

Mary and Joseph were careful to obey the Law of Moses (see: Luke 2:22,23,24,27,39). Because Bethlehem was near the temple in Jerusalem, they were able to take Jesus to the temple. There, they asked God to bless Jesus.

See: Temple

See Map: Jerusalem; Bethlehem

How was Jesus' family poor?

[2:24]

Some scholars believe that Mary and Joseph were poor because they brought two small birds to sacrifice for her. This was for them to obey the law of Moses. The normal sacrifice was a lamb, but it could be two small birds if the family was poor. Some scholars believe that Mary and Joseph made this trip to the temple before the "learned men" (μάγος/g3097) visited Jesus. Mary and Joseph would have been able to buy a lamb after the "learned men" brought Jesus valuable gifts (see: Matthew 2:11).

See: Leviticus 12:8

Who was Simeon?

[2:25]

Luke wrote nothing about Simeon except that he honored God and obeyed him. He was waiting for the "helper" (παράκλησις/g3874) of Israel. That is, he was waiting for God to help Israel. Also the Holy Spirit was "on him". That is, was with him. This was how Simeon was able to speak about what Jesus would do in the future.

What were the "helper" of Israel and the "deliverer" of Jerusalem?

[2:25]

The "helper" (παράκλησις/g3874) of Israel and the "deliverer" (λύτρωσις/g3085) of Jerusalem are both in this passage (see: Luke 2:25,38). They were both things that Simeon, Anna, and others were "waiting" (προσδέχομαι/g4327) for God to make happen. Some scholars believe that they were waiting for God to free Israel from the Romans, who ruled over it. Others believe that they were waiting for the kingdom of God, that is, for God to begin to rule in Israel.

Simeon, Anna, and others like them were probably waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue them from their suffering. Some scholars say that when Jews talked about the "helper" of Israel, they were talking about the Messiah, the person they were expecting to come.

See: Redeem (Redemption); Kingdom of God

Why was the Holy Spirit was upon Simeon?

[2:25]

The Holy Spirit was "upon" (ἐπὶ/g1909) Simeon. Because of this, Simeon honored God (see: Luke 2:25). Also, the Holy Spirit told Simeon that he would see the Messiah (see: Luke 2:26). The Holy Spirit guided Simeon's life until he went to the temple at the right time to see the Messiah (see: Luke 2:27). Finally, the Holy Spirit made Simeon able to recognize the Messiah and to prophesy about him.

See: Holy Spirit; Filling of the Holy Spirit

What did Simeon believe about Jesus?

[2:26]

Simeon believed that Jesus is the Messiah God sent (see: Luke 2:26). He also believed that Jesus would "save" (σωτήριος/g4992) the people of Israel (see: Luke 2:30). Simeon also called Jesus the "light" (φῶς/g5457) for the Gentiles. This metaphor meant that Jesus would enable Gentiles to also know God. Simeon also believed that Jesus would bring "glory" (δόξα/g1391) to Israel (see: Luke 2:32). Some scholars say all the people in the world will honor Israel because of Jesus. Other scholars say Jesus is the Israelite whom all people in the world will honor in the future (see: Isaiah 49:5). God also honored Israel by planning to save people everywhere through Jesus, an Israelite man.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Metaphor; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why were Joseph and Mary amazed at what Simeon said about Jesus?

[2:33]

Jesus' parents were amazed at what Simeon said about Jesus (see: 2:33). Most Jews did not believe that Gentiles could live together with God forever. Mary probably did not expect Simeon to praise God because of her child.

How did Simeon say to Mary that Jesus will be very great?

[2:34]

Simeon said that Jesus was "appointed" (κεῖμαι/g2749) to do a certain task. He meant that God had sent Jesus in order to cause many in Israel to "rise" and many others to "fall." That is, God would bless many Israelites through Jesus, and would condemn many others, those who would reject Jesus. Some scholars also believe that "rise" represents living with God forever, and that "fall" represents suffering forever away from God.

Simeon also called Jesus a "sign," that is, someone that God would show to the people. Despite this, many people would speak against him and not accept his message.

See: Luke 11:23

See: Appoint; Heaven; Hell; Sign

How will a sword pierce Mary's "soul"?

[2:35]

Simeon told Mary that a sword will pierce her “soul”(ψυχή/g5590). By saying this, Simeon meant that Mary would become very sad. Many scholars believe that it was over the death of Jesus that Mary would become sad like this. Some scholars believe that she would become sad over the division in Israel between those who would accept her Son and those who would reject him. Other scholars believe that she would become sad over grief Jesus caused when he stayed in the temple (see: Luke 2:49), and when he gave his disciples priority over his own family (see: Luke 8:21). It is also possible that Simeon spoke about the sword for more than one of these reasons. In any case, Mary would suffer greatly in the years ahead.

See: John 19:25; Luke 12:51-53

How did the birth of John the Baptist compare to Jesus’ birth?

There were some ways in which the birth of John the Baptist was born in the same way Jesus was born.

The angel Gabriel announced beforehand that each would be born. Both John’s mother and Jesus’ mother did not expect to become pregnant. Men gave prophecies about each of the babies. Both babies caused people to rejoice. However, scholars have pointed out several differences.

John was born to old and barren parents, but Jesus was born to a virgin. John was a prophet of God, but Jesus is the Son of God. The Holy Spirit filled John while he was in his mother’s womb, but Jesus’ mother conceived him as the Holy Spirit came on her. Neighbors and relatives rejoiced because of John’s birth, but angels rejoiced because of Jesus’ birth. John grew and became strong in spirit (see: Luke 1:80), but Jesus also increased in wisdom. John was the greatest human to ever live, but Jesus is more excellent than John.

These differences were how Jesus was greater than John.

How did the Holy Spirit begin to work in a different way after Jesus was born?

[2:38]

Most scholars believe that God stopped sending prophets to Israel about four hundred years before Jesus was born. These four hundred years are called the “inter-testamental years,” that is, the years between when the last book of the Old Testament was written and when Jesus was born.

However, since Luke calls Anna a “prophetess”(προφῆτις/g4398), some scholars believe that the Holy Spirit continued to work in the same way in Israel. Still other scholars believe that God began to send prophets again after these four hundred years.

See: Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophesy)

2:41-52

Why did Jesus’ parents go to Jerusalem every year?

[2:41]

The Law of Moses required Jewish men to go to three festivals in Jerusalem each year (see: Deuteronomy 16:16), but it was often impossible for the poor to go so often, because for many of them, Jerusalem was very far away. Probably many people went only to the Passover festival, as Mary and Joseph did. In doing so, they showed themselves to be people who honored God. At the Passover, they offered sacrifices and celebrated for a week. This festival was to remember how God had brought the Israelites out from Egypt and freed them from being slaves.

See: Leviticus 23:6

See: Passover

See Map: Jerusalem

When did Jesus’ parents take him to the Passover?

[2:41]

Some scholars believe that this was the first time that Jesus’ parents took him to Jerusalem for the Passover. Other scholars believe that they took him every year. Either is possible.

How did Jesus become a son of the Law of Moses?

[2:43]

The Jews thought that when boys became twelve years old, they were old enough to know the difference between right and wrong. It was at this age that a Jewish boy began to have to obey the Law of Moses. People then began to call him a “son of the Law”.

See: Law of Moses

How did Jesus’ parents leave him in Jerusalem?

[2:44]

Jesus and his parents traveled to Jerusalem in a large group of people. Mary and Joseph probably thought that everyone in the group made sure that all the children were with them.

Where did Mary and Joseph find Jesus?

[2:46]

Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple. Jesus was not inside the temple itself. He was in the courtyard of the temple.

See: Temple; Temple Courts

How did Jesus amaze teachers in the temple?

[2:47]

During Passover, many teachers came to the temple. They taught by asking questions and then answering their own questions. At the end of the festival, although most visitors had left Jerusalem, the boy Jesus stayed behind in the temple. Perhaps Jesus asked questions of the teachers because he truly wanted to know various things about the Law of Moses. Perhaps he also asked questions in the same way the teachers did, in order to answer them himself. In any case, he answered questions in a way that amazed the teachers.

See: Temple

Why did Mary ask Jesus a question?

[2:48]

Mary asked Jesus a question because she cared for her son. She was very worried after she and Joseph could not find Jesus for three days. She thought that Jesus had done wrong when he left their group and stayed behind in Jerusalem. However, Jesus did not do anything wrong.

Who was Jesus' Father?

[2:49]

See: Son of God; God the Father

What was "necessary" to happen?

[2:49]

Luke wrote the word "necessary" (δεῖ/g1163) to say God required Jesus to be in his Father's house, or to be busy with his Father's affairs. Jesus had no choice other than to honor and obey God. At the age of twelve, Jesus understood that he had to do what his Father wished him to do.

How did Jesus grow in wisdom?

[2:52]

Jesus grew up like other children grow up. Even though he was God, he was also a human being, so he needed to learn just like any other child. Luke seems to want to say that as Jesus grew, he understood better and better how he was going to serve God his Father.

See: Incarnation

Luke 2:1

General Information:

This gives background to show why Mary and Joseph have to move at the time of Jesus's birth.

Now

This word marks the beginning of a new part of the story. it came about that

This phrase is used to show that this is the beginning of an account. If your language has a way of showing the start of an account, you may use that. Some versions do not include this phrase.

Caesar Augustus

"King Augustus" or "Emperor Augustus." Augustus was the first emperor of the Roman Empire.

sent out a decree ordering

This command was probably carried by messengers throughout the empire. Alternate translation: "sent messengers with a decree ordering"

that a census be taken of all the people living in the world

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that they register all the people living in the world" or

"that they count all the people in the world and write down their names"

the world

Here the word "world" represents only the part of the world that Caesar August ruled. Alternate translation: "the Empire" or "the Roman world"

Luke 2:2

Quirinius

Quirinius was appointed to be the governor of Syria.

Luke 2:3

everyone went

"everyone started off" or "everyone was going"

his own city

This refers to the cities where people's ancestors lived.

People may have lived in a different city. Alternate

translation: "the city in which his ancestors lived"

to be registered for the census

"to have his name written in the register" or "to be included in the official count"

Luke 2:4

General Information:

The UDB rearranges verses 4 and 5 into a verse bridge in order to make it easier to shorten the sentences.

Joseph also

This introduces Joseph as a new participant in the story. to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem

The phrase "the city of David" was a name for Bethlehem that tells why Bethlehem was important. Although it was a small town, King David was born there, and there was a prophecy that the Messiah would be born there. Alternate translation: "to Bethlehem, the city of King David" or "to Bethlehem, the town where King David was born"

because he was of the house and family line of David

"because Joseph was a descendant of David"

Luke 2:5

to register

This means to report to the officials there so they could include him in the count. Use a term for an official government count if possible.

along with Mary

Mary traveled with Joseph from Nazareth. It is likely that women were also taxed, so Mary would have needed to travel and be registered as well.

who was engaged to him
"his fiancée" or "who was promised to him." An engaged couple was considered legally married, but there would not have been physical intimacy between them.

Luke 2:6

General Information:

The UDB rearranges verses 6 and 7 into a verse bridge in order to keep together the details about the place they stayed.

Now it came about

This phrase marks the beginning of the next event in the story.

while they were there

"while Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem"

the time came for her to deliver her baby

"it was time to give birth to her baby"

Luke 2:7

wrapped him in long strips of cloth

In some cultures mothers comfort their babies by wrapping them tightly in cloth or a blanket. Alternate translation: "wrapped cloths firmly around him" or "wrapped him tightly in a blanket"

laid him in a manger

This was some kind of box or frame that people put hay or other food in for animals to eat. It was most likely clean and may have had something soft and dry like hay in it as a cushion for the baby. Animals were often kept near the home to keep them secure and to feed them easily. Mary and Joseph stayed in a room that was used for animals.

there was no room for them in the inn

"there was no space for them to stay in the guest room."

This was probably because so many people went to Bethlehem to register. Luke adds this as background information.

Luke 2:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 2:9

An angel of the Lord

"An angel from the Lord" or "An angel who served the Lord" appeared to them

"came to the shepherds"

the glory of the Lord

The source of the bright light was the glory of the Lord, which appeared at the same time as the angel.

Luke 2:10

Do not be afraid

"Stop being afraid"

that will bring great joy to all the people

"that will make all the people very happy"

all the people

Some understand this to refer to the Jewish people. Others understand it to refer to all people.

Luke 2:11

the city of David

This refers to Bethlehem.

Luke 2:12

This is the sign that will be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will give you this sign" or "You will see this sign from God"

the sign

"the proof." This could either be a sign to prove that what the angel was saying was true, or it could be a sign that would help the shepherds recognize the baby.

wrapped in strips of cloth

This was the normal way that mothers protected and cared for their babies in that culture. See how you translated this in [Luke 2:7]

lying in a manger

This was some kind of box or frame that people put hay or other food in for animals to eat. See how you translated this in Luke 2:7.

Luke 2:13

a great multitude from heaven

These words could refer to a literal army of angels, or it could be a metaphor for an organized group of angels.

Alternate translation: "a large group of angels from heaven"

praising God

"giving praise to God"

Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest

Possible meanings are 1) "Give honor to God in the highest place" or 2) "Give the highest honor to God."

may there be peace on earth among people with whom he is pleased

"may those people on earth with whom God is pleased have peace"

Luke 2:15

It came about

This phrase is used to mark a shift in the story to what the shepherds did after the angels left.

from them

"from the shepherds"

to each other

"to one another"

Let us ... to us

Since the shepherds were speaking to one another, languages that have inclusive forms for "we" and "us" should use the inclusive form here.

Let us

"We should"

this thing that has happened

This refers to the birth of the baby, and not to the appearance of the angels.

Luke 2:16

lying in a manger

A manger is a box or frame that people put hay or other food in for animals to eat. See how you translated this in Luke 2:7.

Luke 2:17

what had been said to them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"what the angels had told the shepherds"

this child

"the baby"

Luke 2:18

what was spoken to them by the shepherds

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"what the shepherds told them"

Luke 2:19

treasuring them in her heart

A person who thinks is something is very valuable or precious is "treasuring" it. Mary considered the things she was told about her son to be very precious. Alternate translation: "carefully remembering them" or "joyfully remembering them"

Luke 2:20

shepherds returned

"shepherds went back to the sheep"

glorifying and praising God

These are very similar and emphasize how excited they were about what God had done. Alternate translation: "talking about and praising God's greatness"

Luke 2:21

General Information:

The laws God gave the Jewish believers told them when to circumcise a boy baby and what sacrifice the parents had to bring.

When it was the end of the eighth day

This phrase shows the passing of time before this new event.

the end of the eighth day

"the end of the eighth day of his life." The day he was born was counted as the first day.

he was named

Joseph and Mary gave him his name.

the name he had been given by the angel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the name the angel had called him"

Luke 2:22

When the required number ... had passed

This shows the passing of time before this new event.

the required number of days

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the number of days that God required"

for their purification

"for them to become ceremonially clean." You can also state God's role. Alternate translation: "for God to consider them clean again"

they brought him up to the temple

"Mary and Joseph brought the baby up to the temple"

to present him to the Lord

"to bring him to the Lord" or "to bring him into the Lord's presence." This was a ceremony acknowledging God's claim on the firstborn children who were male.

Luke 2:23

As it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As Moses wrote" or "They did this because Moses wrote"

Every male who opens the womb

This is an idiom meaning the first male born into a family.

This referred to both animals and people. Alternate translation: "The first male that a mother gives birth to" or "Every firstborn male"

Luke 2:24

what was said in the law of the Lord

"that which the law of the Lord also says." This is a different

place in the law. It refers to all males, whether firstborn or not.

Luke 2:25

Behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story.

Your language may have a way of doing this.

was righteous and devout

These abstract terms can be expressed as actions. Alternate translation: "did what was right and feared God" or "obeyed God's laws and feared God"

consolation of Israel

The word "Israel" is a metonym for the people of Israel. To "console" someone is to give them comfort, or "consolation."

The words "consolation of Israel" are a metonym for the Christ or Messiah who would comfort or bring consolation to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "the one who would comfort the people of Israel"

the Holy Spirit was upon him

"the Holy Spirit was with him." God was with him in a special way and gave him wisdom and direction in his life.

Luke 2:26

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The Holy Spirit had shown him" or "The Holy Spirit had told him"

he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ

"he would see the Lord's Messiah before he died"

Luke 2:27

Led by the Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As the Holy Spirit directed him"

came

Some languages may say "went."

into the temple

"into the temple courtyard." Only priests could enter the temple building.

the parents

"Jesus's parents"

the custom of the law

"the custom of the law of God"

Luke 2:28

he took him into his arms

"Simeon took the infant Jesus into his arms" or "Simeon

held Jesus in his arms"

Luke 2:29

Now let your servant depart in peace

"I am your servant; let me depart in peace." Simeon was referring to himself.

depart

This is a euphemism meaning "die"

according to your word

"Word" here is a metonym for "promise." Alternate translation: "as you have promised"

Luke 2:30

my eyes have seen

This expression means, "I have personally seen" or "I, myself, have seen"

your salvation

This expression refers to the person who would bring

salvation—the infant Jesus—whom Simeon was holding.
Alternate translation: "the savior whom you sent" or "the one whom you sent to save"

Luke 2:31

which you

Depending on how you translate the previous phrase, this may need to be changed to "whom you."

have prepared

"have planned" or "caused to happen"

Luke 2:32

A light for revelation to the Gentiles

This metaphor means that the child will help people to understand God's will. The Gentiles understanding God's will is spoken of as if they were people using physical light to see a solid object. You may need to make explicit what it is that the Gentiles will see. Alternate translation: "This child will enable the Gentiles to understand God's will as light allows people to see clearly"

for revelation

It may be necessary to state what is to be revealed.

Alternate translation: "that will reveal God's truth"

glory to your people Israel

"he will be the reason that glory will come to your people Israel"

Luke 2:33

what was said about him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that Simeon said about him"

Luke 2:34

said to Mary his mother

"said to the child's mother, Mary." Make sure it does not sound like Mary is the mother of Simeon.

Behold

Simeon used this expression to tell Mary that what he is about to say is extremely important to her.

this child is appointed for the downfall and rising up of many people in Israel

The words "downfall" and "rising up" express turning away from God and drawing closer to God. Alternate translation: "this child will cause many people in Israel to fall away from God or to rise closer to God"

Luke 2:35

a sword will pierce your own soul

This metaphor describes the deep sadness that Mary would feel. Alternate translation: "your sadness will be painful as though a sword pierced your soul"

the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's inner beings. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he may reveal the thoughts of many people" or "he may reveal what many people secretly think"

Luke 2:36

A prophetess named Anna was there

This introduces a new participant into the story.

Phanuel

This is a man's name.

She was advanced in her days

This is a euphemism that says that she was very old. See how you translated similar words in [Luk 2:7]

seven years

"7 years"

after her virginity

"after she married him"

Luke 2:37

a widow for eighty-four years

Possible meanings are 1) she had been a widow for 84 years or 2) she was a widow and was now 84 years old.

never left the temple

This is probably an exaggeration meaning that she spent so much time in the temple that it seemed as though she never left it. Alternate translation: "was always at the temple" or "was often at the temple"

with fastings and prayers

"by abstaining from food on many occasions and by offering many prayers"

Luke 2:38

came near to them

"approached them" or "went to Mary and Joseph"

the redemption of Jerusalem

Here the word "redemption" is used to refer to the person who would do it. Alternate translation: "the one who would redeem Jerusalem" or "the person who would bring God's blessings and favor back to Jerusalem"

Luke 2:39

Connecting Statement:

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus leave the town of Bethlehem and return to the city of Nazareth for his childhood.

they were required to do according to the law of the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that the law of the Lord required them to do"

their own town of Nazareth

This phrase means they lived in Nazareth. Make sure it does not sound like they owned the town. Alternate translation: "the town of Nazareth, where they lived"

Luke 2:40

full of wisdom

"becoming wiser" or "learning what was wise"

the grace of God was upon him

"God blessed him" or "God was with him in a special way"

Luke 2:41

His parents went ... Festival of the Passover

This is background information.

His parents

"Jesus's parents"

Luke 2:42

they again went up

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

at the customary time

"at the normal time" or "as they did every year"

the festival

The Festival of the Passover, which involved eating a ceremonial meal.

Luke 2:43

After they had stayed the full number of days for the feast

"When the entire time for celebrating the feast was over" or

"After celebrating the feast for the required number of

days"

Luke 2:44

They assumed

"They thought"

they traveled a day's journey

"they traveled one day" or "they went as far as people walk in one day"

Luke 2:45

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 2:46

It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

in the temple

This refers to the courtyard around the temple. Only the priests were allowed in the temple. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard" or "at the temple"

in the middle of

This does not mean the exact center. Rather, it means "among" or "together with" or "surrounded by."

the teachers

"the religious teachers" or "those who taught people about God"

Luke 2:47

All who heard him were amazed

They could not understand how a twelve-year-old boy with no religious education could answer so well.

at his understanding

"at how much he understood" or "that he understood so much about God"

his answers

"at how well he answered them" or "that he answered their questions so well"

Luke 2:48

When they saw him

"When Mary and Joseph found Jesus"

why have you treated us this way?

This was an indirect rebuke because he had not gone with them on the way back home. This caused them to worry about him. Alternate translation: "you should not have done this to us!"

Look

This word is often used to show the beginning of a new or

important event. It also can be used to show where the action begins. If your language has a phrase that is used in this way, consider whether it would be natural to use it here.

Luke 2:49

Why were you searching for me?

Jesus uses two questions to mildly rebuke his parents, and to begin to tell them that he had a purpose from his heavenly Father that they did not understand. Alternate translation: "You did not need to be concerned about me."

Did you not know ... business?

Jesus uses this second question to try to say that his parents should have known about the purpose for which his Father sent him. Alternate translation: "You should have known ... business."

about my Father's business

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus meant these words literally, to indicate that he was doing the work that his Father had given him, or 2) these words are an idiom that indicate where Jesus was, "in my Father's house." Since the next verse says that his parents did not understand what he was telling them, it would be best not to explain it more.

my Father's business

At age 12, Jesus, the Son of God, understood that God was his real Father

Luke 2:50

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 2:51

he went back home with them

"Jesus went back home with Mary and Joseph"

was obedient to them

"obeyed them" or "was always obeying them"

treasured all these things in her heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "carefully remembered all these things"

Luke 2:52

grow in wisdom and stature

"become wiser and stronger." These refer to mental and physical growth.

increased in favor with God and people

This refers to spiritual and social growth. These could be stated separately. Alternate translation: "God blessed him more and more, and people liked him more and more"

Chapter 3

Luke 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 3:4-6, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Justice

John's instructions to the soldiers and tax collectors in this chapter are not complicated. They are things that should have been obvious to them. He instructed them to live justly. (See: justice and [Luke 3:12-15](#))

Genealogy

A genealogy is a list which records a person's ancestors or descendants. Such lists were very important in determining who had the right to be king, because the king's authority was usually passed down or inherited from his father. It was also

common for other important people to have a recorded genealogy.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Prophecy often involves the use of metaphors to express its meaning. Spiritual discernment is needed for proper interpretation of the prophecy. The prophecy of Isaiah is an extended metaphor describing the ministry of John the Baptist

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"(Herod) had John locked up in prison"

This event can cause confusion because the author says John was imprisoned and then says he was baptizing Jesus. The author probably uses this phrase in anticipation of Herod's imprisonment of John. This would mean that this statement is still in the future at the time of the narrative.

Links:

[Luke 3:1 Notes](#)

Luke 3

3:1-20

Who was Tiberius Caesar?

[3:1]

Tiberius Caesar ruled the entire Roman Empire from A.D. 14 to 37. The fifteenth year of his reign was A.D. 27.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Who was Pontius Pilate?

[3:1]

Pontius Pilate was a "leader" (ἡγεμονεύω/g2230) in the Roman Empire. He ruled over Judea and the area near Judea from A.D. 26 to 36.

See Map: Judea

Who was Herod?

[3:1]

There are several men named Herod in the Bible. The man in this verse is Herod Antipas, one of the sons of King Herod the Great. He ruled a "fourth" (τετραρχέω/g5075) of the area that his father ruled. Herod Antipas ruled over Galilee from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39.

See: King Herod

Who was Philip?

[3:1]

Philip was another one of the sons of Herod the Great. He ruled a "fourth" (τετραρχέω/g5075) of the area that his father ruled. This included the regions of Iturea and Trachonitis, which were located east of Caesarea Philippi, and south of Damascus.

See Map: Israel

Who was Lysanias?

[3:1]

The only thing that is known about Lysanias is that Luke said he was ruler of Abilene at this time. Abilene was place north of Mt. Hermon. Perhaps he was another son of Herod the Great. He ruled a "fourth" (τετραρχέω/g5075) of the area that his father ruled.

See: King Herod

See Map: Israel

Why did Luke give the names of Roman and Jewish rulers at the time of John the Baptist?

[3:1]

Luke gave the names of Roman and Jewish rulers at the time of John because John was a prophet who served God. In the Old Testament, when someone wrote about a prophet, they often said what kings were ruling when the prophets served God (see: Isaiah 1:1; Zechariah 1:1). Although Luke did not call John a prophet in this scripture (see: Luke 3:2), Zechariah and Jesus called John a prophet (see: Luke 1:76; 7:26). This was because God told him what to say to people.

Also, Luke gave the names of the rulers because his readers knew them. They knew that these rulers had did many evil things, and that the prophets suffered because of them. When the people of Israel read about these things, perhaps they thought about how kings in the past made the prophets suffer and die (see: Hebrews 11:32-40). John suffered and died because of evil rulers in the same way other prophets suffered and died.

See: Prophet

Advice to translators: Use the expression for "clean" or "ritually pure" that you use in your version of the gospels.

Why was John's baptism different than other kinds of baptism?

[3:3]

See: Baptize (Baptism); Repent (Repentance); Messiah (Christ); Clean and Unclean

See Map: Jordan

How did Luke write about repenting?

[3:3]

“Repentance”(μετάνοια/g3341) is a turning, in the same way when someone turns from facing one way to facing another way. Some scholars think that it means to stop dishonoring God and to turn to follow a path that honors him. Other scholars think it means for a person to change what he thinks about God. John used the word “repentance” because he wanted the people to get ready for the messiah to come to them.

See: Isaiah 40:3-5

See: Repent (Repentance)

How did God forgive a Jew’s sins?

[3:3]

God will only forgive a person for sinning if that person believes in him. Before Jesus came to Earth, the Jews showed God that they believed in him by obeying the Law of Moses. When John the Baptist preached, some Jews showed that they trusted God by “repenting”(μετάνοια/g3341) and asking John to baptize them. However, it was not because of the way that they acted that God forgave them. It was because they trusted in him.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Repent (Repentance)

How did John serve God and Jesus?

[3:4]

John served God by helping the Jewish people to know that Jesus was the messiah and to believe in Jesus. Luke wrote about the way John served Jesus as if John was announcing that a king was coming (see: Luke 3:5). When a king visited, the people often repaired the road and made it easy to travel on. John explained to the people that the right way to receive Jesus was to repent and trust in God to save them.

See: Repent (Repentance); Messiah (Christ)

Why did Luke write all flesh will see God’s salvation?

[3:6]

Luke wrote all flesh will see God’s salvation. Luke was repeating Isaiah 40:5. The Greek translation of the Old Testament used the word “salvation” in Isaiah 40:5. Luke may have also thinking about Isaiah 45:8,17; 46:13 and other scriptures in Isaiah. Isaiah wrote about God’s salvation many times.

See: Luke 2:30; Isaiah 12:2-3; 17:10; 25:9; 52:7; 59:17

What was flesh?

[3:6]

Flesh was “people”(σάρξ/g4561). That is, flesh was a metaphor to say that all people will know about the salvation God brings.

Why did John call the Jews poisonous snakes?

[3:7]

John called the Jews children of poisonous snakes because they did evil things. The Jews thought they were Abraham’s children and friends with God. While Abraham was their ancestor, they did not do the things that Abraham did. Therefore, they were not friends with God. Isaiah said that God’s enemies among the Israelites were poisonous snakes (see: Isaiah 59:5).

See: Luke 19:40

See: Wrath; Fire

Advice to translators: “Imply” means to want to say something without saying it clearly.

Why did John speak of the wrath to come?

[3:7]

John implied that God will be angry with the people who do not “repent”(μετάνοια/g3341). He also implied that he was talking about the “Day of the Lord,” when God will judge the whole world.

See: Isaiah 13:9; Zephaniah 2:2

See: Repent (Repentance); Day of the Lord; Day of Judgment

How did John speak about fruit?

[3:8]

John spoke about people doing good things as if they were trees producing fruit. That is, when people “repented”(μετάνοια/g3341), they made fruit. John said that if there was no fruit, then they did not truly “repent”. If Jews did not do good things, then John said they did not live in the same way Abraham lived. If Jews did good things, then John said they were “true” descendants of Abraham. That is, they lived in the way that Abraham lived. However, the Jews thought they were “true” descendants of Abraham even when they did evil things. John said they were wrong to think that. He said they needed to do good things.

John said when trees did not make fruit, they were useless. Therefore, men cut them down and burned them. In the Bible,

when God punishes sinners it is often spoken about as if they were being burned (see: Matthew 13:49-50; Revelation 21:8). If the Jews did not “repent”, God would punish them. They only had a short period of time in which to repent. Finally, when people “repented,” they changed how they treated other people. They were to share with those who lacked what they needed every day. They were also to treat all people the same way. John wanted people to think about the things they did.

See: Repent (Repentance); Fruit (Metaphor)

What did the Jews think about tax collectors?

[3:12]

The Jews hated tax collectors for many reasons.

Tax collectors collected taxes for the Roman government. The Jews hated the Roman government because they were Gentiles and they treated the Jews badly. Tax collectors often took more money than they needed to take. The Jews believed they were giving money to people who were evil and reject God.

Because of this, the Jews considered Jewish tax collectors to be traitors to their own people so that they could gain money for themselves.

See: Tax (Tax Collector, Toll)

Advice to translators: A sandal is a type of shoe that does not completely surround the foot. When someone wears a sandal, you can see his toes.

Why was John unworthy to untie Jesus’ sandals?

[3:16]

Except for Jesus, John the Baptist honored God more than anyone else who ever lived (see: Luke 7:28). He was humble, and he knew that Jesus was far stronger than himself. He knew Jesus is God. Because of this, John did not feel that he was good enough to approach Jesus. For the Jews, God could not be approached because he is perfectly “holy”(ἅγιος/g0040). That is, God is perfect and completely different from men.

In ancient Israel, people’s feet got dirty from the dusty ground they walked on. Only servants would touch someone’s feet; they did so in order to wash them for them. People wore sandals on their feet, so their sandals also became dirty. John thought that Jesus was so much greater than himself, that he did not deserve even to help him remove his sandals.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

Why did people baptize other people?

[3:16]

See: Baptize (Baptism)

How did Jesus baptize in the Holy Spirit and in fire?

[3:16]

Some scholars say Jesus baptized in the Holy Spirit and in fire when he punished people who did evil things (see: Luke 3:9,17). Other scholars say Jesus baptized in the Holy Spirit and fire by filling people with the Holy Spirit so they could serve God (see: Acts 1:5; 2:3-4).

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Advice to translators: This entry is mainly for people in cultures that do not know or use threshing floors.

What was a threshing floor?

[3:17]

A threshing floor was a bare place on the ground where people separated grain from its stalk. In some places, people made threshing floors inside large buildings. At the time of John the Baptist, most threshing floors were outside.

When people separated the grain from its stalk, they often beat the stalks or they had large animals pull heavy loads across the stalks. Then, the people threw the stalks into the air, where the wind blew away the useless parts. The grain, which was heavier, fell back to the ground. Then the people put the grain into bags.

When John said that the messiah would separate grain, he meant that the messiah would separate the people who believed in him from those who rejected him. The writers of the Bible often spoke of God punishing the wicked people as if he were making a fire burn forever (see: Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10,15).

See: Metaphor; Hell; Fire; Punish (Punishment)

What was the good news John announced?

[3:18]

When Luke said that John announced the “good news” or “gospel”(εὐαγγελίζω/g2097) to the Jews, he meant that John told everyone to repent of their sins. They must also be “baptized”(βαπτίζω/g0907) to get ready for the messiah.

When Jesus began to teach the people, he told them more things about this good news. He told people that the “kingdom of God” was coming. He also spoke more and more clearly about what he would do. He would die on a cross but he would rise again. This was what he must do as the “Lamb of God.” However, it seems that he only said this to the twelve disciples. It does not seem that he ever told the people in general about these things.

See: Gospel; Repent (Repentance); Messiah (Christ); Kingdom of God; Lamb of God

3:21-22

Why was Jesus praying when he was baptized?

[3:21]

Jesus was praying when he was baptized because he wanted the Holy Spirit to help him serve God. Luke often wrote about someone praying at the same time when he wrote about the Holy Spirit. He wrote about how Jesus taught his disciples how to pray to God. Later, God the Father gave the Holy Spirit to them (see: Luke 11:13). God filled Christians with the Holy Spirit when they prayed (see: Acts 4:31).

See: Pray (Prayer); Filling of the Holy Spirit

Advice to translators: For “the Holy Spirit filled Christians,” consider using the expression in your version of Acts 2:4.

Why was the Holy Spirit in bodily form of a dove?

[3:22]

In the Bible, a dove represented many different things. Only Luke wrote the Holy Spirit was in the “bodily”(σωματικός/g4984) “form”(εἶδος/g1491) of a dove.” Luke wrote that because he noted well the service of the Holy Spirit at the start of his Gospel (see: Luke 1:15,35,41,67; 2:25-27).

See: Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Isaiah 42:1

Advice to translators: For “the bodily form of a dove,” use the expression in your Bible version.

Why did God call Jesus his Son?

[3:22]

God called Jesus his Son because God was announcing that Jesus was the messiah whom he had promised to send. In Psalms 2:7, God said the person he made king was his “Son”. God also loves Jesus and is pleased with him. God spoke from heaven when Jesus was baptized. The people heard him, but they did not see him.

See: Messiah (Christ); Son of God

Why was Jesus baptized?

[3:22]

John “baptized”(βαπτίζω/g0907) people as part of their “repenting”(μετανοέω/g3340) from their sins. He did this so that they would be able to welcome the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He also “baptized” Jesus (see: Mark 1:9), because Jesus asked him to do so, even though Jesus had never sinned. He never needed to “repent” of having sinned. Most scholars think that Jesus wanted to be “baptized” in order to prepare him to be a sacrifice to God. He would die in the same way a sacrifice was done to allow people to be at peace with God.

See: 2 Corinthians 5:21

See: Repent (Repentance); Messiah (Christ); Atone (Atonement)

3:23-38

Why did Luke write how old Jesus was when he began to serve the people?

[3:23]

Luke wrote that Jesus was about thirty years old when he began to serve the people. The Jews thought that this was when a man should begin doing the work that he would do for the rest of his life. Joseph was thirty years old when he became a leader in Egypt (see: Genesis 41:46). David was thirty when he began to rule over Israel (see: 2 Samuel 5:4). The Levites began serving in the tent of meeting at the age of thirty (see: Numbers 4:3).

See: Tent of Meeting

Advice to translators: A genealogy is a list of someone’s ancestors or descendants.

How was Luke’s genealogy of Jesus different from Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus?

[3:23]

Luke’s genealogy of Jesus is different from Matthew’s genealogy in several ways.

Matthew wrote the genealogy first in his gospel. However, Luke wrote the genealogy after he wrote about how Jesus was “baptized”(βαπτίζω/g0907). However, he wrote about it before he wrote about how Satan tried to make Jesus sin.

Matthew started Jesus’ genealogy with Abraham. He wrote Jesus’ descendants until Joseph, who people thought was the father of Jesus. However, Luke started Jesus’ genealogy with Joseph. He wrote Jesus’ ancestors all the way back to Adam, the first man. Matthew wrote about David’s son Solomon in his genealogy. However, Luke wrote about David’s son Nathan. Matthew wrote about women in his genealogy. However, Luke did not write about any women. Matthew wrote about three groups of fourteen people. This was forty-two people. Luke wrote about eleven groups of seven people. This was seventy-seven people. The people between Jesus to David are different in Matthew and Luke.

See: Gospel; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Genealogy; Son of David

Advice to translators: A genealogy is a list of someone’s ancestors or descendants.

Why was Luke’s genealogy of Jesus different from Matthew’s genealogy of Jesus?

[3:23]

Scholars give different reasons why Luke’s genealogy of Jesus was different from Matthew’s genealogy.

Matthew and Luke thought different kinds of people would read their gospels. Matthew wrote for Jewish Christians and Luke wrote for Gentile Christians. Luke wrote Jesus’ ancestors from his mother Mary but Matthew wrote Jesus’ ancestors from Joseph. Luke wrote about Nathan instead of Solomon because of prophecies that David would stop having

descendants (see: Jeremiah 22:28-30; 36:30-31). Luke wanted to imply that Jesus was also a prophet.

See: Gospel; Prophet

Advice to translators: A genealogy is a list of someone's ancestors or descendants.

Why did Luke write a genealogy of Jesus?

[3:23]

Luke's genealogy named the ancestors of Jesus back to Adam, the first man, and then back to God. Luke wanted people to know that Jesus was related to all mankind, not only to the Jews. Therefore, Luke also wanted his readers to know that Jesus came to bring the gospel to all mankind.

Some scholars think Luke wanted people to know Jesus was different than Adam (see: Romans 5:12-21). When Adam sinned, the whole world rebelled against God and began to die. However, Jesus came so that people could live forever with God.

See: Gospel

Luke 3:1

General Information:

Verses 1-3 give background information to tell what is happening when Jesus's cousin John begins his ministry.

Connecting Statement:

As the prophet Isaiah had foretold, John begins to preach good news to the people.

Philip ... Lysanias

These are the names of men.

Iturea and Trachonitis ... Abilene

These are names of territories.

Luke 3:2

during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas

"while Annas and Caiaphas were serving together as the high priest." Annas was the high priest, and the Jews continued to recognize him as such even after the Romans appointed his son-in-law, Caiaphas, to replace him as high priest.

the word of God came

The writer speaks of God's message as though it were a person who moved toward those who heard it. Alternate translation: "God spoke his message"

Luke 3:3

preaching a baptism of repentance

The terms "baptism" and "repentance" could be stated as actions. Alternate translation: "and he preached that people should be baptized to show that they were repenting"

for the forgiveness of sins

They would repent so that God would forgive their sins.

The term "forgiveness" can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "so that their sins would be forgiven" or "so that God would forgive their sins"

Luke 3:4

General Information:

The author, Luke, quotes a passage from Isaiah the prophet concerning John the Baptist.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, These words introduce a quotation from the prophet Isaiah. They can be stated in active form, and the missing words can be supplied. Alternate translation: "This happened as Isaiah the prophet had written in the book that contains his words:" or "John fulfilled the message that the prophet Isaiah had written in his book:"

A voice of one crying out in the wilderness

This can be expressed as a sentence. Alternate translation:

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness is heard" or

"They hear the sound of someone crying out in the wilderness"

Make ready the way of the Lord, make his paths straight

The second command explains or adds more detail to the first.

Make ready the way of the Lord

"Get the road ready for the Lord." Doing this represents preparing to hear the Lord's message when he comes.

Alternate translation: "Prepare yourselves for the Lord to come" or "Be ready for the Lord when he comes"

the way

"the path" or "the road"

Luke 3:5

Every valley will be filled ... every mountain and hill will be made low

When people prepare the road for an important person who is coming, they cut down the high places and fill in the low places so that the road will be level. This is part of the metaphor started in the previous verse.

Every valley will be filled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"They will fill in every low place in the road"

every mountain and hill will be made low

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they will level every mountain and hill" or "they will remove every high place in the road"

Luke 3:6

see the salvation of God

This can be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "learn how God saves people from sin"

Luke 3:7

to be baptized by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for John to baptize them"

You offspring of vipers

This is a metaphor. Here "offspring of" means "having the characteristic of." Vipers are poisonous snakes that are dangerous and represent evil. Alternate translation: "You evil poisonous snakes" or "You are evil, like poisonous snakes"

Who warned you ... coming?

He was not really expecting them to answer. John was rebuking the people because they were asking him to baptize them so that God would not punish them, but they did not want to stop sinning. Alternate translation: "You cannot flee from God's wrath like this!" or "You cannot escape from God's wrath just by being baptized!"

from the wrath that is coming

The word "wrath" is used here to refer to God's punishment because his wrath precedes it. Alternate translation: "from the punishment that God is sending" or "from God's wrath on which he is about to act"

Luke 3:8

produce fruits that are worthy of repentance

In this metaphor, a person's behavior is compared to fruit. Just as a plant is expected to produce fruit that is appropriate for that kind of plant, a person who says that he has repented is expected to live righteously. Alternate translation: "produce the kind of fruit that shows that you have repented" or "do the good things that show that you have turned away from your sin"

to say within yourselves

"saying to yourselves" or "thinking"

We have Abraham for our father

"Abraham is our ancestor" or "We are Abraham's descendants." If it is unclear why they would say this, you may also add the implied information: "so God will not punish us."

raise up children for Abraham

"create children for Abraham"

from these stones

John was probably referring to the actual stones along the Jordan River.

Luke 3:9

the ax is set against the root of the trees

The ax that is in position so it can cut the roots of a tree is a metaphor for the punishment that is about to begin. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is like the man who has placed his ax against the root of the trees"

every tree ... is chopped down and thrown into the fire

"fire" here is a metaphor for punishment. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he chops down every tree ... and throws it into the fire"

Luke 3:10

asking him, saying

"asking him and said" or "asking John"

Luke 3:11

Connecting Statement:

John begins to respond to questions that people in the crowd ask him.

answered and said to them

"answered them, saying" or "answered them" or "said"

do the same

This refers back to giving to someone what he needs.

Alternate translation: "give food to someone who does not have any" or "share extra food just as you shared the extra tunic"

Luke 3:12

to be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for John to baptize them"

Luke 3:13

Do not collect more money

"Do not ask for more money" or "Do not demand more money." Tax collectors had been collecting more money than they should have been collecting. John tells them to

stop doing that.

than you have been ordered to collect

This is passive to show that the tax collector's authority comes from Rome. Alternate translation: "than what the Romans have authorized you to take"

Luke 3:14

What about us? What must we do?

"How about us soldiers, what must we do?" John is not included in the words "us" and "we." The soldiers have implied that John had told the crowd and the tax collector what they must do and want to know what they as soldiers are to do.

do not accuse anyone falsely

It seems that the soldiers were making false charges against people in order to get money. This can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "in the same way, do not accuse anyone falsely in order to get money from them" or "do not say that an innocent person has done something illegal"

Be content with your wages

"Be satisfied with your pay"

Luke 3:15

as the people

"because the people." This refers to the same people who came to John.

everyone was wondering in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ.

"everyone was unsure what to think about John; they asked themselves, 'Could he be the Christ?'" or "no one was sure what to think about John because they were wondering whether he might be the Christ."

Luke 3:16

John answered by saying to them all

John's answer about a greater person coming clearly implies that John is not the Christ. It may be helpful to state this clearly for your audience. Alternate translation: "John clarified that he was not the Christ by saying to them all"

I baptize you with water

"I baptize using water" or "I baptize by means of water"

not worthy even to untie the strap of his sandals

"not important enough even to loosen the straps of his sandals." Untying the straps of sandals was a duty of a slave. John was saying that the one who would come is so great that John was not even worthy enough to be his slave.

He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire

This metaphor compares literal baptism that brings a person into contact with water to a spiritual baptism that brings them into contact with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Here the word "fire" may refer to 1) judgment or 2) purification. It is preferred to leave it as "fire"

Luke 3:17

His winnowing fork is in his hand

"He is holding a winnowing fork because he is ready." John speaks of the Christ coming to judge people as if he were a farmer who is ready to separate wheat grain from chaff. Alternate translation: "He is ready to judge people like a farmer who is ready"

winnowing fork

This is a tool for tossing wheat into the air to separate the

wheat grain from the chaff. The heavier grain falls back down and the unwanted chaff is blown away by the wind. It is similar to a pitchfork.

to thoroughly clear off his threshing floor

The threshing floor was the place where wheat was stacked in preparation for threshing. To "clear off" the floor is to finish threshing the grain. Alternate translation: "to finish threshing his grain"

to gather the wheat

The wheat is the acceptable harvest that is kept and stored.

will burn up the chaff

The chaff is not useful for anything, so people burn it up.

Luke 3:18

With many other exhortations

"With many other strong urgings"

Luke 3:19

General Information:

Verses 19 and 20 tell what is going to happen to John but has not happened at this time.

Herod the tetrarch

Herod was a tetrarch, not a king. He had only limited rule over the region of Galilee.

When Herod the tetrarch had been reproved

It is implied that John reproved Herod. This can also be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "When Herod the tetrarch had been reproved by John" or "When John reproved Herod the tetrarch")

for marrying his brother's wife Herodias

"because Herod married Herodias, his own brother's wife." This was evil because Herod's brother was still alive. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "because he married his brother's wife, Herodias, while his brother was still alive"

Luke 3:20

he locked John up in prison

Because Herod was tetrarch, he probably locked John up by ordering his soldiers to lock John up. Alternate translation: "he had his soldiers lock John up in prison" or "he told his soldiers to put John in prison"

Luke 3:21

General Information:

The previous verse says that Herod put John in prison. It might be helpful to make it clear that the account starting in verse 21 happened before John was arrested. The UDB does this by starting verse 21 with "But before John was put in prison."

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins his ministry with his baptism.

Now it came about

This phrase marks the beginning of a new event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

when all the people were baptized

"while John baptized all the people." The phrase "all the people" refers to the people present with John.

Jesus also was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"John baptized Jesus also"

the heavens opened

"the sky opened" or "the sky became open." This is more than a simple clearing of clouds, but it's not clear what it means. It possibly means that a hole appeared in the sky. Luke 3:22

the Holy Spirit in bodily form came down on him like a dove

"in physical form the Holy Spirit came down like a dove onto Jesus"

a voice came from heaven

Here "a voice came from heaven" represents people on earth hearing God in heaven speaking. It can be made clear that God spoke to Jesus. Alternate translation: "a voice from heaven said" or "God spoke to Jesus from heaven, saying" my beloved Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

Luke 3:23

General Information:

Luke lists the ancestors of Jesus through the line of his supposed father, Joseph.

When

This word is used here to mark a change from the story to background information about Jesus's age and ancestors.

thirty years of age

"30 years old"

He was the son (as it was assumed) of Joseph

"It was thought that he was the son of Joseph" or "People assumed that he was the son of Joseph"

Luke 3:24

the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph

This continues the list that begins with the words "He was the son ... of Joseph, the son of Heli" in verse 24. Consider how people normally list ancestors in your language. You should use the same wording throughout the whole list. Possible formats are 1) "He was the son ... of Joseph, the son of Heli, who was the son of Matthat, who was the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph" or 2) "He was the son ... of Joseph. Joseph was the son of Heli. Heli was the son of Matthat. Matthat was the son of Levi. Levi was the son of Melchi. Melchi was the son of Jannai. Jannai was the son of Joseph" or 3) "His father ... was Joseph. Joseph's father was Heli. Heli's father was Matthat. Matthat's father was Levi. Levi's father was Melchi. Melchi's father was Jannai. Jannai's father was Joseph"

Luke 3:25

the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos ... Naggai

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:26

the son of Maath ... Joda

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:27

Joda was the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa ... Neri

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that begins in [Luke 3:23]

the son of Salathiel

The name Salathiel may be a different spelling of the name Shealtiel (as some versions have it), but identification is

difficult.

Luke 3:28

the son of Melchi ... Er

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:29

the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer ... Levi

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:30

the son of Simeon, the son of Judah ... Eliakim

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:31

the son of Melea ... David

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:32

the son of Jesse ... the son of Nahshon

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:33

the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin ... Judah

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that

began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:34

the son of Jacob ... Nahor

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:35

the son of Serug ... Shelah

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:36

the son of Cainan, the son of Arphaxad ... Lamech

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:37

the son of Methuselah ... Cainan

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Luke 3:38

the son of Enos ... Adam

This is a continuation of the list of Jesus's ancestors that began in [Luke 3:23]

Adam, the son of God

"Adam, created by God" or "Adam, who was from God" or "Adam, the son, we could say, of God"

Chapter 4

Luke 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 4:10-11, 18-19, which is from the Old Testament.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Jesus was tempted by the devil

While it is true that the devil sincerely believed that he could persuade Jesus to obey him, it is important not to imply that Jesus actually ever really wanted to obey him.

Links:

[Luke 4:1 Notes](#)

Luke 4

4:1-13

Why did Luke write that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit when he went into the wilderness?

[4:1]

Luke wrote that the Holy Spirit wanted Jesus to go into the wilderness. In the wilderness, the devil tried to make Jesus sin. Matthew and Mark also wrote about the Holy Spirit doing this (see: Matthew 4:1; Mark 1:12). However, only Luke wrote that Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit. Some scholars say Jesus had the Holy Spirit in him and was full of the Holy Spirit since he was baptized (see: Luke 3:21-22). Other scholars say Luke wanted people to know that Jesus was not “tempted or tested”(πειράζω/g3985) because he did something wrong.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Wilderness; Tempt (Temptation); Test

Advice to translators: The devil tried to trap Jesus and get him to sin, this was a “temptation.” A “temptation” was a certain type of test or a trap. A “wilderness” was an area that was very hot and had no water.

See Map: Judea

How did Jesus in the wilderness compare with the Israelites?

[4:1, 4:2]

Jesus in the wilderness compared to the Israelites because God tested Israel in the wilderness after they left Egypt with Moses. They did not obey God. However, Jesus obeyed God when the devil tried to make him sin. Also, the forty days Jesus was in the wilderness compared to the forty years the Israelites were in the wilderness. The Israelites were in the wilderness one year for each day the spies were in the promised land. In the same way Jesus was in the wilderness one

day for each year the Israelites were in the wilderness (see: Numbers 14:33-34).

See: Wilderness; Canaan (Promised Land)

Why did Jesus fast for forty days?

[4:2]

The Old Testament used the number forty is used many times. Moses and Elijah began to serve God in a special way after they fasted for forty days (see: Exodus 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8). After Jesus fasted, he began to serve God in a special way and tell Israel that he was the messiah.

See: Fasting; Messiah (Christ)

The devil tried to convince Adam to sin. He also tried to convince Jesus to sin. How did Satan do this?

[4:2]

The devil tried to convince Adam to sin. He also tried to convince Jesus to sin. Some scholars think that Satan did this in the same way. They think that he did it in a certain way for a certain reason. Perhaps, John talked about these reasons in 1 John 2:16.

See: Incarnation; Tempt (Temptation); Satan (The Devil)

Advice to translators: In some translations, Satan said “if” you are the son of God. However, Satan knew that Jesus was the Son of God. This question may need to be adapted to explain your local translation.

Did Satan know that Jesus is the Son of God?

[4:3]

Satan knew that Jesus is the Son of God. However, the devil wanted Jesus to stop being the Son of God. Perhaps he thought that God would reject Jesus if Jesus rejected God.

In the Old Testament, Israel was also called the “son” of God (see: Exodus 4:22-23; Hosea 11:1). Jesus is also the Son of God. However, he is not the son of God in the same way that Israel was the son of God. Israel disobeyed God and God punished them in the same way a parent punished their son. The devil wanted Jesus to disobey God. Perhaps, Satan wanted God to punish Jesus. Despite this, Jesus obeyed God in the same way a son should obey his father.

See: Luke 3:22

See: Son of God; Satan (The Devil); Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did the devil tempt Jesus when Jesus was hungry?

[4:3]

The devil wanted Jesus to turn a stone into bread because Jesus was hungry. Jesus was very hungry after not eating for forty days. The devil knew Jesus was a human being in every way except Jesus did not sin. Perhaps Luke remembered that the Israelites were also hungry in the desert. When they were hungry, they disobeyed God (see: Exodus 16:8).

However, Jesus obeyed God when he was hungry.

See: Incarnation; Tempt (Temptation); Satan (The Devil)

The devil told Jesus to make himself food in the desert. Why did Jesus not do this?

[4:4]

Scholars give several reasons why Jesus did not make himself food in the desert.

God did not want him to eat food. Jesus was fasting when he was in the desert. Jesus needed to suffer in the same way that people suffered (see: Hebrews 2:18; 4:15). This helped Jesus to become a priest who knew what people felt when they were hungry. Jesus trusted God. Jesus knew that God would give him food to eat. He knew that God would give him everything that he needed to live. He also trusted in the things that God said in Scripture. Therefore, he said to the devil the things that Scripture wrote.

However, some scholars say it was not always wrong for Jesus to make food. When Jesus answered the devil, he repeated a scripture that spoke about the manna that God made (see: Deuteronomy 8:3). Later, Jesus made food for people (see: Luke 5:4-10; 9:12-17).

See: Fasting; Priest (Priesthood)

How did the devil show Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world”?

[4:5]

Scholars believe the devil showed Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world” in a vision. Whether it was the world that Rome ruled or the whole world, no one was able to see all of it at one time from a mountain. It was a real seeing but it did not belong to this world. Some scholars say it was real the same way the heavens opened at Jesus’ baptism (see: Luke 3:21). Some scholars say that is why Luke did not say Jesus was on a mountain. Other scholars say when the devil led Jesus up it was on a mountain.

See: Deuteronomy 32:49; 34:1-3

See: Vision); World; Satan (The Devil)

How was the devil able to give Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world”?

[4:6]

The devil was able to give Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world” because God gave permission to the devil to rule the whole world (see: 1 John 5:19). However, this is only for a limited time (see: John 12:31; 16:11).

See: Satan (The Devil)

Why did the devil want to give Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world”?

[4:6, 4:7]

The devil wanted to give Jesus “all the kingdoms of the world” because that was not God’s plan for Jesus. God gives Jesus authority to rule the world (see: Psalm 2:8; Daniel 7:14; Matthew 28:18). However, God’s plan was for Jesus to suffer and die before he entered into glory (see: Luke 24:26). Paul also wrote about this (see: Philippians 2:5-11).

See: Kingdom of God; Atonement; Cross; Glory (Glorify)

Why did Jesus refuse to worship the devil to receive “all the kingdoms of the world”?

[4:8]

Jesus refused to worship the devil to receive “all the kingdoms of the world” because the Old Testament wrote only God must be worshipped. That is, someone cannot worship God and worship someone else at the same time. Jesus noted this well by adding the word “only”(μόνος/g3441) when he repeated the Old Testament scripture (see: Deuteronomy 6:13).

See: Worship

How did the devil use Psalm 91 in a wrong way?

[4:10, 4:11]

The devil used Psalm 91 in a wrong way by telling Jesus that God protected people from harm even when they tested God. The devil tried to convince Jesus that he was able to throw himself down from the “highest point of the temple.” However, the writer of Psalm 91 wrote about someone who trusted God, even when things were difficult. He also wrote about how God promised to care for people who trusted in him. However, the devil wanted to use this Psalm in a different way. He wanted Jesus to think God would help him, even if Jesus tested God or rejected the things that God said. However, God did not promise to protect those who rejected him in Psalm 91.

See: Psalm; Temple; Satan (The Devil)

Why was Jesus not willing to test God?

[4:12]

Jesus was not willing to test God because Jesus knew all scriptures and he knew how to follow them in the right way. Jesus repeated Deuteronomy 6:16 to the devil. That Scripture said people must not test God. Jesus did not argue with the devil about scripture.

Advice to translators: Translate the phrase “until another time” as your local translation does. Why did Luke write “until another time”? Luke wrote “until another time” so his readers would know the devil left Jesus in order to wait for another time to try to make Jesus disobey God. The devil also tempted Jesus when he died on the cross. At that time, people spoke to Jesus using words using the same words the devil said, “If you are the Son of God” (see: Matthew 27:40).

4:14-15

Why did the second major section of Luke’s gospel begin here?

[4:14]

Jesus’ temptation concluded the first major section of Luke’s gospel. Jesus was a baby born from a virgin when he came into the world. John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus’ coming. Luke recorded Jesus’ genealogy and temptation. Jesus then began seeking people. He announced his ministry at his hometown. He taught and did miracles. This division of major sections is taken from the key verse of Luke’s gospel (see: Luke 19:10).

What did Luke say about the start of Jesus’ earthly service?

[4:15]

After the devil tempted Jesus, Jesus went back to Galilee in the “power”(δύναμις/g1411) of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helped Jesus to do the great things that he did. He taught and did miracles because the Holy Spirit gave him the power to do these things. Also, Luke said that many people believed in Jesus when he started his earthly service. When Jesus began teaching, everyone in Galilee spoke well of him.

See Map: Galilee

4:16-30

Why did Jesus stand to read the scroll in the synagogue?

[4:16]

Jesus stood to read the scroll in the synagogue because when someone read scripture they needed to stand. This was a way to honor God. Luke wrote that Jesus often went to the synagogue. This time when Jesus went to the synagogue, he asked to read Scripture. Jesus read the words of the prophet Isaiah (see: Isaiah 61:1-2).

See: Synagogue; Prophet

How did the prophecy that Jesus read from Isaiah say Jesus is the Messiah?

[4:18, 4:19]

Isaiah prophesied that the Holy Spirit, the “Spirit”(πνεῦμα/g4151) of the “Lord”(κύριος/g2962), would be with the messiah (see: Luke 3:22). There were three ways that the people would know the messiah.

The messiah told “good news or gospel”(εὐαγγελίζω/g2097) to the “poor”(πτωχός/g4434). The good news was to the “poor” because the poor needed help. People needed help to be at peace with God. The messiah told people in prison that they would be free. The devil caused some people to be sick. The messiah made many sick people healthy. He also freed people

from the way that they used to live before they believed in Jesus. The messiah announced the “time”(ἐνιαυτός/g1763) of the Lord’s “favor”(δεκτός/g1184) (see: Luke 4:19; Isaiah 61:2). Some scholars think that Isaiah was speaking about a special Sabbath time called the Year of Jubilee in the Law of Moses (see: Leviticus 25:8-55). Other scholars think that Isaiah was speaking about how God would give favor to Christians. He did this when Jesus died so that Christians could be at peace with God.

See: Prophet; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Messiah (Christ); Gospel; Law of Moses; Sabbath

Why did Jesus not talk about God’s judgment when he read from Isaiah?

[4:19]

Scholars give several reasons why Jesus did not talk about God’s judgment when he read from Isaiah.

Jesus did not want people to think about Isaiah’s warnings of judgment. The people thought Isaiah’s judgment was for the Gentiles. Jesus wanted them to know the Lord’s favor was for the Gentiles also. This was not time for the judgment. It was the time for the Lord’s favor. The judgment will come when Jesus returns at the end of the world (see: Revelation 19:11-16). The people become angry enough in verse twenty-eight without hearing Jesus read about Judgment from Isaiah.

See: Judge (Judgment)

Why did Jesus tell the people a proverb?

[4:23]

Jesus told the people a proverb about a doctor healing himself because the people wanted Jesus to do miracles in Nazareth. They knew Jesus did miracles in Capernaum and now they wanted him to do the same things in Nazareth (see: Luke 4:23). However, Jesus did not do what they wanted because the people did not believe in him (see: Matthew 13:57-58).

See: Proverb; Miracle

See Map: Nazareth; Capernaum; Galilee

Why did Jesus talk about the prophets, Elijah and Elisha?

[4:25, 4:26, 4:27]

Jesus talked about the prophets, Elijah and Elisha. These men died many years before. Jesus wanted the people of Nazareth to know that they rejected him in the same way that the Israelites rejected Elijah and Elisha. However, the people of Nazareth knew that God sent Elijah and Elisha. After the Israelites rejected them, Elijah and Elisha helped the Gentiles. The Israelites thought that the Gentiles were evil and did not honor God. Therefore, a prophet should not help them. After the people of Nazareth rejected him, Jesus began to help Gentiles.

See: 1 Kings 17; 2 Kings 5

See: Prophet; Gentile

See Map: Sidon; Syria

Why did all the people in the synagogue try to kill Jesus?

[4:29]

Jesus read the words of Isaiah to the people in Luke 4:18-19 (see: Isaiah 61:1-2). All the people in the synagogue tried to kill Jesus because the things he said made them angry. They thought that Isaiah was speaking about God saving Israel. Jesus said that it was about the Gentiles. This insulted the Jews because they thought the Gentiles were evil.

See: Synagogue; Gentile

4:31-44

Why were the people amazed at the teaching of Jesus?

[4:32]

Luke said that the people were “amazed”(ἐκπλήσσω/g1605) at the things Jesus taught. They were amazed because Jesus said the words God commanded him to speak (see: Matthew 7:29). Jesus spoke with “power”(ἐξουσία/g1849) that came from the Holy Spirit and God himself. Scholars think that Jesus explained the Old Testament to the people.

What was another way Jesus demonstrated his power in the synagogue?

[4:35]

While Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, a man began to shout loudly. The man was controlled by a demon. Jesus commanded the demon to be “quiet”(φιδώ/g5392) and he commanded the demon to “come out”(ἐξέρχουαι/g1831) of the shouting man. Luke wanted people to know that Jesus could make demons obey him because he is God. Once again, the people were amazed with Jesus and the power that God had given him.

See: Synagogue; Demon

How did Jesus heal Simon’s mother-in-law?

[4:39]

Simon’s mother-in-law was sick with a “high fever”(πυρετός/g4446)(μέγας/g3173) fever. Jesus stood over Simon’s mother-in-law and “commanded”(ἐπιτιμάω/g2008) the fever to leave. Simon’s mother-in-law was immediately healed. Some scholars think that Luke wanted people to know that Jesus could immediately heal a sick person. Other scholars think a demon caused the fever. Jesus “commanded” the fever to leave in the same way that he “commanded” the demon to leave

the man in the synagogue.

Why did people come to Jesus after sunset?

[4:40]

People came to Jesus after sunset because it was the sabbath. People did not travel very far or carry a heavy load on the Sabbath. Therefore, after the sabbath they brought ill and demon possessed people to Jesus. Jesus healed them of various diseases and cast out demons.

See: Sabbath; Demon

Why did Jesus lay his hands on people when healing them?

[4:40]

Jesus laid his hands on people when he healed them because he loved them or he favored them. However, putting his hands on people was not what healed them. Instead, it was the power of God.

Why did Jesus command the demons not to say he is the Son of God even though they were right that he is the Messiah?

[4:41]

Scholars give several reasons why Jesus commanded the demons not to say he is the Son of God even though they were right that he is the messiah.

Demons taught people wrong things about the messiah. Jesus did not want the evil demons to tell people about him. Jesus wanted his disciples to tell people about him.

See: Son of God; Messiah (Christ); Demon

Why did God sent Jesus?

[4:43]

God sent Jesus to tell people about God's reign. Some scholars think Jesus told people he was the messiah. They think Jesus offered to rule the Jews on the earth. Other scholars think that Jesus wanted people to believe in him and obey him as their king. They think God sent him to help people to be at peace with God.

See: Kingdom of God

Luke 4:1

Then Jesus

After John had baptized Jesus.

was led by the Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Spirit led him"

Luke 4:2

Connecting Statement:

Jesus fasts for 40 days, and the devil meets him to try to persuade him to sin.

for forty days he was tempted

Most versions say that the temptation was throughout the forty days. The UDB states "While he was there, the devil kept tempting him" to make this clear.

forty days

"40 days"

he was tempted by the devil

This can be stated in active form, and you can make explicit what it was the devil tempted him to do. Alternate translation: "the devil tried to persuade him to disobey God"

He ate nothing

The word "he" refers to Jesus.

Luke 4:3

If you are the Son of God

The devil challenges Jesus to prove that he is the Son of God.

this stone

The devil either holds a stone in his hand or points to a nearby stone.

Luke 4:4

Jesus answered him, "It is written ... alone."

Jesus's rejection of the devil's challenge is clearly implied in his answer. It may be helpful to state this clearly for your

audience, as the UDB does. Alternate translation: "Jesus replied, 'No, I will not do that because it is written ... alone.'"

It is written

The quotation is from Moses's writings in the Old Testament. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Moses has written in the scriptures"

Man does not live on bread alone

The word "bread" refers to food in general. Food as compared to God, by itself, is not enough to sustain a person. Jesus quotes the scripture to say why he would not turn the stone into bread. Alternate translation: "People cannot live on just bread" or "It is not just food that makes a person live" or "God says there are more important things than food"

Luke 4:5

Then the devil led Jesus up ... world

"Then the devil led Jesus up to a very high place ... world." It is uncertain where the devil led Jesus and how he showed all the kingdoms of the world to him.

in an instant of time

"in an instant" or "instantly"

Luke 4:6

they have been given to me

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are that "them" refers to 1) the authority and splendor of the kingdoms or 2) the kingdoms. Alternate translation: "God has given them to me"

Luke 4:7

if you will bow down ... worship me

These two phrases are very similar. They can be combined. Alternate translation: "if you will bow down in worship to me"

it will be yours

"I will give you all these kingdoms, with their splendor"

Luke 4:8

It is written

Jesus refused to do what the devil asked. It may be helpful to state this clearly. Alternate translation: "No, I will not worship you, because it is written"

answered and said to him

"responded to him" or "replied to him"

It is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Moses has written in the scriptures"

You will worship the Lord your God

Jesus was quoting a command from the scriptures to say why he would not worship the devil.

You

This refers to the people in the Old Testament who received God's Law. You could use the singular form of 'you' because each person was to obey it, or you could use the plural form of 'you' because all of the people were to obey it.

him

The word "him" refers to the Lord God.

Luke 4:9

the very highest point

This was the corner of the temple roof. If someone fell from there, they would be seriously injured or die.

If you are the Son of God

The devil is challenging Jesus to prove that he is the Son of God.

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

throw yourself down

"jump down to the ground"

Luke 4:10

For it is written

The devil implies that his quote from the Psalms means Jesus will not be hurt if he is the Son of God. This can be stated clearly, as the UDB does. Alternate translation: "You will not be hurt, because it is written"

it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the writer has written"

He will give orders

"He" refers to God. The devil partially quoted from the Psalms in an effort to persuade Jesus to jump off the building.

Luke 4:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 4:12

It is said

Jesus tells the devil why he will not do what the devil told him to do. His refusal to do it can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "No, I will not do that, because it is said"

It is said

Jesus quotes from the writings of Moses in Deuteronomy.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Moses has said" or "Moses has said in the scriptures"

Do not put the Lord your God to the test

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus should not test God by jumping off the temple, or 2) the devil should not test Jesus to see if he is the Son of God. It is best to translate the verse as stated rather than to try to explain the meaning.

Luke 4:13

until another time

"until another occasion"

had finished tempting Jesus

This does not imply that the devil was successful in his temptation—Jesus resisted every attempt. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "had finished trying to persuade Jesus to sin"

Luke 4:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus returns to Galilee, teaches in the synagogue (4:15), and tells the people there that he is fulfilling scripture of Isaiah the prophet (4:17-21).

Then Jesus returned

This begins a new event in the story.

in the power of the Spirit

"and the Spirit was giving him power." God was with Jesus in a special way, enabling him to do things that humans usually could not.

news about him spread

"people spread the news about Jesus" or "people told other people about Jesus" or "knowledge about him was passed on from person to person." Those who heard Jesus told other people about him, and then those other people told even more people about him.

throughout the entire surrounding region

This refers to the areas or places around Galilee.

Luke 4:15

he was praised by all

"everyone said great things about him" or "all the people spoke about him in a good way"

Luke 4:16

where he had been raised

"where his parents had raised him" or "where he lived when he was a child" or "where he grew up"

as was his custom

"as he did each Sabbath." It was his usual practice to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day.

Luke 4:17

The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Someone gave him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah"

scroll of the prophet Isaiah

This refers to the book of Isaiah written on a scroll. Isaiah had written the words many years before, and someone else had copied them onto a scroll.

the place where it was written

"the place in the scroll with these words." This sentence continues on into the next verse.

Luke 4:18

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me

"The Holy Spirit is with me in a special way." When someone says this, he is claiming to speak the words of God. he anointed me

In the Old Testament, ceremonial oil was poured on a

person when they were given power and authority to do a special task. Jesus uses this metaphor to refer to the Holy Spirit being on him to prepare him for this work. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit is upon me to empower me" or "the Holy Spirit gave me power and authority"

the poor

"the poor people"

proclaim freedom to the captives

"tell people who are being held captive that they can go free" or "set free the prisoners of war"

recovery of sight to the blind

"give sight to the blind" or "make the blind be able to see again"

set free those who are oppressed

"set free those who are treated harshly"

Luke 4:19

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor

"tell everyone that the Lord is ready to bless his people" or "announce that this is the year that the Lord will show his kindness"

Luke 4:20

rolled up the scroll

A scroll was closed by rolling it like a tube to protect the writing inside it.

attendant

This refers to a synagogue worker who brought out and put away with proper care and reverence the scrolls containing the scriptures.

sat down

It was customary for teachers to be seated while teaching.

were fixed on him

This idiom means "were focused on him" or "were looking intently at him"

Luke 4:21

this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing

Jesus was saying that he was fulfilling that prophecy by his actions and speech at that very time. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am fulfilling what this scripture says right now as you are listening to me"

in your hearing

This idiom means "while you are listening to me"

Luke 4:22

amazed at the gracious words which were coming out of his mouth

"surprised about the gracious things that he was saying."

Here "gracious" may refer to 1) how well or how persuasively Jesus spoke, or 2) that Jesus spoke words about God's grace.

Is this not the son of Joseph?

People thought that Joseph was Jesus's father. Joseph was not a religious leader, so they were surprised that his son would preach what he did. Alternate translation: "This is just Joseph's son!" or "His father is only Joseph!"

Luke 4:23

Surely

"Certainly" or "There is no doubt that"

Doctor, heal yourself

If someone claims to be able to heal diseases that he himself has, there is no reason to believe he is really a doctor. People will speak this proverb to Jesus to say that

they will only believe he is a prophet if they see him do what they have heard that he did in other places.

Whatever we heard ... do the same in your hometown

The people of Nazareth do not believe Jesus is a prophet because of his low status as Joseph's son. They will not believe unless they personally see him do miracles.

Luke 4:24

Truly I say to you

"It is certainly true." This is an emphatic statement about what follows.

no prophet is received in his own hometown

Jesus makes this general statement in order to rebuke the people. He means that they are refusing to believe the reports of his miracles in Capernaum. They think they already know all about him.

own hometown

"homeland" or "native city" or "country where he grew up"

Luke 4:25

General Information:

Jesus reminds the people who are listening to him in the synagogue about Elijah and Elisha

But in truth I tell you

"I tell you truthfully." Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the importance, truth, and accuracy of the statement that follows.

widows

Widows are women whose husbands have died and who have not married again.

during the time of Elijah

The people to whom Jesus was speaking would have known that Elijah was one of God's prophets. If your readers would not know that, you can make this implicit information explicit as in the UDB. Alternate translation:

"when Elijah was prophesying in Israel"

when the sky was shut up

This is a metaphor. The sky is pictured as a ceiling that was closed, and so no rain would fall from it. Alternate translation: "when no rain fell down from the sky" or "when there was no rain at all"

a great famine

"a serious lack of food." A famine occurs when the crops do not produce enough food for the people for a long period of time.

Luke 4:26

to Zarephath in Sidon, to a widow living there

The people living in the town of Zarephath were Gentiles, not Jews. The people listening to Jesus would have understood that the people of Zarephath were Gentiles.

Alternate translation: "to a Gentile widow living in Zarephath in Sidon"

Luke 4:27

none of them were cleansed except Naaman the Syrian

This double negative emphasizes that Naaman was the only one who was cleansed. This can also be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "the only one of them who was cleansed was Naaman" or "the only one of them whom God cleansed was Naaman"

were cleansed

People who had leprosy were considered to be unclean.

When they were healed from leprosy, they were clean.

Alternate translation: "were healed"

Naaman the Syrian

A Syrian is a person from the country of Syria. The people of Syria were Gentiles, not Jews. Alternate translation: "the Gentile Naaman from Syria"

Luke 4:28

All the people in the synagogue were filled with rage when they heard these things

The people of Nazareth were deeply offended that Jesus had cited scriptures where God had helped Gentiles instead of Jews.

Luke 4:29

forced him out of the town

"forced him to leave the town" or "shoved him out of the city"

cliff of the hill

"edge of the cliff"

Luke 4:30

through the middle of them

"through the middle of the crowd" or "between the people who were trying to kill him."

he went to another place

"he went away" or "he went on his way" Jesus went where he had planned to go instead of where the people were trying to force him to go.

Luke 4:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus then goes to Capernaum, teaches the people in the synagogue there, and commands a demon to leave a man (4:35).

Then he

"Then Jesus." This indicates a new event.

went down to Capernaum

The phrase "went down" is used here because Capernaum is lower in elevation than Nazareth.

Capernaum, a city in Galilee

"Capernaum, another city in Galilee"

Luke 4:32

astonished

greatly surprised, greatly amazed

he spoke with authority

"he spoke as one with authority" or "his words had great power"

Luke 4:33

Now ... there was a man

This phrase is used to mark the introduction of a new character into the story; in this case, a demon-possessed man.

who had the spirit of an unclean demon

"who was possessed by an unclean demon" or "who was controlled by an evil spirit"

he cried out with a loud voice

"he shouted loudly"

Luke 4:34

What do we have to do with you

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "What do we have in common" or "What right do you have to bother us"

What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth?

This question could be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "What do you, Jesus of Nazareth, have to do with us!" or "We have nothing to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth!" or "You have no right to bother us, Jesus of Nazareth!"

Luke 4:35

Jesus rebuked the demon, saying

"Jesus scolded the demon, saying" or "Jesus sternly said to the demon"

Come out of him

He commanded the demon to stop controlling the man.

Alternate translation: "Leave him alone" or "Do not live in this man any longer"

Luke 4:36

What kind of words are these?

The people were expressing how amazed they were that Jesus had the authority to command demons to leave a person. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "These are amazing words!" or "His words are amazing!"

He commands the unclean spirits with authority and power

"He has authority and power to command the unclean spirits"

Luke 4:37

So news about him began to spread ... the surrounding region

This is a comment about what happened after the story.

The spread of the news was caused by the events within the story itself.

news about him began to spread

"reports about Jesus began to spread" or "people began to spread the news about Jesus"

Luke 4:38

Connecting Statement:

Jesus is still in Capernaum, but he is now at the house of Simon.

Then Jesus left

This introduces a new event.

Simon's mother-in-law

"the mother of Simon's wife"

was suffering with

This is an idiom that means "was very sick with"

a high fever

"very hot skin"

pleaded with him on her behalf

This means they asked Jesus to heal her from the fever. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "asked Jesus to heal her from the fever" or "asked Jesus to cure her fever"

Luke 4:39

So he stood

The word "So" makes it clear that he did this because the people pleaded with him on behalf of Simon's mother-in-law.

stood over her

"went to her and leaned over her"

rebuked the fever, and it left her

"spoke sternly to the fever, and it left her" or "commanded the fever to leave her, and it did." It may be helpful to state clearly what he told the fever to do. Alternate translation: "commanded that her skin should become cool, and it did"

or "commanded the sickness to leave her, and it did"
rebuked the fever
"rebuked the hotness"
started serving them
Here this means she began to prepare food for Jesus and the other people in the house.
Luke 4:40
laid his hands on
"placed his hands on" or "touched"
Luke 4:41
Demons also came out
It is implied that Jesus made the demons leave the demon-possessed people. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Jesus also forced demons to come out"
crying out and saying
These mean about the same thing, and probably refer to cries of fear or anger. Some translations use only one term. Alternate translation: "screaming" or "shouting"
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
rebuked the demons
"spoke sternly to the demons"

would not let them
"did not allow them to"
Luke 4:42
Connecting Statement:
Though the people want Jesus to stay in Capernaum, he goes to preach in other Judean synagogues.
When daybreak came
"At sunrise" or "At dawn"
a solitary place
"a deserted place" or "a place where there were no people"
Luke 4:43
to many other cities
"to the people in many other cities"
this is the reason I was sent here
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "this is the reason God sent me here"
Luke 4:44
throughout Judea
Since Jesus had been in Galilee, the term "Judea" here probably refers to the entire region where the Jews lived at that time. Alternate translation: "where the Jews lived"

Chapter 5

Luke 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"You will catch men"

Peter, James, and John were fishermen. When Jesus told them that they would catch men, he was using a metaphor to tell them he wanted them to help people believe the good news about him.

Sinners

When the people of Jesus's time spoke of "sinners," they were talking about people who did not obey the law of Moses and instead committed sins like stealing or sexual sins. When Jesus said that he came to call "sinners," he meant that only people who believe that they are sinners can be his followers. This is true even if they are not what most people think of as "sinners." (See: sin)

Fasting and Feasting

People would fast, or not eat food for a long time, when they were sad or were showing God that they were sorry for their sins. When they were happy, like during weddings, they would have feasts, or meals where they would eat much food. (See: fast)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Irony

Jesus uses irony to condemn the Pharisees. This passage includes "people in good health" and "righteous people." This does not mean that there are people who do not need Jesus. There are no "righteous people." Everybody needs Jesus. (See: and [Luke 5:31-32](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Implicit information

In several parts of this chapter the author left out some implicit information that his original readers would have understood and thought about. Modern readers might not know some of those things, so they might have trouble understanding all that the author was communicating. The UDB often shows how that information can be presented so that modern readers will be able to understand those passages.

Past Events

Parts of this chapter are sequences of events that have already happened. In a given passage, Luke sometimes writes as if the events have already happened while other events are still in progress (even though they are complete at the time he writes). This can cause difficulty in translation by creating an illogical order of events. It may be necessary to make these consistent by writing as if all the events have already happened.

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

Luke 5

5:1-11

Why were the people coming to Jesus?

[5:1]

Luke said that many people went Jesus to hear the “word”(λόγος/g3056) of God. That is, they wanted to hear the things that God told Jesus to say. These were often instructions, warnings, or prophecies. Jesus did this from a boat. Luke said Jesus asked Peter to take him out into the water on Peter’s boat. Jesus sat down in the boat and began to speak the word of God to the people. Teachers often sat when giving instruction during the time of Jesus.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)

Why did Simon not want to fish in the deep water?

[5:5]

Simon did not want to fish in deeper water because he knew that people fished in deep water at night, not in the day. Simon fished all night the previous night in the deep water. Simon knew this was not a good way to fish. Some scholars think he thought he knew more about fishing than Jesus knew. Other scholars think he tired and was discouraged from fishing all night and not catching anything. In any case, some scholars say Simon respected Jesus because he was a great teacher. He called him “master”(ἐπιστάτης/g1988). Simon finally did what Jesus asked of him. Other scholars say he did what Jesus asked because he knew Jesus could do things that only God could do.

See Map: Capernaum

Why did Simon bow down to Jesus?

[5:8]

When Simon Peter saw how many fish he caught, he bowed down to Jesus. This miracle showed Simon that Jesus was more than his master or leader. Jesus has power that only God has. Simon called Jesus “Lord”(κύριος/g2962). Simon knew himself to be a “sinful man” (ἁματωλός/g0268). In the Old Testament, people often bowed down and did not look at God because they feared God and knew how great he is (see: Isaiah 6:5). Simon and all the people with him were “amazed”(θάμβος/g2285) at what Jesus did.

Advice to translators: When someone “bows down” to another person, they either bend at the waist or lie down on the ground. When they did this, they were not as tall as the other person and they did not look at them. This was a way to show respect to people who were greater.

See: Miracle

What did Jesus do because Simon was amazed?

[5:9]

Jesus told Simon to not “fear”(φοβέω/g5399). He told Simon that he will be catching people now, not fish. This was a metaphor. In the same way Peter gathered fish for his work by fishing, Jesus wanted Peter to gather people into the kingdom of God (see: Acts 2:38-42). After Jesus spoke, Simon, James, and John left “everything”(πάντα/g3956) and followed him.

See: Metaphor; Kingdom of God

5:12-16

Why did Luke say that the man was “full of leprosy”?

[5:12]

Some scholars think Luke used the medical term “full of leprosy” because this meant a severe case of leprosy. Luke described a man who was “completely covered”(πλήρης/g4134) with a skin disease called “leprosy”(λέπρα/g3014). A person full of leprosy was unable to be healed.

See: Leprosy (Leper); Clean and Unclean

What did the leper do when he saw Jesus coming?

[5:12]

The man with leprosy came to Jesus and “dropped to the ground”(πίπτω/g4098). Some scholars think he heard about Jesus healing many people (see: Luke 4:37). The man called Jesus “Lord”(κύριος/g2962). He told Jesus that if Jesus wanted him to be healed, he would be healed. He knew that Jesus had the ability to heal him from leprosy. But he knew he had no power to make Jesus do this if Jesus did not want to heal him. However, Jesus said he wanted to heal the man. Jesus told the man to “be cleansed”(καθαρίζω/g2511). The leprosy healed immediately.

See: Leprosy (Leper); Miracle

Why did Jesus tell the leper not to tell anyone but go to the priest immediately?

[5:14]

Jesus told the man he healed to immediately go to the priest. Some scholars think that Jesus did not want to bring attention to himself. Other scholars think Jesus wanted the man to go to the priest and have the priest say that this man

was clean. That is, he wanted the Priest to prove he was clean before the man began speaking with other people in the town. If a man with leprosy went into the town, he broke the Law of Moses. The priest had to say he was clean.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Clean and Unclean; Sin; Clean and Unclean

What other things did Jesus tell the man with leprosy to do?

[5:14]

Jesus also told the man to make an offering in the same way the Law of Moses commanded (see: Leviticus 4-7). Jesus said giving this offering showed the man's healing and cleansing of leprosy. Some scholars think this showed only the priest and those at the temple his healing. Other scholars think this showed all people his healing. For both of these reasons, Jesus wanted the man to obey the Law of Moses.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Law of Moses

Why did Jesus go to the wilderness to pray?

[5:16]

Scholars say Jesus prayed alone in the wilderness (See: Luke 5:16) because he did not want other people to see him. He did not want other people to give him attention for praying. Jesus prayed alone many times. People gave Jesus a lot of attention when he healed people and got rid of their demons. God gave Jesus the strength not to want attention when he prayed. Jesus showed his disciples that he obeyed God in everything he did. God guided him when he prayed.

See: Pray (Prayer)

5:17-26

What was the "power of the Lord" in Jesus?

[5:17]

Many scholars think that the "power of the Lord" in Jesus was the Holy Spirit (see: Luke 4:18) This made Jesus able to heal people. Some scholars think Luke wanted people to know that God the Father was also with Jesus. That is, all of God's power gave Jesus the ability to heal people.

How did the paralyzed man get to Jesus?

[5:18]

Luke said the paralyzed man was taken to Jesus on a "bed" (κλίνη/g2825). Most scholars think this was a poor man's bed. That is, it was a mat or mattress filled with straw. The men carrying the mat went up onto the roof. They took the tiles off the roof of the house and lowered the bed to Jesus in the house (see: Mark 2:3-4).

Who believed in Jesus?

[5:19, 5:20]

Some scholars think it was the men who helped the paralyzed man who believed in Jesus. They did anything they needed to do in order to get their friend to Jesus. They had no doubt that Jesus was able to heal their friend. Other scholars think Jesus also spoke about the paralyzed man who believed in Jesus. The paralyzed man gave permission to his friends to lower him down to Jesus through the roof. He knew Jesus had the ability to heal him.

Why did the Pharisees and Scribes say that Jesus insulted God?

[5:21]

The Pharisees and Scribes said Jesus "insulted God" (βλασφημία/g0988) because Jesus told the paralyzed man that he forgave his sins. The Pharisees and Scribes understood that only God can forgive sin (see: Isaiah 43:25; Psalm 32:5; Psalm 51:4). They did not understand that Jesus is God, and he can forgive sins also.

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin

How did Jesus know what the Scribes and Pharisees were thinking?

[5:22]

Scholars say Jesus showed the people that he is God because he knew what the Scribes and Pharisees were thinking.

How did Jesus show that he had the power to forgive sins?

[5:24]

To show that he was able to forgive sins, Jesus healed the paralyzed man. The Jews knew that only God forgives sins and only God heals people. Jesus also knew this. Jesus showed that he was God by healing this man and forgiving his sins.

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin

5:27-32

Who was Levi?

[5:27]

Luke said that Levi was a tax collector. Many scholars think Levi was this man's name in the Aramaic language. The Book of Matthew said that this tax collector was also called Matthew. Jesus called Matthew one of the first of the twelve apostles. (see: Matthew 10:2-4).

See: Apostle; Tax (Tax Collector, Toll)

How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees when they asked why he ate with sinners?

[5:31]

Jesus said that "healthy" (ὑγιαίνω/g5198) people do not need a doctor. Jesus used the metaphor of someone needing a

doctor to talk about people who thought they were at peace with God because they did the right things. They thought they did not need God's forgiveness for their sins. The Pharisees thought they were at peace with God because they did the right things. They closely followed the Jewish Law. Jesus said to his disciples and to the Pharisees that he had come for the "sick" (κακῶς/g2560). "Sick" was a metaphor talking about sinners.

See: Metaphor; Sin

Why did Jesus say he "called people to repentance"?

[5:32]

See: Repent (Repentance)

What did it mean to fast?

[5:33]

See: Fasting

Who were the wedding guests and the bridegroom?

[5:34]

Jesus used the metaphor of wedding guests to speak about all the people who followed him. He used the metaphor of a bridegroom to speak about himself. Many scholars think that much feasting and rejoicing happened at a wedding, not fasting. Jesus spoke clearly that the time for fasting comes when the bridegroom leaves the wedding. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the future when he was going to be crucified.

See: Metaphor; Wedding; Fasting; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus talk about old and new clothes?

[5:36]

Jesus used the metaphor of "old clothes" to speak about a person who was living by Jewish traditions made from their law. Jesus used the metaphor of "new clothes" to speak about those who believed in Jesus. That is, they are changed into something new because of Jesus. Someone cannot become new by just adding new ideas to their old idea. That is, they cannot simply "patch" themselves. Becoming a new person is to be changed into someone completely different. The Holy Spirit inside the Christian makes these changes.

See: Metaphor

Why did Jesus talk about old and new wineskins?

[5:37]

The old wineskin spoke about the person in their old way of living. That is, they lived in the same way all sinners live. The new wineskin spoke about a person who believed in Jesus. The old wineskin cannot hold the life of Jesus. God works to make a person new when Jesus comes to live in the new person through faith in Jesus.

Many scholars think this last part of the parable spoke directly to the Pharisees. These scholars think Jesus told them they did not want this new idea, that is, believing in Jesus. That is, they found comfort with the old works of the Law of Moses.

Advice to Translators: A wineskin was a leather sac used to hold wine.

Luke 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus preaches from Simon Peter's boat at the lake of Gennesaret.

Now it happened

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

listening to the word of God

Possible meanings are 1) "listening to the message God wanted them to hear" or 2) "listening to Jesus's message about God"

the lake of Gennesaret

These words refer to the Sea of Galilee. Galilee was on the west side of the lake, and the land of Gennesaret was on the east side, so it was called by both names. Some English versions translate this as the proper name of the body of water, "the Lake of Gennesaret."

Luke 5:2

washing their nets

They were cleaning their fishing nets in order to use them again to catch fish.

Luke 5:3

one of the boats, which was Simon's, and

"the boat belonging to Simon and"

asked him to put it out in the water

"asked Simon to move the boat"

he sat down and taught the people

Sitting was the normal position for a teacher.

taught the people out of the boat

"taught the people while he sat in the boat." Jesus was in the boat a short distance from the shore and he was speaking to the people who were on the shore.

Luke 5:4

When he had finished speaking

"When Jesus had finished teaching the people"

Luke 5:5

at your word

"because you have told me to do this"

Luke 5:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 5:7

motioned

They were too far from shore to call, so they made gestures, probably by waving their arms.

they began to sink

"the boats began to sink." The reason could be stated

clearly. Alternate translation: "the boats began to sink because the catch of fish was so heavy" or "the boats began to sink because there were so many fish"

Luke 5:8

fell down at Jesus' knees

Possible meanings are 1) "knelt down before Jesus" or 2) "bowed down at Jesus' feet" or 3) "lay down on the ground at Jesus' feet." Peter did not fall accidentally. He did this as a sign of humility and respect for Jesus.

sinful man

The word here for "man" means "adult male" and not the more general "human being."

Luke 5:9

the catch of fish

"the large number of fish"

Luke 5:10

partners with Simon

"Simon's partners in his fishing business"

you will catch men

The image of catching fish is being used as a metaphor for gathering people to follow Christ. Alternate translation: "you will fish for people" or "you will gather people for me" or "you will bring people to be my disciples"

Luke 5:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 5:12

Connecting Statement:

Jesus heals a leper in a different city that is not named.

It came about

This phrase marks a new event in the story.

a man full of leprosy

"a man who was covered with leprosy." This introduces a new character in the story.

he fell on his face

Here "fell on his face" is an idiom that means to bow down. Alternate translation: "he knelt and touched the ground with his face" or "he bowed down to the ground"

if you are willing

"if you want to"

you can make me clean

It is understood that he was asking Jesus to heal him. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "please make me clean, because you are able"

make me clean

This refers to ceremonial cleanness, but it is understood that he is unclean because of the leprosy. He is really asking Jesus to heal him of his disease. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "heal me from leprosy so I will be clean"

Luke 5:13

Be clean

This refers to ceremonial cleanness, but it is understood that he is unclean because of the leprosy. He is really asking Jesus to heal him of his disease. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Be healed"

the leprosy left him

"he no longer had leprosy"

Luke 5:14

He instructed him to tell no one but told him, "Go on your way" Jesus's instruction can be stated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "He said, 'Do not tell anyone, but go on your way'"

to tell no one

The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "to not tell anyone that he had been healed" sacrifice for your cleansing

The law required a person to make a specific sacrifice after they were healed. This allowed the person to be ceremonially clean, and able to again participate in religious rituals.

for a testimony

"as proof of your healing"

to them

Possible meanings are 1) "to the priests" or 2) "to all the people."

Luke 5:15

the report about him

"the news about Jesus." This could mean either "the report about Jesus's healing the man with leprosy" or "the report about Jesus's healing people."

the report about him spread even farther

"the report about him went out even farther." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people kept telling the news about him in other places"

Luke 5:16

the deserted places

"lonely places" or "places where there were no other people"

Luke 5:17

Connecting Statement:

One day when Jesus was teaching in a building, some men brought a paralyzed man for Jesus to heal.

It came about

This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story.

Luke 5:18

Now some men came

These are new people in the story. Your language may have a way of showing that these are new people.

mat

sleeping pad or bed or stretcher

was paralyzed

"could not move himself"

Luke 5:19

They could not find a way to bring him in because of the crowd, so In some languages it might be more natural to reorder this. Alternate translation: "But because of the crowd of people, they could not find a way to bring the man inside. So" because of the crowd

It is clear that the reason they could not enter was that the crowd was so large that there was no room for them.

they went up to the housetop

Houses had flat roofs, and some houses had a ladder or staircase outside to make it easy to go up there. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "they went up to the flat roof of the house"

right in front of Jesus

"directly in front of Jesus" or "immediately in front of Jesus"

Luke 5:20

Seeing their faith, Jesus said

It is understood that they believe Jesus can heal the paralyzed man. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "When Jesus perceived that they believed that he could heal the man, he said to him"

Man

This is a general word that people used when speaking to a man whose name they did not know. It was not rude, but it also did not show special respect. Some languages might use a word like "friend" or "sir."

your sins are forgiven you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are forgiven" or "I forgive your sins"

Luke 5:21

question this

"discuss this" or "reason about this." What they questioned can be stated. Alternate translation: "discuss whether or not Jesus had authority to forgive sins"

Who is this who speaks blasphemies?

This question shows how shocked and angry they were at what Jesus said. This can be written as a statement.

Alternate translation: "This man is blaspheming God!" or "He blasphemes God by saying that!"

Who can forgive sins but God alone?

The implied information is that if a person claims to forgive sins he says he is God. This can be written as a clear statement. Alternate translation: "No one can forgive sins but God alone!" or "God is the only one who can forgive sins!"

Luke 5:22

Why are you questioning this in your hearts?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not argue about this in your hearts." or "You should not doubt that I have the authority to forgive sins." in your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds or inner beings.

Luke 5:23

Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

Jesus uses this question to make the scribes think about what might prove whether or not he could really forgive sins. Alternate translation: "You may think that it is easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven' than it is to say 'Get up and walk.'"

easier to say

The unspoken implication is that one thing is easier to say because no one will know what has happened, but the other thing is harder to say because everyone will know what has happened. People could not see if the man's sins were forgiven, but they would all know he was healed if he got up and walked.

Luke 5:24

you may know

Jesus was speaking to the scribes and Pharisees. The word "you" is plural.

the Son of Man

Jesus was referring to himself.

I tell you

Jesus was saying this to the paralyzed man. The word "you" is singular.

Luke 5:25

Immediately he got up

"At once he got up" or "Right away he got up"

he got up

It may be helpful to clearly say that he was healed.

Alternate translation: "the man was healed! He got up"

Luke 5:26

filled with fear

"very afraid" or "filled with awe"

extraordinary things

"amazing things" or "strange things"

Luke 5:27

Connecting Statement:

When Jesus leaves the house, he calls Levi, the Jewish tax collector, to follow him.

After these things happened

The phrase "these things" refers to what happened in the previous verses. This signals a new event.

saw a tax collector

"looked at a tax collector with attention" or "looked carefully at a tax collector"

Follow me

To "follow" someone is to become that person's disciple.

Alternate translation: "Be my disciple" or "Come, follow me as your teacher"

Luke 5:28

followed him, leaving everything behind

"followed him and left his work as a tax collector"

Luke 5:29

in his house

"in Levi's house"

reclining at the table

It was customary to lie on a couch while eating at a feast and to prop oneself up with the left arm on some pillows. Alternate translation: "eating together" or "eating at the table"

Luke 5:30

to his disciples

"to Jesus's disciples"

Why do you eat ... sinners?

The Pharisees and scribes ask this question to express their disapproval that Jesus's disciples are eating with sinners.

Alternate translation: "You should not eat ... sinners!"

sinners

people who did not obey the law of Moses but committed what others thought were very bad sins

you eat and drink with ... sinners

The Pharisees and scribes believed that religious people should separate themselves from people they consider to be sinners. The word "you" is plural.

Luke 5:31

Connecting Statement:

At the meal, Jesus speaks with the Pharisees and scribes.

People who are well ... sick

Jesus uses this proverb to begin to tell them that he calls sinners to repentance the way a physician calls sick people

to be healed.

physician

"doctor"

only those who are sick

You may need to supply the words that have been omitted.

Alternate translation: "only those who are sick need a physician"

Luke 5:32

I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance

Jesus uses irony to condemn the Pharisees because they think of themselves as righteous. Anyone who wants to follow Jesus has to think of himself as a sinner, not as righteous. Jesus does not mean that he thinks there are righteous people who do not need to repent.

the righteous

This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase.

Alternate translation: "righteous people"

Luke 5:33

They said to him

"The religious leaders said to Jesus"

Luke 5:34

Can anyone make the wedding attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is still with them?

Jesus uses this question to cause the people to think about a situation that they already know. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one tells the wedding attendants of the bridegroom to fast while he is still with them."

wedding attendants

"guests" or "friends." These are friends who celebrate with a man who is getting married.

the wedding attendants of the bridegroom fast

Fasting is a sign of sadness. The religious leaders understood that the wedding attendants would not fast while the bridegroom was with them.

Luke 5:35

the days will come when

"soon" or "some day"

the bridegroom will be taken away from them

Jesus is comparing himself to the bridegroom, and the disciples to the wedding attendants. He does not explain the metaphor, so the translation should explain it only if

necessary.

Luke 5:36

General Information:

Jesus tells a story to the scribes and pharisees who were at Levi's house.

No one tears ... uses it ... he ... he

"No one rips ... uses it ... he ... he" or "People never tear ... use it ... they ... they"

mend

repair

will not fit with

"will not match" or "will not be the same as"

Luke 5:37

new wine

"grape juice." This refers to wine that has not yet fermented.

wineskins

These were bags made out of animal skins. They could also be called "wine bags" or "bags made of skin."

the new wine will burst the skins

When the new wine would ferment and expand, it would break the old skins because they could no longer stretch out. Jesus's audience would have understood how wine expands when it ferments.

the wine will be spilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the wine will spill out of the bags"

Luke 5:38

fresh wineskins

"new wineskins" or "new wine bags." This refers to new wineskins, unused.

Luke 5:39

drinking old wine ... wants the new

This metaphor contrasts the old teaching of the religious leaders against the new teaching of Jesus. The point is that people who are used to the old teaching are not willing to listen to the new things that Jesus is teaching.

for he says, 'The old is better.'

It may be helpful to add the implicit information. Alternate translation: "for he says, 'The old is better,' and he is therefore not willing to try the new wine."

Chapter 6

Luke 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Luke 6:20-49 contains many blessings and woes that appear to correspond to Matthew 5-7. This part of Matthew has traditionally been called the "Sermon on the Mount." In Luke, they are not as connected to a teaching on the kingdom of God as they are in Matthew's gospel. (See: kingdomofgod)

Special concepts in this chapter

"Eating the grain"

When the disciples plucked and ate the grain in a field they were walking through on the Sabbath ([Luke 6:1](#)), the Pharisees said that they were breaking the law of Moses. The Pharisees said that the disciples were doing work by picking the grain and so disobeying God's command to rest and not work on the Sabbath.

The Pharisees did not think the disciples were stealing. That is because the law of Moses required farmers to allow travelers to pluck and eat small amounts of grain from plants in fields they traveled through or near. (See: lawofmoses and works and sabbath)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Metaphors are pictures of visible objects that speakers use to explain invisible truths. Jesus used a metaphor of a generous grain merchant to teach his people to be generous

Rhetorical Questions

Rhetorical questions are questions to which the speaker already knows the answer. The Pharisees scolded Jesus by asking him a rhetorical question when they thought he was breaking the Sabbath

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Implicit information

Speakers usually do not say things that they think their hearers already understand. When Luke wrote that the disciples were rubbing the heads of grain between their hands, he expected his reader to know that they were separating the part they would eat from what they would throw away

The twelve disciples

The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

Links:

[Luke 6:1 Notes](#)

Luke 6

6:1-5

Why did the Pharisees not want Jesus and his disciples to pick grain?

[6:1, 6:2]

The Pharisees did not want Jesus and his disciples to pick grain on the Sabbath. The Law of Moses said that people cannot harvest grain on the Sabbath. But, the religious teachers said that picking grain on the Sabbath and harvesting grain on the Sabbath were the same activity. They said that both broke the Law of Moses. But, the Law of Moses says that it is good for a person to pick grain if they are hungry. However, they cannot use a tool to cut the grain (see: Deuteronomy 23:25).

See: Pharisees; Sabbath; Law of Moses

How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees?

[6:3, 6:4]

Jesus told the Pharisees about when David went to the house of God and “received” (λαμβάνω/g2983) the bread from the priest. The priest made new bread every Sabbath day. The Law gave the old bread to the priest for food. The Law of Moses always said to do good things, even on the Sabbath. The priest did a good thing by giving David and his men the bread because they were hungry.

See: 1 Samuel 21:6

See: Priest (Priesthood)

Why did Jesus say that the “Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath”?

[6:5]

Jesus said that the “Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” because he is God, and God made the laws in the Law of Moses about the Sabbath. That is, because he made the Sabbath, he can say what can and cannot be done on the Sabbath (see: Genesis 2:3; Exodus 20:8-11). Genesis said that “God” (אֱלֹהִים/h0430) created heaven and earth (see: Genesis 1:1). The Hebrew word for God is in the plural form. Also, God said in the plural, “Let us make” (see: Genesis 1:26). This means that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit helped create heaven and earth. That is, God the Son, Jesus, created heaven and earth and also created the laws about the Sabbath (see: John 1:1-5; Colossians 1:15-18).

See: Heaven; Son of Man; Sabbath; Trinity

6:6-11

Why did the Scribes and Pharisees become angry when Jesus healed a person?

[6:11]

The Scribes and Pharisees said giving medical help on the Sabbath was work. The Scribes and Pharisees said the things they taught must be obeyed in the same way people obeyed the Law of Moses. However, nothing in the Law of Moses said giving medical help on the Sabbath day was wrong. The Old Testament made it clear that it was always lawful to do good everyday of the week (see: Deuteronomy 22:1-4).

See: Luke 13:10-17

See: Scribe; Pharisees; Sabbath; Law of Moses; Miracle

6:12-16

Why did Jesus go to the mountain to pray?

[6:12]

Perhaps Jesus went to the mountain to talk with God about the apostles. That is, he was about to choose those to be his special disciples. Luke does not say how many disciples Jesus had when he called them to be apostles. Later in Luke's gospel, he spoke about his having seventy other disciples (see: Luke 10:1).

See: Apostle; Disciple; Pray (Prayer)

Why did Jesus choose twelve of the disciples to be apostles?

[6:13]

Some scholars think that in the same way there were twelve tribes of Israel, Jesus chose twelve disciples to be apostles. They think Jesus chose the twelve apostles to be the new spiritual leaders of Israel. They think Jesus wanted these apostles to lead Israel based on the promises of the New Covenant (see: Jeremiah 31:31-33). Other scholars think Jesus chose the twelve apostles to be the spiritual leaders of the church, and not the new leaders of Israel. The Apostle Paul spoke about apostles and prophets being the foundation of God's household. They held up the church with the truth of the gospel in the same way a house is held up by its foundation. That is, they lead the church, told others about the gospel, and protected the gospel from false teachers. The household of God consisted of both Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles (see: Ephesians 2:19-20; 3:1-7).

See: Prophet; Gospel; Tribes of Israel; Disciple; Apostle; New Covenant; Church

6:17-19

Why did the crowds wait for Jesus and his disciples?

[6:17, 6:18]

The crowds waited for Jesus because they wanted to hear him teach. Also, they wanted him to heal them from their sicknesses. These people never heard anyone teach in the way Jesus taught. No one ever healed others in the same way that Jesus healed. Many people went to Jesus so they could touch him and be healed. They wanted to touch him because healing power was coming from him. Jesus healed people who were attacked by evil, unclean spirits. Many more of Jesus' disciples were in the crowds that came to Jesus.

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

See Map: Jerusalem; Judea; Tyre; Sidon

6:20-23

To whom did Jesus teach?

[6:20]

Luke wrote that Jesus looked at his disciples when he taught. This was the twelve apostles who came down the mountain with him. Also, it was the larger crowd of Jesus' disciples waiting for him to come down from the mountain (see: Luke 6:17).

See: Disciple; Apostle

What four things did Jesus teach that God approved?

[6:20, 6:21, 6:22, 6:23]

Jesus taught that God approved of those who were "poor" (πτωχός/g4434). Some scholars think Jesus spoke of people who did not have food, clothing, or shelter. Other scholars think Jesus spoke of the spiritually poor (see: Matthew 5:3). That is, they knew their great need for God, or people treated them badly (see: Matthew 5:10).

Jesus taught that God approved of those who were hungry. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about people who did not have food. These scholars think when God promised to feed people who were hungry, he was thinking about a feast held in heaven (see: Luke 13:29). Other scholars think Jesus spoke using a metaphor. He wanted to say that those who were hungry and thirsty really wanted to do the things that God wanted them to do (see: Matthew 5:6). These scholars think the words, "you will be filled" spoke about God's promise to approve those who hungered for him in this way.

Jesus taught that God approved those who "weep" (κλαίω/g2799). God promised them that their weeping will change to laughter. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about people being sorry for their sin or for the sins of other people. This sorrow caused them to weep. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about the evil of the world. This also caused Christians to weep. These scholars think Jesus spoke about the day when God gathers his people into his kingdom. There will be no weeping in the kingdom of God. There, all weeping will be changed to laughter (see: Jeremiah 31:13; Revelation 7:17; 21:4).

Jesus taught that God approves the disciples when people hate them for following Jesus. That is, when others treat Christians badly for following Jesus, Jesus told them to “rejoice”(χαίρω/g5463). Their reward will be in heaven when they die (see: Romans 5:3-5; 1 Peter 4:13).

See: Matthew 5:3; Ephesians 2:1-5

See: Metaphor; Kingdom of God; Persecute (Persecution)

6:24-26

What four things did Jesus teach that God did not reward?

[6:24, 6:25, 6:26]

Jesus said “woe”(ὠαί/g3759) to rich people. That is, disaster comes for people who trust in the things they own or in what they know. Jesus said these people received their reward here on this earth. No reward is given to them in heaven (see: Luke 12:16-21).

Jesus said “woe” to the “full”(ἐμπλήμι/g1705) people. That is, they do not think they needed God because they meet their own needs. However, Jesus warned them and said they will hunger. That is, spiritual hunger destroys them after their death (see: Luke 16:19-30; Isaiah 65:13-14).

God warned those who “laugh”(γελάω/g1070) now. Scholars think Jesus was speaking about a certain type of laughing. That is, he warned those who do not take care of the needs of others. Jesus said these people will one day weep and mourn.

Jesus said “woe” to you if people only say good things about you. Many people said evil things about Jesus because they hated his message. Jesus told the crowd that their fathers spoke good things which were said by false prophets (see: Jeremiah 5:31).

See: Prophet; Reward

6:27-36

Why did Jesus talk to those “who hear”?

[6:27]

Some scholars think Jesus was speaking to his disciples when he said, “I say to you who hear”(ἀκούω/g0191) (see: 6:20-26).

Jesus only spoke to the whole crowd around him after he spoke to the disciples. Other scholars think that when Jesus said, “I say to you who hear,” he was speaking to those who listened and obeyed his words. That is, they obeyed because they heard.

See: Disciple

What three things did Jesus tell his disciples to do?

[6:27, 6:28, 6:29]

Jesus told his disciples to “love”(ἀγαπάω/g0025) their enemies. That is, they needed to be respectful to those who hated them and do good to those who hated them. Jesus said the world hated him, it will also hate people who believe in Jesus (see: John 15:18). God rewards those who give this type of love to others (see: 6:32,35).

Jesus told his disciples to “do good”(καλῶς/g2573) to those who hate them. That is, they need to be kind to those who hate them. In the same way Jesus taught about love, Christians are not to want to be treated kindly simply because they treated others kindly (see: Luke 6:33, 35). Christians show kindness in two ways. First, they speak good about a person who speaks evil of them. Second, they pray for the people who treat them badly.

Jesus told his disciples to give to those who ask to borrow something from them. In the same way Christians are to love and do good without wanting anything for this, they are to give whatever is asked of them without wanting to get anything back from the one who asked (see: Luke 6:34-35).

See: Persecute (Persecution)

How did God the Father show mercy to people?

[6:36]

Some scholars think Jesus said God the Father shows mercy to people by not getting angry quickly. He also gives approval and unchanging love to them (see: Psalm 103:8). Luke later said that Jesus told a story of a man who showed the same type of mercy that the Father shows (see: Luke 10:30-37).

6:37-38

How did Jesus tell Christians to treat others?

[6:37]

Jesus told Christians not to “judge”(κρίνω/g2919). Only God can judge a person because he knows what a person really wants, even if they do not tell anyone or do not know themselves. Also, Jesus told believers not to “condemn”(καταδικάζω/g2613) others. Only God can condemn.

Jesus told Christians to forgive others. That is, Christians are to forgive others when they do something wrong to them.

This is not the same forgiveness for disobeying God. Only God can forgive those sins. Also, Jesus told Christians to freely “give”(δίδωμι/g1325) to others. That is, to meet the needs of others.

What was a “good measure?”

[6:38]

Jesus said the metaphor “good measure” to tell Christians about how valuable it was to give a lot to others. In the days of Jesus, the shop owners measured and sold their grain by pouring it into a person’s lap. The people wore a robe with a fold between their legs. A seller measured the grain and filled the fold of the robe. The fold was then pressed together and shaken. This made space for more grain. The seller then poured more grain into the fold of the robe until it went over the top of the fold.

See: Metaphor

6:39-42

Why did Jesus tell this parable?

[6:39]

Jesus used this parable to say that his disciples needed to be “fully trained”(καταρτίζω/g2675). Once they become fully trained, they will teach others. A fully trained disciple is one who understands God’s word fully. That is, because he understands God’s word fully, he does what God wants him to do (see: Hebrews 5:12-14). A fully trained disciple is one who knows when they hear a false teacher. Jesus said these false teachers were blind. That is, they were blind to true things about God. He told his disciples to not follow the teachings of a blind, false teacher.

See: Parable; Disciple

6:43-45

What was the “treasure” of a person’s heart?

[6:45]

Jesus used the word “treasure” to say how valuable the works were from a person’s “heart”(καρδία/g2588). When the Bible wrote about a person’s “heart,” it meant a person’s inner self. A person who did not believe in Jesus was under the control of the devil (see: Ephesians 2:1-3). But a person who believed in Jesus was a new creation. The Holy Spirit controlled them (see: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:13-14).

In the same way a tree grew only one type of fruit, a person spoke what was in their heart. This was not both good and evil.

See: Satan (The Devil); Sanctify (Sanctification)

6:46-49

Why did Jesus say that being his disciple was like building a house?

[6:48]

Jesus said that in the same way a house was built on a solid foundation, a Christian needed to trust Jesus so that they were able to withstand the devil. Jesus’s words were their solid foundation. Jesus said that he was the cornerstone of the house (see: Ephesians 2:19-21). That is, he is the cornerstone of the church. In the same way a house with a solid foundation will not be destroyed during a severe storm, so a Christian who follows Jesus’s words will not be destroyed when the devil attacks them.

Also, in the same way a house without a solid foundation is easily destroyed when a severe storm comes, someone who does not follow Jesus’ words will be destroyed by the works of the enemy, the devil.

Advice to translators: A foundation is the base or bottom part of a house. If a foundation is not made well, then the whole house cannot be made well. A cornerstone is the first stone put in place in a house or building. After this stone is put into place, it affects the rest of the house. If it is put into crooked, then the whole house will be crooked.

See: Disciple; Satan (The Devil)

Luke 6:1

Connecting Statement:

While Jesus and his disciples are walking through grainfields, some Pharisees begin to question the disciples about what they are doing on the Sabbath, which, in God’s law, has been set aside for God.

Now it happened

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you can consider using it here.

grainfields

These are large sections of land where people had scattered wheat seed to grow wheat.

heads of grain

These are the topmost parts of the grain plant, which is a kind of large grass. It holds the mature, edible seeds of the plant.

grain, rubbing them between their hands, and eating

They did this to separate the grain seeds. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: “grain. They rubbed them in their hands to separate the grains from the husks and ate” Luke 6:2

General Information:

The word “you” here is plural, and refers to the disciples.

Why are you doing something that is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day?

They asked this question to accuse the disciples of breaking the law. It can be written as a statement. Alternate

translation: "Picking grain on the Sabbath is against God's law!"

doing something

The Pharisees considered even the small action of rubbing a handful of grain to be unlawful work. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "doing work"

Luke 6:3

Have you not even read ... him?

Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees for not learning from the scriptures. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should learn from what you have read ... him!" or "Certainly you have read ... him!"

Luke 6:4

the bread of the presence

This is the sacred bread that priests placed before God in the tabernacle. It represented God's presence. Alternate translation: "the bread of Yahweh's presence" or "the bread that the priest placed before God" or "the sacred bread"

Luke 6:5

The Son of Man is

Jesus was referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am"

is Lord of the Sabbath

The title "Lord" here emphasizes his authority over the Sabbath. Alternate translation: "has the authority to determine what is right for people to do on the Sabbath!"

Luke 6:6

General Information:

It is now another Sabbath day and Jesus is in the synagogue.

Connecting Statement:

The scribes and Pharisees watch as Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath.

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new event in the story.

A man was there

This introduces a new character in the story.

hand was withered

The man's hand was damaged in such a way that he could not stretch it. It was probably almost bent into a fist, making it look small and wrinkled.

Luke 6:7

were watching him closely

"were watching Jesus carefully"

so that they might find

"because they wanted to find"

Luke 6:8

in the middle of everyone

"in front of everyone." Jesus wanted the man to stand where everyone there could see him.

Luke 6:9

to them

"to the Pharisees"

I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to destroy it?

Jesus asks this question to force the Pharisees to admit that he was right to heal on the Sabbath. The intent of the question is thus rhetorical: to get them to admit what they

all know is true rather than to obtain information.

However, Jesus says, "I ask you," so this question is not like other rhetorical questions that might need to be translated as statements. This should be translated as a question.

to do good or to do harm

"to help someone or to harm someone"

Luke 6:10

Stretch out your hand

"Hold out your hand" or "Extend your hand"

restored

healed

Luke 6:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 6:12

General Information:

Jesus chooses twelve apostles after he prays all night.

It happened in those days

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.

in those days

"around that time" or "not long after" or "one day around then"

he went out

"Jesus went out"

Luke 6:13

When it was day

"When it was morning" or "The next day"

he chose twelve of them

"he chose twelve of the disciples"

whom he also named apostles

"whom he also made apostles" or "and he appointed them to be apostles"

Luke 6:14

The names of the apostles were

Luke wrote a list of the names of the apostles. The ULB uses these words to introduce the list.

his brother Andrew

"Simon's brother, Andrew"

Luke 6:15

the Zealot

Possible meanings are 1) "the Zealot" is a title that indicates he was part of the group of people who wanted to free the Jewish people from Roman rule. Alternate translation: "the patriot" or "the nationalist" or 2) "the Zealot" is a description that indicates he was zealous for God to be honored. Alternate translation: "the passionate one"

Luke 6:16

became a traitor

It may be necessary to explain what "traitor" means in this context. Alternate translation: "betrayed his friend" or "turned his friend over to enemies"

Luke 6:17

Connecting Statement:

Though Jesus especially addresses his disciples, there are many people around who listen.

with them

"with the twelve he had chosen" or "with his twelve apostles"

Luke 6:18

to be healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for Jesus to heal them"

People who were troubled with unclean spirits were also healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Jesus also healed people who were troubled with unclean spirits"

troubled with unclean spirits

"bothered by unclean spirits" or "controlled by evil spirits"

Luke 6:19

power to heal was coming out from him

"he had power to heal people" or "he was using his power to heal people"

Luke 6:20

Blessed are you

Jesus speaks this phrase three times. Each time, it indicates that God gives favor to certain people or that their situation is positive or good.

Blessed are you who are poor

"You who are poor receive God's favor" or "You who are poor benefit"

for yours is the kingdom of God

Languages that do not have a word for kingdom might say, "for God is your king" or "because God is your ruler."

yours is the kingdom of God

"the kingdom of God belongs to you." This could mean 1)

"you belong to God's kingdom" or 2) "you will have

authority in God's kingdom."

Luke 6:21

you will laugh

"you will laugh with joy" or "you will be joyful"

Luke 6:22

Blessed are you

"You receive God's favor" or "You benefit" or "How good it is for you"

exclude you

"reject you"

because of the Son of Man

"because you associate with the Son of Man" or "because they reject the Son of Man"

Luke 6:23

in that day

"when they do those things" or "when that happens"

leap for joy

This idiom means "be extremely joyful"

a great reward

"a large payment" or "good gifts"

Luke 6:24

woe to you

"how terrible it is for you." Jesus speaks this phrase three times. It is the opposite of "blessed are you." Each time, it indicates that God's anger is directed at the people, or that something negative or bad awaits them.

woe to you who are rich

"how terrible it is for you who are rich" or "trouble will come to you who are rich"

your comfort

"what comforts you" or "what satisfies you" or "what makes

you happy"

Luke 6:25

who are full now

"whose stomachs are full now" or "who eat much now"

who laugh now

"who are happy now"

Luke 6:26

Woe to you

"How terrible it is for you" or "How sad you should be"

when all men speak

Here "men" is used in the generic sense the includes all people. Alternate translation: "when all people speak" or "when everyone speaks"

that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets

"their ancestors also spoke well of the false prophets"

Luke 6:27

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to speak to his disciples and the crowd who is listening to him as well.

to you who are listening

Jesus now begins to speak to the entire crowd, rather than just to his disciples.

love ... do good

Each of these commands is to be followed continually, not just a single time.

love your enemies and

This does not mean those listening were to only love their enemies and not their friends. This can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "love your enemies, not only your friends, and"

Luke 6:28

Bless ... pray

Each of these commands is to be followed continually, not just a single time.

Bless those

God is the one who blesses. This can made explicit.

Alternate translation: "Ask God to bless those"

those who curse you

"those who habitually curse you"

those who mistreat you

"those who habitually mistreat you"

Luke 6:29

To him who strikes you

"If anyone hits you"

on the one cheek

"on one side of your face"

offer him also the other

It may be helpful to state what the attacker will do to the person. Alternate translation: "turn your face so that he can strike the other cheek also"

do not withhold

"do not prevent him from taking"

Luke 6:30

Give to everyone who asks you

"If anyone asks you for something, give it to him"

do not ask him to give

"do not require him to give" or "do not demand that he give"

Luke 6:31

As you want people to do to you, you should do the same to them
In some languages it may be more natural to reverse the order. Alternate translation: "You should do to people the same as what you want them to do to you" or "Treat people the way you want them to treat you"

Luke 6:32

what reward is there for you?

"what reward will you receive?" or "what praise will you receive for doing that?" This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "you will not receive any reward for that." or "God will not reward you for that."

Luke 6:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 6:34

people from whom you hope to be repaid

Here the word "hope" means to confidently expect that what one desires will happen. The person who hopes in this way believes that what he desires will happen. The verb "to be repaid" can be expressed with an active form. Alternate translation: "people whom you expect will repay you" or "people whom you believe will repay you"

to receive back the same amount

The law of Moses commanded the Jews not to receive interest on money they loaned to other Jews.

Luke 6:35

expecting nothing in return

"not expecting the person to return what you have given him" or "not expecting the person to give you anything"

your reward will be great

"you will receive a great reward" or "you will receive good payment" or "you will get good gifts because of it"

you will be sons of the Most High

It is best to translate "sons" with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a human son or child.

sons of the Most High

Make sure that the word "sons" is plural so it is not confused with Jesus's title "The Son of the Most High."

unthankful and evil people

"people who do not thank him and who are evil"

Luke 6:36

your Father

This refers to God. It is best to translate "Father" with the same word your language would naturally use to refer to a human father.

Luke 6:37

Do not judge

"Do not judge people" or "Do not harshly criticize people" and you

"and as a result you"

you will not be judged

Jesus does not say who will not judge. Possible meanings are 1) "God will not judge you" or 2) "no one will judge you"

Do not condemn

"Do not condemn people"

you will not be condemned

Jesus does not say who will not condemn. Possible meanings are 1) "God will not condemn you" or 2) "no one

will condemn you"

you will be forgiven

Jesus does not say who will forgive. Possible meanings are 1) "God will forgive you" or 2) "people will forgive you"

Luke 6:38

it will be given to you

Jesus does not say exactly who will give. Possible meanings are 1) "someone will give it to you" or 2) "God will give it to you"

A good amount—pressed down, shaken together and spilling over—will pour into your lap

Jesus speaks either of God or of people giving generously as if he were speaking of a generous grain merchant.

Alternate translation: "God will pour into your lap a generous amount—pressed down, shaken together and spilling over" or "Like a generous grain merchant who presses down the grain and shakes it together and pours in so much grain that it spills over, they will give generously to you"

A good amount

"A generous amount" or "A large amount"

it will be measured back to you

Jesus does not say exactly who will measure. Possible meanings are 1) "they will measure things back to you" or 2) "God will measure things back to you"

Luke 6:39

Connecting Statement:

Jesus includes some examples to make his point.

Can a blind person guide another blind person?

Jesus used this question to get the people to think about something that they already know. This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "We all know that a blind person cannot guide another blind person."

blind person

The person who is "blind" is a metaphor for a person who has not been taught as a disciple.

If he did

Some languages might prefer, "if one did."

they would both fall into a pit, would they not?

This can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "both of them would fall into a hole."

Luke 6:40

A disciple is not greater than his teacher

"A disciple does not surpass his teacher." Possible meanings are 1) "A disciple does not have more knowledge than his teacher" or 2) "A disciple does not have more authority than his teacher."

everyone when he is fully trained

"every disciple who has been trained well" or "every disciple whose teacher has fully taught him"

Luke 6:41

Why do you look ... brother's eye, but you do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Jesus uses this question to challenge the people to pay attention to their own sins before they pay attention to another person's sins. Alternate translation: "Do not look ... brothers eye while you ignore the log that is in your own eye."

the tiny piece of straw that is in your brother's eye

This is a metaphor that refers to the less important faults of a fellow believer.

tiny piece of straw

"speck" or "splinter" or "bit of dust." Use a word for the smallest thing that commonly falls into a person's eyes.

brother

Here "brother" refers to a fellow Jew or a fellow believer in Jesus.

do not notice the log that is in your own eye

"do not notice that you have a log in your own eye"

the log that is in your own eye

This is a metaphor for a person's most important faults. A log could not literally go into a person's eye. Jesus exaggerates to emphasize that a person should pay attention to his own more important faults before he deals with another person's less important faults.

log

"beam" or "plank"

Luke 6:42

How can you say ... eye?

Jesus asks this question to challenge the people to pay attention to their own sins before they pay attention to another person's sins. Alternate translation: "You should not say ... eye."

Luke 6:43

General Information:

People can tell if a tree is good or bad, and what type of tree it is, by the fruit it produces. Jesus uses this as an unexplained metaphor—we know what kind of person someone is when we see his actions.

For there is

"This is because there is." This indicates that what follows is the reason why we should not judge our brother.

good tree

"healthy tree"

rotten fruit

fruit that is decaying or bad or worthless

Luke 6:44

each tree is known

People recognize the kind of tree by the fruit it bears. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people know the type of a tree" or "people recognize a tree"

thornbush

a plant or shrub that has thorns

briar bush

a vine or shrub that has thorns

Luke 6:45

General Information:

Jesus compares the thoughts of a person to his good or evil treasure. When a good person has good thoughts, he engages in good actions. When an evil person thinks evil thoughts, he engages in evil actions.

The good man

The word "good" here means righteous or moral.

good man

The word "man" here refers to a person, male or female.

Alternate translation: "good person"

the good treasure of his heart

Here the good thoughts of a person are spoken of as if they

were treasures stored in the heart of that person, and "his heart" is a metonym for the person's inner being. Alternate translation: "the good things he keeps deep inside himself" or "the good things he values very intensely"

produces what is good

Producing what is good is a metaphor for doing what is good. Alternate translation: "does what is good"

the evil treasure of his heart

Here the evil thoughts of a person are spoken of as if they were evil things stored in the heart of that person, and "his heart" is a metonym the person's inner being. Alternate translation: "the evil things he keeps deep inside himself" or "the evil things he values very intensely"

out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks

Here "heart" represents the person's mind or inner being.

The phrase "his mouth" represents the person as a whole.

Alternate translation: "what he thinks in his heart affects what he says with his mouth" or "a person will speak aloud what truly values inside of himself"

Luke 6:46

Lord, Lord

Here the repetition of these words is used as an exclamation. People repeat a name or title in this way when trying to find someone or to get someone's attention.

Luke 6:47

General Information:

In verse 47-48 Jesus compares the person who obeys his teaching to a man who builds a house on rock where it will be safe from floods.

Every person who comes to me and hears my words and obeys them, I will tell you what he is like

It may be clearer to change the order of this sentence.

Alternate translation: "I will tell you what every person is like who comes to me and hears my words and obeys them"

Luke 6:48

dug down deep in the ground and built the house's foundation on solid rock

"dug down deep into the ground until he found a large, solid rock. Then he built his house on that rock so that it would be strong and stable." Some cultures may not be familiar with this process of building a house and may need to use another image for a stable foundation.

torrent of water

"fast-moving water" or "river"

flowed against

"crashed against"

shake it

Possible meanings are 1) "cause it to shake" or 2) "destroy it."

because it had been well built

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"because the man had built it well"

Luke 6:49

General Information:

Jesus compares the person who hears but does not obey his teaching to a man who builds a house that has no foundation and so will collapse when the flood comes.

But the person

"But" shows a strong contrast to the previous person who

built with a foundation.

on top of the ground without a foundation

Some cultures may not know that a house with a foundation is stronger. Additional information may be helpful. Alternate translation: "but he did not dig down and build first a foundation"

torrent of water

"fast-moving water" or "river"

flowed against

"crashed against"

collapsed

fell down or came apart

the ruin of that house was complete

"that house was completely destroyed"

Chapter 7

Luke 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 7:27.

Several times in this chapter Luke changes his topic without marking the change. You should not try to make these rough changes smooth.

Special concepts in this chapter

Centurion

The centurion who asked Jesus to heal his slave ([Luke 7:2](#)) was doing many unusual things. A Roman soldier would almost never go to a Jew for anything, and most wealthy people did not love or care for their slaves. (See: centurion and faith)

John's Baptism

John baptized people to show that those he was baptizing knew they were sinners and were sorry for their sin. (See: repent and sin)

"Sinners"

Luke refers to a group of people as "sinners." The Jewish leaders considered these people to be hopelessly ignorant of the law of Moses, and so called them "sinners." In reality, the leaders were sinful. This situation can be taken as irony.

"Feet"

The feet of the people in the ancient Near East were very dirty because they wore sandals and the roads and trails were dusty and muddy. Only slaves washed other people's feet. The woman who washed Jesus's feet was showing him great honor.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[Luke 7:1 Notes](#)

Luke 7

7:1-10

Where is Capernaum?

[7:1]

See Map: Capernaum

What was a centurion?

[7:2]

A centurion was a type of Roman soldier. They led 100 soldiers.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did the centurion send two groups of people to Jesus?

[7:3, 7:6]

The centurion sent two groups of people to Jesus because he was a Gentile. Perhaps he thought the leaders of the Jews had more influence than he did to ask Jesus to heal his servant. So he sent the leaders of the Jews to Jesus. Scholars think the centurion was humble because he felt unworthy for Jesus to come to his house and instead he sent his friends to speak with Jesus.

See: Gentile

Why did Matthew write that the centurion himself spoke to Jesus?

Matthew also wrote about this story, but he did not say the centurion sent people to Jesus (see: Matthew 8:5-13). Many scholars think the centurion spoke through his friends. That is, their words were the same as his words.

Why did the message of the centurion amaze Jesus?

[7:9]

Scholars think the centurion's message amazed Jesus for three reasons.

Though the centurion led many people, he showed humility before Jesus. He believed in Jesus' ability and power to heal his servant. The centurion felt unworthy for Jesus to come to his home because of his respect for Jesus. The centurion understood the ability to give commands. Luke wrote about how the soldiers were given permission to give commands to other people they lead. He understood that Jesus had the ability to heal his servant from a distance. Jesus never saw people in Israel believe in him so strongly. This Gentile military leader showed that he believed in Jesus more than the people of Israel. That is, God's chosen people did not show this much faith.

See: Gentile; Faith (Believe in); People of God

7:11-17

Why did Jesus raise the young man from the dead?

[7:14]

Scholars think Jesus raised the young man from the dead for two reasons.

Jesus had compassion for the young man's mother. His mother was also a widow, and she did not have any other sons. In ancient times, a widow's sons helped their mother and without them, the mother would be very poor. Jesus wanted people to know that he controlled death and uncleanness.

Why did Jesus not become unclean when he touched the dead body?

[7:14]

The Old Testament spoke about uncleanness coming over someone who touches a dead body (see: Number 19:11-6).

However, when Jesus raised the widow's son back to life, he made the man clean. Because he raised the boy, Jesus never became unclean under the Law of Moses.

See: Clean and Unclean; Law of Moses; Sin

Why did all the people say Jesus was a "great prophet"?

[7:16]

The people said Jesus was a "great prophet" because he raised a young man from the dead. Only two other prophets raised people from the dead. Elijah raised a widow's son (see: 1 Kings 17:17-18), and Elisha raised the son of a Shunammite woman (see: 2 Kings 4:18-37).

See: Prophet

7:18-23

Why did John send two of his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the "Coming One"?

[7:19]

Scholars give two reasons why John sent his disciples to ask Jesus if he is the "Coming One." That is, if Jesus was the messiah whom God promised to come.

John wanted to strengthen the faith of his disciples.

John wanted to know himself that Jesus is the "Coming One." God gave John a message to preach that spoke of a coming judgment. John expected Jesus to bring judgment on sinners quickly (see: Luke 3:8,16-17). When John was put in prison, Jesus said others will also be put in prison before the judgment of God comes on the world (see: Luke 21:10-22).

See: Preach (Preacher); Messiah (Christ)

Why might people "fall away" because of Jesus?

[7:23]

Some scholars think Jesus' words spoke about people in general. They think people "fall away" because they expected the Messiah to be someone different than who he really is. Other scholars think Jesus spoke to John specifically. They think Jesus' words told John not to stop believing in Jesus because judgment did not happen at the time John thought it was going to happen.

See: Judge (Judgment)

7:24-28

Why did Jesus ask the crowds about going into the wilderness?

[7:24]

Jesus asked the crowds three questions about going into the wilderness to speak about the serious message of John. Jesus did not want the crowds to answer the questions, but he wanted to use the questions to teach the truth about John. The first question spoke about a reed shaken by the wind. The wind easily bent reeds back and forth, and this was a common sight. People did not travel to the wilderness to see reeds bending in the wind. Some scholars think Jesus was saying that John was not a man who was easily swayed. Rather he was a solid man who believed in the coming Messiah.

Jesus then asked the people if they went to the wilderness to see a man dressed in soft, fancy clothes. The people knew that a person in soft, fancy clothes did not live in the wilderness. The third question Jesus asked was whether the people

went out to the wilderness to see a prophet. Jesus told the crowds that John was more than just a prophet.

See: Metaphor; Parable

Why did Jesus say John was more than a prophet?

[7:26]

Many scholars think Jesus said John was “more than a prophet” because John spoke about the coming of the Messiah. The Old Testament prophet, Malachi, spoke about a prophet coming to tell people about the Messiah before the messiah came. Malachi spoke about the prophet John. John not only told people about the coming of the messiah, he also saw the messiah. He witnessed God’s words about Jesus happen (see: John 1:32-34). Jesus even spoke about John the prophet being the same as Elijah, the prophet promised to come (see: Matthew 17:11-13).

See: Malachi 4:5-6

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus say the least in the kingdom was actually greater than John?

[7:28]

Scholars think Jesus said the least in the kingdom was actually greater than John because John lived in the time before Jesus began his ministry. That is, John did not live to see Jesus die and become alive again because he was in prison. Also, the ones Jesus called “the least” of his followers saw many believers filled with the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist did not see any. However, John will be in the kingdom in heaven with all of God’s prophets (see: Luke 13:28).

See: Kingdom of God; Minister (Ministry); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Filling of the Holy Spirit

7:29-30

Why did Luke write that the people declared God to be right?

[7:29]

After the people heard Jesus speak, those John baptized said that God was right. Some scholars think because John spoke about repentance and the Messiah, it showed that John taught God’s message. However, the Pharisees refused to believe that Jesus is the Messiah and they refused to repent. They believed following the Law of Moses was right and made them be at peace with God.

See: Pharisees; Baptize (Baptism); Repent (Repentance); Messiah (Christ); Law of Moses

7:31-35

Who were the people of that generation?

[7:31]

Many scholars think Jesus spoke about the Pharisees, the teachers of the Law of Moses and all those who followed them. These scholars think Jesus spoke about the things the people of Israel did in the past (see: Acts 7:51-53). Jesus said that in the same way children made up games with rules, so did the Pharisees and teachers of the law of Moses criticized anyone who did not play by their rules.

See: Pharisees; Law of Moses

What did Jesus say about the accusations of the Pharisees?

[7:34, 7:35]

Jesus spoke about the things the Pharisees accused them of. They did this by saying wisdom was shown to be true by her children. This meant those who trusted in God and obeyed his commands were wise people. The Pharisees rejected the things John said that God gave him to tell the people. The Pharisees also rejected Jesus the messiah. They rejected him because he was a friend of sinners. Because the Pharisees rejected both John and Jesus, they were not considered to be children of wisdom.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Messiah (Christ)

7:36-50

How did Jesus recline at the table?

[7:36]

Jesus reclined at the table by lying on his side and facing the table. His feet went away from the table. The woman was then able to touch his feet. This reclining at a table was common in the days of Jesus.

How did Luke describe the unnamed woman?

[7:37]

Luke wrote the unnamed woman was a sinner. Luke did not say how she sinned. Some scholars think she was a prostitute. Fewer scholars think she committed adultery or her husband dishonored God in his work.

See: Sin; Adultery

What was an alabaster jar?

[7:37]

An alabaster jar was a glass or soft-stone jar with a long neck that held perfume. Both the jar and the perfume were very expensive. A woman broke the long neck of the jar to pour out the perfume. Why was the woman crying? Some scholars think the woman’s tears showed her humility and a deep sense of repentance. Other scholars think she felt sad because

she sinned. Or she felt joy because Jesus forgave her sins. So, she showed she loved Jesus very much by pouring out her tears on his feet, wiping them with her hair, kissing them, and anointing them with perfume from her alabaster jar.

See: Anoint (Anointing); Repent (Repentance)

Why did Simon the Pharisee think Jesus was not a prophet?

[7:39]

Simon the Pharisee thought Jesus did not know the woman was a sinner. So, he must not be a prophet. The Pharisees always kept away from any contact with sinners. Simon thought that Jesus, if he were a prophet, would also keep away from sinners.

See: Prophet

How did Jesus "answer" Simon?

[7:40]

Simon did not ask his question for others to be able to hear him. He only thought the question. However, Jesus knew Simon's inner thoughts and was able to answer Simon's question. Then people knew Jesus was a prophet.

See: Prophet

How much was a denarius?

[7:41]

A denarius was a fair wage for a day of labor (see: Matthew 20:2). Scholars say the man with the large debt needed one and three-quarters years to earn what he owed. The man with the small debt needed two months to earn what he owed. This story was a metaphor. In the story to Simon, the moneylender who "forgave" (χαρίζομαι/g5483) the debts of denarii was Jesus who "forgives" (ἀφίημι/g0863) people who sinned.

See: Denarius; Metaphor

Why did Jesus speak about water for his feet to Simon?

[7:44]

Jesus spoke to Simon about what was good and polite to do for a guest. That is, to provide water for the washing of feet, a kiss of greeting to welcome a guest into their home, and oil to anoint the guest's head. Simon failed to provide any of these common greetings to Jesus. But, the sinful woman washed the feet of Jesus with her own tears, kissed the feet of Jesus, and anointed his feet with expensive perfume. The sinful woman went far beyond Simon but others thought Simon was a man who honored God.

See: Genesis 18:4; 43:24

See: Anoint (Anointing)

Why did Jesus forgive the woman?

[7:47, 7:48]

Jesus forgave the woman because she believed in him. Jesus said her faith saved her (see: 7:50). The woman showed great love toward Jesus because of her awareness of her great sin. She knew only Jesus saved her. Her acts of love came from her desire to repent.

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Repent (Repentance); Faith (Believe in)

What did the other guests think about Jesus forgiving the woman who sinned?

[7:49]

The other guests thought Jesus was not able to forgive people who sinned. They knew that only God is able to forgive people who sin. The other guests at the table continued to reject Jesus the Messiah. That is, they did not think he was equal with God.

See: Messiah (Christ)

Luke 7:1

General Information:

Jesus enters Capernaum, where he heals a centurion's servant.

in the hearing of the people

The idiom "in the hearing" emphasizes that he wanted them to hear what he said. Alternate translation: "to the people who were listening to him" or "to the people who were present" or "for the people to hear"

he entered Capernaum

This begins a new event in the story.

Luke 7:2

who was highly regarded by him

"whom the centurion valued" or "whom he respected"

Luke 7:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 7:4

asked him earnestly

"pleaded with him" or "begged him"

He is worthy

"The centurion is worthy"

Luke 7:5

our nation

"our people." This refers to the Jewish people.

Luke 7:6

continued on his way

"went along"

not far from the house

"near the house"

do not trouble yourself

The centurion was speaking politely to Jesus. Alternate

translation: "do not trouble yourself by coming to my house" or "I do not wish to bother you"

come under my roof

This phrase is an idiom that means "come into my house." If your language has an idiom that means "come into my house," think about whether it would be good to use here.

Luke 7:7

just say a word

The servant understood that Jesus could heal the servant just by speaking. Here "word" refers to a command.

Alternate translation: "just give the order"

my servant will be healed

The word that is translated here as "servant" is normally translated as "boy." It may indicate that the servant was very young or show the centurion's affection for him.

Luke 7:8

I also am a man who is under authority

"I also have someone over me that I must obey"

under me

"under my authority"

to my servant

The word that is translated here as "servant" is the typical word for a servant.

Luke 7:9

he was amazed at him

"he was amazed at the centurion"

I say to you

Jesus said this to emphasize the surprising thing that he was about to tell them.

not even in Israel have I found such faith.

The implication is that Jesus expected Jewish people to have this kind of faith, but they did not. He did not expect Gentiles to have this kind of faith, yet this man did. You may need to add this implied information. Alternate translation: "I have not found any Israelite who trusts me as much as this Gentile does!"

Luke 7:10

those who had been sent

It is understood that these were the people the centurion sent. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "the people whom the Roman officer had sent to Jesus"

Luke 7:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus goes to the city of Nain, where he heals a man who had died.

Nain

This is the name of a city.

Luke 7:12

behold, a man who had died

The word "behold" alerts us to the introduction of the dead man into the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "there was a dead man who"

a man who had died was being carried out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people were carrying out of the city a man who had died"

carried out, the only son of his mother (who was a widow), and a rather large crowd

"carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow. A rather large crowd." This is background

information about the dead man and his mother.

widow

a woman whose husband has died and who has not remarried

Luke 7:13

was deeply moved with compassion for her

"felt very sorry for her"

Luke 7:14

he went up

"he went forward" or "he approached the dead man"

the wooden frame on which they carried the body

This was a stretcher or bed used to move the body to the burial place. It did not have to be something in which the body was buried. Other translations may have the less common "bier" or "funeral couch."

I say to you, arise

Jesus says this to emphasize that the young man needs to obey him. "Listen to me! Arise"

Luke 7:15

The dead man

The man was not still dead; he was now alive. It may be necessary to state this clearly. Alternate translation: "The man who had been dead"

Luke 7:16

Connecting Statement:

This tells what happens as a result of Jesus healing the man who had died.

fear overcame all of them

"fear filled all of them." This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "they all became very afraid"

A great prophet has been raised among us

They were referring to Jesus, not to some unidentified prophet. "Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to become."

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has caused one of us to become a great prophet"

looked upon

This idiom means "cared for"

Luke 7:17

This news about Jesus spread

"This news" refers to the things people were saying in verse 16. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People spread this report about Jesus" or "People told others this report about Jesus"

This news

"This report" or "This message"

Luke 7:18

John's disciples told him about all these things

This introduces a new event in the story.

told him

"told John"

all these things

"all the things Jesus was doing"

Luke 7:19

Connecting Statement:

John sends two of his disciples to question Jesus.

Luke 7:20

the men said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to say, 'Are you ... or should we look for another?'"

This sentence can be rewritten so that it only has one direct

quote. Alternate translation: "the men said that John the Baptist had sent them to him to ask, 'Are you the one who is coming, or should we look for another?'" or "the men said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask if you are the one who is coming, or if we should look for another.'"

Luke 7:21

In that hour

"At that time"

from evil spirits

It may be helpful to restate the healing. Alternate translation: "he healed them from evil spirits" or "he set people free from evil spirits"

Luke 7:22

said to them

"said to John's messengers" or "said to the messengers that John sent"

report to John

"tell John"

people who have died are being raised back to life

"dead people are being caused to live again"

the poor

This nominal adjective can be translated as a noun phrase.

Alternate translation: "poor people"

Luke 7:23

The person who does not stop believing in me because of my actions is blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will bless the person who does not stop believing in me because of my actions"

The person who does not ... is blessed

"People who do not ... are blessed" or "Anyone who does not ... is blessed" or "Whoever does not ... is blessed." This is not a specific person.

does not stop believing in me because of

"continues to believe in me despite"

believing in me

"trusting me completely"

Luke 7:24

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to speak to the crowd about John the Baptist. He asks rhetorical questions to lead them to think about what John the Baptist is really like.

What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

This expects a negative answer. These questions can be written as a question with an answer or as a statement.

Alternate translation: "Did you go out to see a reed shaken by the wind? Of course not!" or "Surely you did not go out to see a reed being shaken by the wind!"

A reed shaken by the wind

Possible meanings of this metaphor are 1) a person who easily changes his mind, as reeds are easily moved by the wind, or 2) a person who talks a lot but does not say anything important, as reeds rattle when the wind blows.

Luke 7:25

But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes?

This expects a negative answer. These questions can be written as a question with an answer or as a statement.

Alternate translation: "Did you go out to see a man dressed in soft clothes? Of course not!" or "You certainly did not go

out to see a man dressed in soft clothes!"

dressed in soft clothes

This refers to expensive clothing. Normal clothing was rough. Alternate translation: "wearing expensive clothing" kings' palaces

A palace is a large, expensive house that a king lives in.

Luke 7:26

But what did you go out to see? A prophet?

This expects a positive answer. These questions can be written as a question with an answer or as a statement.

Alternate translation: "Did you go out to see a prophet? Of course you did!" or "But you actually went out to see a prophet!"

Yes, I say to you

Jesus says this to emphasize the importance of what he will say next.

more than a prophet

This phrase means that John was indeed a prophet, but that he was even greater than a typical prophet. Alternate translation: "not just an ordinary prophet" or "much more important than a normal prophet"

Luke 7:27

This is he of whom it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"John is the one the prophets wrote about long ago"

See, I am sending

In this verse, Jesus is quoting the prophet Malachi and saying that John is the messenger of which Malachi spoke. before your face

This idiom means "in front of you" or "to go ahead of you" your

The word "your" is singular because God was speaking to the Messiah in the quotation.

Luke 7:28

I say to you

Jesus is speaking to the crowd, so "you" is plural. Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the truth of the surprising thing he is about to say next.

among those born of women

"among those to whom a woman has given birth." This is a metaphor that refers to all people. Alternate translation: "of all the people who have ever lived"

none is greater than John

"John is the greatest"

the one who is least in the kingdom of God

This refers to anyone who is part of the kingdom that God will establish.

is greater than he is

The spiritual state of people in the kingdom of God will be higher than that of the people before the kingdom was established. Alternate translation: "has higher spiritual status than John"

Luke 7:29

General Information:

Luke, the author of this book, comments on how people responds to John and Jesus.

When all the people heard this, including the tax collectors, they declared that God is righteous, because they had been baptized with the baptism of John

This verse could be reordered to be more clear. Alternate translation: "When all the people who had been baptized by John, including the tax collectors, heard this, they declared that God is righteous"

they declared that God is righteous

"they said that God had shown himself to be righteous" or "they declared that God had acted righteously"

because they had been baptized with the baptism of John

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"because they had let John baptize them" or "because John had baptized them"

Luke 7:30

rejected God's purpose for themselves

"rejected what God wanted them to do" or "chose to disobey what God told them"

they had not been baptized by John

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they did not let John baptize them" or "they rejected John's baptism"

Luke 7:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the people about John the Baptist.

To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like?

Jesus uses these questions to introduce a comparison. They can be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "This is what I compare this generation to. This is what they are like."

I compare ... What are they like

These are two ways of saying that this is a comparison.

the people of this generation

The people living when Jesus spoke.

Luke 7:32

They are like

These words are the beginning of Jesus's comparison. Jesus is saying that the people are like children who are never satisfied with the way other children act.

marketplace

a large, open-air area where people come to sell their goods

and you did not dance

"but you did not dance to the music"

and you did not cry

"but you did not cry with us"

Luke 7:33

eating no bread

Possible meanings are 1) "frequently fasting" or 2) "not eating normal food."

you say, 'He has a demon.'

Jesus was quoting what people were saying about John.

This can be stated without the direct quote. Alternate

translation: "you say that he has a demon." or "you accuse him of having a demon."

Luke 7:34

The Son of Man came

Jesus expected the people to understand that he was referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, came"

you say, 'Look, he is a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax

collectors and sinners!'

This can be translated as an indirect quote. If you translated "The Son of Man" as "I, the Son of man," you can state this as an indirect statement and use the first person. Alternate translation: "you accuse him of eating and drinking too much and of being a friend of tax collectors and sinners." or "you say that I am a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors sinners."

he is a gluttonous man

"he is a greedy eater" or "he continually eats too much food"

a drunkard

"a drunk" or "he continually drinks too much alcohol"

Luke 7:35

wisdom is justified by all her children

This appears to be a proverb that Jesus applied to this situation, probably to teach that wise people would understand that the people should not have rejected Jesus and John.

Luke 7:36

General Information:

It was a custom in that time for onlookers to attend dinners without eating.

Connecting Statement:

A Pharisee invites Jesus to eat at his house.

Now one of the Pharisees

The marks the beginning of a new part of the story and introduces the Pharisee into the story.

reclined at the table to eat

"sat down at the table for the meal." It was the custom at a relaxed meal such as this dinner for men to eat while lying down comfortably around the table.

Luke 7:37

Behold, there was a woman

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story.

Your language may have a way of doing this.

who was a sinner

"who lived a sinful lifestyle" or "who had a reputation for living a sinful life." She may have been a prostitute.

an alabaster jar

"a jar made of soft stone." Alabaster is a soft, white rock.

People stored precious things in alabaster jars.

of perfumed oil

"with perfume in it." The oil had something in it that made it smell nice. People rubbed it on themselves or sprinkled their clothing with it in order to smell nice.

Luke 7:38

anointed them with perfumed oil

"poured perfume on them"

Luke 7:39

he thought to himself, saying

"he said to himself"

If this man were a prophet, then he would know who and what type of woman is touching him, that she is a sinner

The Pharisee thought that Jesus was not a prophet because he allowed the sinful woman to touch him. Alternate translation: "Apparently Jesus is not a prophet, because a prophet would know that this woman who is touching him is a sinner"

that she is a sinner

Simon assumed that a prophet would never allow a sinner to touch him. This part of his assumption can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "that she is a sinner, and he would not allow her to touch him"

Luke 7:40

Simon

This was the name of the Pharisee who invited Jesus into his home. This was not Simon Peter.

Luke 7:41

General Information:

To emphasize what he is going to tell Simon the Pharisee, Jesus tells him a story.

A certain moneylender had two debtors

"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender"

five hundred denarii ... fifty

"500 days' wages ... 50." "Denarii" is the plural of "denarius."

A "denarius" was a silver coin.

the other fifty

The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "the other debtor owed fifty denarii" or "the other debtor owed 50 days' wages"

Luke 7:42

he forgave them both

"he forgave their debts" or "he canceled their debts"

Luke 7:43

I suppose

Simon was cautious about his answer. Alternate translation: "Probably"

You have judged correctly

"You are right"

Luke 7:44

Jesus turned to the woman

Jesus directed Simon's attention to the woman by turning to her.

You gave me no water for my feet

It was a basic responsibility of a host to provide water and a towel for guests to wash and dry their feet after walking on dusty roads.

You ... but she

Jesus twice uses these phrases to contrast Simon's lack of courtesy with the woman's extreme actions of gratitude.

she has wet my feet with her tears

The woman used her tears in place of the missing water. wiped them with her hair

The woman used her hair in place of the missing towel.

Luke 7:45

You did not give me a kiss

A good host in that culture would greet his guest with a kiss on the cheek. Simon did not do this.

did not stop kissing my feet

"has continued to kiss my feet"

kissing my feet

The woman kissed the feet of Jesus rather than his cheek as a sign of extreme repentance and humility.

Luke 7:46

You did not ... but she

Jesus continues to contrast Simon's poor hospitality with the actions of the woman.

anoint my head with oil

"put oil on my head." This was the custom to welcome an honored guest. Alternate translation: "welcome me by anointing my head with oil"

anointed my feet

The woman greatly honored Jesus by doing this. She demonstrated humility by anointing his feet instead of his head.

Luke 7:47

I say to you

This emphasizes the importance of the statement that follows.

her sins, which were many, have been forgiven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has forgiven her many sins"

for she loved much

Her love was the evidence that her sins were forgiven.

Some languages require that the object of "love" be stated.

Alternate translation: "for she greatly loves the one who forgave her" or "for she loves God very much"

the one who is forgiven little

"anyone who is forgiven only a few things." In this sentence Jesus states a general principle. However, he expected Simon to understand that he showed very little love for Jesus.

Luke 7:48

Then he said to her

"Then he said to the woman"

Your sins are forgiven

"You are forgiven." This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "I forgive your sins"

Luke 7:49

reclining together

"reclining together around the table" or "eating together"

Who is this that even forgives sins?

The religious leaders knew that only God could forgive sins and did not believe that Jesus was God. This question was probably intended to be an accusation. Alternate translation: "Who does this man think he is? Only God can forgive sins!" or "Why is this man pretending to be God, who alone can forgive sins?"

Luke 7:50

Your faith has saved you

"Because of your faith, you are saved." The abstract noun "faith" could be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "Because you believe, you are saved"

Go in peace

This is a way of saying good-bye while giving a blessing at the same time. Alternate translation: "As you go, do not worry anymore" or "May God give you peace as you go"

Chapter 8

Luke 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Several times in this chapter Luke changes his topic without marking the change. You should not try to make these rough changes smooth.

Special concepts in this chapter

Miracles

Jesus made a storm stop by speaking to it, he made a dead girl alive by speaking to her, and he made evil spirits leave a man by speaking to them. (See: miracle)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Parables

The parables were short stories that Jesus told so that people would easily understand the lesson he was trying to teach them. He also told the stories so that those who did not want to believe in him would not understand the truth ([Luke 8:4-15](#)).

Links:

[Luke 8:1 Notes](#)

Luke 8

8:1-3

Why did Luke write 8:1-3?

[8:1, 8:2, 8:3]

Luke wanted his readers to know two things when he wrote 8:1-3. The other gospel writers did not write about these two things.

Luke wanted his readers to know that Jesus “preached”(κηρύσσω/g2784) and “proclaimed” the (εὐαγγελίζω/g2097) the gospel. The gospel is about the “kingdom of God.” Luke used the word “preached.” He used this word to write about how God gave Jesus permission to speak about the kingdom of God. Luke also used the words, “proclaimed the gospel.” He wrote this because the things Jesus spoke about were good for the people to know.

Luke also wanted readers to know women served Jesus. Some scholars think these women served in the same way the disciples served Jesus. Other scholars think these women served Jesus in a different way.

See: Gospel; Preach (Preacher); Kingdom of God; Disciple

Who was Mary Magdalene?

[8:2]

Mary Magdalene was a woman from a small village called Magdala. Some scholars think the village was near the west side of the Sea of Galilee. Other scholars think they do not know where Magdala was located. The apostle John wrote that Mary Magdalene witnessed the resurrection of Jesus (see: John 20:11-18).

See: Apostle; Resurrect (Resurrection)

See Map: Sea of Galilee

Why did Luke write about Joanna?

[8:3]

Luke wrote about Johanna. Johanna was a person who worked for Herod. John wanted his readers to know that even the people working for Herod heard about the gospel. Some scholars think her husband, Chuza, also served Herod.

See: Gospel

8:4-15

What was a “parable”?

[8:4]

See: Parable

How did people sow seeds when Jesus lived on earth?

[8:5]

When Jesus was on the earth, people sowed seeds by having a seed bag over their shoulders. They threw seeds from the bag onto the ground. They did this in late fall or early winter. The seeds began to grow out of the ground in spring. Then they gathered what was grown in summer. Many times a dirt road or pathway went through the field where they sowed seeds.

Advice to Translators: Spring, Summer, Winter, and fall are words used to talk about the changing seasons in an area of the world. Many places in the world do not have these four seasons. They may have only two of these seasons or they may have what is called wet and dry seasons. Overall, these words are used to talk about different times of the year due to changes in the weather in that particular area.

See: Sow (Plant); Hebrew Calendar (Seasons in Israel); Metaphor

Why did Jesus tell the parable of the farmer who sowed his seed?

[8:5, 8:6, 8:7, 8:8]

Jesus told the parable of the farmer who sowed his seed. He wanted people to know four different ways people heard the word of God.

See: Sow (Plant); Gospel; Word of God

Why did Jesus say, "Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear"?

[8:8]

Scholars think Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear," because he wanted people to listen to what he said. That is, people needed to not only know what he taught, but also they needed to do the things he taught. He did not say this because he was angry. How was the seed the word of God in the parable? Scholars do not agree about how the seed was the word of God in the parable. Some scholars think it was about God ruling (see: 8:1). Other scholars think it was about people needing to obey what Jesus taught (see: 8:21).

See: Sow (Plant); Parable; Kingdom of God; Word of God

Why did Jesus speak about the seed beside the road?

[8:12]

Jesus spoke about the seed beside the road because he wanted his listeners to know how Satan tries to take away the word of God from people. That is, Satan took the word of God from people in the same way birds ate seeds from a road. Satan did not want people to know the word of God. He also did not want God to save people from the punishment of sinning.

See: 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

See: Metaphor; Sow (Plant); Satan (The Devil); Word of God

What did Jesus say about the seed that fell on the rock?

[8:13]

Jesus said some seed fell on the rock. He used this to talk about how some people rejoice when they hear the word of God. However, they stop believing in it when they begin to suffer because of it. Seeds that were thrown over rocks did only grow for a short time. This is because it did not have any water or deep roots.

See: Metaphor; Parable; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Word of God; Sow (Plant); Eternal Security

What happened to the seed that fell among the thorns?

[8:14]

Jesus said that thorns grew with the good plants. Thorns took the things from the soil that the good plants needed to grow. Therefore, nothing could grow around the thorns. These thorns "choked" the life from the good plants. In the same way, people were "choked"(συμπνίγω/g4846) by the "cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life." Jesus said these people were never able to do the things that honored God (see: 3:8-9).

Advice to translators: A "thorn" was a plant with thorns. It was a type of weed. It was a plant that grew quickly and hampered other plants. It did not do anything good.

See: Sow (Plant); Metaphor

How did Jesus speak about the seed that fell on good soil?

[8:15]

Scholars think there were two ways Jesus spoke about the seed that fell on good soil. Some scholars think Jesus wanted Christians to know that more people believed in Jesus (see: Acts 6:7; Colossians 1:5-6). Other scholars think Jesus wanted Christians to know that there were many people who trusted in God and Jesus more than they did before. Perhaps Jesus meant both.

See: Sow (Plant); Metaphor

8:16-18

Why did Jesus tell the parable of the lamp?

[8:16]

Jesus told the parable of the lamp to talk about how God wanted the disciples to listen very carefully to what Jesus said.

Matthew and Mark also wrote about the parable of the lamp.

See: Matthew 5:14-16; Mark 4:21-25

See: Parable; Disciple

How did Jesus speak about the "light"?

[8:16, 8:17]

Scholars think different things about how Jesus spoke about the "light."

Some scholars think it was a metaphor for the things Jesus taught. Jesus taught that God wanted people to believe in the word of God (see: 8:11-15).

Some scholars think it was a metaphor for the people who followed Jesus. It taught the word of God to other people (see: 24:44-48).

Some scholars think it was a metaphor for what people thought about the things Jesus taught.

See: Metaphor; Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Word of God

What did God give or take away?

[8:18]

Scholars think God either told people more things about himself or he made the things that they already knew about him leave them. This was because of how people listened to Jesus (see: 8:11-15). Some scholars say a person who did not believe in the word of God was wrong to think he knew anything about God.

See: 11:33; 12:2

See: Word of God

8:19-21

Why did Luke tell this story about Jesus and his family?

[8:19]

Luke told this story about Jesus and his family so people would know how great was the message Jesus taught. He wanted people to hear, believe, and obey the word of God (see: 8:11,15,21). Matthew and Mark also wrote about this.

See: Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35

See: Word of God; Family of Jesus

Why did Jesus say his family were the people who heard and did the word of God?

[8:21]

Some scholars think Jesus spoke about his “mother and brothers” as a metaphor. He wanted to say that everyone who heard his word and did the things his word said to do were a member of his family. Many scholars think Jesus did not reject his mother and brothers, but he made other people able to become members of his family. On the other hand, some scholars think Jesus spoke against family when they wanted people to stop obeying God’s word (see: Luke 14:26; 18:29-30).

See: Metaphor; Children of God; Word of God

8:22-25

Why did Luke write about Jesus stopping the storm?

[8:24]

When Luke wrote about Jesus stopping the storm, he wanted Christians to know that Jesus controlled the winds and the seas. In ancient times, people did not think these things could be controlled. These miracles came near the time when Peter said Jesus is the Messiah (see: Luke 9:20). Matthew and Mark also wrote about this.

See: Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41

See: Miracle; Messiah (Christ)

See Map: Sea of Galilee

Why did the disciples call Jesus “Master”?

[8:24]

The disciples called Jesus “master”(ἐπιστάτης/g1988) because they honored Jesus. They called him “master” twice because they honored Jesus in the same way they honored God.

How did Jesus “rebuke” the wind and water?

[8:24]

Jesus “rebuked”(ἐπιτιμάω/g2008) the wind and water with his own power. He did not pray to God. That is, Jesus wanted his disciples to know he has the same power God has (see: Psalm 89:9). Scholars think that the wind and water immediately settled down after Jesus spoke.

Why did the disciples not have faith?

[8:25]

Scholars think there were two reasons the disciples did not have faith. That is, they did not fully trust Jesus.

The disciples did not have faith because they did not think Jesus was able to stop the storm.

They also did not have faith because they feared they were going to die.

See: Disciple

8:26-39

Where was the “region of the Gerasenes”?

[8:26]

See Map: Sea of Galilee; Gerasenes

Why did the demon possessed man fall down in front of Jesus?

[8:28]

Scholars think the demon possessed man fell down in front of Jesus because the demons feared Jesus. The demons gave power to the possessed man, but they had no power compared to Jesus. They did not want Jesus to punish them. However, here the demons were not worshipping Jesus.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Worship

What was meant by the words, “Most High God”?

[8:28]

Some scholars think the words “Most High God” were used to talk about God being more powerful and greater than any other god. Other scholars think the demon possessed man called God the “Most High” because that was what Gentiles called the God of the Jews. They were in a place where the Gentiles lived.

Advice to translators: Although this talks about God being greater than other gods, this does not mean that the other gods are real. The other gods are not real and have never lived.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Gentile

Why did the demon possessed man call Jesus “Son of the Most High God”?

[8:28]

Scholars think the demon possessed man called Jesus “Son of the Most High God” because Jesus rules over everything, including demons. He gave permission for Satan to rule the demons. The demons did not want Jesus to punish or harm them. Gabriel, the angel of God, also called Jesus the “Son of the Most High God” (see: 1:32).

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Angel

Why did Jesus ask the demon possessed man his name?

[8:30]

Scholars think there were several reasons why Jesus asked the demon possessed man his name.

Jesus wanted people to know that thousands of demons controlled the man. “Legion” was a name for a group of about 6,000 Roman soldiers.

Jesus wanted people to know that he has power over the demons. Jesus had power over demon possessed people without asking their names (see: 4:33-36).

Jesus wanted people to know that the man was a person even though the demons controlled him. It was a way Jesus wanted people to know that he had compassion for him.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

What was the abyss?

[8:31]

See: Abyss (Bottomless Pit)

Why did the demons ask Jesus to send them into the pigs?

[8:32]

Scholars think there are several reasons why the demons wanted to go into the pigs.

The demons did not want Jesus to make them go into the abyss.

The demons knew that Jesus did not want the demons to go into other people.

The demons wanted to control animals if they were no longer able to control people.

See: Demon; Abyss (Bottomless Pit); Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why did Jesus allow the demons to go into the pigs?

[8:32]

Jesus allowed the demons to go into the pigs. Scholars think he did this for many reasons.

Jesus wanted people to know that God will judge demons. This will happen when the known world ends and is recreated.

He will send them into the abyss.

The demons went into the abyss when the pigs went into the sea.

Jesus created everything. Therefore, he has the ability to do anything he wants with his creation.

Jesus cared more about the man than about the pigs.

It made people know that the man was really free from the demons.

See: Demon; World; Day of Judgment; Abyss (Bottomless Pit); Punish (Punishment); Spiritual Warfare

Why did the people ask Jesus to leave?

[8:37]

Scholars think there are several reasons why the people asked Jesus to leave.

They cared more about losing the pigs than about Jesus rescuing the man from the demons.

They were afraid because Jesus has the same power over demons that God has.

They were afraid of Jesus. They did not want him to interfere with Roman rule over the Jews.

See: Demon; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

8:40-56

Who was Jairus?

[8:41]

Jairus was the leader of a synagogue. He read Old Testament Scriptures in the synagogue meetings. He also was a leader in the community. Some scholars think that his name was the same as, "God will awaken." He was different from other synagogue leaders. He bowed down at Jesus' feet and asked Jesus to heal. He did not argue with Jesus.

See: Synagogue

How did the woman suffer?

[8:43]

Scholars think the woman suffered in three ways.

She had a bleeding illness for twelve years.

Because of her bleeding, she was unclean according to the law of Moses (see: Leviticus 15:25-33). That is, she had to be separated from people. That is, because they would be unclean if they touched her or if she touched them. She could not worship in the temple. The people in the crowd did not have compassion for her or even look at her.

She was poor. The Gospel of Mark said she spent all her money on doctors but she only got more sick (see: Mark 5:26).

See: Clean and Unclean; Law of Moses; Worship; Temple; Gospel

Why did the woman want to touch the edge of Jesus' coat?

[8:44]

Some scholars think the woman wanted to touch the edge of Jesus' coat because she believed in magic. More scholars say she believed Jesus was able to heal her (see: 8:48). That is, she did not believe in magic. Jesus healed other people when they touched him (see: 6:19).

See: Sorcery; Miracle

Why did Jesus ask who touched him?

[8:45]

Jesus asked who touched him because he wanted all the people to know he healed the woman. Scholars think Jesus already knew who touched him before he asked. He wanted the woman to talk about what had happened to her. Some scholars think this was so others would know that Jesus had the power to heal the woman completely. Also, Jesus wanted others would know that the woman was now clean. That is, she was able to go back into the community and no longer needed to be separated from people.

See: Clean and Unclean; Miracle

Why did Jesus call the woman "daughter"?

[8:48]

Scholars think there are three reasons Jesus called the woman "daughter."

Jesus wanted people to know he had compassion for her.

Jesus wanted people to know she came back into the community. That is, she was no longer unclean.

Luke wanted his readers to know that this story happened at the same time Jesus made another person's daughter alive again.

See: Clean and Unclean

Why did Jesus tell Jairus to not fear?

[8:50]

Scholars think Jesus told Jairus not to fear because his daughter's death made him fear. Jairus was afraid it was too late for Jesus to heal her. However, Jesus wanted Jairus to trust him that his daughter would be healed.

Why did Jesus use the word "sleep"?

[8:52]

The word "sleep" was a metaphor used to talk about someone who was dead. Some scholars think Jesus told the crowd that the girl was not dead. She was only sleeping because he knew he was going to heal her and make her alive again.

See: John 11:11-14

See: Sleep (Metaphor)

Why did all the crying people start laughing?

[8:53]

Scholars think there are two reasons why they quickly changed from crying to laughing.

Someone paid these people to mourn for the girl. Therefore, they were not really sad about the girl's death.

They did not think Jesus had the power to make the girl alive again. Perhaps they did not know Jesus made a man alive again in Nain (see: 7:11-16).

See Map: Nain

Why did Jesus tell the parents not to tell anyone that he made their daughter alive again?

[8:56]

Scholars think there are several reasons why Jesus told the parents not to tell anyone that Jesus made their daughter alive

again.

Jesus wanted people to know that following him caused suffering, not comfort and miracles.

Jesus judged the people who laughed.

Jesus did not want those who did not believe to know about what he was doing.

Jesus wanted them to care for their daughter.

Jesus also did not want all of his disciples to see the miracle (see: Luke 8:51).

Jesus wanted to help his disciples understand who was Jesus (see: Luke 9:20).

Jesus wanted to wait until after he became alive again for people to know he has power to make people alive again.

See: Matthew 9:26

See: Miracle; Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Messianic Secret

Luke 8:1

General Information:

These verses give background information about Jesus's preaching while traveling.

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark a new part of the story.

Luke 8:2

who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom Jesus had set free from evil spirits and healed of diseases"

Mary

One of the "certain women."

Mary who was called Magdalene ... seven demons had been driven out

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Mary, whom people called Magdalene ... Jesus had driven out seven demons"

Luke 8:3

Joanna ... Susanna

Two of the "certain women"

Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's manager

Joanna was Chuza's wife, and Chuza was Herod's manager.

"Joanna, the wife of Herod's manager, Chuza"

provided for their needs

"financially supported Jesus and his twelve disciples"

Luke 8:4

General Information:

Jesus tells the parable of the soils to the crowd. He explains its meaning to his disciples in 8:11:15.

coming to him

"coming to Jesus"

Luke 8:5

A farmer went out to sow his seed

"A farmer went out to scatter some seed in a field" or "A farmer went out to scatter some seeds in a field"

some fell

"some of the seed fell" or "some of the seeds fell"

it was trampled underfoot

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"people walked on it" or "people walked on them"

birds of the sky

This idiom can be translated simply as "birds" or as "birds flew down and" to keep the sense of "sky."

devoured it

"ate it all" or "ate them all"

Luke 8:6

it withered away

"each plant became dry and shriveled up" or "the plants became dry and shriveled up"

it had no moisture

"it was too dry" or "they were too dry." The cause can also be stated. Alternate translation: "the ground was too dry"

Luke 8:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling the parable to the crowd.

choked it

The thorn plants took all the nutrients, water, and sunlight, so the farmer's plants could not grow well.

Luke 8:8

produced a crop

"grew a harvest" or "grew more seeds"

a hundred times greater

This means a hundred times more than the seeds that were sown.

Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "ears to hear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. Alternate translation: "Let the one who is willing to listen, listen" or "The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey" or "If you are willing to listen, listen" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey"

Luke 8:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 8:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to speak to his disciples.

The knowledge of ... God has been given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has given to you the knowledge of ... God" or "God has made you able to understand ... God"

the secrets of the kingdom of God

These are truths that have been hidden, but that Jesus is now revealing them.

for others

"for other people." This refers to the people who rejected the teaching of Jesus and did not follow him.

seeing they may not see

"though they see, they will not perceive." This is a quote

from the prophet Isaiah. Some languages may need to state

the object of the verbs. Alternate translation: "though they see things, they will not understand them" or "though they see things happen, they will not understand what they mean"

hearing they may not understand

"though they hear, they will not understand." This is a quote from the prophet Isaiah. Some languages may need to state the object of the verbs. Alternate translation: "though they hear instruction, they will not understand the truth"

Luke 8:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to explain the meaning of the parable that he told in [Luke 8:5-8](#).

The seed is the word of God

"The seed is the message from God"

Luke 8:12

The ones along the road are those

"The seeds that fell along the path are those." Jesus tells what happens to the seeds as it relates to people. Alternate translation: "The seeds that fell along the road represent people" or "In the parable, the seeds that fell along the road represent people"

are those who

Jesus speaks of the seeds showing something about people as if the seeds were the people. Alternate translation: "show what happens to people who"

the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds or inner beings. Alternate translation: "the devil comes and takes away the message of God from their inner thoughts"

takes away

In the parable this was a metaphor of a bird snatching away the seeds. Try to use words in your language that keep that image.

hearts so they may not believe and be saved.

This is the devil's purpose. Alternate translation: "hearts because the devil thinks, 'They must not believe and they must not be saved.'" or "hearts so it will not be that they believe and God saves them."

Luke 8:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 8:14

The seeds that fell among the thorns are people

"The seeds that fell among the thorns represent people" or "In the parable the seeds that fell among the thorns represent people"

they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the cares and riches and pleasures of this life choke them"

cares

things that people worry about

pleasures of this life

"the things in this life that people enjoy"

they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and their fruit does not mature

This metaphor refers to the way weeds cut off light and nutrients from plants and keep them from growing.

Alternate translation: "as weeds prevent good plants from growing, the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life keep these people from becoming mature"

their fruit does not mature

"they do not bear ripe fruit." Mature fruit is a metaphor for good works. Alternate translation: "so like a plant that does not produce mature fruit, they do not produce good works"

Luke 8:15

the seed that fell on the good soil, these are the ones

"the seed that fell on the good soil represents the people" or "in the parable the seed that fell on the good soil represents the people"

hearing the word

"hearing the message"

with an honest and good heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or intentions. Alternate translation: "with an honest and good desire"

bear fruit with patient endurance

"produce fruit by enduring patiently" or "produce fruit by continued effort." Fruit is a metaphor for good works.

Alternate translation: "like healthy plants that produce good fruit, they produce good works by persevering"

Luke 8:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues with another parable.

No one

This marks the beginning of another parable.

Luke 8:17

nothing is hidden that will not be made known

This double negative can be written as a positive statement. Alternate translation: "everything that is hidden will be made known"

nor is anything secret that will not be known and come into the light

This double negative can be written as a positive statement.

Alternate translation: "and everything that is secret will be made known and will come into the light"

Luke 8:18

to the one who has, more will be given to him

It is clear from the context that Jesus is talking about understanding and believing. This can be stated clearly and changed to active form. Alternate translation: "whoever has understanding will be given more understanding" or "God will enable those who believe the truth to understand even more"

the one who does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him

It is clear from the context that Jesus is talking about understanding and believing. This can be stated clearly and changed to active form. Alternate translation: "whoever does not have understanding will lose even what understanding he thinks he has" or "God will cause those who do not believe the truth not to understand even the little that they think they have understood"

Luke 8:19

brothers

These were Jesus's younger brothers—the sons of Mary and Joseph who were born after Jesus. Since the Father of Jesus was God, and their father was Joseph, they were technically

his half-brothers. This detail is not normally translated.

Luke 8:20

He was told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"People told him" or "Someone told him"

wanting to see you

"and they want to see you"

Luke 8:21

My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it

This metaphor expresses that the people who were coming to listen to Jesus were as important to him as his own family was. Alternate translation: "Those who hear the word of God and obey it are like a mother and brothers to me"

the word of God

"the message God has spoken"

Luke 8:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus and his disciples use a boat to cross Lake Genneseret. The disciples learn more about Jesus's power through the storm that arises.

the lake

This is the lake of Genneseret, which is also called the Sea of Galilee.

They set sail

This expression means they began to travel across the lake in their sailboat.

Luke 8:23

as they sailed

"as they went"

fell asleep

"began to sleep"

A terrible windstorm came down

"A storm of very strong winds began" or "Very strong winds suddenly began to blow"

their boat was filling with water

The strong winds caused high waves which pushed water over the sides of the boat. This can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "the winds caused high waves that started to fill up their boat with water"

Luke 8:24

rebuked

spoke sharply to

the raging of the water

"the violent waves"

they ceased

"the wind and the waves stopped" or "they became still"

Luke 8:25

Where is your faith?

Jesus rebukes them mildly because they do not trust him to take care of them. This can be written as a statement.

Alternate translation: "You should have faith!" or "You should trust me!"

Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?

This question expresses shock and confusion over how Jesus is able to control the storm. Alternate translation:

"What kind of man is this? He commands even the winds

and the water, and they obey him!"

Luke 8:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus and his disciples come ashore at Gerasa, where Jesus removes many demons from a man.

the region of the Gerasenes

Gerasenes were people from the city called Gerasa.

across the lake from Galilee

"on the other side of the lake from Galilee"

Luke 8:27

a certain man from the city

"a man from the city of Gerasa"

a certain man from the city who had demons

The man had demons; it was not the city that had demons.

Alternate translation: "a certain man from the city, and this man had demons"

who had demons

"who was controlled by demons" or "whom demons controlled"

For a long time he had worn no clothes ... but among the tombs

This is background information about the man who had demons.

he had worn no clothes

"he had not worn clothes"

tombs

These are places where people put dead bodies, possibly caves or small buildings that the man could use for shelter.

Luke 8:28

When he saw Jesus

"When the man who had the demon saw Jesus"

he cried out

"he screamed" or "he shrieked"

fell down before him

"lay down on the ground before Jesus." He did not fall accidentally.

he said with a loud voice

"he said loudly" or "he shouted out"

What have you to do with me

This idiom means "Why are you bothering me?"

Son of the Most High God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Luke 8:29

many times it had seized him

"many times it had taken control of the man" or "many times it had gone into him." This tells about what the demon had done many times before Jesus met the man.

though he was bound ... and kept under guard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"though the people had bound him ... and guarded him"

he would be driven by the demon

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the demon would make him go"

Luke 8:30

Legion

Translate this with a word that refers to a large number of soldiers or people. Some other translations say "Army."

Alternate translation: "Battalion" or "Brigade"

Luke 8:31

kept begging him

"kept begging Jesus"

Luke 8:32

Now a large herd of pigs was there feeding on the hillside

This is supplied as background information to introduce the pigs.

was there feeding on the hillside

"was nearby eating grass on a hill"

Luke 8:33

So the demons came out

The word "so" is used here to explain that the reason the demons came out the man was because Jesus had told them that they could go into the pigs.

rushed

ran very fast

the herd ... was drowned

"the herd ... drowned." No one caused the pigs to drown once they were in the water.

Luke 8:34

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 8:35

found the man from whom the demons had gone out

"saw the man whom the demons had left"

in his right mind

"sane" or "behaving normally"

sitting at the feet of Jesus

"sitting at the feet" here is an idiom that means "sitting humbly nearby" or "sitting in front of." Alternate translation: "sitting on the ground in front of Jesus"

they were afraid

It may be helpful to state explicitly that they were afraid of Jesus. Alternate translation: "they were afraid of Jesus"

Luke 8:36

those who had seen it

"those who had seen what had happened"

the man who had been possessed by demons had been healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Jesus had healed the man whom demons had possessed" or "Jesus had healed the man whom demons had controlled"

Luke 8:37

the region of the Gerasenes

"that area of the Gerasenes" or "the area where the Gerasene people lived." See how you translated this in 8:26

Luke 8:26

they were overwhelmed with great fear

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they were very afraid"

and returned

This is not the last thing that Jesus did in that place, so this can also be stated as "in order to return" or "to go back."

returned

The destination can be stated. Alternate translation:

"returned across the lake"

Luke 8:38

The man

The events in these verses happened before Jesus left in the boat. It may be helpful to state this clearly at the beginning.

Alternate translation: "Before Jesus and his disciples left,

the man" or "Before Jesus and his disciples set sail, the man"

Luke 8:39

your home

"your household" or "your family"

give a full account of what God has done for you

"tell them everything about what God has done for you"

Luke 8:40

Connecting Statement:

When Jesus and his disciples return to Galilee on the other side of the lake, he heals the 12-year-old daughter of the ruler of the synagogue as well as a woman who has been bleeding for 12 years (8:43-48).

the crowd welcomed him

"the crowd joyfully greeted him"

Luke 8:41

one of the leaders of the synagogue

"one of the leaders at the local synagogue" or "a leader of the people who met at the synagogue in that city"

fell down at Jesus' feet

Possible meanings are 1) "bowed down at Jesus' feet" or 2)

"lay down on the ground at Jesus' feet." Jairus did not fall accidentally. He did this as a sign of humility and respect for Jesus.

Luke 8:42

was dying

"was about to die"

As Jesus was on his way

Some translators may need to first say that Jesus had agreed to go with Jairus. Alternate translation: "So Jesus agreed to go with him. As he was on his way"

the crowds of people pressed together around him

"the people were crowding tightly around Jesus"

Luke 8:43

a woman was there

This introduces a new character in the story.

had been bleeding

"had a flow of blood." She was probably bleeding from her womb even when it was not the normal time for it. Some cultures may have a polite way of referring to this condition.

and could not be healed by anyone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but no one could heal her"

Luke 8:44

touched the edge of his coat

"touched the fringe of his robe." Jewish men wore tassels on the edges of their robes as a part of their ceremonial dress as commanded in God's Law. This is likely what she touched.

Luke 8:45

the crowds of people are all around you and they are pressing in against you

By saying this, Peter was implying that anyone could have touched Jesus. This implicit information can be made explicit if necessary. Alternate translation: "there are many people crowding around you and pressing in against you, so any one of them might have touched you"

Luke 8:46

Someone did touch me

It may be helpful to distinguish this intentional "touch" from the accidental touches of the crowd. Alternate translation: "Someone deliberately touched me"

I know that power has gone out from me

Jesus did not lose power or become weak, but his power healed the woman. Alternate translation: "I know that healing power went out from me" or "I felt my power heal someone"

Luke 8:47

that she could not escape notice

"that she could not keep secret what she had done." It may be helpful to state what she did. Alternate translation: "that she could not keep it a secret that she was the one who had touched Jesus"

she came trembling

"she came trembling with fear"

fell down before him

Possible meanings are 1) "bowed down in front of Jesus" or 2) "lay down on the ground at Jesus's feet." She did not fall accidentally. This was a sign of humility and respect for Jesus.

In the presence of all the people

"In the sight of all the people"

Luke 8:48

Daughter

This was a kind way of speaking to a woman. Your language may have another way of showing this kindness. your faith has made you well

"because of your faith, you have become well." The abstract noun "faith" could be stated as an action. Alternate translation: "because you believe, you are healed"

Go in peace

This idiom is a way of saying, "Goodbye" and giving a blessing at the same time. Alternate translation: "As you go, do not worry anymore" or "May God give you peace as you go"

Luke 8:49

While he was still speaking

"While Jesus was still speaking to the woman"

synagogue leader

This refers to Jairus (Luke 8:41).

Do not trouble the teacher

This statement implies that Jesus will not be able to do anything to help now that the girl is dead.

the teacher

This refers to Jesus.

Luke 8:50

she will be healed

"she will be well" or "she will live again"

Luke 8:51

When he came to the house

"When they came to the house." Jesus went there with Jairus. Some of Jesus's disciples also went with them.

he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter ... mother

This double negative emphasizes that Peter and the others were the only ones whom Jesus allowed to enter. This could be stated positively. Alternate translation: "he allowed only Peter ... mother to enter with him"

the father of the child

This refers to Jairus.

Luke 8:52

all were mourning and wailing for her

This was the normal way of showing grief in that culture. Alternate translation: "all the people there were showing how sad they were and crying loudly because the girl had died"

Luke 8:53

began to mock him, knowing that she

"laughed at him because they knew the girl"

Luke 8:54

he took her by the hand

"Jesus took hold of the girl's hand"

Luke 8:55

Her spirit returned

"Her spirit returned to her body." The Jews understood that life was the result of the spirit coming into a person.

Alternate translation: "She started breathing again" or "She came back to life" or "She became alive again"

Luke 8:56

to tell no one

This could be stated differently. Alternate translation: "not to tell anyone"

Chapter 9

Luke 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"To preach the kingdom of God"

No one knows for sure what the words "kingdom of God" here refer to. Some say it refers to the reign of God on earth, and others say it refers to the gospel message that Jesus died to pay for his people's sins. It is best to translate this as "to preach about the kingdom of God" or "to teach them about how God was going to show himself as king."

Elijah

God had promised the Jews that the prophet Elijah would return before the Messiah came, so some people who saw Jesus do miracles thought Jesus was Elijah ([Luke 9:9](#), [Luke 9:19](#)). However, Elijah did come to earth to speak with Jesus ([Luke 9:30](#)). (See: prophet and christ and elijah)

"Kingdom of God"

The term "kingdom of God" is used in this chapter to refer to a kingdom that was still in the future when the words were spoken. (See: kingdomofgod)

Glory

Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. Luke says in this chapter that Jesus's clothing shone with this glorious light so that his followers could see that Jesus truly was God's Son. At the same time, God told them that Jesus was his Son. (See: glory and fear)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. An example in this chapter is: "Whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." ([Luke 9:24](#)).

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

"Receiving"

This word appears several times in this chapter and means different things. When Jesus says, "If someone receives a little child like this in my name, he also is receiving me, and if someone receives me, he is also receiving the one who sent me" ([Luke 9:48](#)), he is speaking of people serving the child. When Luke says, "the people there did not receive him" ([Luke 9:53](#)), he means that the people did not believe in or accept Jesus. (See: believe)

Links:

[Luke 9:1 Notes](#)

Luke 9

9:1-6

Who were the twelve?

[9:1]

The twelve Luke wrote about were the twelve disciples.

See: Disciple

Why did Luke wrote, "power and authority"?

[9:1]

Luke wrote that Jesus gave the disciples "power," he wanted people to know that Jesus gave them the ability to do something. Luke wrote that Jesus gave the disciples "authority." That is, Jesus gave them permission to do something.

See: Disciple

What did it mean to have power and authority "over all the demons"?

[9:1]

Jesus gave the disciples power and authority "over all the demons." He gave them permission and power to make the demons to leave people and to stop controlling people.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Disciple

What did it mean to "preach the kingdom of God"?

[9:2]

See: Preach (Preacher); Kingdom of God

Why was shaking dust off feet a testimony against people who did not receive the twelve?

[9:5]

The disciples shook the dust off of their feet because people did not believe the things they said about Jesus. This was a symbol. In ancient Israel, people did this when they left places where Gentiles lived because the Gentiles were unclean. Because people did not believe in Jesus, they were unclean. This is why the disciples shook the dust off of their feet.

Perhaps this was a warning that God will reject these people.

See: Acts 13:48-51

See: Disciple; Gentile; Clean and Unclean; Symbol

9:7-9

Who was Herod the tetrarch?

[9:7]

Herod the tetrarch was Herod Antipas. Sometimes people called him the tetrarch because he reigned over one fourth of the territory his father reigned over before him. Sometimes people called him a king (see: Mark 6:14).

See: King Herod

Why did some people say Elijah appeared rather than became alive again?

[9:8]

Some people said Elijah appeared rather than become alive again because Elijah did not die (see: 2 Kings 2:11). Instead, he went to heaven without dying. People expected Elijah to appear before the coming of the messiah (see: Malachi 4:5-6).

See: Heaven; Messiah (Christ)

9:10-17

Where was Behsaida?

[9:10]

See Map: Bethsaida

How many people were in the crowd?

[9:14]

Luke wrote there were five thousand men in the crowd. However, scholars say there were also women and children in the crowd. In ancient times, people often counted only men in a crowd (see: Matthew 14:21). Perhaps there were about twenty thousand people in the crowd.

How did Jesus “bless” the food?

[9:16]

Jesus blessed the food. Some scholars say Jesus “consecrated” the food. That is, Jesus asked God to bless the people who were going to eat the food. More scholars think Jesus “thanked God” for the food.

See: John 17:1

See: Bless (Blessing)

9:18-22

What did it mean that Jesus was “praying by himself”?

[9:18]

Luke wrote that Jesus was “praying by himself”. Jesus and the disciples were away from the crowd. Perhaps the disciples came and joined Jesus while he was praying.

See: Disciple

Why did Peter know that Jesus is the “Christ of God”?

[9:20]

Peter thought that Jesus was “the Christ of God”. In Matthew’s gospel, Jesus told Peter that God the Father revealed to him that Jesus is the Christ (see: Matthew 16:16-17).

See: Messiah (Christ); Gospel; God the Father; Reveal (Revelation)

Why did Jesus warn the disciples not to tell people he is the Christ of God?

[9:21]

See: Messianic Secret

Why did Jesus have to suffer?

[9:22]

Jesus had to suffer. Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about certain prophecies about things that will happen to the messiah (see: Luke 24:45-46; Isaiah 53). Others scholars think Jesus was preparing the disciples for what was going to happen.

See: Luke 24:47; Ephesians 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

See: Prophecy (Prophesy) ; Messiah (Christ); Disciple

Why did Jesus call himself the “Son of Man?”

[9:22]

See: Son of Man

9:23-27

What did it mean that a Christian “must deny himself”?

[9:23]

Luke wrote that a Christian must deny himself. Scholars think Jesus meant that a Christian must do what God wants him to do. That is, a Christian must give up the right to do what they want to do and instead do what God wants them to do.

What did it mean for a Christian to “take up his cross daily”?

[9:23]

Some scholars think Jesus used a metaphor when he said that a Christian must “take up his cross daily.” This meant that anyone who wanted to be a disciple of Jesus had to be prepared to suffer for being a Christian. Other scholars think Jesus was talking about Christians doing things God wanted and not the things they wanted to do (see: Galatians 2:20).

See: Metaphor; Cross; Suffer

What did Jesus mean by saying, “whoever would save his life will lose it”?

[9:24]

The person who wanted to “save his life” was a person that was willing to do what God wanted him to do. When they do this, they will suffer. Scholars think Jesus was talking about a person’s soul when he spoke about their life.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Soul; Metaphor

What did Jesus mean by saying, “whoever loses his life for my sake will save it”?

[9:24]

A person who “loses his life” is a person who gave up his right to live in the way he wants to live. He did this so he could follow Jesus. This person did this to honor God because they were at peace with God.

What was meant by the words, “gain the whole world”?

[9:25]

Someone who gained the whole world was someone who owned the world and everything in it. It was hyperbole to speak in this way. They were very rich and powerful.

See: Hyperbole

What did it mean to be “ashamed” of Jesus and his words?

[9:26]

Jesus talked about someone who was ashamed of him and the things he said. This person refused to be a disciple because he felt “ashamed” and afraid of being embarrassed in front of other people. That is, he was afraid that other people would insult or mock him for following Jesus.

See: Disciple

When does Jesus come in “his own glory and the glory of the Father, and the angels”?

[9:26]

See: Jesus’ Return to Earth; Glory (Glorify); God the Father; Angel

What did Jesus mean by saying that some “will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God”?

[9:27]

When someone tasted death, this was a way of saying that they died. Jesus said that some people will not die before they see the kingdom of God. Scholars think different things about what it meant to “see the kingdom of God”.

Some scholars think Jesus was talking about the disciples who would see the form of Jesus change on the mountain (see: Luke 9:28-36).

Other scholars think Jesus was talking about people seeing him when God made him alive again (see: Mark 15:33-16:13).

Other scholars think Jesus was talking about people seeing the Holy Spirit do great things (see: Acts 2:1-4).

See: Kingdom of God; Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection)

9:28-36

Where did Jesus take Peter, John, and James?

[9:28]

Luke did not write the name of the mountain where Jesus took Peter, John, and James. Scholars think it was Hermon, Tabor, or Meron. Peter wrote the mountain was holy (see: 2 Peter 1:18).

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

See Map: Mt. Hermon; Mt. Tabor; Mt. Meron

How was “the form of his face” changed?

[9:29]

Luke wrote that the form of Jesus’ face changed. Jesus’ face looked different in some way. Perhaps this was because Jesus’ face began to shine with a glory from heaven.

See: Glory (Glorify); Heaven

How did Moses and Elijah appear in “glorious splendor”?

[9:30, 9:31]

Moses and Elijah appeared in “glorious splendor.” Like Jesus, they shone brightly with glory from heaven. That is, they were surrounded with very bright light.

See: Glory (Glorify); Heaven

What was the “departure” about which Jesus, Moses, and Elijah spoke?

[9:31]

When Moses and Elijah spoke to Jesus about his “departure,” they were speaking about Jesus dying. This happened in Jerusalem.

Why did Peter want to “make three shelters”?

[9:33]

Peter wanted to make three shelters. Scholars think Peter was thinking about the shelters that were used to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles when people lived in shelters for seven days (see: Leviticus 23:33-42). They think Peter was wanted to stay on the mountain with Jesus, Moses, and Elijah.

Advice to translators: A shelter is a type of tent.

See: Festival of Shelters

What was the cloud that came and overshadowed them?

[9:34]

Luke wrote about a cloud. Some scholars think the cloud was like the pillar of cloud that led the people of Israel in the wilderness (see: Exodus 14:19-20). They think the cloud appeared and cast a shadow over Jesus, Moses, Elijah, and the disciples. Other scholars think the cloud came close to the ground and surrounded Jesus, Moses, Elijah, and the disciples.

See: Disciple

Who spoke out of the cloud?

[9:35]

When Luke wrote about someone speaking out of the cloud, it was God who was speaking.

What did it mean that Jesus was found alone?

[9:36]

Luke wrote that Jesus was found alone. He wanted people to know that the disciples no longer saw Moses and Elijah.

They only saw Jesus.

See: Disciple

9:37-45

When speaking about a child, what did it mean that “a spirit takes control over him”?

[9:39]

Luke was writing about an evil spirit or demon taking possession of the child. That is, the demon controlled the boy’s body and caused him to shake violently and to cry out.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why did Jesus call the people an “unbelieving and depraved generation”?

[9:41]

Jesus called people an “unbelieving and depraved generation.” Some scholars think Jesus was telling the people that they were just like their ancestors, who also rejected God (see: Deuteronomy 32:5-6, 20). These people rejected Jesus.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

What did it mean that Jesus “rebuked the unclean spirit”?

[9:42]

Luke wrote that Jesus “rebuked” the unclean spirit. Jesus commanded the evil spirit to leave the boy. That is, he made the demon stop controlling the boy.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

What did it mean that the Son of Man will be betrayed?

[9:44]

Luke wrote that the Son of Man was going to be betrayed. That is, someone Jesus trusted would help Jesus’ enemies arrest Jesus.

See: Son of Man

How was Jesus’ statement “hidden” from the disciples?

[9:45]

Scholars think that God caused Jesus’ statement to be “hidden.” That is, people did not understand what Jesus wanted to say. This is because it was not the right time for the meaning of what Jesus said to be revealed. God planned for a time in the future for the disciples to understand what Jesus said.

See: Reveal (Revelation); Disciple

9:46-48

What did it mean that the disciples were arguing about who would be “greatest”?

[9:46]

The disciples were arguing about who would be the greatest. Some scholars think the disciples were arguing about which of them was the greatest disciple at that present time. More scholars think the disciples were arguing about which of them was to be the greatest disciple in God’s kingdom. They wanted to be more honored than other people.

See: Disciple; Kingdom of God; Pride; Humble (Humility)

What did Jesus mean when he said “whoever welcomes this child in my name”?

[9:48]

Jesus put a “little child” next to him to teach the disciples a lesson about being great. Someone needed to help or care for a child. Because of this, someone must welcome a child. Jesus wanted the disciples to know that in the kingdom of God, they too needed someone greater than themselves to help them.

See: Disciple; Kingdom of God; Pride; Humble (Humility)

What did it mean that “whoever is least among you all is the one who is great”?

[9:48]

Luke wrote, “whoever is least among you all is the one who is great.” Some scholars think Jesus meant that whoever was a humble person was the one who was truly great. Others scholars think Jesus wanted the disciples to know that God thought certain people were great who other people did not think they were great.

See: Disciple; Pride; Humble (Humility)

9:49-50

Why did John say, “he does not follow along with us”?

[9:49]

When John said these words to Jesus, he meant that the person who was forcing out demons was not one of the disciples.
See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon; Disciple

9:51-56

What did it mean for Jesus to be “taken up”?

[9:51]

Jesus would be “taken up.” That is, God was going to take Jesus back up to heaven.

See: Ascend (Ascension); Heaven

What was meant by the words, “he set his face to go to Jerusalem”?

[9:51]

Luke wrote, “he set his face to go to Jerusalem.” Jesus decided to go to Jerusalem. That is, he was determined to start his journey to Jerusalem.

Who were the Samaritans?

[9:52]

See: Samaria

See Map: Samaria

Why did the people of Samaria not welcome Jesus?

[9:53]

The people of Samaria did not welcome Jesus because he was going to Jerusalem. The people of Samaria worshipped on Mount Gerizim. They did not like people traveling through Samaria to get to Jerusalem.

See Map: Mount Gerizim

Why did rebuke the disciples?

[9:55]

Scholars think that Jesus rebuked the disciples for wanting to see Samaria destroyed. This meant that Jesus told the disciples they were thinking in a wrong way. That is, they did not treat people the way God wanted them to treat other people.

See: Samaria; Disciple

See Map: Samaria

9:57-62

Why did Luke write, “the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head”?

[9:58]

Luke wrote, “the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” Foxes and birds had places where they lived. However, Jesus was always traveling and did not live in one place.

See: Son of Man

What did Jesus mean by saying, “leave the dead to bury their own dead”?

[9:60]

Jesus said, “leave the dead to bury their own dead.” Some scholars think the first use of the word “dead” was speaking about those who were spiritually dead. That is, all those who did not know Jesus or had rejected him as the messiah. Because of this, they were separated from God. In ancient Israel, people often spoke about this as a type of death. He said those who were spiritually dead can take care of burying those who were physically dead. His command saying, “follow me” meant he wanted that person to immediately go out and tell people about the kingdom of God.

See: Tomb; Messiah (Christ); Kingdom of God

Someone wanted to say goodbye to people at home before they followed Jesus. How did Jesus use a metaphor to answer them?

[9:62]

Someone wanted to say goodbye to people at home before they followed Jesus. Jesus answered them with a metaphor about plowing a field and then looking back. People used an animal to pull a plow. The farmer held a handle on the plow to make a straight trench in the ground. If the farmer looked back the trench was not straight. Just as the farmer should not look behind him, so a disciple should keep his eye on following Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Kingdom of God

Luke 9:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus reminds his disciples not to depend on money and their things, gives them power, and then sends them out to various places.

power and authority

These two terms are used together to show that the twelve had both the ability and the right to heal people. Translate

this phrase with a combination of words that include both of these ideas.

all demons

Possible meanings are 1) "every demon" or 2) "every kind of demon."

diseases

sicknesses

Luke 9:2

sent them out
 "sent them to various places" or "told them to go"
 Luke 9:3
 He said to them
 "Jesus said to the twelve." It may be helpful to state that this happened before they went out. Alternate translation:
 "Before they left, Jesus said to them"
 Take nothing
 "Do not take anything with you" or "Do not bring anything with you"
 staff
 large stick that people use for balance when climbing or walking on uneven ground, as well as for defense against attackers
 wallet
 a bag a traveler uses for carrying what he needs on a journey
 bread
 This is here used as a general reference to "food."
 Luke 9:4
 Whatever house you enter
 "Any house you enter"
 stay there
 "remain there" or "temporarily live in that house as a guest"
 until you leave
 "until you leave that town" or "until you leave that place"
 Luke 9:5
 Wherever they do not receive you, when you leave
 "Here is what you should do in any town where people do not receive you: When you leave"
 shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them
 To "shake off the dust from your feet" was an expression of strong rejection in that culture. It showed they did not want even the dust of that town to remain on them.
 Luke 9:6
 they departed
 "they left the place where Jesus was"
 healing everywhere
 "healing wherever they went"
 Luke 9:7
 General Information:
 Verses 7-9 interrupt the story to give information about Herod.
 Now Herod
 The word "Now" marks a pause in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about Herod.
 Herod the tetrarch
 This refers to Herod Antipas, who was the ruler of one-fourth of Israel.
 perplexed
 unable to understand, confused
 it was said by some
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "some people said"
 Luke 9:8
 still others that one of the prophets of long ago had risen
 The word "said" is understood from the previous phrase.
 Alternate translation: "still others said that one of the

prophets of long ago had risen"
 Luke 9:9
 I beheaded John. Who is this
 Herod assumes that it is impossible for John to rise from the dead. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation:
 "It cannot be John because I had his head cut off. So who is this man"
 I beheaded John
 Herod's soldiers would have carried out executions.
 Alternate translation: "I commanded my soldiers to cut off John's head"
 Luke 9:10
 Connecting Statement:
 Though the disciples return to Jesus and they go to Bethsaida to spend time together, the crowds follow Jesus for healing and to listen to his teaching. He performs a miracle to provide bread and fish to the crowds as they return home.
 apostles returned
 "apostles came back to where Jesus was"
 everything they had done
 This refers to the teaching and healing that they did when they went to the other cities.
 Bethsaida
 This is the name of a city.
 Luke 9:11
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 Luke 9:12
 the day was about to come to an end
 "the day was about to end" or "it was near the end of the day." The end of the day was at sunset. Alternate translation: "it was almost sunset"
 an isolated place
 This was a place far away from where people lived.
 Alternate translation: "a remote place" or "a place where no one lives"
 Luke 9:13
 five loaves of bread
 A loaf of bread is a lump of dough that is shaped and baked.
 two fish—unless we go and buy food for all these people
 If "unless" is difficult to understand in your language, you could make a new sentence. "two fish. In order to feed all these people, we would have to go and buy food"
 Luke 9:14
 about five thousand men
 "about 5,000 men." This number does not include the women and children who might have been present.
 Have them sit down
 "Tell them to sit down"
 fifty each
 "50 each"
 Luke 9:15
 So they did this
 "This" refers to what Jesus told them to do Luke 9:14. They told the people to sit down in groups of about fifty people.
 Luke 9:16
 Taking the five loaves
 "Jesus took the five loaves of bread"

up to heaven
 This refers to looking up, toward the sky. The Jews believed that heaven was located above the sky.
 he blessed them
 This refers to the loaves of bread and the fish.
 to set before
 "to pass out to" or "to give to"
 Luke 9:17
 were satisfied
 This idiom means they ate enough food so they were not hungry. Alternate translation: "they had as much as they wanted to eat"
 Luke 9:18
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus is praying, with only his disciples near him, and they begin to talk about who Jesus is. Jesus tells them that he will soon die and resurrect and urges them to follow him even if it becomes very hard to do that.
 It came about
 This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new event.
 praying by himself
 "praying alone." The disciples were with Jesus, but he was praying personally and privately by himself.
 Luke 9:19
 John the Baptist
 It may be helpful to restate part of the question here.
 Alternate translation: "The crowds say you are John the Baptist"
 that one of the prophets from long ago has risen
 It may be helpful to clarify how this answer relates to Jesus's question. Alternate translation: "that you are one of the prophets from long ago and have risen"
 has risen
 "has come back to life"
 Luke 9:20
 Then he said to them
 "Then Jesus said to his disciples"
 Luke 9:21
 he warned and instructed them
 The combination of "warned" and "instructed" is a hendiadys that means "strongly warned" or "strictly instructed." Alternate translation: "he strongly warned them" or he strictly instructed them"
 them to tell this to no one.
 "not to tell anyone." or "that they should not tell anyone."
 This could be stated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "them, 'Do not tell anyone.'"
 Luke 9:22
 The Son of Man must suffer many things
 "People will cause the Son of Man to suffer greatly"
 The Son of Man ... and he will
 Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man ... and I will"
 be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the elders, chief priests, and scribes will reject him"
 he will be killed
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they will kill him"
 on the third day
 "three days after he dies" or "on the third day after his death"
 be raised
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will make him alive again" or "he will live again"
 Luke 9:23
 he said
 "Jesus said"
 to them all
 This refers to the disciples who were with Jesus.
 come after me
 Coming after Jesus represents being one of his disciples. Alternate translation: "be my disciple" or "be one of my disciples"
 must deny himself
 "must not give in to his own desires" or "must forsake his own desires"
 take up his cross daily and follow me
 "carry his cross and follow me every day." The cross represents suffering and death. Taking up the cross represents being willing to suffer and die. To follow Jesus represents obeying him. Alternate translation: "must obey me every day even to the point of suffering and dying"
 Luke 9:24
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 Luke 9:25
 What profit is there for a person to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit himself?
 The implied answer to this question is that it is not good. Alternate translation: "It will not benefit someone at all to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit himself."
 to gain the whole world
 "to get everything in the world"
 lose or forfeit himself
 "ruin himself or give up his life"
 Luke 9:26
 my words
 "what I say" or "what I teach"
 of him will the Son of Man be ashamed
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him"
 the Son of Man ... when he comes in his own glory
 Jesus was speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man ... when I come in my own glory"
 the Father
 This is an important title for God.
 Luke 9:27
 But truly I say to you
 Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the importance of what he will say next.
 there are some standing here who will not taste death
 "some of you who are standing here will not taste death"
 before they see
 Jesus was speaking to the people he was talking about. Alternate translation: "before you see"
 will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God

"Taste death" is an idiom that means "die." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "will see the kingdom of God before they die" or "will see the kingdom of God before you die"

Luke 9:28

Connecting Statement:

Eight days after Jesus tells his disciples that some would not die before they saw the kingdom of God, Jesus goes up the mountain to pray with Peter, James, and John, who all fall asleep while Jesus is changed to a dazzling appearance.

these words

This refers to what Jesus said to his disciples in the preceding verses.

Luke 9:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 9:30

Behold

The word "Behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows. Alternate translation: "Suddenly"

Luke 9:31

who appeared in glory

This phrase gives information about how Moses and Elijah looked. Some languages would translate it as a separate clause. Alternate translation: "and they appeared in glorious splendor" or "and they were shining brightly" his departure

"his leaving" or "how Jesus would leave this world." This was a polite way of talking about his death. Alternate translation: "his death"

Luke 9:32

Now

This word is used here to mark a pause in the main story. Here Luke tells about Peter, James, and John.

heavy with sleep

This idiom means "very sleepy."

they saw his glory

This refers to the brilliant light that surrounded them. Alternate translation: "they saw brilliant light coming from Jesus" or "they saw very bright light coming out of Jesus"

the two men who were standing with him

This refers to Moses and Elijah.

Luke 9:33

As they were going away

"As Moses and Elijah were going away"

shelters

simple, temporary places in which to sit or sleep

Luke 9:34

As he was saying this

"While Peter was saying these things"

they were afraid

These adult disciples were not afraid of clouds. This phrase indicates that some kind of unusual fear came over them with the cloud. Alternate translation: "they were terrified"

they entered into the cloud

This can be expressed in terms of what the cloud did.

Alternate translation: "the cloud surrounded them"

Luke 9:35

A voice came out of the cloud

It is understood that the voice could only have belonged to God. Alternate translation: "God spoke to them from the cloud"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

the one who is chosen

This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: "the one I have chosen" or "I have chosen him"

Luke 9:36

They kept silent ... what they had seen

This is information that tells what happened after the story

as a result of the events in the story itself.

kept silent ... told no one

The first phrase refers to their immediate response, and the

second refers to what they did in the following days.

Luke 9:37

Connecting Statement:

The next day after Jesus's dazzling appearance, Jesus heals a demon-possessed boy that the disciples were unable to make better.

Luke 9:38

Behold, a man from the crowd

The word "behold" alerts us to the new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. English uses "There was a man in the crowd who"

Luke 9:39

You see, a spirit

The phrase "You see" introduces us to the evil spirit in the man's story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "There is an evil spirit that"

he foams at the mouth

"foam comes out of his mouth." When a person has a seizure, he can have trouble breathing or swallowing. This causes white foam to form around his mouth.

Luke 9:40

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 9:41

Jesus answered and said

"Jesus answered by saying"

You unbelieving and perverse generation

Jesus says this to the crowd that has gathered, and not to his disciples.

perverse generation

"corrupt generation"

how long must I be with you and put up with you?

Here "you" is plural. Jesus uses these questions to express his sadness that the people do not believe. They can be written as statements. Alternate translation: "I have been with you so long, yet you do not believe. I wonder how long I must put up with you."

Bring your son here

Here "your" is singular. Jesus is speaking directly to the father who addressed him.

Luke 9:42

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 9:43

they were all amazed at the greatness of God
Jesus performed the miracle, but the crowd recognized that
God was the power behind the healing.

everything he was doing
"everything Jesus was doing"

Luke 9:44

Let these words go deeply into your ears
This is an idiom that means they should pay attention.
Alternate translation: "Listen carefully and remember" or
"Do not forget this"

The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men
This can be stated with an active clause. Here "hands"
refers to power or control. Alternate translation: "Someone
will betray the Son of Man and put him under the control of
men"

The Son of Man will be betrayed into the hands of men
Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person. The
word "hands" is a synecdoche for the people whose hands
they are or a metonym for the power that uses those hands.
You may need to make explicit who these men are.
Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man will be betrayed
into the hands of men" or "The Son of Man will be betrayed
into the power of his enemies" or "I, the Son of Man will be
betrayed to my enemies"

Luke 9:45

It was hidden from them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"God hid the meaning from them"

Luke 9:46

General Information:
The disciples begin to argue about who will be the most
powerful among them.

among them
"among the disciples"

Luke 9:47

knowing the reasoning in their hearts
Here "hearts" is a metonym for their minds. Alternate
translation: "knowing the reasoning in their minds" or
"knowing what they were thinking"

Luke 9:48

in my name
This refers to a person doing something as a representative
of Jesus. Alternate translation: "because of me"

in my name welcomes me
This metaphor could also be stated as a simile. Alternate
translation: "in my name, it is like he is welcoming me"
the one who sent me
"God, who sent me"

the one who is great
"the one whom God considers to be most important"

Luke 9:49

John answered
"In reply, John said" or "John replied to Jesus." John was
responding to what Jesus had said about being the greatest.
He was not answering a question.

we saw
John speaks of himself but not Jesus, so "we" here is
exclusive.
in your name

This means the person was speaking with the power and
authority of Jesus.

Luke 9:50

Do not stop him
This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "Allow
him to continue"

whoever is not against you is for you
Some modern languages have sayings that mean the same
thing. Alternate translation: "if a person does not keep you
from working, it is as if he were helping you" or "if
someone is not working against you, he is working with
you"

Luke 9:51

General Information:
It is now obvious that Jesus has decided to go to Jerusalem.
When the days drew near for him to be taken up
Here "be taken up" implies that Jesus will be taken up to
heaven. This can be stated in active form. Alternate
translation: "When the time was coming for him to go up
heaven" or "When it was almost time for him to leave this
world"

set his face
This idiom means he "firmly decided." Alternate
translation: "made up his mind" or "decided"

Luke 9:52

to prepare everything for him
This means to make arrangements for his arrival there,
possibly including a place to speak, a place to stay, and
food.

Luke 9:53

did not welcome him
"did not want him to stay"

because he had set his face to go to Jerusalem
The Samaritans and the Jews hated each other. Therefore
the Samaritans would not help Jesus on his journey to
Jerusalem, the Jewish capital.

Luke 9:54

saw this
"saw that the Samaritans did not receive Jesus"
command fire to come down from heaven and destroy them
James and John suggested this method of judgment because
they knew that this was how the prophets such as Elijah
had judged people who rejected God.

Luke 9:55

he turned and rebuked them
"Jesus turned and rebuked James and John." Jesus did not
condemn the Samaritans as the disciples expected.

Luke 9:56

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 9:57

someone
This was not one of the disciples.

Luke 9:58

Foxes have holes ... nowhere to lay his head
Jesus responds with a proverb to teach the man about
being Jesus's disciple. Jesus implies that if the man were to
follow him, that man too might not have a home. Alternate
translation: "Foxes have holes ... nowhere to lay his head. So

do not expect that you will have a home"

Foxes

These are land animals similar to small dogs. They sleep in a den or a burrow in the ground.

birds in the sky

"birds that fly in the air"

the Son of Man has ... his head

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, have ... my head"

nowhere to lay his head

"nowhere to rest my head" or "nowhere to sleep." Jesus exaggerates to emphasize that he has no permanent home and that people did not often invite him to stay with them.

Luke 9:59

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk with the people along the road.

Follow me

By saying this Jesus is asking the person to become his disciple and to go with him.

first let me go and bury my father

It is unclear whether the man's father has died and he will bury him immediately, or if the man wants to stay for a longer amount of time until his father dies so he can bury him then. The main point is the man wants to do something else first before he follows Jesus.

first let me go

"before I do that, let me go"

Luke 9:60

Leave the dead to bury their own dead

Jesus does not mean literally that dead people will bury other dead people. Possible meanings of "the dead" are 1) it

is a metaphor for those who will soon die, or 2) it is a metaphor for those who do not follow Jesus and are spiritually dead. The main point is that a disciple must not let anything delay him from following Jesus.

the dead

This refers to dead people in general. Alternate translation: "the dead people"

Luke 9:61

I will follow you

"I will join you as a disciple" or "I am ready to follow you"

first let me say goodbye to those in my home

"before I do that, let me tell my people at my home that I am leaving"

Luke 9:62

No one ... fit for the kingdom of God

Jesus responds with a proverb to teach the man about being his disciple. Jesus means that a person is not suitable for the kingdom to God if he focuses on people in his past instead of following Jesus.

No one who puts his hand to the plow

Here "puts his hand to" something is an idiom that means the person starts to do something. Alternate translation:

"No one who starts to plow his field"

looks back

Anyone who is looking back while plowing cannot guide the plow where it needs to go. That person must focus on looking forward in order to plow well.

fit for the kingdom of God

"useful for the kingdom of God" or "suitable for the kingdom of God"

Chapter 10

Luke 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Harvest

Harvest is when people go out to get the food they have planted so they can bring it to their houses and eat it. Harvest can also refer to the food that is gathered. Jesus used this as a metaphor to teach his followers that they need to go and tell other people about Jesus so those people can be part of God's kingdom. (See: harvest and faith)

Neighbor

A neighbor is anyone who lives nearby. The Jews helped their Jewish neighbors who needed help, and they expected their Jewish neighbors to help them. Jesus wanted them to understand that people who were not Jews were also their neighbors, so he told them a parable

Links:

[Luke 10:1 Notes](#)

Luke 10

10:1-12

Why did Jesus send out people in groups of two?

[10:1]

Jesus sent out people in groups of two. In ancient times, people often traveled with other people. Perhaps he did this because in the Law of Moses, two people were needed to be a witness of something. These two people were witnesses of Jesus (see: Deuteronomy 19:15).

See: Law of Moses

What did Jesus mean by saying, "the harvest is plentiful"?

[10:2]

Jesus said “the harvest is plentiful.” This is a metaphor. A farmer’s field was full of grain and was ready to be harvested. Jesus was saying there are many people ready to believe in him. The farmer needed people to harvest the grain. Jesus also needed his disciples to tell people about him. Jesus wanted people to pray to God, and ask him to have more people serve God.

See: Metaphor; Disciple

How were the disciples like lambs being sent out “in the midst of wolves”?

[10:3]

Jesus used a metaphor when speaking about his disciples. When he spoke about sheep, he was speaking about his disciples. Sheep need a shepherd to defend them and to watch over them. Wolves were wild animals that killed sheep. There were many people who rejected Jesus and tried to harm the disciples.

See: Metaphor; Disciple

Advice to Translators: A wolf is large type of dog that does not live with people.

Why did Jesus tell his disciples not to “carry a money bag, or a traveler’s bag, or sandals”?

[10:4]

Jesus told his disciples not to carry certain things. Scholars disagree about why told his disciples not to bring anything with them.

Some scholars think Jesus was telling the disciples not to carry extra money or clothing for their journey. He wanted them to trust that God would give them what they needed to serve these people.

Other scholars think Jesus wanted the disciples to leave immediately.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus command the disciples not to greet anyone on the road?

[10:4]

In ancient times, greetings often took a long time. Perhaps Jesus want people to hurry.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus instruct the disciples to say, “May peace be on this house”?

[10:5]

Jesus wanted his disciples to say, “may peace be on this house.” Some scholars think Jesus wanted his disciples to greet people the way the Jews greeted one another when they entered someone’s home. They wanted people to be at peace with God.

What was a person of peace?

[10:6]

A person of peace accepted the peace from Jesus. Scholars think they were ready to receive peace or God prepared them to receive peace. This person wanted to be at peace and welcomed people who followed Jesus into their house.

Why did Jesus say that peace will return to you?

[10:6]

Jesus said that peace will return to you. He wanted people to know that God’s peace would not rest on that home. It would be like the disciples never even spoke the blessing.

See: Bless (Blessing); Disciple

Why did Jesus say, “the laborer is worthy of his wages”?

[10:7]

In ancient times, people often said “the laborer is worthy of his wages.” Anyone who did work had the right to receive money for the things he did. In the same way, Jesus wanted his disciples to know it was right for them to receive food and a place to sleep because they were teaching people about Jesus.

See: Disciple

How had the kingdom of God come close?

[10:9]

Luke wrote that the kingdom of God came close. Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about his disciples, whom he sent out, healing and telling people about the kingdom of God. In this way, the kingdom had come near to them. Other scholars think Jesus was saying that because he was among them, the kingdom of God was now in the world. However, scholars think it will only be completed in the future. Other scholars think Jesus was offering to rule and be king, but he did not because people rejected him.

See: Justify (Justification)

What did Jesus mean with the words, “we wipe off against you” when speaking about the dust on the disciple’s feet?

[10:11]

See: Luke 9:5

Why did Jesus say it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for the town that rejected the followers of Jesus?

[10:12]

Jesus said that it would be better for the people of Sodom than for those who rejected him. The people of Sodom sinned

more than other people and God punished them (see: Genesis: 18:20; 19:24). God will punish people more if they reject Jesus.

See: Punish (Punishment)

See Map: Sodom

10:13-20

What was a woe?

[10:13]

See: Woe

Where were Chorazin and Bethsaida?

[10:13]

Chorazin and Bethsaida were cities in Israel. The people in these cities were Jews.

See Map: Chorazin and Bethsaida

Where were Tyre and Sidon?

[10:13]

Tyre and Sidon were cities outside of Israel. The people in these cities were Gentiles.

See: Gentile

See Map: Tyre and Sidon

What were the “mighty works” about which Jesus spoke?

[10:13]

The “mighty works” or “miracles” about which Jesus spoke were the healings, making people alive again, and forcing out demons.

See: Miracle ; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

What did it mean to repent?

[10:13]

See: Repent (Repentance)

When will Jesus judge these cities?

[10:14]

Jesus will judge these cities after he returns at the end of the earth.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Judge (Judgment)

Where was Capernaum?

[10:15]

Capernaum was a city in Israel near the Sea of Galilee. Jesus stayed there often and did many miracles and taught people.

See: Miracle

See Map: Capernaum; Sea of Galilee

How was a city exalted to “heaven?”

[10:15]

A city “exalted to heaven” was a metaphor. This city was more honored than other cities. A city was exalted to “heaven” or the “sky” when God honored it. In ancient Israel, people thought that nothing was higher than the sky.

See: Metaphor; Heaven

What is Hades?

[10:15]

See: Hades (Sheol)

Jesus said, “whoever listens to you.” Who was he talking about?

[10:16]

When Jesus said “whoever listens to you,” he was talking about the disciples he sent. He gave them permission to say the things he wanted them to say. If the people listen to the disciples, it was as if they listened to Jesus. If people did not listen to the disciples, they rejected Jesus.

See: Disciple

Why did the demons submit to the disciples in the name of Jesus?

[10:17]

The demons submitted to the disciples in the name of Jesus. Scholars think the demons knew that Jesus gave the disciples permission to do things for him. Because of this, the demons obeyed the disciples.

See: Demon; Submit (Submission); Disciple

What did Jesus mean when he said he was “watching Satan fall from heaven”?

[10:18]

Jesus said that Satan fell from heaven. This is a metaphor.

Some scholars think Jesus was talking about when God cast Satan out of heaven (see: Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-19). That is, God made Satan live in hell, not heaven.

Other scholars think Jesus was talking about Jesus defeating Satan when he was tempted (see: Matthew 4: 1-11).
Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about Jesus and God defeating Satan.

See: Satan (The Devil); Heaven; Metaphor; Tempt (Temptation)

What was meant when Jesus said, "I have given you authority"?

[10:19]

Scholars think Jesus gave his disciples the permission to do things for him. He gave them the power to do things they could not do without him (see: Mark 16:17-18). They think Jesus gave his disciples power over the enemy, Satan.

See: Disciple; Satan (The Devil)

What was meant by the words, "your names are engraved in heaven"?

[10:20]

Some scholars think Jesus wanted the disciples to rejoice that they were joined together in some way with other Christians. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about God's book of life (see: Revelation 3:5).

See: Disciple; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Heaven

10:21-24

How did Jesus rejoice in the Holy Spirit?

[10:21]

Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit filled him and led him (see: 3:22;4:1). The Holy Spirit wanted Jesus to pray these things (see: 10:21-22). This brought joy to Jesus.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Who is the Lord of heaven and earth?

[10:21]

God the Father is the Lord of heaven and earth. That is, God the Father made heaven and earth. This is why he is Lord over heaven and earth.

See: Genesis 1:1-25; John 1:1-5

See: God the Father; Heaven; Create (Creation, Creature); Lord

What did God conceal and reveal?

[10:21]

Scholars say God concealed and revealed things about the kingdom of God. At this time, he wanted people to know certain things about the kingdom of God. At this time, he also wanted people not to know certain things about the kingdom of God.

See: Kingdom of God; Reveal (Revelation)

Who were the little children?

[10:21]

Jesus spoke about little children. This was a metaphor. Some scholars think he was speaking about people who did not know much about the Bible (see: Hebrews 5:13). Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about people who believed the right things about God even when the Jewish teachers did not believe the right things.

See: Metaphor

What did it mean that the Father entrusted Jesus with all things?

[10:22]

God the Father entrusted Jesus with all things. Scholars think that when the Father entrusted all things to Jesus, he gave Jesus all knowledge. That is, Jesus knew everything that God the Father was going to do. He also gave Jesus permission to give eternal life to other people (see: Matthew 28:18; John 17:2).

See: God the Father; Eternal Life

Why did no one know who the Son was except the Father and no one knew who the Father was except the Son?

[10:22]

No one knew who the Son was except the Father and no one knew who the Father was except the Son. This is because only the Father and the Son know each other fully. The Father and the Son know each other from eternity.

See: God the Father; Son of God

How did Jesus reveal God the Father to people?

[10:22]

Jesus revealed God the Father to people by telling them about God and what God wanted. He also revealed God the Father by doing God's will.

See: God the Father; Reveal (Revelation); Will of God

What did it mean that the disciples were "blessed"?

[10:23]

Jesus said that the disciples were blessed. Scholars think Jesus was speaking about a person who had received great favor from God. God favored them because they witnessed the things Jesus said and did.

See: Disciple; Bless (Blessing)

10:25-29

What was a teacher of the Jewish laws?

[10:25]

See: Law of Moses

Why did this man want to test Jesus?

[10:25]

This man tried to test Jesus. Scholars disagree about why this man did this.

He wanted to know the things Jesus taught about the Law of Moses.

He wanted to trick Jesus into saying something that would make people angry.

He thought he knew more about the Law of Moses than Jesus.

See: Test; Law of Moses

How did the teacher of the law answer Jesus?

[10:27]

The teacher of the Law of Moses said what was written in the Law of Moses when he answered Jesus' question (see: Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18).

See: Law of Moses

How did the teacher of the law wanted to justify himself?

[10:29]

The teacher of the Law of Moses wanted to justify himself. Some scholars think that when the teacher wanted to make people think he was right. That is, he wanted to make people think that he was wise. Other scholars say this man wanted to justify himself because he did evil things to other people.

See: Law of Moses; Justify (Justification); Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

10:30-37

Where was Jericho?

[10:30]

See Map: Jericho

How did someone "fall among robbers"?

[10:30]

When someone "fell among robbers," the robbers violently attacked him. They took his clothes and beat him. Some scholars think the robbers surrounded him. Other scholars think he fought the robbers and they used clubs or sticks to beat him. Other scholars think the robbers also took his money. The robbers left him half dead. That is, he was about to die if no one helped him.

What was a Samaritan?

[10:33]

See: Samaria

See Map: Samaria

What did it mean that the Samaritan was "moved with compassion"?

[10:33]

The Samaritan was moved with "compassion." He felt sorry for the injured man.

See: Samaria; Mercy

See Map: Samaria

Why did the Samaritan pour oil and wine on the injured man's wounds?

[10:34]

In ancient times, people often used oil and wine for wounds. The oil and wine cleaned the wound and made it feel better.

Advice to translators: A wound is a place on someone's skin that has been hurt.

What was a denarius?

[10:35]

A denarius was the amount of money someone typically made in one day.

See: Denarius

10:38-42

Why did Mary "sat at the Lord's feet and heard his word"?

[10:39]

In ancient Israel, a student often sat on the floor to listen to their teacher while he sat on a box or chair to teach. She did this because she was humble and wanted to learn from Jesus.

See: Humble (Humility); Disciple

How did Mary choose what was best?

[10:42]

Mary choose what was best by doing the one thing that she needed to do. That is, she needed to learn from Jesus more than she needed to help prepare a meal. Perhaps Martha needed to spend less time preparing for a meal and spend more time listening to Jesus.

How will the best not be taken away from Mary?

[10:42]

Luke wrote that the best will not be taken away from Mary. Some scholars think that Mary would always remember sitting at Jesus' feet and hearing him teach. She would especially remember these things after Jesus was crucified, buried, and became alive again.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Luke 10:1

General Information:

Jesus sends out 70 more people ahead of him.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new event in the story.

seventy

"70." Some versions say "seventy-two" or "72." You may want to include a footnote that says that.

sent them out two by two

"sent them out in groups of two" or "sent them out with two people in each group"

Luke 10:2

He said to them

This was before the men actually went out. Alternate translation: "He had said to them" or "Before they went out he told them"

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few

"There is a big crop, but not enough workers to bring it in."

Jesus means there are many people ready to enter God's kingdom, but there are not enough disciples to go teach and help the people.

Luke 10:3

Go on your way

"Go to the cities" or "Go to the people"

I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves

Wolves attack and kill sheep. This metaphor therefore means that there are people who would attempt to harm the disciples that Jesus is sending out. The names of other animals could be substituted. Alternate translation: "when I send you out, people will want to harm you, as wolves attack sheep"

Luke 10:4

Do not carry a money bag, or a traveler's bag, or sandals

"Do not take with you a bag, a traveler's bag, or sandals"

greet no one on the road

"do not greet anyone on the road." Jesus was emphasizing that they should go quickly to the towns and do this work.

He was not telling them to be rude.

Luke 10:5

May peace be on this house

This was both a greeting and a blessing. Here "house" refers to those who live in the house. Alternate translation: "May the people in this household receive peace"

Luke 10:6

a son of peace

The phrase "son of peace" here is a metaphor for a person who wants peace with God and with people. Alternate

translation: "a peaceful person"

your peace will rest upon him

Here "peace" is described as a living thing that can choose where to stay. Alternate translation: "he will have the peace you blessed him with"

if not

It may be helpful to restate the entire phrase. Alternate translation: "if there is no person of peace there" or "if the owner of the house is not a peaceful person"

it will return to you

Here "peace" is described as a living thing that can choose to leave. Alternate translation: "you will have that peace" or "he will not receive the peace you blessed him with"

Luke 10:7

Remain in that same house

Jesus was not saying that they should stay in the house all day, but that they should sleep at the same house every night they were there. Alternate translation: "Continue to sleep at that house"

for the laborer is worthy of his wages

This is a general principle that Jesus was applying to the men he was sending out. Since they would be teaching and healing the people, the people should provide them with a place to stay and with food.

Do not move around from house to house

Moving around from house to house means going to different houses. It can be made clear that he was talking about staying overnight at different houses. "Do not go sleep at a different house each night"

Luke 10:8

and they receive you

"if they welcome you"

eat what is set before you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "eat whatever food they give you"

Luke 10:9

the sick

This refers to sick people in general. Alternate translation: "the sick people"

The kingdom of God has come close to you

The abstract noun "kingdom" can be expressed with the verbs "reign" or "rule." Possible meanings are 1) the kingdom of God will begin soon. Alternate translation: "God will soon rule everywhere as king" or 2) the activities of kingdom of God are happening all around you. Alternate translation: "The proof that God is reigning is all around you"

Luke 10:10

and they do not receive you

"and the people of the city reject you"

Luke 10:11

Even the dust from your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you

This is a symbolic action to show that they reject the people of the city. Alternate translation: "Just as you rejected us, we thoroughly reject you. We even reject the dust from your town that clings to our feet"

we wipe off

Since Jesus was sending these people out in groups of two, it would be two people saying this. So languages that have a dual form of "we" would use it.

But know this: The kingdom of God is near

The phrase "But know this" emphasizes the importance of what is said next. Alternate translation: "But be aware that the kingdom of God is near" or "But be sure of this: The kingdom of God is near"

The kingdom of God is near

The abstract noun "kingdom" can be expressed with the verbs "reign" or "rule." See how you translated a similar sentence in [Luke 10:8]

Luke 10:12

I say to you

Jesus was saying this to the 70 people he was sending out. He said this to show that he was about to say something very important.

that day

The disciples would have understood that this refers to the time of final judgment of sinners. Alternate translation: "judgment day"

it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town

"God will not judge Sodom as severely as he will judge that town." Alternate translation: "God will judge the people of that town more severely than he will judge the people of Sodom"

Luke 10:13

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!

Jesus speaks as if the people of the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida are there listening to him, but they are not.

If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon

Jesus is describing a situation that could have happened in the past but did not. Alternate translation: "If someone had performed the miracles for the people of Tyre and Sidon that I performed for you"

they would have repented long ago, sitting

"the wicked people who lived there would have shown that they were sorry for their sins by sitting"

sitting in sackcloth and ashes

"wearing sackcloth and sitting in ashes"

Luke 10:14

But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you

It may be helpful to clearly state the reason for their judgment. Alternate translation: "But because you did not repent and believe in me even though you saw me do miracles, God will judge you more severely than he will

judge the people of Tyre and Sidon"

at the judgment

"on that final day when God judges everyone"

Luke 10:15

You, Capernaum

Jesus now speaks to the people in the city of Capernaum as if they are listening to him, but they are not.

do you think you will be exalted to heaven?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the people of Capernaum for their pride. The expression "exalted to heaven" means "greatly exalted" or "honored." Alternate translation: "you will certainly not go up to heaven!" or "God will not honor you!"

you will be brought down to Hades

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"you will go down to Hades" or "God will send you to Hades"

Luke 10:16

The one who listens to you listens to me

The comparison can be clearly stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "When someone listens to you, it is as if they were listening to me"

the one who rejects you rejects me

The comparison can be clearly stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "when someone rejects you, it is as if they were rejecting me"

the one who rejects me rejects the one who sent me

The comparison can be clearly stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "when someone rejects me, it is as if they were rejecting the one who sent me"

the one who sent me

This refers to God the Father, who appointed Jesus for this special task. Alternate translation: "God, who sent me"

Luke 10:17

The seventy returned

Some languages will need to say that the seventy actually went out first, as the UDB does. This is implicit information that can be made explicit.

seventy

You may want to add a footnote: "Some versions have '72' instead of '70.'"

in your name

Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority.

Luke 10:18

I was watching Satan fall from heaven as lightning

Jesus used a simile to compare how God was defeating Satan when his 70 disciples were preaching in the towns to the way lightning strikes.

fall from heaven as lightning

Possible meanings are 1) fall as quickly as lightning strikes, or 2) fall down from heaven as lightning strikes downward. Since both meaning are possible, it may be best to keep the image.

Luke 10:19

authority to tread on serpents and scorpions

"authority to trample on snakes and crush scorpions."

Possible meanings are 1) snakes and scorpions are a metaphor for evil spirits. Alternate translation: "the right to defeat evil spirits" or 2) this refers to actual snakes and

scorpions.

tread on serpents and scorpions

This implies that they would do this and not be injured.

Alternate translation: "walk on snakes and scorpions, which will not hurt you,"

scorpions

Scorpions are small animals with two claws and a poisonous stinger on their tail.

over all the power of the enemy

"I have given you authority to crush the power of the enemy" or "I have given you authority to defeat the enemy."

The enemy is Satan.

Luke 10:20

do not rejoice only in this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice even more that your names are engraved in heaven

"do not rejoice only because the spirits submit to you" can also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:

"rejoice that your names are written in heaven even more than you rejoice that the spirits submit to you"

your names are engraved in heaven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has written your names in heaven" or "your names are on the list of people who are citizens of heaven"

Luke 10:21

that same hour

"that same time"

Father

This is an important title for God.

Lord of heaven and earth

The phrase "heaven" and earth" represents everything that exists. Alternate translation: "Master over everyone and everything in heaven and earth"

these things

This refers to Jesus's previous teaching about the authority of the disciples. It may be best to simply say "these things" and let the reader determine the meaning.

the wise and understanding

The words "wise" and "understanding" are nominal adjectives that refer to people with these qualities. Because God had concealed truth from them, these people were not actually wise and understanding, even though they thought they were. Alternate translation: "from people who think they are wise and have understanding"

those who are untaught, like little children

This refers to those who may not have much education but who are willing to accept Jesus's teachings in the same way that little children willingly listen to those they trust.

Alternate translation: "people who may have little education, but who listen to God as little children do"

for so it was well pleasing in your sight

"for it pleased you to do this"

Luke 10:22

All things have been entrusted to me from my Father

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "My Father has handed everything over to me"

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

no one knows who the Son is except the Father

This double negative emphasizes that the Father is the only one who knows. Alternate translation: "The only one who knows who the Son is, is the Father"

knows ... knows

The word that is translated as "knows" means to know from personal experience. God the Father knows Jesus in this way.

the Son

Jesus is referring to himself in the third person.

no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those ... him

This double negative emphasizes that the Son is the only one who knows. Alternate translation: "The only one who knows who the Father is, is the Son"

those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him

"whoever the Son desires to show the Father to"

Luke 10:23

Then he turned around to the disciples and said privately

The word "privately" indicates that he was alone with his disciples. Alternate translation: "Later, when he was alone with his disciples, he turned to them and said"

Blessed are those who see the things that you see

This probably refers to the good works and miracles that Jesus was doing. Alternate translation: "How good it is for those who see the things that you see me doing"

Luke 10:24

and they did not see them

This implies that Jesus was not yet doing those things.

Alternate translation: "but they could not see them because I was not doing them yet"

the things that you hear

This probably refers to the teaching of Jesus. Alternate translation: "the things that you have heard me say"

and they did not hear them

This implies that Jesus was not yet teaching. Alternate translation: "but they could not hear them because I had not yet started to teach"

Luke 10:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus replies with a story to a Jewish teacher who wants to test Jesus.

Behold, an expert in the law

This alerts us to a new event and a new person in the story.

stood up

This is an idiom that probably here means "began to act."

Your language may have a different way of showing that the expert in the law had been present, listening to Jesus, and was now beginning to act. He was not necessarily sitting before he "stood up" and began to speak.

test him

"challenge Jesus"

Luke 10:26

What is written in the law? How do you read it?

Jesus is not seeking information. He uses these questions to test the Jewish teacher's knowledge. Alternate translation: "Tell me what Moses wrote in the law and what you think it means."

What is written in the law?

This can be asked in active form. Alternate translation:

"What did Moses write in the law?"

How do you read it?

"What have you read in it?" or "What do you understand it to say?"

Luke 10:27

You will love ... neighbor as yourself

The man is quoting what Moses wrote in the law.

with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind

Here "heart" and "soul" are metonyms for a person's inner being. These four phrases are used together to mean "completely" or "earnestly."

your neighbor as yourself

This simile can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "love your neighbor as much as you love yourself"

Luke 10:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 10:29

But he, desiring to justify himself, said

"But the expert in the law wanted to find a way to justify himself, so he said" or "But wanting to appear righteous, the expert in the law said"

Who is my neighbor?

The man wanted to know whom he was required to love.

Alternate translation: "Whom should I consider to be my neighbor and love as I love myself?" or "Which people are my neighbors that I should love?"

Luke 10:30

Jesus answered him and said

Jesus answers the man by telling a parable. Alternate translation: "In response, Jesus told him this story"

A certain man

This introduces a new character in the parable.

He fell among robbers, who

"He was surrounded by robbers, who" or "Some robbers attacked him. They"

stripped him of his belongings

"took everything he had" or "stole all his things"

half dead

This idiom means "almost dead."

Luke 10:31

By chance

This was not something that any person had planned.

a certain priest

This expression introduces a new person in the story, but does not identify him by name.

and when he saw him

"and when the priest saw the injured man." A priest is a very religious person, so the audience would assume that he would help the injured man. Since he did not, this phrase could be stated as "but when he saw him" to call attention to this unexpected result.

he passed by on the other side

It is implied that he did not help the man. Alternate translation: "he did not help the injured man but instead walked past him on the other side of the road"

Luke 10:32

a Levite ... the other side

The Levite served in the temple. He would be expected to help his fellow Jewish man. Since he did not, it may be helpful to state that. Alternate translation: "a Levite ... the other side and did not help him"

Luke 10:33

But a certain Samaritan

This introduces a new person in the story without giving his name. We know only that he was from Samaria.

a certain Samaritan

The Jews despised the Samaritans and would have assumed that he would not help the injured Jewish man.

When he saw him

"When the Samaritan saw the injured man"

he was moved with compassion

"he felt sorry for him"

Luke 10:34

bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them

He would have put the oil and wine on the wounds first.

Alternate translation: "he put wine and oil on the wounds and wrapped them with cloth"

pouring oil and wine on them

Wine was used to clean the wound, and oil was probably used to prevent infection. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "pouring oil and wine on them to help heal them"

his own animal

"his own pack animal." This was an animal that he used to carry heavy loads. It was probably a donkey.

Luke 10:35

two denarii

"two day's wages." "Denarii" is the plural of "denarius."

the host

"the innkeeper" or "the person who took care of the inn"

whatever extra you spend, when I return, I will repay you

This could be reordered. Alternate translation: "when I return, I will repay you whatever extra amount you spend"

Luke 10:36

Which of these three do you think ... robbers?

This could be written as two questions. Alternate translation: "What do you think? Which of these three men ... robbers?"

was a neighbor

"showed himself to be a true neighbor"

to him who fell among the robbers

"to the man whom the robbers attacked"

Luke 10:37

He said, "The one who showed mercy to him."

"The expert in the law said, 'The one who showed mercy to him.'"

Go and do the same

Here "do the same" refers to showing mercy to others.

Alternate translation: "In the same way, go and show mercy to anyone else who needs help" or "In the same way, go and help everyone you can"

Luke 10:38

General Information:

Jesus comes to Martha's house, where her sister Mary listens to Jesus with great attention.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new event.
as they were traveling along
"as Jesus and his disciples were traveling along"
a certain village
This introduces the village as a new location, but does not name it.
a certain woman named Martha
This introduces Martha as a new character. Your language may have a way of introducing new people.
Luke 10:39
sat at the Lord's feet
This was the normal and respectful position for a learner at that time. Alternate translation: "sat on the floor near Jesus" heard his word
This refers to everything that Jesus taught while at Martha's house. Alternate translation: "listened to the Lord teach"
Luke 10:40
overly busy
"very busy" or "too busy"
do you not care ... alone?

Martha is complaining that the Lord is allowing Mary to sit listening to him when there is so much work to do. She respects the Lord, so she uses a rhetorical question to make her complaint more polite. Alternate translation: "it seems like you do not care ... alone."
Luke 10:41
Martha, Martha
Jesus repeats Martha's name for emphasis. Alternate translation: "Dear Martha" or "You, Martha"
Luke 10:42
only one thing is necessary
Jesus is contrasting what Mary is doing with what Martha is doing. It may be helpful to make this explicit. Alternate translation: "the only thing that is really necessary is to listen to my teaching" or "listening to my teaching is more necessary than preparing a meal"
which will not be taken away from her
Possible meanings are 1) "and I will not take this opportunity away from her" or 2) "and she will not lose what she has gained as she was listening to me"

Chapter 11

Luke 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULB sets the lines in 11:2-4 farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text because they are a special prayer.

Special concepts in this chapter

The Lord's Prayer

When Jesus's followers asked him to teach them how to pray, he taught them this prayer. He did not expect them to use the same words every time they prayed, but he did want them to know what God wanted them to pray about.

Jonah

Jonah was an Old Testament prophet who was sent to the Gentile city of Nineveh to tell them to repent. When he told them to repent, they repented. (See: prophet and sin and repent)

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Washing

The Pharisees would wash themselves and the things they ate with. They would even wash things that were not dirty. The law of Moses did not tell them to wash these things, but they would wash them anyway. This was because they thought that if they obeyed both the rules that God had made and some rules that God had not made, God would think that they were better people. (See: lawofmoses and clean)

Links:

[Luke 11:1 Notes](#)

Luke 11

11:1-13

How did Jesus want his disciples to pray this prayer?

[11:2]

Some scholars think Jesus wanted his disciples to pray this prayer by saying the same words he said. Other scholars think Jesus wanted them to pray in the same way he prayed, but not say the same words he said. Other scholars think both ways of praying honored God.

See: Matthew 6:9-13

See: Disciple; Pray (Prayer)

What did Jesus mean when he told the disciples to pray "may your name be sanctified"?

[11:2]

Jesus told the disciples that the name of God the Father was to "sanctified"(ἀγιάζω/g0037). He wanted the disciples to

know that the name of God the Father was holy and different than every other name. They were to honor the name of God.

See: Sanctify (Sanctification); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

What was meant by the words, “may your kingdom come”?

[11:2]

When Jesus prayed “may your kingdom come,” he wanted the kingdom of God to begin.

See: Kingdom of God

What was “daily bread”?

[11:3]

To the people of Jesus’ day, people needed to eat bread to live. Some scholars think Jesus was not speaking about bread, but he was speaking about all food. Other scholars think bread was a metaphor. He was speaking about everything the disciple needed to live. Still other scholars think Jesus was teaching the disciples that bread represented spiritual food (see: John 6:32-35).

See: Metaphor; Disciple

Why did Jesus want the disciples to pray “forgive us our sins”?

[11:4]

Jesus prayed, “forgive us our sins.” He told the disciples to pray this way. God had already forgiven the sins of the disciples. He wanted them to pray that they would forgive other people when these people sinned against them. God did not forgive the disciples’ sins because of the things they do. God forgave them because of his mercy.

See: Mercy; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

How did Jesus use the word “temptation”?

[11:4]

Jesus spoke about temptation. Some scholars say Jesus was thinking about sin. Other scholars say Jesus was thinking about testing. That is, the persecution or suffering the disciples experienced.

See: Tempt (Temptation); Test; Sin; Persecute (Persecution) ; Persecute (Persecution)

What was meant by the words, “shameless persistence”?

[11:8]

Scholars think Jesus used “shameless persistence”(ἀναιδεια/g0335) in two different ways.

Some scholars think Jesus used “shameless persistence” to speak about the friend on the outside who boldly kept knocking on the door of the house until his friend gave him what he wanted.

Other scholars think Jesus used “shameless persistence” to speak about the friend on the inside of the house who gave his friend what he wanted because he was worried about what people thought about him.

Why did Jesus tell the disciples to ask, seek, and knock?

[11:8, 11:9, 11:10]

Jesus told the disciples to ask, seek, and knock. Scholars think these words were metaphors. Jesus was speaking about asking God in prayer, seeking God’s wisdom in prayer, and constantly praying.

See: Metaphor; Pray (Prayer)

What did Luke write in verse 11?

[11:11]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words, “if your son asks for a loaf of bread, will you give him a stone?” Other ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. When Matthew wrote about these same things, he said these words (see: Matthew 7:9). Scholars do not think Luke wrote these words.

What did Jesus mean by saying, “you who are evil”?

[11:13]

Jesus said, “you who are evil.” Scholars think Jesus was comparing people’s fathers with God the Father. Everyone’s father has sinned. However, God the Father has never sinned. He is holy and righteous.

See: God the Father; Sin; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Righteous (Righteousness)

Who is the Holy Spirit?

[11:13]

See: Holy Spirit

11:14-26

How was Jesus “driving out a demon”?

[11:14]

Jesus drove out the demon by the power of God. That is, Jesus commanded the spirit to leave which stopped the demon from controlling the man. Jesus had total control over demons (see: 4:33-36).

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon

What was a demon that was mute?

[11:14]

A mute demon cannot talk. This caused the man to not be able to speak.

See: Demon

Who was Beelzebul?

[11:15]

Beelzebul was the name of a pagan god. Pagans called their gods Ba'al (see: 2 Kings 1:2). The New Testament used the name Beelzebul as a name for Satan.

See: Pagan; False gods; Satan (The Devil)

What did it mean that others tested Jesus?

[11:16]

Others tested Jesus. Some scholars do not know why other people tested Jesus, but they wanted a sign from heaven. Some scholars think they wanted Jesus to prove he is the messiah by doing a sign. Some scholars think these were people trying to make other people think the wrong things about Jesus. That is, they wanted people to think that Jesus was not the Messiah.

See: Test; Sign; Heaven; Messiah (Christ)

What did it mean that a kingdom "is made desolate"?

[11:17]

A kingdom that "is made desolate" is a kingdom that was destroyed.

What was Satan's kingdom?

[11:18]

Satan's kingdom was made of demons. Satan ruled over the demons. Jesus defeated Satan in the wilderness when Satan was not able to make Jesus sin. Jesus also defeated Satan at the cross. The final defeat of Satan will be at the end of the world.

See: Satan (The Devil); Demon; Sin; Cross; Jesus' Return to Earth

What was the "finger of God"?

[11:20]

The finger of God was a metaphor for God's power. Some scholars think it was easy for Jesus to drive out demons. Other scholars think the metaphor spoke about God not moving his finger very much to drive out demons. God did it easily. Jesus said he drove out demons by the Spirit of God (see: Matthew 12:28).

See: Metaphor; Demon; Holy Spirit

How did the kingdom of God come to these people?

[11:20]

The kingdom of God came to these people when Jesus came and cast out demons. That was one way God began to reign. God will fully reign at the end of the earth.

See: Kingdom of God; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon; Jesus' Return to Earth

What was a "strongman"?

[11:21]

Here, a strongman is a soldier or a warrior. That is, he is a man who is able to fight well. Perhaps this strongman was also Satan.

What did it mean to "plunder the man's possessions"?

[11:22]

When someone plundered a man's possessions, the man's possessions were divided and then given to other people. What did Jesus mean when he said, "the one who is not with me is against me"? Jesus said, "the one who is not with me is against me." Jesus wanted to say that anyone who was not his friend was his enemy. Here, Jesus spoke about a fight between good and evil (see: Luke 11:14-22). Anyone who was not Jesus' friend was a friend of Satan.

See: Satan (The Devil)

Why did Jesus say, "the one who does not gather with me scatters"?

[11:23]

Jesus said, "the one who does not gather with me scatters." He wanted to say that anyone who did not serve with him was fighting against him in some way. People made a decision to either serve with Jesus or fight against him. He spoke about this using a metaphor. Some scholars think this metaphor was about a shepherd who gathered his sheep. Satan tried to scatter the sheep. Other scholars think this metaphor was about a farmer who gathered his crop at harvest time. Christians helped Jesus gather the harvest.

See: Metaphor; Shepherd; Harvest; Satan (The Devil)

What was an unclean spirit?

[11:24]

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

What were waterless places?

[11:24]

Waterless places were the dry deserts and wilderness. People did not live in these places. Demons and unclean spirits wandered through the wilderness, but they did not find a place to stay. The demons then try to go back to the person from whom they were driven.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

What was meant by the words, “house swept out and put in order”?

[11:25]

Jesus spoke about a “house swept out and put in order.” This was a metaphor. He compared the heart of a man to a clean and tidy house. A clean house was ready for someone to live in it. Jesus spoke about a person who was not living in the right way and was ready to have many spirits live in him (see: Matthew 12:44).

11:27-32

Why did the woman say, “blessed is the womb that bore you”?

[11:27]

When the woman spoke the words, “blessed is the womb that bore you,” she was speaking about Jesus’ mother. The woman said that his mother is blessed.

See: Bless (Blessing)

How did someone “hear the word of God and keep it”?

[11:28]

Jesus spoke about someone hearing the word of God and keeping it. Scholars think that Jesus wanted people to know that there was a greater blessing for people who believed in him and obeyed him, than his mother received.

See: Word of God; Bless (Blessing)

How did Jesus speak about an “evil generation”?

[11:29]

When Jesus spoke about an “evil generation” he was speaking about the people living when he was on the earth. They were “evil” because they refused to believe that God sent Jesus. They only wanted Jesus to do miracles.

See: Luke 11:16

See: Generation; Miracle

What was the “sign of Jonah”?

[11:29]

Jesus said that “no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” Scholars think Jesus was speaking about a future sign. Matthew also wrote about the sign of Jonah and that Jonah was in the stomach of a big fish for three days and nights (see: Matthew 12:40). Scholars think Jesus was speaking about Jesus being crucified and being dead for three days. Just as Jonah was released from the stomach of fish, so Jesus became alive again.

See: Jonah 1:17-2:10

See: Sign; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Who was the queen of the south?

[11:31]

The queen of the south was the queen of Sheba who visited King Solomon of Israel (see: 1 Kings 10:1-13). Some scholars think she was from southern Arabia. Other scholars think she was from modern Yemen.

See Map: Arabia; Yemen

How will the queen of the south condemn that generation at God’s judgment?

[11:31]

Luke wrote about the queen of the south condemning a certain generation. Scholars think that when the queen of the south rises at the judgment, people will know she did things that pleased God. The Jewish people who lived at the time of Jesus, and rejected him, did not do what pleased God. They will be condemned when God judges them.

See: Condemn (Condemnation); Generation; Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment

How will the Queen of the South come from the ends of the earth?

[11:31]

Luke wrote that the queen of the south “came from the ends of the earth.” He wanted to say that she came from very far away.

How will the men of Nineveh condemn that generation at God’s judgment?

[11:32]

Luke wrote that the men of Nineveh will condemn people. The men of Nineveh will not be acting as judges. However, they will rise and people will know that when Jonah spoke God’s word to them, they “repented” (see: Jonah 3:4-10). Their repentance pleased God. The Jewish people who lived at the time when Jesus was on the earth did not repent when Jesus spoke God’s word. This did not please God.

See: Condemn (Condemnation); Generation; Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment; Repent (Repentance); Word of God

See Map: Nineveh

How did Jesus say something greater than Solomon and Jonah was there?

[11:32]

Jesus said something greater than Solomon and Jonah was there when he said that Solomon's great wisdom did not compare to Jesus' greater wisdom. Also, Jonah's great preaching did not compare to Jesus' greater preaching. Solomon and Jonah did not always do what God wanted (see: 1 Kings 11:1-9; Jonah 4:5-10). Jesus always did what God wanted him to do.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Preach (Preacher)

11:33-36

How was the eye the lamp of the body?

[11:34]

The eye is the lamp of the body. This is a metaphor. The eye sees light. Scholars think Jesus used a metaphor in speaking about the eye. He wanted people to believe the things he taught and to live in a way that honors God.

See: Metaphor; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

11:37-54

What was a Pharisee?

[11:37]

See: Pharisees

Why did Jesus recline when he ate?

[11:37]

In ancient Israel, people often laid on cushions around a low table for a meal. The people leaned on one elbow while they ate.

Why was the Pharisee surprised that Jesus did not wash his hands?

[11:38]

The Pharisee was surprised Jesus did not wash his hands. They taught people that they needed to wash their hands in a certain way to be clean. They expected Jesus to follow the rules the Jewish teachers made. Jesus obeyed the Law of Moses, not the rules made by the Jewish teachers.

See: Pharisees; Clean and Unclean; Law of Moses

Why did Jesus say the Pharisees cleaned "the outside of cups and bowls"?

[11:39]

When Jesus spoke about the "outside of cups and bowls" he used a metaphor. People clean the "outside of cups and bowls". That is, people did certain things so that other people thought they lived in a way that honored God. However, the inside of the cup was still dirty. That is, these people did not live in a way that honored God.

See: Pharisees; Metaphor; Clean and Unclean

What was a woe?

[11:42]

See: Woe

What was a tithe?

[11:42]

See: Tithe

What was a synagogue?

[11:43]

See: Synagogue

What did it mean when Jesus said the Pharisees were "like unmarked graves"?

[11:44]

An unmarked grave looked just like ordinary ground, because there was nothing to mark it as a grave. People could walk over these graves without knowing there were dead bodies underneath them. This was a metaphor. People did not see what happened inside an unmarked grave when they walked on it and people did not see the evil inside of the Pharisees. Advice to translators: A grave is a hole in the ground where people put a dead person's body. They cover it with dirt. It is often marked with a stone. This stone has the name of the person who died on it.

See: Metaphor; Pharisees; Tomb

What was a "teacher of the law"?

[11:45, 11:46]

A "teacher of the law" was an expert in the Law of Moses. They were often Pharisees.

See: Law of Moses; Pharisees

Why did Jesus criticize the teachers of the law for building tombs for the dead prophets?

[11:47]

Jesus criticized the teachers of the Law of Moses. The Pharisees wanted to honor the prophets who died long before they were born. Scholars think Jesus wanted the Pharisees to honor the prophets by obeying what they taught, not by building them tombs. Because the ancestors of these teachers killed the prophets, scholars think Jesus was saying the teachers

were only honoring the prophets for dying, but not living in a way that honors God.

See: Prophet; Law of Moses; Pharisees; Tomb

Why was that generation responsible for so much?

[11:50]

Scholars give several reasons why that generation was responsible for so much.

That generation approved of their ancestors killing God's prophets.

That generation was about to kill God's apostles.

The Old Testament prophesied about the time of that generation. When that generation rejected prophets and apostles, they also rejected all the prophets from earlier times.

That generation rejected and killed Jesus.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Prophet; Generation

Why did Jesus talk about the deaths of Abel and Zechariah?

[11:51]

Jesus talked about the deaths of Abel and Zechariah because Abel was the first person killed in the Old Testament (see: Genesis 4:8) and Zechariah was the last person killed for obeying God in the Old Testament (see: 2 Chronicles 24:20-21).

What was the "key of knowledge"?

[11:52]

Jesus spoke about the "key of knowledge." Scholars think Jesus was using a metaphor. A key was used to lock a door. The Jewish leaders stopped people from knowing God. They stopped people from knowing that Jesus is the messiah.

See: Metaphor; Messiah (Christ)

What was a scribe?

[11:53]

See: Scribe

Luke 11:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of the next part of the story. Jesus teaches his disciples to pray.

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Luke 11:2

Jesus said to them

"Jesus said to his disciples"

Father

Jesus is commanding the disciples to honor the name of God the Father by addressing him as "Father" when praying to him. This is an important title for God.

may your name be honored as holy

"cause everyone to honor your name." "Name" often refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "may all people honor you"

May your kingdom come

The action of God ruling over everyone is spoken of as if it were God himself. Alternate translation: "May you come and rule over everyone"

Luke 11:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples how to pray.

Give us

This is an imperative, but it should be translated as a request, rather than as a command. It may be helpful to add something such as "please" to it to make this clear.

Alternate translation: "Please give us"

our daily bread

Bread was an inexpensive food that people ate every day. It is used here to refer to food in general. Alternate

translation: "the food we need each day"

Luke 11:4

Forgive us ... Do not lead us

These are imperatives, but they should be translated as requests, rather than as commands. It may be helpful to add something such as "please" to them to make this clear.

Alternate translation: "Please forgive us ... Please do not lead us"

Forgive us our sins

"Forgive us for sinning against you" or "Forgive our sins"

as we forgive

"since we also forgive"

who is in debt to us

"who has sinned against us" or "who has done wrong things to us"

Do not lead us into temptation

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:

"Lead us away from temptation"

Luke 11:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples about prayer.

lend to me three loaves of bread

"let me borrow three loaves of bread" or "give me three loaves of bread and I will pay you later." The host does not have any food ready to give to his guest.

three loaves of bread

Bread is a food that people in Israel commonly ate. If people in your community do not know what bread is, you may translate it with a more general expression for food.

Alternate translation: "some food"

Luke 11:6

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes asking a question that begins in verse 5.

since a friend ... to set before him?"

Jesus finishes asking the question that begins with the words "Which of you will have a friend" in verse 5. The whole question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Suppose you have a friend and will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend to me three loaves of bread, since a friend ... to set before him.'"

just came in from the road

It is implied that the visitor has come far from his home.

Alternate translation: "was traveling and just came to my house"

anything to set before him

"any food ready to give him"

Luke 11:7

I am not able to get up

"It is not convenient for me to get up"

give bread to you

Bread is a food that people in Israel commonly ate. If people in your community do not know what bread is, you may translate it with a more general expression for food.

Alternate translation: "give you some food"

Luke 11:8

I say to you

Jesus was speaking to the disciples. The word "you" is plural.

give bread to you ... give you as many loaves of bread

Bread is a food that people in Israel commonly ate. If people in your community do not know what bread is, you may translate it with a more general expression for food.

Alternate translation: "give you some food ... give you as much food"

give bread to you because you are ... your ... you ... you need

Jesus addresses the disciples as if they were the ones asking for bread. Alternate translation: "give bread to him because he is ... his ... him ... he needs"

because of your shameless persistence

The phrase can be reworded to eliminate the abstract noun "persistence." Alternate translation: "because you persist shamelessly" or "because you boldly continue to ask him"

Luke 11:9

ask ... seek, and you will find ... knock

Jesus gives these commands to encourage his disciples to pray continually. Some languages may also require more information with these verbs. Use the form of "you" that would be most appropriate in this context. Alternate translation: "keep asking for what you need ... keep seeking what you need from God, and you will find it ... keep knocking on the door"

it will be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will give it to you" or "you will receive it"

knock

To knock at a door is to hit it a few times to let a person inside the house know you are standing outside. It can also be translated using the way people in your culture show that they have arrived, such as "call out" or "cough" or "clap." Here, it means a person should keep praying to God until he answers.

it will be opened to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will open the door for you" or "God will welcome you inside"

Luke 11:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 11:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes teaching his disciples about prayer.

Which father among you ... will ... a fish?

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. It could also be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "None of you fathers ... would ... a fish."

Luke 11:12

Or ... egg, will you give a scorpion to him?

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. It could also be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "And you would never give him a scorpion ... egg."

scorpion

A scorpion is similar to a spider, but it has a tail with a poisonous sting. If scorpions are not known where you are, you could translate this as "poisonous spider" or "spider that stings"

Luke 11:13

if you who are evil know

"since you who are evil know" or "even though you are sinful, you know"

how much more will ... give ... him?

Jesus again uses a question to teach his disciples. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "you can be sure that ... will give ... him."

Luke 11:14

Now

The author uses this word to mark the beginning of a new event.

Jesus was driving out a demon

It may be helpful to add extra information. Alternate translation: "Jesus was driving a demon out of a person" or "Jesus was making a demon leave a person"

demon that was mute

The demon has power to prevent people from speaking.

Alternate translation: "demon that caused the man to be unable to speak"

Now

This word is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here. When the demon comes out of the man, some of the people criticize Jesus, and that leads to Jesus teaching about evil spirits.

When the demon had gone out

It may be helpful to add extra information. Alternate translation: "When the demon had gone out of the man" or "When the demon left the man"

the man who had been mute spoke

"the man who had been unable to speak now spoke"

Luke 11:15

General Information:

Jesus is accused of using Satan's power to drive a demon out of a mute man.

By Beelzebul, the ruler of demons, he is driving out demons

"He is driving out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of demons"

Beelzebul

another name for Satan

Luke 11:16

Others tested him

"Other people tested Jesus." They wanted him to prove that his authority was from God.

and sought from him a sign from heaven

"and asked him to give a sign from heaven" or "by demanding that he give a sign from heaven." This was how they wanted him to prove that his authority was from God.

Luke 11:17

General Information:

Jesus begins to respond to the crowd.

Every kingdom divided against itself is made desolate

"kingdom" here refers to the people in it. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If people of a kingdom fight among themselves, they will destroy their kingdom"

a house divided against itself falls

Here "house" refers to a family. Alternate translation: "if family members fight each other, they will ruin their family"

falls

"crashes down and is destroyed." This image of the house collapsing refers to the destruction of a family when the members fight each other.

Luke 11:18

If Satan is divided against himself

"Satan" here is referring to the demons who follow Satan as well as to Satan himself. Alternate translation: "If Satan and members of his kingdom are fighting among themselves"

If Satan ... how will his kingdom stand?

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If Satan ... his kingdom will not last." or "If Satan ... his kingdom will fall apart."

For you say I cast out demons by Beelzebul

"For you say that it is by the power of Beelzebul that I make demons leave people." The next part of his argument can be stated explicitly: Alternate translation: "For you say that it is by the power of Beelzebul that I make demons leave people. That would mean that Satan is divided against himself"

Luke 11:19

If I ... by whom do your followers drive them out?

"If I ... by whose power do your followers force demons to leave people?" Jesus uses a question to teach the people. The meaning of Jesus's question can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "If I ... then we must agree that your followers also drive out demons by Beelzebul's power. But you do not believe that it is true."

they will be your judges

"your followers who cast out demons by God's power will judge you for saying that I cast out demons by Beelzebul's power"

Luke 11:20

by the finger of God

The "finger of God" refers to God's power.

then the kingdom of God has come to you

"this shows that God's kingdom has come to you"

Luke 11:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins a parable about a strong man who is defeated by a stronger man.

When a strong man ... are safe

The "strong man" here is a metaphor for Satan.

his own palace

Possible meanings of the word "palace" are 1) the entire premises of the "strong man" or 2) it refers to the courtyard of a palace and is a synecdoche for the palace. If you have a word for the house and other areas close to it that the strong man can constantly guard, you may want to use it here.

his possessions are safe

"no one can steal his things"

Luke 11:22

a stronger man

The stronger man in the parable is a metaphor for Jesus, who is stronger than Satan.

takes away the armor

"removes the weapons and protection"

plunders the man's possessions

"steals his possessions" or "takes away anything that he wants"

Luke 11:23

The one who is not with me is against me, and the one who does not gather with me scatters

This refers to any person or any group of people. "Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me scatters" or "Those who are not with me are against me, and those who do not gather with me scatter"

one who is not with me

"one who does not support me" or "one who does not work with me"

is against me

"works against me"

the one who does not gather with me scatters

Jesus is referring to gathering disciples who follow him.

This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "anyone who does not cause people to come and follow me causes them to go away from me"

Luke 11:24

waterless places

This refers to "desolate places" where the evil spirits wander.

Finding none

"If the spirit does not find any rest there"

my house from which I came

This refers to the person in which he used to live. Alternate translation: "the person in whom I used to live"

Luke 11:25

finds the house had been swept clean and put in order

This metaphor speaks about the person as if he were a house that is swept clean, with things put in their places. It is implied that the house is still empty. This can be stated in active form with that information made explicit. Alternate

translation: "finds that the person is like a house that someone has swept clean and organized by putting everything where it belongs, but has left empty" or "finds that the person is like a house that is clean and organized, but empty"

Luke 11:26

worse than the first

The word "first" refers to the condition of the man while he had the unclean spirit before it left him. Alternate translation: "worse than his condition was before the spirit left"

Luke 11:27

General Information:

This is a break in Jesus's teachings. A woman speaks a blessing and Jesus responds.

It happened that

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

raised her voice above the crowd

This idiom means "spoke loudly above the noise of the crowd"

Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you
The parts of a woman's body are used to refer to the whole woman. Alternate translation: "How good it is for the woman who bore you and nursed you at her breasts" or "How happy the woman who bore you and nursed you at her breasts must be"

Luke 11:28

Rather, blessed are they

"It is even better for those"

hear the word of God

"hear the message God has spoken"

and keep it

"and obey it"

Luke 11:29

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues teaching the crowd.

As the crowds were increasing

"As more people were joining the crowd" or "As the crowd was growing larger"

This generation is an evil generation. It seeks ... to it

Here "generation" refers to the people in it. Alternate translation: "The people living at this time are evil people. They seek ... to them" or "You people living at this time are evil people. You seek ... to you"

It seeks a sign

The information about what kind of sign it seeks can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "It wants me to perform a miracle as proof that I have come from God"

no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah

This double negative emphasizes that the sign of Jonah is the only sign that will be given. Alternate translation: "The only sign that will be given to it is the sign of Jonah"

no sign will be given to it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will not give it a sign"

the sign of Jonah

"what happened to Jonah" or "the miracle that God did for

Jonah"

Luke 11:30

For just as Jonah became a sign ... so too ... this generation

This means that Jesus will serve as a sign from God for the Jews of that day in exactly the same way as Jonah served as a sign from God to the people of Nineveh.

Son of Man will

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, will"

this generation

"the people living today"

Luke 11:31

Queen of the South

This refers to the Queen of Sheba. Sheba was a kingdom south of Israel.

will rise up

"will appear"

she came from the ends of the earth

This idiom means that she came from very far away.

Alternate translation: "she came a very great distance" or "she came from a place very far away"

someone greater than Solomon is here

Jesus is speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "I, who am greater than Solomon, am here"

Luke 11:32

The men of Nineveh

It may be helpful to state explicitly that this refers to the ancient city of Nineveh. Alternate translation: "The men who lived in the ancient city of Nineveh"

The men

This includes both men and woman. Alternate translation: "The people"

this generation of people

"the people of this time"

for they repented

"for the people of Nineveh repented"

someone greater than Jonah is here

Jesus is speaking about himself. It may be helpful to explicitly state that they have not listened to him. Alternate translation: "even though I am greater than Jonah, you still have not repented"

Luke 11:33

General Information:

Jesus begins a parable in which he speaks of his teaching as light that he wants his disciples to obey and share with others.

puts it in a hidden place or under a basket

"hides it or puts in under a basket"

but on a lampstand

The understood subject and verb in this clause may be supplied. Alternate translation: "but a person places it on a lampstand" or "but a person puts it on a table"

Luke 11:34

General Information:

Jesus continues his parable, in which he speaks of his teaching as light that he wants his disciples to obey and share with others. He speaks of people who do not know or accept his teaching as being in darkness.

Your eye is the lamp of the body

In this part of the metaphor, the things they saw Jesus do provided understanding just as an eye provides light for the body. Alternate translation: "Your eye is like the lamp of the body"

Your eye

The eye is a metonym for vision.

the body

The body is a synecdoche for a person's life.

When your eye is good

Here "eye" here is a metonym for vision. Alternate translation: "When your vision is good" or "when you see well"

the whole body is filled with light

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the light will fill your whole body" or "you will be able to see everything clearly"

when your eye is bad

Here "eye" is a metonym for vision. Alternate translation: "When your vision is bad" or "when you see poorly"

your body is full of darkness

"you will not be able to see anything"

Luke 11:35

General Information:

Jesus continues his parable, in which he speaks of his teaching as light that he wants his disciples to obey and share with others. He speaks of people who do not know or accept his teaching as being in darkness.

watch out that the light in you is not darkness

"look carefully to make sure that what you think is light is not actually darkness"

Luke 11:36

General Information:

Jesus ends his parable.

If then your whole body is full of light, not having any member in darkness

Jesus speaks of his teaching as light that he wants his disciples to obey and share with others. He speaks of people who do not know or accept his teaching as being in darkness.

not having any member in darkness

"with none of its parts in darkness"

then your whole body will be like when a lamp shines its brightness on you

Jesus states the same truth he has just presented as a metaphor, but this time he uses a simile. He speaks of people who are full of truth as if they are a lamp that shines brightly.

Luke 11:37

General Information:

Jesus finishes teaching the crowd, and a Pharisee invites Jesus to eat at his house.

When he had finished speaking

The author uses these words to mark the beginning of a new event.

at his house

This refers to the Pharisee's house.

reclined

It was the custom at a relaxed meal such as this dinner for men to eat while lying down comfortably around the table.

You might want to translate using the word your language uses for the way people's bodies are when they eat.

Alternate translation: "sat down at the table"

Luke 11:38

wash

The Pharisees had a rule that people must wash their hands in order to be ceremonially clean before God. Alternate translation: "wash his hands" or "wash his hands in order to be ritually clean"

Luke 11:39

General Information:

Jesus begins to speak to the Pharisee using a metaphor. He compares the way they clean cups and bowls to how they clean themselves.

the outside of cups and bowls

Washing of the outside of containers was a part of the ritual practices of the Pharisees.

but the inside of you is filled with robbery and evil

This part of the metaphor contrasts the careful way they clean the outside of the dishes with the way they ignore their own internal condition.

Luke 11:40

You senseless men

This expression can refer to men or women, even though all of the Pharisees to whom Jesus was speaking to here were men.

Did not the one who made the outside also make the inside?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the Pharisees for not

understanding that what is in their hearts matters to God.

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation:

"The one who made the outside also made the inside!"

Luke 11:41

Give what is inside as alms

This refers to what they should be doing with their cups and bowls. Alternate translation: "Give what is inside your cups and bowls as alms" or "Be generous to the poor"

all things will be clean for you

"you will be completely clean" or "you will be clean both inside and outside"

Luke 11:42

you tithe mint and rue and every other garden herb

"you give God one tenth of your mint and rue and other herbs from your garden." Jesus was giving an example of how extreme the Pharisees were in giving a tenth of their income.

mint and rue

These are herbs. People put just a little bit of these leaves into their food to give it flavor. If people do not know what mint and rue are, you can use the name of herbs they know or a general expression such as "herbs."

every other garden herb

Possible meanings are 1) "every other vegetable" 2) "every other garden herb" or 3) "every other garden plant."

the love of God

"to love God" or "love for God." God is the one who is loved.

without failing to do the other things also

"without failing" emphasizes that this should always be done. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate

translation: "and to always do the other good things as

well"

Luke 11:43

the front seats

"the best seats"

respectful greetings

"you like people to greet you with special honor"

Luke 11:44

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes speaking to the Pharisees.

you are like unmarked graves that people walk over without knowing it

The Pharisees are like unmarked graves because they look ceremonially clean, but they cause people around them to become unclean.

unmarked graves

These graves were holes dug in the ground where a dead body was buried. They did not have the white stones that people normally place over graves so that others would see them.

without knowing it

When the Jews walked over a grave, they would become ceremonially unclean. These unmarked graves caused them to accidentally do that. This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "without realizing it and become ceremonially unclean"

Luke 11:45

General Information:

Jesus begins to respond to a Jewish teacher.

One of the experts in the law

This introduces a new character into the story.

what you say insults us too

Jesus's comments about the Pharisees also seemed to apply to the teachers of the Jewish laws.

Luke 11:46

Woe to you, teachers of the law!

Jesus makes it clear that he intended to condemn the actions of the teachers of the law along with the Pharisees.

you put people under burdens that are hard to carry

"you put burdens on people that are too heavy and they cannot carry them." Jesus speaks about someone giving people many rules as if the person were giving them heavy things to carry. Alternate translation: "you burden people by giving them too many rules to follow"

touch the burdens with one of your own fingers

Possible meanings are 1) "do anything at all to help people carry those burdens" or 2) "make any effort to carry those burdens yourselves."

Luke 11:47

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 11:48

So you are witnesses and you consent

Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees and teachers of the law.

They know about the murder of the prophets, but do not condemn their ancestors for killing them. Alternate translation: "So, rather than denouncing them, you confirm and agree"

Luke 11:49

For this reason

This refers back to the previous statement that the teachers

of the law burdened people with rules.

God's wisdom said

"wisdom" is treated as if it was able to speak for God.

Alternate translation: "God in his wisdom said" or "God wisely said"

I will send to them prophets and apostles

"I will send prophets and apostles to my people." God had declared beforehand that he would send prophets and apostles to the ancestors of the Jewish audience to whom Jesus was speaking.

they will persecute and kill some of them

"my people will persecute and kill some of the prophets and apostles." God had declared beforehand that the ancestors of the Jewish audience to whom Jesus was speaking would persecute and kill the prophets and apostles.

Luke 11:50

this generation will be charged for all the blood of the prophets shed since the foundation of the world

God will hold the people to whom Jesus is speaking responsible for the murder of the prophets by their ancestors. Alternate translation: "God will hold this generation responsible for the deaths of all the prophets whom people have killed since the foundation of the world" for all the blood of the prophets shed

The "blood ... shed" refers to the blood that was spilled when the prophets were killed. Alternate translation: "for all the murders of the prophets"

since the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since the creation of the world" or "since God created the world"

Luke 11:51

Zechariah

This was probably the priest in the Old Testament who rebuked the people of Israel for idolatry. This was not the Father of John the Baptist.

who was killed

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the people killed"

Luke 11:52

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes responding to the Jewish teacher.

you have taken away the key of knowledge; you do not enter in yourselves, and you hinder those who are entering

Jesus speaks about life in God's kingdom as if it were in a house that the teachers will neither enter nor allow others to enter. This means the teachers do not truly know God, and they prevent others from knowing him as well by teaching about scripture things that are not true. Alternate translation: "you have made it impossible for people to know how to live in God's kingdom; you do not want to live in it yourselves, and you keep others from knowing"

the key of knowledge

Possible meanings are 1) "the key that opens the door to knowledge," in which case "knowledge" is what is behind the door, or 2) "the key, which is the knowledge of how to open the door," in which case Jesus is not telling what is behind the door.

you do not enter in yourselves

"you yourselves do not go in to get knowledge"

Luke 11:53

General Information:

This is the end of the part of the story where Jesus eats at the Pharisee's house.

After Jesus left there

"After Jesus left the Pharisee's house"

argued with him about many things

The scribes and Pharisees did not argue in order to defend their views, but to try to trap Jesus so they could accuse him of breaking the law of God.

Luke 11:54

lying in wait to catch him in something he might say

The scribes and Pharisees hoped Jesus would say something wrong so that they could accuse him of breaking God's law. They did not want to learn from him.

lying in wait to catch him

The writer speaks of the Pharisees as if they were thieves hiding by the side of a road waiting for someone to come by whom they could overpower and rob. In this case, they were waiting for Jesus to say something for which they could accuse him. Alternate translation: "waiting and hoping to accuse him"

Chapter 12

Luke 12 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Blasphemy against the Spirit"

No one knows for sure what actions people perform or what words they say when they commit this sin. However, they probably insult the Holy Spirit and his work. Part of the Holy Spirit's work is to make people understand that they are sinners and that they need to have God forgive them. Therefore, anyone who does not try to stop sinning is probably committing blasphemy against the Spirit. (See: blasphemy and holyspirit)

Servants

God expects his people to remember that everything in the world belongs to God. God gives his people things so they can serve him. He wants them to please him by doing what he wants them to do with everything he has given them. One day Jesus will ask his servants what they have done with everything he gave them to use. He will give a reward to those who have done what he wanted them to do, and he will punish those who have not.

Division

Jesus knew that those who did not choose to follow him would hate those who did choose to follow him. He also knew that most people love their families more than they love anyone else. So he wanted his followers to understand that following and pleasing him had to be more important to them than having their family love them ([Luke 12:51-56](#)).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[Luke 12:1 Notes](#)

Luke 12

12:1-12

What was the yeast of the Pharisees?

[12:1]

When Jesus spoke about the yeast of the Pharisees, this was a metaphor. A little yeast spread through the whole lump of dough. It affected all of the dough. In the same way, the things the Pharisees did affected many people.

See: Yeast (Leaven); Pharisees; Metaphor

How will God reveal concealed things?

[12:2]

Jesus was speaking about God concealing things. Jesus was speaking about God knowing why people did things. Even though people wanted to conceal why they did things, but God will reveal the truth. Scholars think God will reveal the truth about why people do things when he returns to judge the earth.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Reveal (Revelation); Judge (Judgment); Judge (Judgment)

Why did Jesus say "do not be afraid of those who kill the body"?

[12:4]

Jesus told people not to be afraid of those who can kill their body. Jesus did not want Christians to be afraid of people who were only able to kill the body because those people cannot kill a Christian's soul (see: Matthew 10:28). People can kill Christians, but they cannot stop them from living with God in heaven forever.

See: Soul; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Heaven

Who has permission to throw people into hell?

[12:5]

Only God can throw people into hell. He does not give permission to anyone else to do this.

See: Hell; Day of Judgment

Why did Jesus speak about sparrows and two small coins?

[12:6]

Sparrows were a common bird poor people ate in ancient Israel. Someone could buy five sparrows for two small coins. This was the amount of money someone earned for working for about one hour. People did not value the sparrow. Yet God does not forget even one sparrow. Jesus wanted his disciples to know that God will never forget them. Indeed, they were worth far more than birds.

See: Disciple

What did it mean to confess Jesus before men?

[12:8]

Jesus spoke about people confessing him before men. Jesus wanted to say that a person declared to the other people that he was a disciple of Jesus.

See: Confess (Confession); Disciple

Who is the Son of Man?

[12:8]

See: Son of Man

What will Jesus confess about people before the angels?

[12:8]

Jesus will confess certain things about people before the angels. Scholars think that Jesus will stand before the angels of God and tell them that a person is at peace with God.

See: Confess (Confession); Angel

How did people deny Jesus?

[12:9]

People denied Jesus by rejecting him in front of other people. They did not believe he is the messiah and Son of God.

See: Messiah (Christ); Son of God

What did it mean to blaspheme against the Holy Spirit?

[12:10]

To “blaspheme”(βλασφημέω/g0987) the Holy Spirit meant to dishonor, insult, or even reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Matthew wrote about people who blasphemed the Holy Spirit (see: Matthew 12:22-32).

Jesus said that every sin could be forgiven except one. That was blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Scholars disagree about how someone blasphemes the Holy Spirit.

Jesus spoke about rejecting him. If someone does not believe in Jesus, then they will not be forgiven of their sins. Jesus spoke about someone seeing Jesus do miracles and saying that Satan gave him the power to do this. Therefore, people today cannot blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

Jesus spoke about people who said that the Holy Spirit did not do the things that he did.

See: Sin; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Holy Spirit; Miracle

What did Jesus mean when he said the Holy Spirit will teach you what you should say?

[12:12]

Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will teach the disciples what they should say. Jesus wanted his disciples to know that when they spoke to certain leaders, the Holy Spirit will cause them to know what they should say. That is, the Holy Spirit will tell them what is the right thing to say.

See: Holy Spirit; Disciple

12:13-21

What was an inheritance?

[12:13]

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

What was a judge or mediator?

[12:14]

See: Judge (Judgment); Mediator

What did Jesus mean when he said, “life does not consist of the abundance of his possessions”?

[12:15]

Jesus said, “life does not consist of the abundance of his possessions.” Jesus wanted people to know that owning many things did not make a person’s life more valuable or more important. He wanted them to do things that honored God.

What was meant by the words, “your soul is required of you”?

[12:20]

The words, “your soul is required of you” meant that the man’s life would be taken from him. That is, he was to die on that night.

See: Soul

Who was a person that was “not rich toward God”?

[12:21]

A person who was “not rich toward God” was a person did not trust God. He did not do the things that God wanted him to do. He did not use the things he had to serve God.

12:22-34

Why did Jesus tell the disciples not to worry about their lives?

[12:22]

Jesus told his disciples not to “worry”(μεριμνάω/g3309). He wanted them not to think too much about whether they will have enough food to eat or clothes to wear. Jesus spoke about food, clothing, and birds of the sky because he wanted the disciples to know that God will take care of them and give them what they need.

See: Disciple

What was a cubit?

[12:25]

See: Cubit

How did someone seek the kingdom of God?

[12:31]

When someone seeked the kingdom of God, they wanted to live in a way that honors God. They did things to serve God. They do not seek the things of the world. That is, they do not do the evil things that people in the world do.

See: Kingdom of God; World; Disciple

Why did Jesus call his disciples a “little flock”?

[12:32]

Jesus called his disciples a “little flock.” This was a metaphor. In the Old Testament, Israel was a flock. Jesus cared for his flock in the same way a shepherd cared for his sheep. They were little because they were few in number. They were helpless in the same way sheep were helpless. Jesus told them to not fear persecution or not having food and clothes.

Advice to translators: A flock is a group of sheep.

See: Metaphor; Shepherd; People of God; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Jesus tell his disciples to sell their possessions?

[12:33]

Scholars give several ways of how Jesus wanted his disciples to sell everything they owned. Jesus wanted them to know that trusting in what they owned prevented them from trusting in God. Jesus did not want them to spend a lot of time thinking about what they owned. Jesus wanted them to be ready to sell everything they owned. Jesus did not want Christians to use the things they owned to help other people.

See: Disciple

What was “treasure in the heavens”?

[12:33]

Jesus spoke about “treasures in heaven.” Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about blessings from God. Jesus was not talking about money. Fewer scholars think that Jesus was speaking about wanting people to think about the kingdom of God. This is because being in the kingdom of God is the greatest reward.

See: Heaven; Bless (Blessing); Kingdom of God; Reward

Why did Jesus say, “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”?

[12:34]

Jesus said, “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Treasure was a metaphor for what people valued. When people valued God their hearts, they did not want the things of the world.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Metaphor; World

12:35-40

How did someone keep their “loins girded”?

[12:35]

Jesus spoke about someone keeping their “loins girded”. That is, they tucked in their long clothing. When someone did this, they were ready to work very hard. Some scholars think Christians must be ready for action. That is, they must be ready to serve God.

Why did Jesus tell those who served him to keep their lamps lit?

[12:35]

In ancient Israel, servants kept lamps burning at night when they knew their master would be returning. In the same way, Jesus wanted those who served him to be ready for him to return. He was speaking about his second coming.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Serve

What was a wedding feast?

[12:36]

See: Wedding

What did it mean to be blessed?

[12:37]

See: Bless (Blessing)

What were the second and third watches?

[12:38]

The second and third watches were time periods of the night in which guards had duty. Typically, the watch periods were from 6:00 in the evening until 6:00 in the morning. The Jews and Romans divided the watches. The Romans divided the watches into four periods of three hours each. The Jews divided the watches into three periods of four hours each.

Why did Jesus talk about a thief?

[12:39]

When Jesus spoke about the owner of a home knowing a thief was coming, he was saying it was wise to keep alert and watch. By doing this, the owner would prevent the thief from breaking into his home. In the same way, Jesus wanted Christians to be alert and watching for him to return. He wanted them to do this even though they did not know the time of his return.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Jesus' Return to Earth

Who is the son of man?

[12:40]

Jesus is the Son of Man.

See: Son of Man

12:41-48

How did Jesus answer Peter?

[12:42]

Jesus did not answer Peter's question directly. However, Jesus answered him using a parable.

See: Parable

How will the Lord come to the unfaithful servant and "cut him in pieces"?

[12:46]

Jesus spoke about a master coming to the unfaithful servant and cutting him into pieces. This was a metaphor. Some scholars think he wanted people to know that the unfaithful servant would be severely punished. Other scholars think he wanted Christians to separate themselves from their community. That is, he would have to live outside of the town.

See: Punish (Punishment)

12:49-59

Why did Jesus speak about "cast fire upon the earth"?

[12:49]

Jesus spoke about casting fire on the earth. This was a metaphor. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about God judging people on the earth. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about God removing evil from the world.

See: Metaphor; Judge (Judgment); Purify (Pure)

What baptism was Jesus talking about?

[12:50]

The baptism Jesus was talking about was a baptism of suffering and death. That is, he was speaking about his death as a type of baptism.

See: Baptize (Baptism)

What did Jesus mean by saying he came to bring "division"?

Jesus said that he came to divide people. Jesus divided people. Some people believed in him. Other people rejected him.

People have to choose whether they believe in Jesus or reject Jesus. They must choose to follow Jesus, or to follow Satan.

See: Satan (The Devil)

Why did Jesus say that people did "not know how to interpret the present time"?

[12:56]

Jesus said that people did "not know how to interpret the present time." Jesus was saying that people did not know how to interpret what Jesus was doing. That is, they did not understand that God sent Jesus, and did not understand what God was going to do through Jesus. The "present time" meant the time in which Jesus was living on earth.

What was a magistrate?

[12:58]

A magistrate was a ruler, or a person who had permission to make legal decisions when two people disagreed with one another.

Luke 12:1

General Information:

Jesus begins to teach his disciples in front of thousands of people.

In the meantime

This is probably while the scribes and Pharisees were looking for a way to trap him. The author uses these words to mark the beginning of a new event.

when many thousands of the people ... they trampled on each other

This is background information that tells the setting of the story.

many thousands of the people

"a very great crowd"

they trampled on each other

This is probably an exaggeration to emphasize that so many people were crowded close together that they would step on each other. Alternate translation: "they were stepping on each other" or "they were stepping on one another's feet"

he began to say to his disciples first of all

"Jesus first started speaking to his disciples, and said to them"

Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy

Just as yeast spreads through a whole lump of bread dough, their hypocrisy was spreading through the whole community. Alternate translation: "Guard yourself against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, which is like yeast" or "Be careful that you do not become hypocrites like the Pharisees. Their evil behavior influences everyone just as yeast affects a lump of dough"

Luke 12:2

But there is

The word "But" connects this verse to the previous verse about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed

"everything that is hidden will be shown." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will find out about everything that people do secretly"

nothing hidden that will not be known

This means the same thing as the first part of the sentence in order to emphasize its truth. It can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will learn about everything that others try to hide"

Luke 12:3

whatever you have said in the darkness will be heard in the light

Here "darkness" is a metonym for "night" which is a metonym for "private. And "light" is a metonym for "day" which is a metonym for "public. The phrase "will be heard" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whatever you have said privately at night, people will hear it in the daylight"

spoken in the ear

whispered

in the inner rooms

"in a closed room." This refers to private speech. Alternate translation: "in privacy" or "secretly"

will be proclaimed

"will be shouted loudly." This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "people will proclaim"

upon the housetops

Houses in Israel had flat roofs, so people could go up and stand on top of them. If readers would be distracted trying to imagine how people would get up on the house tops, this could also be translated with a more general expression, such as "from a high place so that everyone will be able to hear."

Luke 12:4

I say to you, my friends

Jesus readdresses his disciples to mark a shift in his speech to a new topic, in this case, to speak about not being afraid.

they have no more that they can do

"they cannot cause any more harm"

Luke 12:5

Fear the one who, after ... has authority

The phrase "the one" refers to God. This could be reworded.

Alternate translation: "Fear God who, after ... has authority"

or "Fear God, because after ... he has authority"

after he has killed

"after he kills you"

has authority to throw you into hell

This is a general statement about God's authority to judge people. It does not mean this will happen to the disciples.

Alternate translation: "has authority to throw people into hell"

Luke 12:6

Are not five sparrows sold for two small coins?

Jesus uses a question to teach the disciples. Alternate

translation: "You know that five sparrows are sold for only two small coins."

sparrows

very small, seed-eating birds

not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God

This could be stated in active form and in positive form.

Alternate translation: "God never forgets any of them" or

"God indeed remembers every sparrow"

Luke 12:7

even the hairs of your head are all numbered

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God knows even how many hairs are on your head"

Do not fear

The reason for the fear is not stated. Possible meanings are 1) "Do not be afraid of what will happen to you" or 2) "So do not be afraid of people who could hurt you."

You are more valuable than many sparrows

"You are worth more to God than many sparrows"

Luke 12:8

I say to you

Jesus readdresses his audience to mark a shift in his speech to a new topic, in this case, to speak about confession.

everyone who confesses me before men

What is confessed can be stated clearly. Alternate

translation: "whoever tells others that he is my disciple" or

"anyone who acknowledges before others that he is loyal to me"

the Son of Man

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man"

Luke 12:9

he who denies me before men will be denied
 "I will deny before the angels of God that I know anyone who denies me" or "I, the Son of Man will deny before the angels of God that I know anyone who denies me"
 denies me
 "claims that he does not know me" or "claims that he is not my disciple"
 before men
 where people can hear
 will be denied
 "will be treated as though I do not know him" or "will be treated as if he is not my disciple"
 Luke 12:10
 Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man
 "Everyone who says something bad about the Son of Man" it will be forgiven him
 "he will be forgiven." This can be stated in active form.
 Alternate translation: "God will forgive him for that"
 blasphemes against the Holy Spirit
 "speaks evil against the Holy Spirit"
 but to him ... it will not be forgiven
 This can be expressed with an active verb. Alternate translation: "but he ... God will not forgive him" or "but he ... God will consider him guilty forever"
 Luke 12:11
 When they bring you
 It is not stated who brings them into judgment.
 before the synagogues
 "into the synagogues to question you before the religious leaders"
 rulers ... authorities
 It may be necessary to combine these into one statement.
 Alternate translation: "other people who have power in the country"
 Luke 12:12
 in that hour
 "at that time" or "then"
 Luke 12:13
 General Information:
 This is a break in Jesus's teachings. A man asks Jesus to do something and Jesus responds to him.
 divide the inheritance with me
 In that culture, inheritances came from the father, usually after the father had died. You may need to make explicit that the speaker's father had probably died. Alternate translation: "share my father's property with me now that our father is dead"
 Luke 12:14
 Man
 Possible meanings are 1) this is simply a way to address a stranger or 2) Jesus is rebuking the man. Your language might have a way of addressing people in either of these ways. Some people do not translate this word at all.
 who appointed me a judge or a mediator over you?
 Jesus uses a question to rebuke the man. Alternate translation: "no one appointed me a judge or mediator over you." or "I am not your judge or mediator."
 you
 This word refers to the man and his brother and so is

plural.
 Luke 12:15
 He said to them
 The word "them" here probably refers to the whole crowd of people. Alternate translation: "And Jesus said to the crowd"
 keep yourselves from all greedy desires
 "guard yourself from every form of greed." Alternate translation: "do not allow yourself to love having things" or "do not let the urge to have more things control you"
 a person's life
 This is a general statement of fact. It does not refer to any specific person. Some languages have a way of expressing that.
 the abundance of his possessions
 "how many things he owns" or "how much wealth he has"
 Luke 12:16
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus continues his teaching by telling a parable.
 Then Jesus told them
 Jesus was probably still speaking to the entire crowd.
 yielded abundantly
 "grew a very good harvest"
 Luke 12:17
 What will I do, because I do not have a place to store my crops?
 This question reflects what the man was thinking to himself. Alternate translation: "I do not know what to do, because I do not have any place big enough to store all my crops!"
 Luke 12:18
 barns
 buildings where farmers store the crops they have harvested
 all of my grain and other goods
 "all of my grain and the other good things that I own"
 Luke 12:19
 I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ... years. Rest ... merry."
 "I will say to myself, 'I have ... years. Rest ... merry.'" or "I will tell myself that I have ... years, so I can rest ... merry."
 many goods
 "many good things" or "many possessions"
 Luke 12:20
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus quotes how God responds to the rich man, as he finishes telling his parable.
 tonight your soul is required of you
 The "soul" refers to the life of a person. Alternate translation: "you will die tonight" or "I will take your life from you tonight"
 the things you have prepared, whose will they be?
 "who will own what you have stored up?" or "who will have what you prepared?" God uses a question to make the man realize that he would no longer possess those things.
 Alternate translation: "the things that you have prepared will belong to someone else!"
 Luke 12:21
 stores up treasure
 "saves up valuable things"
 is not rich toward God

has not used his time and possessions for the things that are important to God

Luke 12:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues teaching his disciples in front of the crowd.

Therefore

"For that reason" or "Because of what this story teaches"

I say to you

"I want to tell you something important" or "you need to listen carefully to this"

about your body, what you will wear

"about your body and what you will wear" or "about having enough clothes to put on your body"

Luke 12:23

life is more than food

This is a general statement of value. Alternate translation:

"life is more important than the food you eat"

the body is more than clothes

"your body is more important than the clothes you wear"

Luke 12:24

ravens

This refers either to 1) crows, a kind of bird that eats mostly grain, or 2) ravens, a kind of bird that eats the flesh of dead animals. Jesus's audience would have considered the ravens worthless since the Jewish people could not eat these types of birds.

storeroom ... barn

These are places where food is stored.

How much more valuable you are than the birds!

This is an exclamation, not a question. Jesus emphasizes the fact that people are much more valuable to God than birds.

Luke 12:25

Which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his lifespan?

Jesus uses a question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "None of you can make your life any longer by being anxious!"

add a cubit to his lifespan

This is a metaphor because a cubit is a measure of length rather than of time. The image is of a person's life stretched out as if it were a board, a rope, or some other physical object.

cubit

the length from a man's elbow to the end of his fingers

Luke 12:26

If then you are not able to do such a very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

Jesus uses another question to teach his disciples. Alternate translation: "Since you cannot do even this small thing, you should not worry about the other things."

Luke 12:27

Think about the lilies—how they grow

"Think about how the lilies grow."

lilies

Lilies are beautiful flowers that grow wild in the fields. If your language does not have a word for lily, you can use the name of another flower like that or translate it as "flowers"

neither do they spin

The process of making thread or yarn for cloth is called

"spinning." It may be helpful to make this explicit. Alternate translation: "neither do they make thread in order to make cloth" or "and they do not make yarn"

Solomon in all his glory was

"Solomon, who had great wealth, was" or "Solomon, who wore beautiful clothes, was"

Luke 12:28

If God so clothes the grass in the field, which

"If God clothes the grass in the field like that, and it" or "If God gives the grass in the field such beautiful clothing, and it." God making the grass beautiful is spoken of as if God were putting beautiful clothes on the grass. Alternate translation: "If God makes the grass in the field beautiful like this, and it"

is thrown into the oven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"someone throws it into a fire"

how much more will he clothe you

This is an exclamation, not a question. Jesus emphasizes that he will certainly take care of people even better than he does the grass. This could be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "he will certainly clothe you even better"

Luke 12:29

Do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink

"Do not focus on what you will eat and drink" or "Do not greatly desire more to eat and drink"

Luke 12:30

all the nations of the world

Here "nations" refers to "unbelievers." Alternate translation: "all people of other nations" or "all the unbelievers in the world"

your Father

This is an important title for God.

Luke 12:31

seek his kingdom

"focus on God's kingdom" or "greatly desire God's kingdom"

these things will be added to you

"these things also will be given to you." "These things" refers to food and clothing. This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will also give you these things"

Luke 12:32

little flock

Jesus is calling his disciples a flock. A flock is a group of sheep or goats that a shepherd cares for. As a shepherd cares for his sheep, God cares for Jesus's disciples. Alternate translation: "small group" or "dear group"

your Father

This is an important title for God.

Luke 12:33

give alms

It may be helpful to state what they receive. Alternate translation: "give alms from the money you earn from the sales"

Make for yourselves purses ... treasure in the heavens

The purses and treasure in the heavens are the same thing. They both represent God's blessing in heaven.

Make for yourselves

This is the result of giving to the poor. Alternate translation:

"In this way you will make for yourselves"
 purses which will not wear out
 "money bags that will not get holes in them"
 does not run out
 "does not diminish" or "does not become less"
 no thief comes near
 "thieves do not come near"
 no moth destroys
 "moths do not destroy"
 moth
 A "moth" is a small insect that eats holes in fabric. You may need to use a different insect, such as an ant or termite.
 Luke 12:34
 where your treasure is, there your heart will be also
 "your heart will be focused on where you store your treasure"
 your heart
 Here "heart" refers to a person's thoughts.
 Luke 12:35
 General Information:
 Jesus begins to tell a parable.
 Keep your loins girded
 These words are a metaphor for being ready to do hard work. People in Jesus's culture wore long flowing robes. They would tuck these robes into their belts to keep them out of the way while they worked. Alternate translation: "Always be ready to serve" or "Be dressed and ready to serve"
 and your lamps lit
 This is a metaphor or metonym for staying awake at night and another metaphor for always being ready to work, even when it would otherwise be time to rest. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "keep your lamps burning"
 Luke 12:36
 be like people waiting expectantly for their master
 Jesus commands the disciples to be ready for him to return the same way servants should be ready for their master to return.
 waiting expectantly
 If your language has a word for one person waiting and looking for someone he expects will come soon, you may want to use it here.
 returns from the marriage feast
 "returns home from a marriage feast"
 open the door for him
 This refers to the door of the master's house. It was the responsibility of his servants to open it for him.
 Luke 12:37
 Blessed are
 "How good it is for"
 whom the master will find watching when he comes
 "whose master finds them waiting for him when he returns" or "who are ready when the master returns"
 he will gird himself to serve and have them sit down
 Because the servants have been faithful and ready to serve their master, the master will now reward them by serving them.
 he will gird himself to serve

"he will tuck in his robe to serve." If people are not familiar with robes, this can also be translated in a more general way. Alternate translation: "he will dress himself to serve"
 Luke 12:38
 in the second watch of the night
 The second watch was between 9:00 p.m. and midnight.
 Alternate translation: "late at night" or "just before midnight"
 or if even in the third watch
 The third watch was from midnight to 3:00 a.m. Alternate translation: "or if he comes very late at night"
 Luke 12:39
 had known the hour
 "had known when"
 he would not have let his house be broken into
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he would not have let the thief break into his house"
 Luke 12:40
 because the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect
 The similarity between a thief (Luke 12:39) and the Son of Man is that people do not know when either one will come, so they need to be ready. Jesus is not saying that he himself is a thief.
 the Son of Man is coming
 Jesus is talking about himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am coming"
 Luke 12:41
 General Information:
 Here there is a stop in the story as Peter asks Jesus a question about the previous parable.
 Luke 12:42
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus begins to tell another parable.
 Who then is ... right time?
 Jesus uses a question to answer Peter's question indirectly. He expected those who wanted to be faithful managers to understand that the parable was about them. Alternate translation: "I said it for everyone who is ... right time."
 the faithful and wise manager
 Jesus tells another parable about how servants should be faithful while they wait for their master to return.
 whom his lord will set over his other servants
 "whom his lord puts in charge of his other servants"
 Luke 12:43
 Blessed is that servant
 "How good it is for that servant"
 whom his lord finds doing that when he comes
 "if his lord finds him doing that work when he comes back"
 Luke 12:44
 Truly I say to you
 This expression means they should pay special attention to what he is about to say.
 will set him over all his property
 "will put him in charge of all his property"
 Luke 12:45
 that servant
 This refers to the servant whose lord has put him in charge of the other servants.
 says in his heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "thinks to himself"

My lord delays his return

"My master will not return soon"

male servants and female servants

The words that are translated here as "male servants and female servants" are normally translated as "boys" and "girls." They may indicate that the servants were young or that they were dear to their master. If your language can shorten this phrase to "male and female servants," you may want to do so here.

Luke 12:46

in a day when he does not expect and in an hour that he does not know

The words "day" and "hour" form a merism of time that refers to any time, and the words "expect" and "know" have similar meanings, so the two phrases here are parallel to emphasize that the coming of the lord will be a total surprise to the servant. However, the phrases should not be combined unless your language has no different words for "know" and "expect" or "day" and "hour." Alternate translation: "at a time when the servant is not expecting him"

cut him in pieces and appoint a place for him with the unfaithful
Possible meanings are 1) this is an exaggeration for the master dealing out harsh punishment toward the slave, or 2) this describes the manner in which the servant will be executed and buried as punishment.

Luke 12:47

That servant, having known his lord's will and not having prepared or done according to his will, will be beaten with many blows

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "But as for the servant who knows his lord's will does not prepare or do according to it, the master will beat him with many blows"

his lord's will ... according to his will

"what his master wanted him to do ... it"

Luke 12:48

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling the parable.

But the one ... few blows

Both the servant who knows the master's will and the servant who does not know it are punished, but the words that begin with "That servant" (verse 47) show the servant who intentionally disobeyed his master was punished more severely than the other servant.

But everyone who has been given much, from them much will be required

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "They will require more of anyone who has received much" or "The master will require more of everyone he has given much to"

from the one ... much, even more will be asked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the master will ask even more of the one ... much" or "the master will require even more of the one ... much"

the one who has been entrusted with much

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the one to whom the master has given much property to take care of" or "the one to whom the master has given much

responsibility"

Luke 12:49

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to teach his disciples.

I came to cast fire upon the earth

"I came to throw fire on the earth" or "I came to set the earth on fire." Possible meanings are 1) Jesus has come to judge people or 2) Jesus has come to purify believers or 3) Jesus has come to cause division among people.

how I wish that it were already kindled

This exclamation emphasizes how much he wants this to happen. Alternate translation: "I wish very much that it was already lit" or "how I wish that it had already begun"

Luke 12:50

I have a baptism to be baptized with

Here "baptism" refers to what Jesus must suffer. Just as water covers a person during baptism, suffering will overwhelm Jesus. Alternate translation: "I must go through a baptism of terrible suffering" or "I must be overwhelmed by suffering as a person being baptized is covered by water"

But

The word "but" is used to show that he cannot cast the fire on the earth until after he goes through his baptism.

how I am distressed until it is completed

This exclamation emphasizes how distressed he was.

Alternate translation: "I am terribly distressed and will be so until I complete this baptism of suffering"

Luke 12:51

Do you think that I came to bring peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division

Jesus asks a question to let them know that he is going to correct their wrong understanding. You may need to supply the words "I came" that are omitted in the second sentence. Alternate translation: "You think that I came to bring peace on the earth, but I tell you I did not. Instead, I came to bring division"

division

"hostility" or "discord"

Luke 12:52

there will be five in one house

It may be helpful to state that this refers to people.

Alternate translation: "there will be five people in one house"

against ... against

"will oppose ... will oppose"

Luke 12:53

against

"will oppose"

Luke 12:54

General Information:

Jesus begins to speak to the crowd.

When you see a cloud rising ... happens

This condition normally meant rain was coming in Israel.

A shower is coming

"Rain is coming" or "It is going to rain"

Luke 12:55

When a south wind is blowing

This condition normally meant hot weather was coming in

Israel.

Luke 12:56

the earth and the heavens

"the earth and the sky"

how is it that you do not know how to interpret the present time?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the crowd. Jesus uses this question to convict them. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "you should know how to interpret the present time."

Luke 12:57

Why do you not judge what is right for yourselves?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke the crowd. It can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You yourselves should discern what is right."

for yourselves

"on your own initiative"

Luke 12:58

For when you go ... prison

Jesus presents a situation here that continues through verse 59. This may be a parable to teach Jesus's hearers that they need to repent of their sins before God condemns them on

the day of judgment. Alternate translation: "If when you go ... prison"

when you go

Though Jesus is talking to a crowd, the situation he is presenting is something that a person would go through alone. So in some languages the word "you" would be singular.

be reconciled with him

"be reconciled with your adversary"

the judge

This refers to the magistrate, but the term here is more specific and threatening.

does not deliver you

"does not take you"

Luke 12:59

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the situations that begins in verse 58.

the very last bit of money

"the entire amount of money that your adversary demands"

Chapter 13

Luke 13 General Notes

Possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Unknown events

The people and Jesus speak about two events that they knew about but about which no one today knows anything except what Luke has written ([Luke 13:1-5](#)). Your translation should tell only what Luke tells.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in this chapter: "those who are least important will be first, and those who are most important will be last" ([Luke 13:30](#)).

Links:

[Luke 13:1 Notes](#)

Luke 13

13:1-5

How was the blood of Galileans mixed with their own sacrifices?

[13:1]

Luke wrote about the blood of Galileans mixed with their sacrifices. Scholars think that at the Passover, Pilate ordered some of the Jews in Galilee to be killed while they were offering sacrifices. Their blood was mixed with the blood of the animal sacrifices for the Passover in some way.

See: Blood; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

See Map: Galilee

Where was the tower of Siloam?

[13:4]

Luke wrote about the tower of Siloam. Scholars think the tower in Siloam was a tower on the walls around Jerusalem near the pool of Siloam. Luke did not say why the tower fell.

See Map: Jerusalem; Pool of Siloam

Why did it mean to "repent"?

[13:5]

See: Repent (Repentance)

13:6-9

What was a parable?

[13:6]

See: Parable

What was a fig tree?

[13:6]

A fig tree was a tree that was very common in Israel. The tree produced a small fruit called a fig.

What was a vineyard?

[13:6]

A vineyard was a farm where grapes and olives were grown. In this man's vineyard, there was also a fig tree planted.

See: Vine (Vineyard)

13:10-17

What was a synagogue?

[13:10]

See: Synagogue

What was the Sabbath?

[13:10]

See: Sabbath

What was a "spirit of weakness"?

[13:11]

A "spirit of weakness" was an evil spirit or demon. The evil spirit caused the woman to have a "weakness." Some scholars say the "spirit of weakness" always kept the woman sick. Other scholars say it disabled the woman in some way.

See: Demon

Why was the synagogue ruler mad that Jesus "healed on the Sabbath"?

[13:14]

See: Luke 6:6-11

See: Sabbath; Synagogue

Why did Jesus cry out "hypocrites"?

[13:15]

Jesus said that the rulers of the synagogue were "hypocrites." He said this because of the things they taught about the Law of Moses and the Sabbath. The ruler and other religious leaders said they could help their own animals on the Sabbath, but they could not help other people on the Sabbath.

See: Synagogue; Hypocrisy (Hypocrite); Law of Moses; Sabbath

How did Satan bind "bound" the woman?

[13:16]

When Jesus spoke about the woman being bound for eighteen years, he was using a metaphor. Animals were were tied, or bound with a rope. They could not move. The bound woman could not move because she was sick.

See: Metaphor

13:18-21

How is the kingdom of God like a mustard seed?

[13:19]

Jesus told a parable about a mustard seed. He wanted people to know that the kingdom of God will be very large. In Israel, the mustard tree had the smallest seed. However, this seed grew into a big tree. In the same way, the kingdom of God started among a small group of people but it will grow large in some way. It will include all people of the world.

See: Parable; Kingdom of God

Why did Jesus tell the parable of yeast?

[13:21]

Jesus told a parable about yeast. He wanted people to know that the kingdom of God will spread into the whole world. When a woman mixed a small amount of yeast with a big amount of flour the flour raised. Three measures of flour fed 150 people. In the same way, the kingdom of God started among a small group of people but it will become very large. It will include all people of the world.

See: Parable; Kingdom of God; Yeast (Leaven)

13:22-30

What did it mean to be "saved"?

[13:23]

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What was the narrow door?

[13:24]

Jesus spoke about a narrow door. This was a metaphor. Scholars think Jesus spoke about the "narrow door" because it was difficult to enter a house through a narrow door. In the same way, it was difficult to enter the kingdom of God.

Someone could only enter the kingdom of God if they repented.

See: Metaphor; Kingdom of God; Repent (Repentance)

Why will many not be able to enter the kingdom of God?

[13:24]

Many people will not be able to enter the kingdom of God. The owner of the house gets up and locks the door. This was a metaphor. Scholars think there will be a time when Jesus will not allow people to enter the kingdom of God. Perhaps this will happen at the second coming of Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Kingdom of God; Jesus' Return to Earth

What did Jesus mean by saying “there will be crying and the grinding of teeth”?

[13:28]

Jesus said that there will be “crying and the grinding of teeth”. Some scholars think he was saying that people will be greatly disappointed, angry, and filled with worry because they thought they should be in heaven with God. Other scholars think there will be “crying and the grinding of teeth” because people will know they are guilty, and they will be very sad.

See: Heaven; Hell; Day of Judgment; Judge (Judgment); Punish (Punishment) .

Who were the least important and the most important?

[13:30]

Jesus spoke about the least and most important people. Scholars think the least important were the Gentiles and the most important were the Jews.

See: Gentile

13:31-35

What was a Pharisee?

[13:31]

See: Pharisees

Why did Jesus call Herod a fox?

[13:32]

Jesus called Herod a fox. Scholars think Jesus was using a metaphor when he called Herod a “fox”. A fox was an animal that was very tricky, sneaky, and often destroyed things. He wanted to say that Herod like this because he was trying to get rid of Jesus. He was being sneaky by having others try to kill Jesus for him.

See: Metaphor; King Herod

What was casting out demons?

[13:32]

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

What was Jesus' goal?

[13:33]

Jesus spoke about a goal. This was something he wanted to do. Scholars think Jesus was speaking about going to die in Jerusalem. This was when he finished the things God sent him to do.

Why did Jesus say, “it is not acceptable for a prophet to be destroyed outside of Jerusalem”?

[13:33]

Jesus said “it is not acceptable for a prophet to be destroyed outside of Jerusalem.” He wanted people to know that more prophets were killed in Jerusalem than in any other place. Jesus is the greatest of all the prophets and God planned for him to be killed in the city where most of the prophets were killed.

See: Prophet

Who were the “children” about whom Jesus spoke?

[13:34]

Jesus spoke about the “children.” He was speaking about people who lived in Jerusalem. Scholars think Jesus was talking about the whole nation of Israel.

Why did Jesus say, “your house is abandoned”?

[13:35]

Jesus said, “your house is abandoned”. Jesus spoke about something that was going to happen. Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about Jerusalem. Other scholars think Jesus was saying the temple will be abandoned. The Romans destroyed both Jerusalem and the temple about 40 years after Jesus died.

See: Temple

When will people say “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”?

[13:35]

People will say “Blessed is he who come in the name of the Lord”. Jesus was speaking about returning to the earth.

Perhaps the “name of the Lord” referred to the coming of the Messiah.

See: Bless (Blessing); Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth

Luke 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus is still speaking in front of the crowd. Some people in the crowd ask him a question and he begins to respond.

This continues the story that begins in Luke 12:1.

At that time

This phrase connects this event to the end of chapter 12, when Jesus was teaching a crowd of people.

whose blood Pilate mixed with their own sacrifices

Here "blood" refers to the death of the Galileans. They were probably killed while they were offering their sacrifices. This could be stated explicitly as in the UDB.

whose blood Pilate mixed with their own sacrifices

Pilate probably ordered his soldiers to kill people rather than doing it himself. Alternate translation: "whom Pilate's soldiers killed as they were sacrificing animals"

Luke 13:2

Do you think that these Galileans were more sinful ... way?

"Were these Galileans more sinful ... way?" or "Does this prove that these Galileans were more sinful ... way?" Jesus uses this question to challenge the understanding of the people. He answers the question in verse 3.

Luke 13:3

No, I tell you. But if you do not repent ... same way

Jesus answers the question he asked in 13:2. Jesus explains that the Galileans who were killed were not more sinful than other Galileans.

No, I tell you

Here "I tell you" emphasizes "no." Alternate translation: "They certainly were not more sinful" or "You are wrong to think that their suffering proves that they were more sinful"

all of you will perish in the same way

"all of you also will die." The phrase "in the same way" means they will experience the same result, not that they will die by the same method.

perish

die

Luke 13:4

Or those

This is Jesus's second example of people who suffered.

Alternate translation: "Or consider those" or "Think about those"

eighteen people

"18 people"

Siloam

This is the name of an area in Jerusalem.

do you think they were worse sinners ... Jerusalem?

Jesus uses this question to challenge the understanding of the people. He answers the question in 13:4. Alternate translation: "does this prove that they were more sinful ... Jerusalem?"

they were worse sinners

The crowd assumed that they died in this terrible way because they were especially sinful. This could be explicitly stated. Alternate translation: "they died because they were worse sinners"

other men

"other people." The word here is the general term for a person.

Luke 13:5

No, I say

Jesus answers the question he asked in 13:4. Alternate

translation: "They certainly did not die because they were more sinful"

perish

die

Luke 13:6

General Information:

Jesus begins to tell the crowd a parable to explain his last statement, "But if you do not repent, all of you will also perish."

Someone had a fig tree planted in his vineyard

The owner of a vineyard had another person plant a fig tree in the vineyard.

vineyard

Possible meanings are 1) this was a garden where grapes were grown, or 2) this was a garden where fruit trees were grown. Alternate translation: "garden" or "orchard"

Luke 13:7

Why let it waste the ground?

The man uses a question to emphasize that the tree is useless and the gardener should cut it down. Alternate translation: "Do not let it waste the ground."

Luke 13:8

leave it alone

"do not do anything to the tree" or "do not cut it down"

put manure on it

"put manure in the soil." Manure is animal dung. People put it in the ground to make the soil good for plants and trees. Alternate translation: "put fertilizer on it"

Luke 13:9

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling his parable. This is the end of the story that began in Luke 12:1.

If it bears fruit next year, good

It may be helpful to state what will happen. Alternate translation: "If it has figs on it next year, good; we can allow it to keep growing"

cut it down

The servant was making a suggestion; he was not giving a command to the owner. Alternate translation: "tell me to cut it down" or "I will cut it down"

Luke 13:10

General Information:

Verses 10-11 give background information about the setting of this part of the story and about a crippled woman who is introduced into the story.

Now

The author uses this word to mark the beginning of a new event.

during the Sabbath

"on a Sabbath day." Some languages would say "a Sabbath" because we do not know which particular Sabbath day it was.

Luke 13:11

Behold, a woman was there

The word "behold" here alerts us to a new person in the story.

eighteen years

"18 years"

a spirit of weakness

"an evil spirit that made her weak"

Luke 13:12

Woman, you are freed from your weakness

"Woman, you are healed from your disease." This can be expressed with an active verb: Alternate translation:

"Woman, I have set you free from your weakness"

Woman, you are freed from your weakness

By saying this, Jesus healed her. This can be expressed with a sentence that shows that he was causing it to happen, or by a command. Alternate translation: "Woman, I now free you from your weakness" or "Woman, be freed from your weakness"

Luke 13:13

He placed his hands on her

"He touched her"

she was made straight again

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"she was able to stand up straight again"

Luke 13:14

was indignant

"was very angry"

answered and said

"said" or "responded"

he healed then

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"let someone heal you during those six days"

on the Sabbath day

"on a Sabbath day." Some languages would say "a Sabbath" because we do not know which particular Sabbath day it was.

Luke 13:15

The Lord answered him

"The Lord responded to the synagogue ruler"

Hypocrites

Jesus speaks directly to the synagogue ruler, but the plural form includes the other religious rulers also. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "You and your fellow religious leaders are hypocrites"

Does not each of you untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead it to drink on the Sabbath?

Jesus uses a question to get them to think about something they already knew. Alternate translation: "Every one of you unties his ox or his donkey from the stall and leads it to drink on the Sabbath."

ox ... donkey

These are animals that people care for by giving them water.

on the Sabbath

"on a Sabbath." Some languages would say "a Sabbath" because we do not know which particular Sabbath day it was.

Luke 13:16

daughter of Abraham

This is an idiom that means, "descendant of Abraham" whom Satan bound

Jesus compares people tying animals to the way Satan restricted the woman with this disease. Alternate translation: "whom Satan kept crippled by her illness" or "whom Satan bound with this disease"

eighteen long years

"18 long years." The word "long" here emphasizes that eighteen years was a very long time for the woman to suffer. Other languages may have other ways of emphasizing this.

should her bonds not be untied ... day?

Jesus uses a question to tell the synagogue rulers that they are wrong. Jesus speaks about the woman's disease as if it were ropes that bound her. This can be translated as an active statement. Alternate translation: "it is right to release her from the bonds of this illness ... day."

Luke 13:17

As he said these things

"When Jesus said these things"

the glorious things he did

"the glorious things Jesus was doing"

Luke 13:18

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to tell a parable to the people in the synagogue.

What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to?

Jesus uses two questions to introduce what he is about to teach. Alternate translation: "I will tell you what the kingdom of God is like and what I can compare it to."

what can I compare it to?

This is basically the same as the previous question. Some languages can use both questions, and some would use only one.

Luke 13:19

It is like a mustard seed

Jesus compares the kingdom to a mustard seed. Alternate translation: "The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed"

a mustard seed

A mustard seed is a very small seed that grows into a large plant. If this seed is not known, the phrase can be translated with the name of another seed like it or simply as "a small seed."

threw into his garden

"planted in his garden." People planted some kinds of seeds by throwing them so that they scattered in the garden.

a big tree

The word "big" is an exaggeration that contrasts the tree with the tiny seed. Alternate translation: "a very large shrub"

birds of heaven

"birds of the sky." Alternate translation: "birds that fly in the sky" or "birds"

Luke 13:20

To what can I compare the kingdom of God?

Jesus uses another question to introduce what he is about to teach. Alternate translation: "I will tell you another thing to which I can compare to the kingdom of God."

Luke 13:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes speaking to the people in the synagogue. This is the end of this part of the story.

It is like yeast

Jesus compares the kingdom of God to yeast in bread dough. Alternate translation: "The kingdom of God is like yeast"

like yeast

Only a little bit of yeast is needed to make a lot of dough rise. This can be made clear, as it is in the UDB.

three measures of flour

This is a large amount of flour, since each measure was about 13 liters. You may need to use a term that your culture uses to measure flour. Alternate translation: "a large amount of flour"

Luke 13:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 13:23

are only a few people to be saved?

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will God save only a few people?"

Luke 13:24

General Information:

Jesus responds to a question by using a metaphor about entering God's kingdom.

Struggle to enter through the narrow door

"Work hard to go through the narrow doorway." Jesus is speaking about the entrance to God's kingdom as if it were a small doorway to a house. Since Jesus is talking to a group, the "you" implied in this command is plural.

the narrow door

The fact that the door is narrow implies that it is difficult to go through it. Translate it in a way to keep this restrictive meaning.

many will try to enter, but will not be able to enter

It is implied that they will not be able to enter because of the difficulty of entering. The next verse explains the difficulty.

Luke 13:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk about entering into God's kingdom.

Once the owner

"After the owner"

the owner of the house

This refers to the owner of the house with the narrow door in the previous verses. This is a metaphor for God as the ruler of the kingdom.

you will stand outside

Jesus was talking to a crowd. The form of "you" is plural. He is addressing them as if they will not enter through the narrow door into the kingdom.

pound the door

"hit on the door." This is an attempt to gain the owner's attention.

Luke 13:26

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 13:27

Get away from me

"Go away from me"

Luke 13:28

crying and the grinding of teeth

These actions are symbolic acts, indicating great regret and sadness. Alternate translation: "crying and grinding of teeth because of your great regret"

when you see

Jesus continues to speak to the crowd as if they will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

but you are thrown out

"but you yourselves will have been thrown outside." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but God will have forced you outside"

Luke 13:29

from the east, west, north, and south

This means "from every direction."

be seated at a table in the kingdom of God

It was common to speak of the joy in God's kingdom as a feast. Alternate translation: "they will feast in the kingdom of God"

Luke 13:30

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to talk about entering into God's kingdom.

This is the end of this conversation.

will be first ... will be last

Being first represents being important or honored.

Alternate translation: "will be the most important ... will be the least important" or "God will honor ... God will shame"

Luke 13:31

Connecting Statement:

This is the next event in this part of the story. Jesus is still on his way towards Jerusalem when some Pharisees speak to him about Herod.

In that same hour

"Right at that time" or "Soon after Jesus finished speaking"

Go and leave here because Herod wants to kill you

Translate this as a warning to Jesus. They were advising him to go somewhere else and be safe.

Herod wants to kill you

Herod would order people to kill Jesus. Alternate

translation: "Herod wants to send his men to kill you"

Luke 13:32

that fox

Jesus was calling Herod a fox. A fox is a small wild dog.

Possible meanings are 1) Herod was not much of a threat at all 2) Herod was deceptive.

Luke 13:33

In any case

"Nevertheless" or "However" or "Whatever happens"

it is not acceptable for a prophet to be destroyed outside of Jerusalem

The Jewish leaders claimed to serve God and that Jerusalem was their holy city, but it was in Jerusalem that their ancestors had killed many of God's prophets, and Jesus knew that they would kill him there also. This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "it is only in Jerusalem that it is acceptable for prophets to be destroyed"

or "even though you think you are serving God and Jerusalem is your holy city, you disobey God by killing his prophets, and in doing so you defile Jerusalem"

to be destroyed

"to be killed"

Luke 13:34

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes responding to the Pharisees. This is the end of this part of the story.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem

Jesus speaks as if the people of Jerusalem are there listening to him. Jesus says this twice to show how sad he is for them.

who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you

If it would be strange to address the city, you can make it clear that Jesus was really addressing the people in the city: "you people who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you"

those sent to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those God has sent to you"

How often I desired

"I so often desired." This is an exclamation and not a question.

to gather your children

The people of Jerusalem are described as her "children."

Alternate translation: "to gather your people" or "to gather

the people of Jerusalem"

the way a hen gathers her brood under her wings

This describes how a hen protects her young from harm by covering them with her wings.

Luke 13:35

your house is abandoned

This is a prophecy about something that would happen soon. It means that God has stopped protecting the people of Jerusalem, so enemies can attack them and drive them away. Possible meanings are 1) God will abandon them.

Alternate translation: "God will abandon you" or 2) their city will be empty. Alternate translation: "your house will be abandoned"

you will not see me until you say

"you will not see me until the time comes when you will say" or "the next time you see me, you will say"

the name of the Lord

Here "name" refers to the Lord's power and authority.

Chapter 14

Luke 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verse 3 says, "Jesus asked the experts in the Jewish law and the Pharisees, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?'"

Many times, the Pharisees got angry with Jesus for healing on the Sabbath. In this passage, Jesus dumbfounds the Pharisees. It was normally the Pharisees who tried to trap Jesus.

Changes of subject

Many times in this chapter Luke changes from one subject to another without marking the changes.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Parable

Jesus told the parable in [Luke 14:15-24](#) to teach that the kingdom of God will be something that everyone can enjoy. But people will refuse to be part of it. (See: [and kingdomofgod](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in this chapter: "for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" ([Luke 14:11](#)).

Links:

[Luke 14:1 Notes](#)

Luke 14

14:1-6

What was the Sabbath?

[14:1]

See: Sabbath

What was edema?

[14:2]

Edema was swelling of the arms and legs. It affected the heart and kidneys.

Who were the "experts in the Jewish laws"?

[14:3]

The experts of the Jewish laws were people who taught about the Law of Moses. They were also called "scribes."

See: Scribe; Law of Moses

Was it lawful for Jesus to heal on the Sabbath?

[14:3]

See: Luke 6:6-11

See: Sabbath

14:7-11

What was a parable?

[14:7]

See: Parable

What were “seats of honor”?

[14:8]

The “seats of honor” were the places at a feast where the most important people sat.

See: Wedding; Pride; Humble (Humility)

14:12-24

What is the “resurrection of the just”?

[14:14]

The “resurrection of the just” is a time in the future when God will cause all righteous people, who have died, to live again.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Righteous (Righteousness)

Why are people blessed who “eat bread in the kingdom of God”?

[14:15]

People who eat bread in the kingdom of God are blessed. Some scholars think people will be blessed because they will be eating with all those who belong to the kingdom of God. More scholars think that eating in the kingdom of God will happen in heaven.

See: Bless (Blessing); Kingdom of God; Heaven

Why did Jesus say, “none of those men who were invited will taste my dinner”?

[14:24]

Jesus said “none of those men who were invited will taste my dinner”. He said this because the men who were invited refused when Jesus first invited them.

14:25-35

Why must Christians hate their families?

[14:26]

Jesus said that Christians must hate their families. This was a hyperbole. He wanted Christians to love him more than they loved their families (see: Matthew 10:37).

See: Hyperbole

What did it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

[14:26]

See: Disciple

What did it mean for a person to “carry his own cross”?

[14:27]

Jesus told people to carry a cross. This was a metaphor. Someone carried their own cross when they suffered or died for following Jesus. The cross was a metaphor for suffering and death.

See: Cross; Metaphor

What did it mean to “count the cost”?

[14:28]

When someone counted the cost of something, they would calculate how much money the materials to build a tower would cost. He would also calculate the cost of paying people to construct the tower. He would then know if he had enough to build the tower.

Why did Jesus say that if a person “does not give up all his possessions (he) cannot be my disciple”?

[14:33]

Jesus said that if a person did not give up everything, then this person cannot be Jesus’ disciple. Jesus was telling people the cost of following him. Some scholars think Jesus was clearly saying that a disciple must give up everything they own to follow Jesus. Other scholars think Jesus was saying that a disciple must not keep anything that would stop him from following Jesus.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus say, “he who has ears to hear, let him hear”?

[14:35]

Jesus said “he who has an ear, let him hear” because he really wanted people to listen to the things that he just said. Jesus knew that when he spoke, the Holy Spirit spoke too.

See: Holy Spirit

Luke 14:1

General Information:

It is the Sabbath, and Jesus is at a Pharisee's house. Verse 1

gives background information for the event that follows.

It happened one Sabbath

This indicates a new event.

to eat bread

"to eat" or "for a meal." Bread was an important part of a meal and is used in this sentence to refer to a meal.

watching him closely

They wanted to see if they could accuse him of doing anything wrong.

Luke 14:2

Behold, there in front of him was a man

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. English uses "There in front of him was a man"

was suffering from edema

Edema is swelling caused by water building up in parts of the body. Some languages may have a name for this condition. Alternate translation: "was suffering because parts of his body were swollen with water"

Luke 14:3

Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not

"Does the law permit us to heal on the Sabbath, or does it forbid it"

Luke 14:4

But they kept silent

The religious leaders refused to answer Jesus's question.

So Jesus took hold of him

"So Jesus took hold of the man who suffered from edema"

Luke 14:5

Which of you who has a son or an ox ... will not immediately pull him out?

Jesus uses a question because he wanted them to admit that they would help their son or ox, even on the Sabbath.

Therefore, it was right for him to heal people even on the Sabbath. Alternate translation: "If one of you has a son or an ox ... you would surely pull him out immediately."

Luke 14:6

They were not able to give an answer

They knew the answer and that Jesus was right, but they did not want to admit that he was correct. Alternate translation: "They had nothing to say"

Luke 14:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to speak to the guests at the house of the Pharisee who had invited him to a meal.

those who were invited

It may be helpful to identify these people, and to state this in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom the leader of the Pharisees had invited to the meal"

the seats of honor

"the seats for honored people" or "the seats for important people"

Luke 14:8

When you are invited by someone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When someone invites you"

When you ... than you

These occurrences of "you" are singular. Jesus is speaking to the group as if to each individual person.

because someone may have been invited who is more honored than you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"because the host may have invited a person who is more important than you are"

Luke 14:9

say to you ... your place ... you will proceed

These occurrences of "you" and "your" are singular. Jesus is speaking to the group as if to each individual person.

both of you

This occurrence of "you" refers to the two people who want the same seat of honor.

in shame

"you will feel ashamed and"

the lowest place

"the least important place" or "the place for the least important person"

Luke 14:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the people at the Pharisee's house.

when you are invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when someone invites you"

the lowest place

"the seat meant for the least important person"

go up higher

"move to a seat for a more important person"

Then you will be honored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then the one who invited you will honor you"

Luke 14:11

who exalts himself

"who tries to look important" or "who takes an important position"

will be humbled

"will be shown to be unimportant" or "will be given an unimportant position." This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "God will humble"

humbles himself

"who chooses to look unimportant" or "who takes an unimportant position"

will be exalted

"will be shown to be important" or "will be given an important position." This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "God will exalt"

Luke 14:12

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking at the Pharisee's house, but addresses his host directly.

the man who had invited him

"the Pharisee who had invited him to his house for a meal"

When you give

"you" is singular because Jesus is speaking directly to the Pharisee that invited him.

do not invite

This probably does not mean they can never invite these people. More likely it means they should invite others as well. Alternate translation: "do not only invite" or "do not always invite"

as they may

"because they might"

invite you in return
 "invite you to their dinner or banquet"
 you will be repaid
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in this way they will repay you"
 Luke 14:13
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus continues speaking to the Pharisee who had invited him to his home.
 invite the poor
 It may be helpful to add "also" since this statement is probably not exclusive. Alternate translation: "also invite the poor"
 Luke 14:14
 you will be blessed
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless you"
 they cannot repay you
 "they cannot invite you to a banquet in return"
 you will be repaid
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will repay you"
 in the resurrection of the just
 This refers to the final judgment. Alternate translation: "when God brings the righteous people back to life"
 Luke 14:15
 General Information:
 One of the men at the table speaks to Jesus and Jesus responds to him by telling a parable.
 one of them who sat at the table
 This introduces a new person.
 Blessed is he
 The man was not talking about a specific person. Alternate translation: "Blessed is anyone" or "How good it is for everyone"
 he who will eat bread
 The word "bread" is used to refer to the whole meal.
 Alternate translation: "he who will eat at the meal"
 Luke 14:16
 But Jesus said to him
 Jesus begins telling a parable.
 A certain man prepared a large dinner and invited many
 The reader should be able to infer that the man probably had his servants prepare the meal and invite the guests.
 A certain man
 This phrase is a way of referring to the man without giving any specific information about his identity.
 invited many
 "invited many people" or "invited many guests"
 Luke 14:17
 At the dinner hour
 "At the time for the dinner" or "When the dinner was about to begin"
 those who were invited
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those he had invited"
 Luke 14:18
 General Information:
 All of the people who were invited gave the servant excuses

about why they could not come to the banquet.
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus continues telling his parable.
 to make excuses
 "to say why they could not come to the dinner"
 The first said to him
 The reader should be able to infer that these people spoke directly to the servant whom the master had sent out
 Please excuse me
 "Please forgive me" or "Please accept my apology"
 Luke 14:19
 Another said
 The reader should be able to infer that these people spoke directly to the servant whom the master had sent out
 five pairs of oxen
 Oxen were used in pairs to pull farming tools. Alternate translation: "10 oxen to work in my fields"
 I am going to try them out
 He wanted to use the oxen and see how well they worked together pulling farm tools.
 Luke 14:20
 another man said
 The reader should be able to infer that these people spoke directly to the servant whom the master had sent out
 married a wife
 Use an expression that is natural in your language. Some languages may say "gotten married" or "taken a wife."
 Luke 14:21
 became angry
 "became angry with the people he had invited"
 bring in here
 "invite in here to eat the dinner"
 Luke 14:22
 The servant said
 It may be necessary to state clearly the implied information that the servant did what the master commanded him.
 Alternate translation: "After the servant went out and did that, he came back and said"
 what you commanded has been done
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have done what you commanded"
 Luke 14:23
 the highways and hedges
 This refers to roads and paths outside of the city. Alternate translation: "the main roads and paths outside of the city"
 compel them to come in
 "demand that they come in"
 compel them
 The word "them" refers to anyone the servants find.
 "compel anyone you find to come in"
 that my house may be filled
 "so that people may fill my house"
 Luke 14:24
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus finishes his parable.
 For I say to you
 The word "you" is plural, so it is unclear to whom it is addressed.
 those men

The word here for "men" means "male adults" and not just people in general.

who were invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom I invited"

will taste my dinner

"will enjoy the dinner I have prepared"

Luke 14:25

General Information:

Jesus begins to teach the crowds that were traveling with him.

Luke 14:26

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father ... he cannot be my disciple

Here, "hate" is an exaggeration for the lesser love people are to show to people other than Jesus. Alternate translation: "If anyone comes to me and does not love me more than he loves his father ... he cannot be my disciple" or "Only if a person loves me more than he loves his own father ... can he be my disciple"

Luke 14:27

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple

This could be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Only he who carries his own cross and comes after me can be my disciple" or "If anyone wants to be my disciple, he must carry his own cross and follow me"

carry his own cross

Jesus does not mean every Christian must be crucified. The Romans often made people carry their own crosses before they crucified them as a sign of their submission to Rome. This metaphor means they must submit to God and be willing to suffer in any way to be Jesus's disciples.

Luke 14:28

General Information:

Jesus continues to explain to the crowd that it is important to count the cost of being a disciple.

For which of you who desires to build a tower does not first sit down and count the cost to calculate if he has what he needs to complete it? Jesus uses this question to prove that people count the cost of a project before they begin it. Alternate translation: "If a person wanted to build a tower, he would certainly first sit down and determine if he had enough money to complete it."

tower

This may have been a watchtower. "a tall building" or "a high lookout platform"

Luke 14:29

Otherwise

It may be helpful to give more information. Alternate translation: "If he does not first count the cost"

when he has laid a foundation

"when he has built a base" or "when he has completed the first part of the building"

is not able to finish

It is understood that he was not able to finish because he did not have enough money. This could be stated. Alternate translation: "does not have enough money to be able to finish"

Luke 14:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 14:31

General Information:

Jesus continues to explain to the crowd that it is important to count the cost of being a disciple.

Or

Jesus used this word to introduce another situation where people count the cost before making a decision.

what king ... will not sit down first and take advice ... men?

Jesus uses another question to teach the crowd about counting the cost. Alternate translation: "you know that a king ... would sit down first and take counsel ... men."

take advice

Possible meanings are 1) "think carefully" or 2) "listen to his advisors."

ten thousand ... twenty thousand

"10,000 ... 20,000"

Luke 14:32

If not

It may be helpful to restate the information given in the previous verse. Alternate translation: "If he realizes that he will not be able to defeat the other king"

conditions of peace

"terms to end the war" or "what the other king wants him to do in order to end the war"

Luke 14:33

any one of you who does not give up all his possessions cannot be my disciple

This can be stated with positive verbs. Alternate translation: "only those of you who give up all your possessions can be my disciples"

give up all his possessions

"leave behind all that he has"

Luke 14:34

Salt is good

"Salt is useful." Jesus is teaching a lesson about those who want to be his disciple.

how can it be made salty again?

Jesus uses a question to teach the crowd. Alternate translation: "it cannot be made salty again." or "no one can make it salty again."

Luke 14:35

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes teaching the crowd.

manure pile

People use manure to fertilize gardens and fields. Salt without taste is so useless it is not even worth mixing with manure. Alternate translation: "compost heap" or "fertilizer"

It is thrown away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Someone just throws it away"

He who has ears to hear, let him hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "ears to hear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you

translated this phrase in [Luke 8:8]
He who ... let him
Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may

prefer to use the second person here. See how you
translated this phrase in [Luke 8:8]

Chapter 15

Luke 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The parable of the prodigal son

[Luke 15:11-32]

Special concepts in this chapter

Sinners

When the people of Jesus's time spoke of "sinners," they were talking about people who did not obey the law of Moses and instead committed sins like stealing or sexual sins. But Jesus told three parables

Links:

[Luke 15:1 Notes](#)

Luke 15

15:1-10

Who were tax collectors and sinners?

[15:1]

Tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Roman government. People in Israel hated the tax collectors. The tax collector paid the Romans so they could collect taxes from other people. If they collected more taxes than they paid the Roman government, then they were allowed to keep it. Because of this, many tax collectors became rich. The Jews thought a Jewish tax collector betrayed the Jewish people because they took money from the Jews and gave it to the Romans. They thought tax collectors were evil because they took money from people who honored God and gave it to people who rejected God.

The sinners Luke wrote about were Jewish people who did not obey the Law of Moses.

See: Luke 5:29-32

See: Law of Moses; Tax (Tax Collector, Toll), Sin

Who were the scribes?

[15:2]

See: Scribe

What was a parable?

[15:3]

See: Parable

How will there be "joy in heaven"?

[15:7]

Jesus said that there will be "joy in heaven." Jesus spoke about the joy of God and the joy of the angels. They have joy because a sinner repented.

See: Angel; Sin; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Repent (Repentance)

15:11-32

What did the younger son mean when he said "the portion of the wealth that falls to me"?

[15:12]

The younger son said "the portion of the wealth that falls to me". He was speaking about the money of his inheritance.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

How did the younger son live?

[15:13]

The younger son lived recklessly. That is, he wasted his money on doing things that did not honor God.

Why did the younger son say that he "sinned against heaven"?

[15:18]

The younger son said he "sinned against heaven." This was a metaphor the ancient Jews used to talk about God without saying the word God. That is, the younger son sinned against God.

See: Metaphor; Sin; Heaven

Why was the young man's father "moved with compassion"?

[15:20]

Jesus said the father was “moved with compassion.” Scholars think the father wanted to be compassionate to his son. That is, he had wanted to show mercy to his young, to forgive him, and to love him.

See: Mercy

What was the “fattened calf”?

[15:23]

The fattened calf was not with the other calves in the field. People gave it extra food and then had it prepared for a special celebration.

How did people believe the younger son was “dead”?

[15:24]

The father spoke about his son being dead. However, he was not dead. He believed his son was dead in some way. That is, he meant that his son was like someone who was dead, but now had come back to life. The father never expected to see his son again.

Why did the father say to the older son, “you are always with me”?

[15:31]

The father told the older son, “you are always with me.” This was because the older son lived with the father all the time. Therefore, there was no need to have a special feast to celebrate his return.

Luke 15:1

General Information:

We do not know where this takes place; it simply occurs one day when Jesus is teaching.

Now

This marks the beginning of a new event.

all the tax collectors

This is an exaggeration to stress that there were very many of them. Alternate translation: “many tax collectors”

Luke 15:2

This man welcomes sinners

“This man lets sinners into his presence” or “This man associates with sinners”

This man

They were talking about Jesus.

even eats with them

The word “even” shows that they thought it was bad enough that Jesus allowed sinners to come to him, but it was worse that he would eat with them.

Luke 15:3

General Information:

Jesus begins to tell several parables. These parables are situations about things that anyone could experience. They are not about particular people. The first parable is about what a person would do if one of his sheep was lost. to them

Here “them” refers to the religious leaders.

Luke 15:4

Which one of you ... will not leave ... until he finds it?

Jesus uses a question to remind the people that if any of them lost one of their sheep, they would certainly go looking for it. Alternate translation: “Each of you ... would certainly leave ... until he finds it.”

Which one of you, if he has a hundred sheep ... loses ... he finds it

Since the parable starts with “Which one of you,” some languages would continue the parable in the second person. Alternate translation: “Which one of you, if you have a hundred sheep ... lose ... you find it”

hundred ... ninety-nine

“100 ... 99”

Luke 15:5

Then when he has found it, he lays ... rejoices

Since the parable starts in the previous verse with “Which one of you,” some languages would continue the parable in the second person. Alternate translation: “Then when you have found it you will lay ... rejoice”

lays it across his shoulders

This is the way a shepherd carries a sheep. This could be stated. Alternate translation: “lays it across his shoulders to carry it home”

Luke 15:6

When he comes to the house, he calls together his friends and his neighbors

Since the parable starts in the verse 4 with “Which one of you,” some languages would continue the parable in the second person. Alternate translation: “When you come home you will call together your friends and your neighbors”

When he comes to the house

“When the owner of the sheep comes home” or “When you come home.” Refer to the owner of the sheep as you did in the previous verse.

Luke 15:7

even so

“in the same way” or “as the shepherd and his friends and neighbors would rejoice”

there will be joy in heaven

“everyone in heaven will rejoice”

ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent

Jesus uses sarcasm to say that the Pharisees were wrong to think that they did not need to repent. Your language may have a different way to express this idea. Alternate translation: “ninety-nine persons like you, who think they are righteous and do not need to repent”

ninety-nine

“99”

Luke 15:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins telling another parable. It is about a woman with 10 silver coins.

Or what woman ... would not light a lamp ... and seek diligently until she has found it?

Jesus uses a question to remind the people that if they lost a silver coin, they would certainly look for it diligently.

Alternate translation: "Any woman ... would certainly light a lamp ... and seek diligently until she has found it."

Luke 15:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 15:10

Even so

"In the same way" or "Just as people would rejoice with the woman"

over one sinner who repents

"when one sinner repents"

Luke 15:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins telling another parable. It is about a young man who asks his father for his part of the inheritance.

A certain man

This introduces a new character in the parable. Some languages might say "There was a man who"

Luke 15:12

give me

The son wanted his father to give it to him immediately.

Languages that have a command form that means that they want it done immediately should use that form.

the portion of the wealth that falls to me

"the part of your wealth that you plan for me to receive when you die"

between them

"between his two sons"

Luke 15:13

gathered together all he owned

"packed his things" or "put his things in his bag"

living recklessly

"living without thinking about the consequences of his actions" or "living wildly"

Luke 15:14

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

Here Jesus explains how the younger son went from having plenty to being in need.

a severe famine spread through that country

"a drought occurred there and the entire country did not have enough food"

to be in need

"to lack what he needed" or "to not have enough"

Luke 15:15

He went

The word "he" refers to the younger son.

hired himself out to

"took a job with" or "began to work for"

one of the citizens of that country

"a man of that country"

to feed pigs

"to give food to the man's pigs"

Luke 15:16

was longing to eat

"wished very much that he could eat." It is understood that this is because he was very hungry. This could be stated. Alternate translation: "he was so hungry that he would have happily eaten"

carob pods

These are the husks of beans that grow on the carob tree.

Alternate translation: "carob bean pods" or "bean husks"

Luke 15:17

came to himself

This idiom means he realized what the truth was, that he had made a terrible mistake. Alternate translation: "clearly understood his situation"

How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread

This is part of an exclamation, and not a question. Alternate translation: "All my father's hired servants have more than enough bread to eat"

bread

This is a synecdoche for any kind and all kinds of food.

Alternate translation: "food"

perishing from hunger

This is probably not an exaggeration. Jesus may have meant that the young man in his parable was actually starving then.

perishing

"dying" or "being destroyed"

Luke 15:18

I will get up

This is an idiom that means he will begin to act. It does not mean that he was sitting or lying down when he said these words.

I have sinned against heaven

Jewish people sometimes avoided saying the word "God" and used the word "heaven" instead. Alternate translation: "I have sinned against God"

Luke 15:19

I am no longer worthy to be called your son

"I was once worthy to be called your son, but not now." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You called me son in the past, but now I am not worthy for you to call me son"

make me as one of your hired servants

"hire me as an employee" or "hire me and I will become one of your servants." This is a request, not a command. It may be helpful to add "please" as the UDB does.

Luke 15:20

So the young son got up and left and came toward his father

"So he left that country and started going back to his father." The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened first. In this case, the young man was in need and had decided to go home.

got up

This is an idiom that means he began to act. It does not mean that he had been sitting or lying down. See how you translated similar words in [Luke 15:18]

While he was still far away

"While he was still far away from his home" or "While he was still far away from his father's house"

was moved with compassion

"had pity on him" or "loved him deeply from his heart"

embraced him and kissed him

The father did this to show his son that he loved him and was glad that the son was coming home. If people think that it is strange or wrong for a man to embrace or hug and

kiss his son, you can substitute a way that men in your culture show affection to their sons. Alternate translation: "welcomed him affectionately"

Luke 15:21

sinned against heaven

Jewish people sometimes avoided saying the word "God" and used the word "heaven" instead. See how you translated this in [Luke 15:18]

I am no longer worthy to be called your son

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Luke 15:18]

Luke 15:22

best robe

"the best robe in the house." Alternate translation: "the best coat" or "the best garment"

put a ring on his hand

A ring was a sign of authority that men wore on one of their fingers.

sandals

Wealthy people of that time wore sandals. However, in many cultures the modern equivalent would be "shoes."

Luke 15:23

fattened calf

A calf is a young cow. People would give one of their calves special food so that it would grow well, and then when they wanted to have a special feast, they would eat that calf.

Alternate translation: "the best calf" or "the young animal we have been making fat"

kill it

The implied information that they were to cook the meat can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "kill it and cook it"

Luke 15:24

my son was dead, and now he is alive

This metaphor speaks of the son being gone as if he were dead. Alternate translation: "it is as if my son were dead and became alive again" or "I felt like my son had died, but he is now alive"

He was lost, and now he is found

This metaphor speaks of the son being gone as if he had been lost. Alternate translation: "It is as if I had lost my son and now I have found him" or "My son went to where I could not bring him back, but now he has returned home"

Luke 15:25

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Jesus starts to tell about the older son in a new part of the story.

out in the field

It is implied that he was out in the field because he was working there.

Luke 15:26

one of the servants

The word that is translated here as "servant" is normally translated as "boy." It may indicate that the servant was very young.

what these things might be

"what was happening"

Luke 15:27

the fattened calf

A calf is a young cow. People would give one of their calves special food so that it would grow well, and then when they wanted to have a special feast, they would eat that calf. See how you translated this phrase in [Luke 15:23]

he has received him in good health

"your father has received your brother, and your brother is healthy" or "your brother is well and has returned to your father"

Luke 15:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 15:29

these many years

"for many years"

I slaved for you

"I worked extremely hard for you" or "I worked as hard as a slave for you"

never neglected a command of yours

"never disobeyed any of your commands" or "always obeyed everything you told me to do"

a young goat

A young goat was smaller and less expensive than a fatted calf. Alternate translation: "even a young goat"

Luke 15:30

your son

"that son of yours." The older son refers to his brother this way in order to show how angry he is.

devoured your living

Food is a metaphor for money. After one eats food, the food is no longer there and there is nothing to eat. The money that the brother had received was no longer there and there was no more to spend. Alternate translation: "wasted all your wealth" or "thrown away all your money"

with prostitutes

Possible meanings are 1) he assumed this is how his brother spent the money or 2) he speaks of prostitutes to exaggerate the sinfulness of his brother's actions in the "country far away"

fattened calf

A calf is a young cow. People would give one of their calves special food so that it would grow well, and then when they wanted to have a special feast, they would eat that calf. See how you translated this phrase in [Luke 15:23]

Luke 15:31

The father said to him

The word "him" refers to the older son.

Child

"My dear child" or "My dear son." The father was addressing his son tenderly.

Luke 15:32

this brother of yours

The father was reminding the older son that the one who just came home was his brother.

this brother of yours was dead, and is now alive

This metaphor speaks of the brother being gone as if he were dead. See how you translated this phrase in [Luke 15:24]

he was lost, and has now been found

This metaphor speaks of the son being gone as if he had been lost. See how you translated this phrase in [Luke 15:24]

Chapter 16

Luke 16 General Notes

Links:

[Luke 16:1 Notes](#)

Luke 16

16:1-13

What was a manager?

[16:1]

A manager took care of a master's house, land, and business. A master gave the manager a ring. This was a symbol that he had permission to do things for the master. Sometimes managers were servants but sometimes they were free people.

See: Serve

What was meant by the words, "to dig"?

[16:3]

Jesus spoke about digging. Some scholars think he was speaking about digging ditches or digging in the fields using a shovel. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about doing any type of hard work.

How did the manager change what the debtors owed his master?

[16:6, 16:7]

The manager changed what the debtor owed his master. Scholars do not know how the the manager did this.

Some scholars think he wrote that the people owed less money than they owed.

Some scholars think he did not make them pay more money than they owed. They think the owner charged them more interest than he should have.

Some scholars think he would have made money from these people. However, he chose not to make money from them.

The master did not lose any money.

Advice to translators: A debtor is someone who owed someone else money. When someone borrows money, they often have to pay more money back. This is called interest.

What was an "unrighteous manager"?

[16:8]

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Steward

How did the master "commend" the unrighteous manager?

[16:8]

Scholars think that when the master "commended" the manager, he complimented the manager for acting shrewdly.

Advice to Translators: The master did not compliment the manager for acting dishonestly. You will need to distinguish acting "shrewdly" from acting dishonestly.

What did it mean to act "shrewdly"?

[16:8]

When someone acted "shrewdly", they acted with wisdom and skill in the face of a coming problem or crisis. Some scholars think it meant to act in a way that was prudent and they planned for things.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

What was "unrighteous wealth"?

[16:9]

Money that was considered "unrighteous wealth" was money gained from doing evil.

See: Sin

Why did Jesus tell the disciples to make friends "by means of unrighteous wealth"?

[16:9]

Jesus told his disciples to use the money they gained on earth in a way that helped people who were in need. Jesus wanted his disciples to help people because those people might become friends of the disciples. Those friends might then believe in Jesus.

See: Disciple

Who were the "friends" who will welcome the disciples into eternal dwellings?

[16:9]

Scholars have different ideas of who the "friends" are who will welcome the disciples into eternal dwellings.

These friends were poor people whom the disciples helped. These poor people became Christians and died before the disciples. Then these poor people welcomed the disciples into heaven when the disciples died.
These friends were angels. This was a metaphor for God. They spoke about God without saying the name of God.
However, the angels will also welcome the disciples into heaven.
These friends were God and Jesus. Only God and Jesus will receive people into heaven.

See: Eternal Life; Disciple; Heaven; Angel; Metaphor
How did Jesus want the disciples to be “faithful”?

[16:10]

Jesus wanted the disciples to be “faithful”(πιστός/g4103) by being honest with money (see: 16:11). Then God will give them true wealth. This is a metaphor for the treasures and blessings in heaven. This is really valuable and will last forever.

See: Faithful; Bless (Blessing); Heaven; Metaphor

What did Jesus mean when he told the disciples, “you cannot serve God and wealth”?

[16:13]

Jesus said the disciples were not able to serve God and wealth. This was a metaphor. They could not serve a master other than God. If the disciples served someone or something other than God, they did not serve God. Jesus wanted his disciples to serve God only. Jesus said this more than one time (see: Matthew 6:24).

See: Metaphor; Disciple

16:14-18

What did it mean that the Pharisees were lovers of money?

[16:14]

Luke wrote that the Pharisees loved money. Scholars think that someone who was described as a lover of money was a person who wanted to get more and more money. This person really wanted to have a lot of money.

See: 1 Timothy 6:10; 2 Timothy 3:2

See: Pharisees

How did the Pharisees justify themselves to other people?

[16:15]

The Pharisees justified themselves to other people by doing certain things so people could see them doing these things. They gave people money because people saw them give money. They did these things to try to make people think they were righteous. However, that did not justify them to God.

See: Pharisees; Justify (Justification); Righteous (Righteousness)

What was meant by the words, “God knows your hearts”?

[16:15]

God knows someone’s heart. That is, he knows what a person is thinking and what a person wants. God knew these Pharisees loved money rather than God.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Pharisees; Love

What did Jesus mean when he said, “that which is exalted among men is detestable in the sight of God”?

[16:15]

Jesus said, “that which is exalted among men is detestable in the sight of God”. Jesus was speaking about the things people thought were valuable or to be admired. These were not the things God wanted them to do.

See: World; Sin

What were the Law and the prophets?

[16:16]

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What was the gospel of the kingdom of God?

[16:16]

See: Gospel; Kingdom of God; Preach (Preacher)

How do people try to force their way into the kingdom of God?

[16:16]

Jesus said that people tried to force their way into the kingdom of God. Scholars disagree about what Jesus said.

Some scholars think people who believed in Jesus wanted to enter the kingdom of God.

Some scholars think both Christians and non-Christians wanted to enter the kingdom of God.

Some scholars think non-Christians tried to force their way into the kingdom of God but they were not able to get into it.

Some scholars think people tried to fight a war to bring the kingdom of God to earth.

Some scholars think Jesus warned people to enter the kingdom of God because not all people will enter into it.

Some scholars think the Pharisees tried to stop people from entering into the kingdom of God. Demons also tried to stop people from entering into it. Disciples opposed them.

See: Kingdom of God; Pharisees; Demon; Disciple

What was Jesus talking about when he talked about the Law becoming invalid?

[16:17]

Jesus talked about the Law of Moses becoming invalid. Some scholars think he was talking about certain parts of the Law of Moses. However, some parts of the Law of Moses still need to be followed. Other scholars think the Law of Moses ended when Jesus became alive again.

See: Law of Moses; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What is adultery?

[16:18]

See: Adultery

16:19-31

Why was the man described as being “clothed in purple and fine linen”?

[16:19]

When Jesus spoke about the rich man being “clothed in purple and fine linen,” he wanted people to know that this man was as rich as a king. For only kings and very rich people could buy this type of clothing.

What did it mean that Lazarus was laid at the rich man’s gate?

[16:20]

Lazarus was laid at the rich man’s gate. Some scholars think Lazarus was laid on his mat at the opening to the rich man’s home in hopes that the rich man would give food or money to Lazarus. Other scholars think Lazarus was thrown down or dropped off at the gate to the rich man’s house. They think he was dumped there so he could beg for money from the rich man.

Advice to Translators: A beggar was someone who asked people for money because they were poor or because they could not do anything.

What did Jesus mean when he said Lazarus was “longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table”?

[16:21]

Lazarus was “longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table.” Scholars think Lazarus was so hungry that he waited every day for the servants of the rich man to toss the food scraps out to the dogs and beggars.

Advice to translators: Food scraps were food that was not eaten and thrown away or put in the garbage.

Why did the dogs lick Lazarus’ sores?

[16:21]

The dogs licked Lazarus’ sores. Scholars think this was because Lazarus was too sick to stop them. Some scholars also think it helped ease Lazarus’ pain from his sores.

What did it mean that Lazarus was “carried away by the angels to Abraham’s side”?

[16:22]

“Abraham’s side” is another name for “heaven.”

See: Heaven

Where is Hades?

[16:23]

See: Hades (Sheol)

What was a “great chasm”?

[16:26]

Scholars think Jesus used the words “great chasm” to talk about a distance that cannot be crossed.

Why did the rich man call Abraham “Father Abraham”?

[16:27]

The rich man called Abraham “Father Abraham” because Abraham was the ancestor of all Jewish people.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

What did Abraham mean when he said, “They have Moses and the prophets”?

[16:29]

Many scholars think that “Moses and the prophets” spoke and wrote enough to teach the rich man’s brothers about God.

Luke 16:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins telling another parable. It is about a master and the manager of his debtors. This is still the same part of the story and the same day that began in [Luke 15:3]

Jesus also said to the disciples

The last section was directed at Pharisees and scribes, though Jesus’s disciples may have been part of the crowd listening.

There was a certain rich man

This introduces a new character in the parable.

it was reported to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “people reported to the rich man”

wasting his possessions

“foolishly managing the rich man’s wealth”

Luke 16:2

What is this that I hear about you?

The rich man uses a question to scold the manager.
Alternate translation: "I have heard what you are doing."
Give an account of your management

"Set your records in order to pass on to someone else" or
"Prepare the records you have written about my money"
Luke 16:3

What should I do ... job?

The manager asks this question of himself, as a means of
reviewing his options. Alternate translation: "I need to
think about what I should do ... job."

my master

This refers to the wealthy man. The manager was not a
slave. Alternate translation: "my employer"

I do not have strength to dig

"I am not strong enough to dig the ground" or "I am not
able to dig"

Luke 16:4

when I am removed from my management job

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"when I lose my management job" or "when my master
takes away my management job"

people will welcome me into their houses

This implies that those people will provide a job, or other
things that he needs to live.

Luke 16:5

his master's debtors

"the people who were in debt to his master" or "the people
who owed things to his master." In this story the debtors
owed olive oil and wheat.

Luke 16:6

He said ... He said to him

"The debtor said ... The manager said to the debtor"

A hundred baths of olive oil ... fifty

A bath is about 22 liters. Alternate translation: "I owe 2,200
liters of olive oil ... 1,100 liters"

hundred ... fifty

"100 ... 50"

Take your bill

A "bill" is a piece of paper that tells how much someone
owes.

Luke 16:7

the manager said to another ... He said ... He said to him

"the manager said to another debtor ... The debtor said ...

The manager said to the debtor"

A hundred cors of wheat

A cor is about 220 liters. You may convert this to a modern
measure. Alternate translation: "I owe 22,000 liters of
wheat" or "I owe one hundred large baskets of wheat"

write eighty

"write eighty cors of wheat." You may convert this to a
modern measure. Alternate translation: "write 17,600 liters
of wheat" or "write eighty large baskets of wheat"

eighty

"80"

Luke 16:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling the parable about the master and the
manager of his debtors. In verse 9, Jesus continues to teach
his disciples.

The master then commended

The text does not say how the master learned of the
manager's action.

commended

"praised" or "spoke well of" or "approved of"

he had acted shrewdly

"he had acted cleverly" or "he had done a sensible thing"

the sons of this world

This refers to those who, like the unrighteous manager, do
not know or care about God. Alternate translation: "the
people of this world" or "worldly people"

the sons of light

Here "light" is a metaphor for everything godly. Alternate
translation: "the people of God" or "godly people"

Luke 16:9

I say to you

"I" refers to Jesus. The phrase "I say to you" marks the end
of the story and now Jesus tells the people how to apply the
story to their lives.

make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth

The focus here is on using the money to help other people.

Alternate translation: "make people your friends by helping
them with worldly wealth"

by means of unrighteous wealth

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus uses hyperbole when he
calls money "unrighteous" because it has no eternal value.

Alternate translation: "by using money, which has no
eternal value" or "by using worldly money" or 2) Jesus uses
metonymy when he calls money "unrighteous" because
people sometimes earn it or use it in unrighteous ways.

Alternate translation: "by using even money that you
earned dishonestly"

they may welcome

Possible meanings are 1) "the friends you helped with your
money may welcome" or 2) "God and his angels may
welcome"

eternal dwellings

This refers to heaven, where God lives.

Luke 16:10

He who is faithful ... is also faithful ... he who is unrighteous ... is also
unrighteous

"People who are faithful ... are also faithful ... people who
are unrighteous ... are also unrighteous." This would
include women.

faithful in very little

"faithful even with small things." Make sure this does not
sound like they are not very faithful.

unrighteous in very little

"unrighteous even in small things." Make sure this does not
sound like they are not often unrighteous.

Luke 16:11

unrighteous wealth

See how you translated this in [Luke 16:9]

who will trust you with true wealth?

Jesus uses a question to teach the people. Alternate
translation: "no one will trust you with true wealth." or "no
one will give you true wealth to manage."

true wealth

This refers to wealth that is more genuine, real, or lasting

than money.

Luke 16:12

who will give you money of your own?

Jesus uses this question to teach the people. Alternate translation: "no one will give you wealth for yourself."

Luke 16:13

No servant can

"A servant cannot"

serve two masters

It is implied that he cannot "serve two different masters at the same time"

for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other

These two clauses are essentially the same. The only significant difference is that the first master is hated in the first case, but the second master is hated in the second case. he will hate

"the servant will hate"

be devoted to one

"love one very strongly"

despise the other

"hold the other in contempt" or "hate the other"

despise

This means essentially the same as "hate" in the previous clause.

You cannot serve

Jesus was talking to a group of people, so languages that have a plural form of "you" would use that.

Luke 16:14

General Information:

This is a break in Jesus teachings, as verse 14 tells us background information about how the Pharisees ridiculed Jesus. In verse 15, Jesus continues teaching and responds to the Pharisees.

Now

This word marks a shift to the background information.

who were lovers of money

"who loved having money" or "who where very greedy for money"

they ridiculed him

"the Pharisees ridiculed Jesus"

Luke 16:15

He said to them

"And Jesus said to the Pharisees"

You justify yourselves in the sight of men

"You make yourselves look good to other people"

God knows your hearts

Here "hearts" refers to the desires of people. Alternate translation: "God understands your true desires" or "God knows your motives"

That which is exalted among men is detestable in the sight of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Those things that men think are very important are things that God hates"

Luke 16:16

The law and the prophets

This refers to all of God's word that had been written up to that time.

were in effect

"had authority" or "were what people needed to obey"

John came

This refers to John the Baptist. Alternate translation: "John the Baptist came"

the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am teaching people about the good news of the kingdom of God"

everyone tries to force their way into it

This refers to the people who were listening to and accepting the teaching of Jesus. Alternate translation: "many people are doing everything they can to enter it"

Luke 16:17

it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the law to become invalid

This contrast could be stated in the reverse order. Alternate translation: "even the smallest stroke of the letter of the law will last longer than heaven and earth will exist"

than for one stroke of a letter

A "stroke" is the smallest part of a letter. It refers to something in the law that may seem to be insignificant.

Alternate translation: "than for even the smallest detail of the law"

become invalid

"disappear" or "cease to exist"

Luke 16:18

Everyone who divorces his wife

"Anyone who divorces his wife" or "Any man who divorces his wife"

commits adultery

"is guilty of adultery"

he who marries one

"any man who marries a woman"

Luke 16:19

General Information:

These verses give background information about the story Jesus begins to tell about the rich man and Lazarus.

Connecting Statement:

As Jesus continues teaching the people he begins to tell a story. It is about a rich man and Lazarus.

Now

This marks a shift in Jesus's speech as he begins to tell a story that will help people understand what he was teaching them.

a certain rich man

This phrase introduces a person in Jesus's story. It is not clear if this is a real person or if it is simply a person in a story that Jesus tells in order to make a point.

who was clothed in purple and fine linen

"who wore clothing made with fine linen and purple dye" or "who wore very expensive clothes." Purple dye and fine linen cloth were very expensive.

was enjoying every day his great wealth

"enjoyed eating expensive food every day" or "continued to spend much money, buying whatever he desired"

Luke 16:20

A certain beggar named Lazarus was laid at his gate

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"People had laid a certain beggar named Lazarus at his

gate"

A certain beggar named Lazarus

This phrase introduces another person in Jesus's story. It is not clear if this is a real person or simply a person in a story that Jesus tells in order to make a point.

at his gate

"at the gate to the rich man's house" or "at the entrance to the rich man's property"

covered with sores

"with sores all over his body"

Luke 16:21

longing to eat what fell

"wishing he could eat the scraps of food that fell"

Even the dogs came

The word "Even" here shows that what follows is worse than what has already been told about Lazarus. Alternate translation: "In addition to that, the dogs came" or "Worse yet, the dogs came"

dogs

The Jews considered dogs to be unclean animals. Lazarus was too sick and weak to stop the dogs from licking his wounds.

Luke 16:22

It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark an event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

was carried away by the angels

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the angels carried him away"

to Abraham's side

This implies that Abraham and Lazarus were reclining next to each other at a feast, which was a customary style of feasting. The joy in heaven is often represented in the scriptures by the idea of a feast.

was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people buried him"

Luke 16:23

at his side

This implies that Abraham and Lazarus were reclining next to each other at a feast, which was the customary style of feasting. The joy in heaven is often represented in the scriptures by the idea of a feast.

in Hades, being in torment

"he went to Hades, where, suffering in terrible pain"

he lifted up his eyes

This idiom means "he looked up"

Luke 16:24

he cried out and said

"the rich man called out to say" or "he shouted out to Abraham"

Father Abraham

Abraham was the ancestor of all the Jews, including the rich man.

have mercy on me

"please have pity on me" or "please be merciful to me"

and send Lazarus

"by sending Lazarus" or "and tell Lazarus to come to me"

he may dip the tip of his finger

This indicates the smallness of the amount requested.

Alternate translation: "he may wet the tip of his finger"

I am in anguish in this flame

"I am in terrible pain in this flame" or "I am suffering terribly in this fire"

Luke 16:25

Child

The rich man was one of Abraham's descendants.

good things

"fine things" or "pleasant things"

in like manner evil things

"in like manner received evil things" or "in like manner received things that caused him to suffer"

in like manner

This refers the fact that they both received something while they lived on earth. It is not saying that what they received was the same. Alternate translation: "while he was living received"

he is comforted here

"he is comfortable here" or "he is happy here"

in agony

"suffering"

Luke 16:26

Besides all this

"In addition to this reason"

a great chasm has been put in place

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has placed a huge ravine between you and us"

a great chasm

"a steep, deep and wide valley" or "a big separation" or "a huge ravine"

those who want to cross over ... cannot

"those people who want to cross over the chasm ... cannot" or "if anyone wants to cross over ... he cannot"

Luke 16:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 16:28

in order that he may warn them

"so that Lazarus may warn them"

this place of torment

"this place where we suffer torment" or "this place where we suffer terrible pain"

Luke 16:29

They have Moses and the prophets

It is implied that Abraham refused to send Lazarus to the rich man's brothers. This could be stated. Alternate translation: "No, I will not do that, because your brothers have what Moses and the prophets wrote long ago"

Moses and the prophets

This refers to their writings. Alternate translation: "what Moses and the prophets wrote"

let them listen to them

"your brothers should pay attention to Moses and the prophets"

Luke 16:30

if someone would go to them from the dead

The rich man would like this to happen. Alternate

translation: "if a person who has died would go to them" or "if someone who has died would go and warn them" from the dead

The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. Alternate translation: "from among all those who have died"

Luke 16:31

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling the story about the rich man and Lazarus.

If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets

Here "Moses and the prophets" represent the things that

they wrote. Alternate translation: "If they do not pay attention to what Moses and the prophets wrote"

neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "neither will a person who comes back from the dead be able to convince them" or "they will not believe even if a person comes back from the dead"

rises from the dead

The words "the dead" speak of all dead people together in the underworld. To rise from among them is to become alive again.

Chapter 17

Luke 17 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Old Testament Examples

Jesus used the lives of Noah and of Lot to teach his followers. Noah was ready for the flood when it came, and they needed to be ready for him to return, because he would not warn them when he came. Lot's wife loved the evil city she had been living in so much that God also punished her when he destroyed it, and they needed to love Jesus more than anything else,

Those who read your translation may need help so they can understand what Jesus was teaching here.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Jesus asked his disciples three questions ([Luke 17:7-9](#)) to teach them that even those who serve him well are righteous only because of his grace. (See: [and grace and righteous](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in this chapter: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will save it" ([Luke 17:33](#)).

Links:

[Luke 17:1 Notes](#)

Luke 17

17:1-10

What is "woe"?

[17:1]

See: [Woe](#)

What was a "millstone"?

[17:2]

A millstone was a large, heavy round stone used to grind grain. The grain was ground between two stones. The top stone was the millstone. The millstone was often turned by a large animal.

Who were the little ones?

[17:2]

In the Bible, the little ones were often the children (see: [Matthew 18:1-22](#)). Here, some scholars think Jesus was speaking about Christians who had recently believed in Jesus. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about those people who were poor and needed people to help them.

Who was a "brother"?

[17:3]

When Jesus spoke about a brother, he was speaking about Christians.

See: [Family of God](#)

What did it mean to "rebuke" a brother?

[17:3]

When someone "rebuked" a brother, he corrected his brother and told him that what he had done was wrong.

How did someone repent?

[17:3]

See: Repent (Repentance)

What was meant by the words, “if he sins against you seven times in the day”?

[17:4]

Jesus wanted the disciples to forgive another person as often as they sinned and repented. Some scholars think that when Jesus said to forgive seven times, he was speaking about always forgiving someone. Other scholars think Jesus was talking about seven different kinds of sins and a brother was to forgive all types of sins.

See: Repent (Repentance); Sin; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

Why did the apostles say, “Increase our faith”?

[17:5]

The apostles asked Jesus to increase their faith. Scholars think that when the apostles said “increase our faith”, they were asking Jesus to help them. They wanted Jesus to help them have more confidence in God. They wanted Jesus to help them trust and believe in God even more.

See: Apostle; Faith (Believe in)

What did it mean to have “faith like a mustard seed”?

[17:6]

Jesus spoke to his disciples about having “faith like a mustard seed”. This was a metaphor. A mustard seed is a very, very small seed. However, this very small seed grows into a large tree (see: Luke 13:18-19). Jesus was telling his disciples that even if a person’s faith is small, it can do great things.

See: Disciple; Metaphor; Faith (Believe in)

What was a mulberry tree?

[17:6]

A mulberry tree was a tree where Jesus and the disciples lived. It was a large tree and had many roots.

See: Disciple

What did it mean for a servant to “put a belt around his clothes”?

[17:8]

A servant “put a belt around his clothes”. Some scholars think the servant removed his clothes for working in the field and put on the clothes for serving meals. Other scholars think he put something over his clothes before serving other people food.

See: Serve

Why did Jesus want the apostles to say they were “unworthy servants”?

[17:10]

Jesus wanted the disciples to say that they were “unworthy servants.” They did not think they were greater than other people. They wanted to serve other people. They did not want other people to honor them.

See: Serve; Disciple; Humble (Humility)

17:11-19

Where were Jerusalem, Samaria, and Galilee?

[17:11]

See Map: Jerusalem; Samaria; Galilee

Why did the lepers say to Jesus, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us”?

[17:13]

When the lepers asked Jesus to have mercy on them, they were asking Jesus to have compassion on them. Some scholars think they wanted Jesus to heal them. Other scholars do not think they were asking Jesus to heal them.

See: Leprosy (Leper); Mercy; Miracle

Why did Jesus tell the lepers to go to the priests?

[17:14]

At this time, only the priests in the temple could say that someone no longer had leprosy. The priest would then declare the person to be clean (see: Leviticus 14:1-32).

See: Leprosy (Leper); Priest (Priesthood); Temple; Clean and Unclean

How did Jesus cleanse the lepers?

[17:14, 17:15]

Scholars think Jesus healed the lepers by speaking.

See: Leprosy (Leper); Miracle

Who were the Samaritans?

[17:16]

See: Samaria

Why did Jesus tell the Samaritan man his faith made him “well”?

[17:19]

Jesus said, "Your faith has made you well." Scholars think the leper was healed because he believed that Jesus would heal him. He would not have leprosy anymore.

17:20-37

Why did the Pharisees ask when the kingdom of God will come?

[17:20]

The Pharisees asked when the kingdom of God will come.

Some scholars think the Pharisees tried to make Jesus tell them a specific date when the kingdom of God would come. If he did this, and the kingdom of God did not come, then they could tell people that Jesus is not the messiah. Some scholars think the Pharisees wanted to know how to predict when God's kingdom will come.

See: Kingdom of God; Pharisees; Messiah (Christ)

How was the kingdom of God "within" you?

[17:21]

Jesus said that the kingdom of God was "within" or "among" (ἐντός/g1787) you.

The kingdom of God was "among" the people already because Jesus was among them.

The kingdom of God will come suddenly in the future. It will be "among" them. There will be no signs to warn them of its coming.

The kingdom of God was "within" the hearts of people who believed in Jesus. That is, when people obeyed God, then God ruled them in a certain way.

See: Kingdom of God; Sign; Heart (Metaphor)

What was "one of the days of the Son of Man"?

[17:22]

Jesus spoke about "one of the days of the Son of Man".

Some scholars think this was the days when the Messiah will be ruling over all things.

Some scholars think this was the day on which Jesus, the Messiah will return to the earth, at his second coming.

Some scholars think the disciples wanted to see the kingdom of the Messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth; Disciple; Kingdom of God; Day of the Lord

Why did Jesus talk about lightning flashing from one part of the sky to another part?

[17:24]

On the day of the Son of Man, there will be lightning in the sky. That is, everyone will see Jesus return in the same way they see the brightness of lightning. Jesus will return suddenly in the same way lightning is sudden.

See: Son of Man; Day of the Lord; Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Jesus speak about being "rejected by this generation"?

[17:25]

Jesus spoke about being rejected by this generation. Jesus was telling his disciples he must first be rejected by the people who were living at this time. That is, he would be rejected by the Jewish people.

See: Generation; Disciple

What were the days of Noah?

[17:26]

The "days of Noah" were to the days in which Noah lived, before the Flood. Perhaps Jesus was speaking specifically about the days just before the flood (see: Genesis 6:5-13).

What were the "days of Lot"?

[17:28]

The "days of Lot" were the days when Lot lived, before God destroyed the city of Sodom (see: Genesis 19:1-25).

See: Map: Sodom

What was meant by the words, "Lot went out from Sodom"?

[17:29]

Jesus said, "Lot went out from Sodom." That is, Lot left the city of Sodom. Just as God waited for Noah to enter the ark before he destroyed the world with a flood, so God waited until Lot left Sodom before he destroyed the city with fire from heaven.

See: Fire; Heaven

See: Map: Sodom

What did Jesus mean when he said, "After the same manner it will be in the day that the Son of man is revealed"?

[17:30]

Jesus said, "after the same manner." He wanted to say that people will be living normal lives, just as they were before people were punished in Noah's day, and before people were punished in Lot's day. The day that the Son of Man is

“revealed” speaks about when Jesus returns to earth.

Advice to translators: Noah’s day is the time when Noah lived. Lot’s day is the time when Lot lived.

See: Jesus’ Return to Earth; Reveal (Revelation); Day of the Lord.; Son of Man; Punish (Punishment) Reveal (Revelation)

Why did Jesus say, “Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will save it”?

[17:33]

See: Luke 9:24

Why did Jesus say, “one will be taken, and the other will be left”?

[17:34]

Jesus said that, “one will be taken, and the other will be left.” Some scholars think that the people that will be taken are Christians who are taken to a place of safety with Jesus. The people who are left will be punished. Other scholars think the people who will be taken are the people God punishes, and the ones who are left are people who will not be punished.

See: Punish (Punishment); RaptureKingdom of God

Why do scholars think Luke did not write the words in verse 36?

[17:36]

Scholars think Luke did not write the words in verse 36 because most ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not contain the words in verse 36. However, Jesus did say these words in the Book of Matthew (see: Matthew 24:40).

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

What did Jesus mean by saying, “where there is a body, there will (be) vultures”?

[17:37]

Jesus said, “where there is a body, there will (be) vultures.” A vulture is a bird that eats dead animals.They fly over the dead animals before they eat them. Some scholars think Jesus was telling the disciples that punishment comes to wherever evil people are. Other scholars think Jesus was telling his disciples that people would know when Jesus returns to the earth, just as it is obvious there is a dead body because of the vultures flying overhead.

See: Disciple; Punish (Punishment); Jesus’ Return to Earth; Metaphor

Luke 17:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues teaching, but he directs his attention back to his disciples. This is still the same part of the story and the same day that began in Luke 15:3.

It is certain there will be stumbling blocks

"Things that tempt people to sin will certainly happen"

to that person through whom they come

"to anyone who causes the temptations to come" or "to any person who causes people to be tempted"

Luke 17:2

It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble

You may need to make explicit that Jesus is comparing the punishment for causing people to sin to being thrown into the sea. Alternate translation: "It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than that he should suffer the more severe punishment for causing one of these little ones to stumble" or "He would suffer less if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea than if he should cause one of these little ones to stumble"

if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea

This was a terrible punishment. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if they were to put a millstone around his neck and throw him into the sea" or "if someone were to put a heavy stone around his neck and push him into the sea"

for him ... his neck ... he were ... he should

The words "him," "his," and "he" refer to "that person" through whom things that cause people to sin come.

a millstone

This is a very large, heavy circular stone used for grinding wheat grain into flour. Alternate translation: "a heavy stone"

these little ones

This here refers to people whose faith is still weak.

Alternate translation: "these people whose faith is small" to stumble

This was a way of referring to unintentional sin. Alternate translation: "to sin"

Luke 17:3

If your brother sins

This is a conditional statement that talks about an event that will probably happen in the future.

your brother

"brother" is here used in the sense of someone with the same belief. Alternate translation: "a fellow believer"

rebuke him

"tell him strongly that what he did was wrong" or "correct him"

Luke 17:4

seven times in the day, and seven times

The number seven in the Bible is a symbol for completeness. Alternate translation: "many times in a day, and each time"

Luke 17:5

General Information:

There is a brief break in Jesus's teachings as the disciples speak to him. Then Jesus continues teaching.

Increase our faith

"Please give us more faith" or "Please add more faith to our faith"

Luke 17:6

If you had faith like a mustard seed, you

A mustard seed is a very small seed. Jesus implies that they

do not have even a small amount of faith. Alternate translation: "If you had faith that was even as small as a mustard seed, you" or "Your faith is not as big as a mustard seed—but if it were, you"

mulberry tree

If this type of tree is not familiar, it may be helpful to substitute another type of tree. Alternate translation: "fig tree" or "tree"

Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea

These can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Uproot yourself and plant yourself in the sea" or "Take your roots out of the ground, and put your roots down into the ocean"

it would obey you

"the tree would obey you." This result is conditional. It would happen only if they had faith.

Luke 17:7

But which of you, who ... sheep, will say ... sit down to eat?

Jesus asks his disciples a question to help them think about the role of a servant. This could be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "But none of you who ... sheep would say ... sit down to eat."

a servant plowing or keeping sheep

"a servant that plows your field or takes care of your sheep"

Luke 17:8

Will he not say to him ... eat and drink?

Jesus uses a second question explain how the disciples would actually treat a servant. This can be a statement.

Alternate translation: "He would certainly say to him ... eat and drink"

put a belt around your clothes and serve me

"tie your clothes at your waist and serve me" or "dress up properly and take care of me." People would tie their clothes closely around their waist so that their clothes would not get in their way while they worked.

Then afterward

"Then after you serve me"

Luke 17:9

He does not thank the servant ... commanded, does he?

Jesus uses this question to show how people treat servants. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "He would not thank the servant ... commanded."

the things that were commanded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things you commanded him to do"

does he?

"right?" or "is this not true?"

Luke 17:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes teaching. This is the end of this part of the story.

you also

Jesus was speaking to his disciples, so languages that have a plural form of "you" would use it.

that you are commanded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God has commanded you"

We are unworthy servants

This is an exaggeration to express that they did not do

anything worthy of praise. Alternate translation: "We are ordinary slaves" or "We servants do not deserve your praise"

Luke 17:11

General Information:

This begins the story of Jesus healing 10 men of leprosy.

It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new event. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

as he traveled to Jerusalem

"as Jesus and the disciples were traveling to Jerusalem"

Luke 17:12

General Information:

This is the beginning of the background information and the setting of the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers.

a certain village

This phrase does not identify the village.

there he was met by ten men who were lepers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "ten men who were lepers met him" or "ten men who had leprosy met him"

They stood far away from him

This was a respectful gesture, because lepers were not allowed to approach other people.

Luke 17:13

General Information:

This is the end of the background information and the setting of the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers.

they lifted up their voices

The idiom "to lift up one's voice" means to speak loudly.

Alternate translation: "they called with loud voices" or "they called aloud"

have mercy on us

They were specifically asking to be healed. Alternate translation: "please show us mercy by healing us"

Luke 17:14

show yourselves to the priests

Lepers were required to have the priests verify that their leprosy was healed. Alternate translation: "show yourselves to the priests so they can examine you"

they were cleansed

When people were healed, they were no longer ceremonially unclean. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "they were healed of their leprosy and so became clean" or "they were cured of their leprosy"

Luke 17:15

saw that he was healed

"realized that he was healed" or "realized that Jesus had healed him"

he turned back

"he went back to Jesus"

with a loud voice glorifying God

"and glorified God loudly"

Luke 17:16

He fell on his face at Jesus' feet

"he knelt down and put his face close to Jesus' feet." He did this to honor Jesus.

Now he was a Samaritan

The word "now" is used to mark a break in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about the man who returned to Jesus.

Luke 17:17

Then Jesus said

Jesus responded to what the man did, but he was speaking to the group of people around him. Alternate translation: "So Jesus said to the crowd"

Were not the ten cleansed?

This is the first of three rhetorical questions. Jesus used them to show the people around him how surprised and disappointed he was that only one of the ten men came back to glorify God. Alternate translation: "Ten men were healed." or "God healed ten men."

Where are the nine?

"Why did not the other nine come back?" This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "The other nine men should have come back, too."

Luke 17:18

Were there no others who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "There were no others who returned to give glory to God, except this foreigner!" or "God healed ten men, yet only this foreigner came back to give glory to God!"

this foreigner

Samaritans had non-Jewish ancestors and they did not worship God in the same way that the Jews did.

Luke 17:19

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Jesus healing the 10 lepers.

Your faith has made you well

"Because of your faith you have become well." The idea of "faith" can be expressed with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "Because you believe, you are well again"

Luke 17:20

General Information:

We do not know where this event takes place; it simply happens one day when Jesus is talking with the Pharisees.

Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come,

This is the beginning of a new event. Some translations start it with "One day" or "Once." It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, 'When will the kingdom of God come?'"

The kingdom of God does not come with careful observing

People thought that they would be able to see signs of the kingdom coming. The idea of signs can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "The kingdom of God does not come with signs that people can observe"

Luke 17:21

the kingdom of God is within you

The idea of the noun "kingdom" can be expressed with the verb "rules." Alternate translation: "God rules within you"

the kingdom of God is within you

Jesus was speaking to the religious leaders who were hostile to him. Possible meanings are 1) the word "you" refers to people in general. Alternate translation: "the kingdom of God is within people" or 2) the word translated

"within" means "among." Alternate translation: "the kingdom of God is among you"

Luke 17:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to teach his disciples.

The days are coming when

The idea of days days coming represents something being soon. Alternate translation: "A time is coming when" or

"Soon"

you will desire to see

"you will want very much to see" or "you will wish to experience"

one of the days of the Son of Man

This refers to the kingdom of God. Alternate translation:

"one of the days when the Son of Man will rule as king"

the Son of Man

Jesus is speaking about himself.

but you will not see it

"you will not experience it"

Luke 17:23

Look, there! Look, here!

This refers to seeking the Messiah. Alternate translation:

"Look, the Messiah is over there! He is over here!"

do not go out or run after them

The purpose of going out can be stated clearly. Alternate

translation: "do not go with them to look"

Luke 17:24

as the lightning shines brightly ... so will the Son of Man be

When lightning flashes, people can see it clearly. This is a metaphor for the way the Son of Man will appear: when he

does, everyone will see him clearly. Alternate translation:

"as the people can see lightning clearly when it flashes ... so they will clearly see the Son of Man"

so will the Son of Man be in his day

This refers to the future kingdom of God. Alternate

translation: "it will be like that on the day when the Son of Man comes to reign"

so will the Son of Man be

Jesus speaks of himself in the third person. Alternate

translation: "so will I, the Son of Man, be"

Luke 17:25

But first he must suffer

"But first the Son of Man must suffer." Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

be rejected by this generation

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people of this generation must reject him"

Luke 17:26

As it happened ... even so will it also happen

"As people were doing things ... even so people will be doing the same things"

in the days of Noah

The "days of Noah" refers to the time during Noah's life just before God punished the people of the world. Alternate

translation: "when Noah was living"

in the days of the Son of Man

The "days of the Son of Man" refers to the period just before the Son of Man will come. Alternate translation: "when the

Son of Man is about to come"

Luke 17:27

They ate, they drank, they married, and they were given in marriage
People were doing ordinary things. They did not know or care that God was about to judge them.

they were given in marriage

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"parents were allowing their daughters to marry men"

the ark

"the ship" or "the barge"

destroyed them all

This does not include Noah and his family who were in the ark. Alternate translation: "destroyed all those who were not in the boat"

Luke 17:28

they were eating and drinking

"the people of Sodom were eating and drinking"

Luke 17:29

it rained fire and sulfur from heaven

"fire and burning sulfur fell from the sky like rain"

destroyed them all

This does not include Lot and his family. Alternate translation: "destroyed all those who stayed in the city"

Luke 17:30

After the same manner it will be

"It will be like that." Alternate translation: "In the same way people will not be ready"

in the day that the Son of Man is revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"when the Son of Man appears" or "when the Son of man comes"

the Son of Man is revealed

Jesus is speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, am revealed"

Luke 17:31

let him who is on the housetop not go down

"whoever is on the housetop must not go down" or "if anyone is on his housetop, he must not go down." This is a statement of what people should not do, not a command to the hearers.

on the housetop

Their housetops were flat and people could walk or sit on them.

his goods

"his possessions" or "his things"

return

They are not to go back to the house to get anything. They are to flee quickly.

Luke 17:32

Remember Lot's wife

"Remember what happened to Lot's wife" This is a warning. She looked back toward Sodom and God punished her along with the people of Sodom. Alternate translation: "Do

not do what Lot's wife did"

Luke 17:33

Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it

"People who try save their lives will lose them" or

"Whoever tries to save his old way of life will lose his life"

but whoever loses his life will save it

"but people who lose their lives will save them" or "but

whoever abandons his old way of life will save his life"

Luke 17:34

I tell you

As Jesus continues to address his disciples, he emphasizes the importance of what he is telling them.

in that night

This refers to what will happen if he, the Son of Man, comes during the night.

there will be two people in one bed

The emphasis is not on these two people, but on the fact that some people will be taken away and the others will be left.

bed

"couch" or "cot"

One will be taken, and the other will be left

"One person will be taken and the other person will be left behind." This can be stated in active form. Alternate

translation: "God will take one person and leave the other"

or "Angels will take one and leave behind the other"

Luke 17:35

There will be two women grinding grain together

The emphasis is not on these two women or their activity, but on the fact that some people will be taken away and the others will be left.

grinding grain together

"grinding grain together"

Luke 17:36

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 17:37

General Information:

The disciples ask Jesus a question about his teaching and he answers them.

Where, Lord?

"Lord, where will this happen?"

Where there is a body, there will the vultures also be gathered together

Apparently this is a proverb that means "It will be obvious" or "You will know it when it happens." Alternate

translation: "As vultures gathering shows that there is a dead body, so these things show that the Son of Man is

coming"

vultures

Vultures are large birds that fly together and eat the flesh of dead animals that they find. You could describe these birds this way or use the word for local birds that do this.

Chapter 18

Luke 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Jesus told two parables ([Luke 18:1-8](#) and [Luke 18:9-14](#)) and then taught that his followers were to be humble ([Luke 18:15-17](#)), to use everything they owned to help the poor ([Luke 18:18-30](#)), and to expect him to die soon ([Luke 18:31-34](#)).

Then they all began to walk to Jerusalem, and Jesus healed a blind man ([Luke 18:35-43](#)).

Special concepts in this chapter

Judges

People expected judges always to do what God said was right and to make sure that other people did what was right. But some judges did not care about doing right or making sure others did right. Jesus called this kind of judge unjust. (See: justice)

Pharisees and tax collectors

The Pharisees thought that they themselves were the best examples of righteous good people, and they thought that tax collectors were the most unrighteous sinners. (See: righteous and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[Luke 18:1 Notes](#)

Luke 18

18:1-8

What was a parable?

[18:1]

See: Parable

Why did Jesus talk about the judge and the widow?

[18:2, 18:3]

Jesus talked about the judge and the widow so that his disciples will pray again and again for God to bring justice to the earth when Jesus returns. Jesus also wanted the disciples to always know God hears their prayers. Some scholars think God will quickly bring justice for Christians. The unjust judge was slow to bring justice but God will not be slow. Other scholars think God will be slow to bring justice for Christians. God is patient and he does not judge a Christian's sins right away, or he limits the ability of people to persecute Christians. Other scholars think God is slow to bring justice but when Jesus returns he will bring justice quickly.

See: Justice (Just, Unjust); Disciple; Jesus' Return to Earth; People of God; Persecute (Persecution)

How does someone fear God?

[18:4]

See: Fear of God

Who were God's chosen ones?

[18:7]

God's chosen ones were the disciples or people who followed Jesus.

When will the Son of Man come?

[18:8]

See: Son of Man; Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Jesus ask, "will he indeed find faith on the earth"?

[18:8]

Jesus asked about finding faith on earth. Some scholars think Jesus was asking if people will believe that he is the Messiah. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about people believing that God will bring justice quickly. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about people believing that he will return to the earth.

See: Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth; Faith (Believe in)

18:9-14

Why did Jesus talk about the Pharisee and the tax collector?

[18:10]

Jesus talked about the Pharisee and the tax collector because he warned people not to think they were doing something that honored God when they hated other people. The Pharisee listed sins he did not do, but other people did these sins. The Pharisee also fasted more times than the Law of Moses said they needed to fast. They also tithed on everything. He stood in the temple so that other people saw him when he prayed. However, he was not at peace with God. God did not think he did the right things.

On the other hand, the tax collector stood away from people and did not think he was able to look at God. He hit his chest because he was ashamed of his sins. Jesus said he was justified. That is, God forgave his sins.

See: Pharisees; Tax (Tax Collector, Toll); Fasting; Law of Moses; Tithe

18:15-17

Why did people bring infants to Jesus?

[18:15]

People brought infants to Jesus for him to bless them. The ancient Jews brought infants to their leaders on the Day of Atonement for their leaders to bless the infants.

See: Matthew 19:13

See: Bless (Blessing); Atone (Atonement)

Why did the disciples rebuke these people?

[18:15]

The disciples rebuke these people. Some scholars think the disciples rebuked these people because they thought Jesus was too tired to bless the infants. Other scholars think the disciples thought Jesus did not have time to bless infants.

See: Disciple; Bless (Blessing)

How did someone receive the kingdom of God?

[18:16]

Someone received the kingdom of God by believing in Jesus in the same way a child believes in Jesus. Children accepted Jesus and trusted him when he blessed them. People did not honor children. Children are humble. That is, they do not think they are greater than they are. Children also trust and depended on their parents.

See: Kingdom of God; Bless (Blessing); Humble (Humility)

18:18-30

Who was the “certain ruler”?

[18:18]

Luke did not write who the “certain ruler” was, but the ruler was young (see: Matthew 19:22). Some scholars think he was a Jewish leader who may have been the leader of a synagogue. Other scholars think he was too young to do that.

See: Synagogue

Why did Jesus say no one is good except God?

[18:19]

Jesus said that no one is good except God.

Some scholars think Jesus wanted the young ruler to know that only God is good. That is, he was telling the young ruler that his goodness was the goodness of God working in him.

Some scholars think the rich young ruler thought Jesus was only a man. He did not think Jesus was good in the same way that God is good. This was because the young ruler did not do what Jesus said.

Other scholars think only God is perfectly holy and righteous. If the rich young ruler wanted to please God he needed to obey God's Son whom God sent.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Righteous (Righteousness); Son of God

Why did Jesus repeat some of the Ten Commandments?

[18:20]

Jesus repeated some of the ten commandments to the young ruler. Some scholars think the young ruler was asking how he could have eternal life through his own power. That is, through doing good things. However, no one except for Jesus has ever been able to keep all of the commandments perfectly, and therefore have eternal life by keeping them.

See: Ten Commandments; Eternal Life; Command (Commandment)

Why did Jesus tell the rich young ruler to sell everything and give the money to the poor?

[18:22]

Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell everything and give the money to the poor because the rich young ruler loved his money and the things he owned. He was not willing to give up everything to follow Jesus. Perhaps Jesus also wanted the young ruler to understand the greater value of being rewarded in heaven.

See: Reward; Heaven

Why do some scholars think Luke did not write “seeing that he had become sad” in verse 24?

[18:24]

Some scholars think Luke did not write “seeing that he had become sad” in verse 24 because some of the oldest Greek copies did not contain them.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

What was the eye of the needle?

[18:25]

The eye of the needle was a small circle on one end of a needle used for sewing cloth. It was very small. The camel was a very large animal. Scholars think Jesus was saying that in the same way it was impossible for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, so it was impossible for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God on his own. That is, he could not be at peace with God without Jesus.

See: Kingdom of God

What did Jesus mean by saying, “things which are impossible with people are possible with God”?

[18:27]

Jesus said, “things which are impossible with people are possible with God.” Scholars think that Jesus was saying that God can do what people cannot do. That is, God makes it possible for a person to be saved, whereas a person cannot possibly save himself.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

How will Jesus reward people?

[18:30]

See: Reward

18:31-34

Who were the twelve?

[18:31]

When Jesus gathered the twelve, he brought the twelve apostles to him. There was a large crowd of people. Jesus wanted to talk to the twelve alone.

See: Apostle; Disciple

Why did Jesus say they are going up to Jerusalem?

[18:31]

Jesus said they are going up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem was on a mountain. They were going to Jerusalem.

See Map: Jerusalem

What were the things written by the prophets about the Son of Man?

[18:31]

Things were written in the prophets about the Son of Man. They said that the Son of Man will suffer (see: Isaiah 53).

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Son of Man

What was meant by the words, “this word was hidden from them”?

[18:34]

Some scholars think that Jesus did not allow the twelve to understand. Other scholars think that because the disciples expected the Messiah to come in a certain way, they could not understand the words of which Jesus spoke.

Where was Jericho?

[18:35]

See Map: Jericho

Why did the blind man ask Jesus to have mercy on him?

[18:38]

The blind man asked Jesus for mercy. The man was asking Jesus to show him compassion and help him. He specifically wanted Jesus to be kind to him and heal him (see: Luke 18:41).

See: Mercy; Miracle

Why did people rebuke this man for crying out to Jesus?

[18:39]

People rebuked this man for crying out to Jesus. Some scholars think they believed Jesus was too important to stop for a blind man. Other scholars think these people thought Jesus was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem. Other scholars think these people knew the Jewish leaders would be angry with people calling Jesus the “Son of David”.

See: Son of David

How did Jesus heal the blind man?

[18:42]

Jesus immediately healed the blind man because the blind man believed in him. When Jesus told him his faith healed him, Jesus healed the blind man. Perhaps Jesus also wanted to say that this man’s faith made him have peace with God.

See: 7:48-50

See: Faith (Believe in)

Luke 18:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to tell a parable as he continues to teach his disciples. This is the same part of the story that began in [Luke 17:20]

Then he

"Then Jesus"

Luke 18:2

saying

A new sentence could begin here (if the comma at the end of the previous verse is changed to a period): "He said"

a certain city

Here "certain city" is a way to let the listener know that the narrative that follows takes place in a city, but the name of the city itself is not important.

did not respect people

"did not care about other people"

Luke 18:3

Now there was a widow

Jesus uses this phrase to introduce a new character to the story.

widow

A widow is a woman whose husband has died and who has not remarried. Jesus's hearers would have thought of her as a person who had no one to protect her from those who wanted to harm her.

she came often to him

The word "him" refers to the judge.

Help me get justice against

"Give me a just ruling against"

my opponent

"my enemy" or "the person who is trying to harm me." This is an opponent in a lawsuit. It is not clear whether the widow is suing the opponent or the opponent is suing the widow.

Luke 18:4

man

This refers here to "people" in general.

Luke 18:5

causes me trouble

"bothers me"

wear me out

"exhaust me"

by her constant coming

"by continually coming to me"

Luke 18:6

General Information:

Jesus has finished telling his parable and is now commenting about it to his disciples.

Listen to what the unjust judge says

"Think about what the unjust judge just said." Translate this in a way that people will understand that Jesus has already told what the judge said.

Luke 18:7

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of an explanation of the parable in Luke 18:1-5.

Now

This word indicates that Jesus has ended the parable and has started explaining its meaning.

will not God also bring ... night?

Jesus uses a question to teach the disciples. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "God will also certainly bring ... night!"

his chosen ones

"the people he has chosen"

Will he delay long over them?

Jesus uses a question to teach the disciples. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "He will certainly not delay long over them!"

Luke 18:8

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the explanation of the parable in Luke 18:1-5 that began in Luke 18:7.

when the Son of Man comes, will he indeed find faith on the earth?

Jesus asks this question so that his hearers will stop thinking that God is slow to help those who call to him for justice and will understand that the real problem is that they do not truly have faith in God. Alternate translation: "when the Son of Man comes, you need to be sure that he will find that you truly have faith in him." or "when the Son

of Man comes, he will find few on earth who believe."

the Son of Man comes, will he indeed find

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man come, will I indeed find"

Luke 18:9

General Information:

Jesus begins to tell another parable to some other people who were persuaded that they themselves were righteous.

Then he

"Then Jesus"

to some

"to some people"

who trusted in themselves that they were righteous

"who had convinced themselves that they were righteous" or "who thought they were righteous"

despised

strongly disliked or hated

Luke 18:10

into the temple

"into the temple courtyard"

Luke 18:11

The Pharisee stood and prayed these things about himself

The meaning of the Greek text of this phrase is not clear.

Possible meanings are 1) "The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself in this way" or 2) "The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed."

robbers

Robbers are people who steal from other people by forcing the other people to give things to them, or by threatening to harm them if they refuse to give what the robbers ask for.

or even like this tax collector

The Pharisees believed that tax collectors were as sinful as robbers, unrighteous people, and adulterers. This could be made explicit. Alternate translation: "and I am certainly not like this sinful tax collector, who cheats people"

Luke 18:12

all that I get

"everything I earn"

Luke 18:13

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling his parable.

standing at a distance

"stood away from the Pharisee." This was a sign of humility. He did not feel worthy to be near the Pharisee.

lift up his eyes to heaven

To "lift up his eyes" means to look at something. Alternate translation: "look toward heaven" or "look upward"

hit his breast

This is a physical expression of great sorrow, and shows this man's repentance and humility. Alternate translation: "hit his breast to show his sorrow"

God, have mercy on me, a sinner

"God, please be merciful to me. I am a sinner" or "God, please have mercy on me even though I have committed many sins"

Luke 18:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus comments on what the parable teaches.

this man went back down to his house justified

He was justified because God forgave his sin. Alternate translation: "God forgave the tax collector" rather than the other "rather than the other man" or "and not the other man." Alternate translation: "but God did not forgive the Pharisee" because everyone who exalts himself

With this phrase, Jesus switches from the story to state the general principle that the story illustrates. will be humbled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will humble" will be exalted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will greatly honor"

Luke 18:15

Connecting Statement:

This is the next event in the part of the story which began in Luke 17:20. Jesus welcomes the children and talks about them.

touch them, but

This could also be translated as separate sentences: "touch them. But" they rebuked them

"the disciples tried to stop the parents from bringing their children to Jesus"

Luke 18:16

Jesus called them to him

"Jesus told the people to bring their infants to him"

Permit the little children to come to me, and do not forbid them

These two sentences have similar meaning and they are combined for emphasis. Some languages emphasize in a different way. Alternate translation: "You must certainly allow the children to come to me"

belongs to such ones

This could be stated as a simile. Alternate translation: "belongs to people who are like these little children"

Luke 18:17

Truly I say to you

"Surely I say to you." Jesus used this expression to emphasize the importance of what he was about to say. whoever will not receive the kingdom of God like a child will definitely not enter it

God requires people to accept his rule over them with trust and humility. Alternate translation: "whoever wants to enter God's kingdom must receive it with trust and humility like a child"

Luke 18:18

Connecting Statement:

This is the next event in the part of the story which began in Luke 17:20. Jesus begins to talk with a ruler about entering the kingdom of heaven.

A certain ruler

This introduces a new character in the story. It only identifies him by his position.

what must I do

"what do I need to do" or "what is required of me"

inherit eternal life

"receive life that does not end." The term "inherit" usually

refers to the property that a man left to his children when he dies. Therefore, this metaphor may mean he understood himself to be a child of God and desired for God to give him eternal life.

Luke 18:19

Why do you call me good? No one is good, except God alone

Jesus asks the question because he knows that the ruler will not like Jesus's answer to the ruler's question in verse 18. Jesus does not expect the ruler to answer Jesus's question. Jesus wants the ruler to understand that Jesus's answer to the ruler's question comes from God, who alone is good. Alternate translation: "You know that no one is good, except God alone, so to call me good is to compare me with God"

No one is good, except God alone

This double negative emphasizes that God is the only one who is good. Alternate translation: "The only one who is good is God"

Luke 18:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 18:21

All these things

"All of these commandments"

Luke 18:22

When Jesus heard that

"When Jesus heard the man say that"

he said to him

"he answered him"

One thing you still lack

"You still need to do one more thing" or "There is one thing that you have not yet done"

sell all that you have

"sell all your possessions" or "sell everything that you own"

distribute it to the poor

"give away the money to the poor people"

come, follow me

"come with me as my disciple"

Luke 18:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 18:24

How difficult it is ... kingdom of God!

This is an exclamation, and not a question. Alternate translation: "It is so very hard ... kingdom of God!"

Luke 18:25

a camel to go through a needle's eye

It is impossible for a camel to fit through the eye of a needle. Jesus was probably using hyperbole to mean it is extremely difficult for a rich man to enter God's kingdom.

needle's eye

The needle's eye is the hole in a sewing needle through which the thread is passed.

Luke 18:26

Those hearing it said

"The people who listening to Jesus said"

Then who can be saved?

It is possible that they were asking for an answer. But it is more likely that they used the question to emphasize their surprise at what Jesus said. Alternate translation: "Then no

one can be saved from sin!" or in active form: "Then God will not save anyone!"

Luke 18:27

are impossible with people are possible with God

"people cannot do are possible for God to do" or "people cannot do, God can do"

Luke 18:28

Well, we

This phrase refers only to the disciples, and contrasts them with the rich ruler.

we have left

"we have given up" or "we have left behind"

everything that is our own

"all our wealth" or "all our possessions"

Luke 18:29

Truly, I say to you

Jesus uses this expression to stress the importance of what he is about to say.

there is no one who

This expression is intended to include not only the disciples, but also everyone else who has made the same sacrifices.

Luke 18:30

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the conversation about entering the kingdom of heaven.

who will not receive

This could be stated in positive form. First the words "there is not one who" in the previous verse

in this time

"in this present world"

in the age to come, eternal life

"he will also receive eternal life in the age to come"

Luke 18:31

Connecting Statement:

This is the next event in this part of the story that began in Luke 17:20. Jesus is talking to his disciples alone.

gathered the twelve to himself

Jesus took the twelve disciples to a place away from other people where they could be alone.

See, we are going up to Jerusalem

This indicates a significant change in the ministry of Jesus as he goes to Jerusalem for the final time.

that have been written by the prophets

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that the prophets have written"

the prophets

This refers to the Old Testament prophets.

Son of Man

Jesus speaks of himself as "the Son of Man." Alternate translation: "me, the Son of Man,"

will be accomplished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"will happen" or "will occur"

Luke 18:32

For he will be given over to the Gentiles

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For the Jewish leaders will give him over to the Gentiles"

he

Jesus speaks of himself. Alternate translation: "I"

will be mocked, and shamefully treated, and spit upon

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they will mock him, treat him shamefully, and spit on him"

Luke 18:33

him ... him ... he

Jesus speaks of himself. Alternate translation: "me ... me ... I"

on the third day

This refers to the third day after his death. However, the disciples did not yet understand this, so it is best not to add this explanation when translating this verse.

Luke 18:34

General Information:

This verse is not part of the main story, but rather a comment about this part of the story.

They understood none of these things

"They did not understand any of these things"

these things

This refers to Jesus's description of how he would suffer and die in Jerusalem, and that he would rise from the dead. this word was hidden from them

This can be stated in active form, but it is not clear whether it is God or Jesus who hid the word from them. Alternate translation: "Jesus hid his message from them" or "God prevented them from understanding the meaning of what Jesus was telling them"

the things that were said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that Jesus said"

Luke 18:35

General Information:

Jesus heals a blind man as he approaches Jericho. These verses give background information and information about the setting of the story.

It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.

a certain blind man was sitting

"there was a blind man sitting." Here "certain" means only that the man is an important new participant in the story.

Luke does not mention his name.

Luke 18:36

and hearing

and hearing

It may be helpful to start a new sentence here after changing the comma at the end of the previous verse (verse 35) to a period. Alternate translation: "When he heard"

Luke 18:37

They told him

"People in the crowd told the blind man"

Jesus of Nazareth

Jesus came from the town of Nazareth, which was located in Galilee.

was passing by

"was walking past him"

Luke 18:38

So

This word marks an event that happened because of

something else that happened first. In this case, the crowd had told the blind man that Jesus was walking by.

cried out

"called out" or "shouted"

Son of David

Jesus was a descendant of David, Israel's most important king.

have mercy on me

"show me pity" or "show me compassion"

Luke 18:39

The ones who were walking ahead

"The people who were walking at the front of the crowd"

to be quiet

"to be silent" or "not to shout"

cried out all the more

This could mean that he cried out louder or that he cried out more persistently.

Luke 18:40

that the man be brought to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people to bring the blind man to him"

Luke 18:41

to receive my sight

"to be able to see"

Luke 18:42

Receive your sight

This is a command, but Jesus is not commanding the man to do anything. Jesus is healing the man by commanding him to be healed. Alternate translation: "You will now receive your sight"

Your faith has healed you

These words are a metonym. It was because of the man's faith that Jesus healed the man. Alternate translation: "I have healed you because you have believed in me"

Luke 18:43

glorifying God

"giving glory to God" or "praising God"

Chapter 19

Luke 19 General Notes

Structure and formatting

After Jesus helped a man named Zacchaeus repent of his sins

Special concepts in this chapter

"Sinner"

The Pharisees referred to a group of people as "sinners." The Jewish leaders thought these people were sinful, but in reality the leaders were also sinful. This can be taken as irony.

Servants

God expects his people to remember that everything in the world belongs to God. God gives his people things so they can serve him. He wants them to please him by doing what he wants them to do with everything he has given them. One day Jesus will ask his servants what they have done with everything he gave them to use. He will give a reward to those who have done what he wanted them to do, and he will punish those who have not.

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal. In this way he was like a king who came into a city after he had won an important battle. Also, the kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on donkeys. Other kings rode on horses. So Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel and that he was not like other kings.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about this event. Matthew and Mark wrote that the disciples brought Jesus a donkey. John wrote that Jesus found a donkey. Luke wrote that they brought him a colt. Only Matthew wrote that there were both a donkey and a colt. No one knows for sure whether Jesus rode the donkey or the colt. It is best to translate each of these accounts as it appears in the ULB without trying to make them all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 21:1-7](#) and [Mark 11:1-7](#) and [Luke 19:29-36](#) and [John 12:14-15](#))

Spreading garments and branches

When a king would enter one of the cities he ruled, people would cut branches from trees and would take off the clothes that they wore to stay warm in cold weather and spread them all on the road so the king would ride over them. They did this to honor the king and show that they loved him.

The merchants in the temple

Jesus forced the people who were selling animals in the temple to leave. He did this to show everyone that he had authority over the temple and that only those who were righteous, who did what God said was good, could be in it. (See: [righteous](#))

Links:

[Luke 19:1 Notes](#)

Luke 19

19:1-10

Where was Jericho?

[19:1]

See: Map of Jericho

What did it mean that Zacchaeus was the “chief tax collector”?

[19:2]

Zacchaeus was the “chief tax collector.” Scholars think he was the leader of several other tax collectors who worked for him.

See: Tax (Tax Collector, Toll)

Why did Jesus say to Zacchaeus, “today I must stay at your house”?

[19:5]

Scholars think Jesus told Zacchaeus, “today I must stay at your house” because it was God’s will that Jesus stayed with Zacchaeus. They think God planned for salvation to come Zacchaeus and his house on that day (see: Luke 19:9).

See: Will of God; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did the people complain that Jesus went to visit a man who was a sinner?

[19:7]

Scholars think the people complained about Jesus going to the house of Zacchaeus because they thought Zacchaeus was a greater sinner than other sinners. Tax collectors often collected more money than the required taxes for themselves. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Zaccheus was also a Jew. Therefore, the Jewish people thought he was a traitor.

See: Sin; Tax (Tax Collector, Toll)

Who was a “son of Abraham”?

[19:9]

The words “son of Abraham” were used to talk about a descendant of Abraham. Abraham was the ancestor of all Jewish people.

See: Luke 3:7-9; 16:24

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

What did Jesus mean when he said, “Today salvation has come to this house”?

[19:9]

Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about a certain person within the house who was saved on that day. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking about Zacchaeus and his family being saved on that day.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

19:11-27

What was a parable?

[19:11]

See: Parable

What was a “nobleman”?

[19:12]

A “nobleman” was a man who had been born to a family people honored. Scholars think a nobleman would rule other people. Perhaps this particular nobleman was on his way to Rome to be made a king of Israel.

What was a “mina”?

[19:13]

A mina was a unit of money in the Greek money system. It had the value of 100 “drachmas”. One drachma was what someone was paid for one day’s work during this time. Therefore, it would have taken about four months to earn a mina.

See: Denarius

19:28-44

Why did Luke write he went up to Jerusalem?

[19:28]

Luke wrote he went up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem was on a mountain.

See Map: Jerusalem

Where were Bethpage, and the hill that is called Olivet?

[19:29]

See Map: Bethpage; Mount of Olives (Olivet)

Why did Jesus send two of his disciples to go into the village and bring back a colt?

[19:30]

When Jesus asked for a colt upon which he would ride into Jerusalem, it fulfilled a prophecy (see: Zechariah 9:9). Scholars think the “colt” was a young donkey because of the words written by other gospel writers (see: Matthew 21:2-5; John 12:14-15). People thought the donkey was a symbol of humility and peace (see: 1 Kings 1:33-37).

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Gospel; Symbol

Why did the disciples cry out, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord”?

[19:38]

Jesus spoke about those who would cry out “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord” (see: Luke 13:35). Scholars think these people said that Jesus is the messiah.

See: Psalm 118:26-29

See: Disciple; Bless (Blessing); Messiah (Christ)

What is peace in heaven?

[19:38]

Some scholars think the peace in heaven spoken about in verse 38 is the peace between God and people. Other scholars think this was the salvation of God’s people. The peace of Jerusalem in verse 42 is the same kind of peace.

See: Heaven; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); People of God

What did Jesus mean by saying, “the stones would cry out”?

[19:40]

Jesus said that the stones would cry out. Some scholars think Jesus was saying that it was no more possible for the disciples to be silent, than it would be possible for stones to cry out. Other scholars think that if the disciples were to keep silent, then the stones would be made to proclaim God’s mighty acts. That is, God would make the stones cry out to tell people about the things he does.

See: Disciple

How was there not “one stone upon another”?

[19:44]

There was not one stone upon another when a Roman army attacked Jerusalem and forced down almost all its walls in about forty years after Jesus died. Some scholars think that when Jesus spoke the words, “One stone upon another”, he was using hyperbole to say the Romans attacked every part of the city and almost nothing was left. The Roman army also destroyed the temple.

See: Hyperbole; Temple

19:45-48

Why did Jesus say the sellers made the temple a den of robbers?

[19:46]

Jesus said the sellers made the temple a den of robbers because they cheated people by selling animals and exchanging money. When they did this they made much money from people coming to the temple to worship God. Some scholars think Jesus was saying the same things the prophet Jeremiah wrote about when he spoke those words (see: Jeremiah 7:11). They did that because they were greedy. Isaiah prophesied God will make the temple a place for prayer and worship for all people in the future (see: Isaiah 56:7). However, at that time the Jews themselves did not use it for prayer.

See: Temple; Prophet; Prophecy (Prophesy) ; Pray (Prayer)

What did Luke mean when he said the leaders of the people wanted to kill Jesus?

[19:47] Scholars think the leaders were looking for a way to kill Jesus that would not upset the people. Many people would be angry if the Jewish leaders killed Jesus.

Why did the Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus?

[19:47] The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus. Some scholars think they did this because they thought Jesus was trying to rule the temple. Other scholars think they did not like what Jesus taught about the Law of Moses. Other scholars think they were afraid that Jesus was starting a revolution. That is, he was going to fight against the Roman Empire. They did not think he could defeat the Romans.

See: Temple; Law of Moses

Luke 19:1

General Information:

Verses 1-2 begin to give background information for the events that follow.

Luke 19:2

Behold, there was a man there

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story.

Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "There was a man who was"

He was a chief tax collector and was rich

This is background information about Zacchaeus.

Luke 19:3

General Information:

This verse completes the background information begun in [Luke 19:1-2]

He was trying

"Zacchaeus was trying"

because he was small in height

"because he was short"

Luke 19:4

So he ran

The author has finished giving the background to the event and now begins to describe the event itself.

a sycamore tree

"a sycamore fig tree." It produces small round fruit about 2.5 centimeters across. Alternate translation: "a fig tree" or "a tree"

Luke 19:5

the place

"the tree" or "where Zacchaeus was"

Luke 19:6

So he hurried

"So Zacchaeus hurried"

Luke 19:7

they all complained
The Jews hated the tax collectors and did not think any good person should associate with them.
He has gone in to visit a man who is a sinner
"Jesus has gone into the house of a sinner to visit him"
a sinner
"an obvious sinner" or "a real sinner"
Luke 19:8
the Lord
This refers to Jesus.
restore four times the amount
"return to them four times as much as I took from them"
Luke 19:9
salvation has come to this house
It was understood that salvation comes from God. Alternate translation: "God has saved this household"
this house
The word "house" here refers to the people living in the house or the family.
he too
"this man too" or "Zacchaeus also"
son of Abraham
Possible meanings are 1) "descendant of Abraham" and 2) "person who has faith as Abraham did."
Luke 19:10
the Son of Man came
Jesus is speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, came"
the people who are lost
"the people who have wandered away from God" or "those who by sinning have wandered away from God"
Luke 19:11
General Information:
Jesus begins to tell a parable to the crowd. This verse gives background information about why Jesus tells the parable. that the kingdom of God was about to appear immediately
The Jews believed that the Messiah would establish the kingdom as soon as he came to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "that Jesus would immediately begin to rule over God's kingdom"
Luke 19:12
A certain nobleman
"A certain man who was a member of the ruling class" or "A certain man from an important family"
to receive for himself a kingdom
This is the image of a lesser king going to a greater king. The greater king would give the lesser king the right and authority to rule over his own country.
Luke 19:13
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.
He called
"The nobleman called." It may be helpful to state that the man did this before he left to receive his kingdom.
Alternate translation: "Before he left, he called"
gave them ten minas
"gave each of them one mina"
ten minas
A mina was 600 grams, probably of silver. Each mina was

equal to 100 days' wages, what people would be paid for about four months' work, so ten minas would have been about three years' wages. Alternate translation: "ten valuable coins" or "a large amount of money"
Conduct business
"Trade with this money" or "Use this money in order to earn more"
Luke 19:14
his citizens
"the people of his country"
a delegation
"a group of people to represent them" or "several messengers"
Luke 19:15
It happened
This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
having received the kingdom
"after he had become king"
to be called to him
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to come to him"
what profit they had made
"how much money they had earned"
Luke 19:16
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.
The first
"The first servant"
came before him
"came before the nobleman"
your mina has made ten minas more
It is implied that the servant was the one who caused the profit. Alternate translation: "I used your mina to make a profit of ten more minas"
mina
A mina was 600 grams, probably of silver. Each mina was equal to 100 days' wages, what people would be paid for about four months' work. See how you translated this in [Luke 19:13]
Luke 19:17
Well done
"You have done well." Your language may have a phrase that an employer would use to show approval, such as "Good job."
very little
This refers to the one mina, which the nobleman apparently did not consider to be a lot of money.
Luke 19:18
Connecting Statement:
Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.
The second
"The second servant"
Your mina, lord, has made five minas
It is implied that the servant was the one who caused the profit. Alternate translation: "Lord, I used your mina to make a profit of five more minas"
mina

A mina was 600 grams, probably of silver. Each mina was equal to 100 days' wages, what people would be paid for about four months' work. See how you translated this in [Luke 19:13]

Luke 19:19

You take charge over five cities

"You will have authority over five cities"

Luke 19:20

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.

Another came

"Another servant came"

mina

A mina was 600 grams, probably of silver. Each mina was equal to 100 days' wages, what people would be paid for about four months' work. See how you translated this in [Luke 19:13]

kept safely in a cloth

"wrapped in a cloth and stored away"

Luke 19:21

a demanding person

"a stern man" or "a man who expects a lot from his servants"

You take up what you did not put in

This was probably a proverb. A person who takes out of storage or out of a bank things that he did not put in is a metaphor for someone who benefits from other people's hard work. Alternate translation: "You take out what you did not put in" or "You are like a person who takes out what other people put in"

you reap what you did not sow

This was probably a proverb. A person who harvests food that someone else has planted is a metaphor for someone who benefits from other people's hard work. Alternate translation: "you are like a person who reaps the fruit of what other people sowed"

Luke 19:22

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.

By your own words

His "words" refer to all that he had said. Alternate translation: "Based on what you have said"

You knew that I am a demanding person

The nobleman was repeating what the servant had said about him. He was not saying that it was true. Alternate translation: "You say that I am a demanding person"

Luke 19:23

why did you not put my money ... interest?

The nobleman uses a question to rebuke the wicked servant. Alternate translation: "you should have put my money ... interest."

put my money in the bank

"lent my money to a bank." Cultures that do not have banks might translate it as "let someone borrow my money."

bank

A bank is a business that safely holds money for people. A bank lends that money to others for a profit. Therefore it pays an extra amount, or interest, to the people who keep their money in the bank.

I would have collected it with interest

"I could have collected that amount plus the interest it would have earned" or "I would have gained a profit from it"

interest

Interest is money that a bank pays people who put their money in the bank.

Luke 19:24

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.

The nobleman

The nobleman had become king. See how you translated this in Luke 19:12.

them that stood by

"the people who were standing near them"

mina

A mina was 600 grams, probably of silver. Each mina was equal to 100 days' wages, what people would be paid for about four months' work. See how you translated this in [Luke 19:13]

Luke 19:25

he has ten minas.

"he already has ten minas!"

Luke 19:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to tell the parable he began in Luke 19:11.

I say to you

It can be stated clearly that the nobleman is speaking.

Alternate translation: "And the nobleman replied, 'I say to you' or 'But the nobleman said 'I tell you this'"

everyone who has will be given more

It is implied that what he has is the money he earned by using his mina faithfully. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone who uses well what he has been given, I will give him more" or "to everyone who uses well what I have given him I will give more"

from him that has not

It is implied that the reason he does not have money is because he did not use his mina faithfully. Alternate translation: "from the person who does not use well what I have given him"

will be taken away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will take away from him"

Luke 19:27

these enemies of mine

Since the enemies were not right there, some languages would say "those enemies of mine."

Luke 19:28

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about the nobleman and his servants. This verse tells us what Jesus does after this part of the story.

When he had said these things

"When Jesus had said these things"

going up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than Jericho, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

Luke 19:29

General Information:

Jesus approaches Jerusalem.

It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new event. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

when he came near

The word "he" refers to Jesus. His disciples were also traveling with him.

Bethphage

Bethphage is a village on the Mount of Olives, which is across the Kidron Valley from Jerusalem.

the mountain that is called Olives

"the hill that is called the Mount of Olives" or "the hill that is called 'Olive Tree Mountain'"

Luke 19:30

a colt

"a young donkey" or "a young riding animal"

that has never been ridden

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that no one has ever ridden"

Luke 19:31

If anyone asks you, "Why are you untying it?" say

The inner quote can also be translated as an indirect quote.

Alternate translation: "If any one asks you why you are untying it, say"

Luke 19:32

Those who were sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The two disciples that Jesus sent"

Luke 19:33

the owners

"the owners of the colt"

Luke 19:34

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 19:35

threw their cloaks upon the colt

"put their robes on the young donkey." Cloaks are outer robes.

set Jesus on it

"helped Jesus get up on and ride on the colt"

Luke 19:36

they spread their cloaks

"people spread their cloaks." This is a sign of giving honor to someone.

Luke 19:37

As he was now approaching

"As Jesus was going near." Jesus's disciples were traveling with him.

where the Mount of Olives descends

"where the road goes down from the Mount of Olives"

mighty works which they had seen

"great things they had seen Jesus do"

Luke 19:38

Blessed is the king

They were saying this about Jesus.

in the name of the Lord

Here "name" refers to power and authority. Also, "Lord"

refers to God.

Peace in heaven

"May there be peace in heaven" or "We want to see peace in heaven"

glory in the highest

"may there be glory in the highest" or "we want to see glory in the highest." The words "the highest" refer to heaven, which is a metonym for God, who lives in heaven. Alternate translation: "Let everyone give glory to God in the highest heaven"

Luke 19:39

in the multitude

"in the large crowd"

rebuke your disciples

"tell your disciples to stop doing these things"

Luke 19:40

I tell you

Jesus said this to emphasize what he would say next.

if these were silent

Jesus is describing something that could have happened but did not. Some translators may need to make it clear what Jesus was implying when he said this. Alternate translation: "I will not rebuke them, for if these people were to be silent"

the stones would cry out

"the stones would call out praises"

Luke 19:41

the city

This refers to Jerusalem.

he wept over it

To weep over something means to weep because of something. The word "it" refers to the city of Jerusalem, but it represents the people who lived in that city. Alternate translation: "he cried about the people of Jerusalem"

Luke 19:42

If only you had known ... bring you peace

Jesus expresses his sadness that the people of Jerusalem had missed the opportunity to be at peace with God.

you

The word "you" is singular because Jesus is speaking to the city. But if this would be unnatural in your language, you could use a plural form of "you" to refer to the people of the city.

they are hidden from your eyes

"your eyes" refer to the ability to see. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you can no longer see them"

Luke 19:43

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking.

For

What follows is the reason for Jesus's sadness.

the days will come upon you when your enemies

This indicates that they will experience difficult times.

Some languages do not talk about time "coming." Alternate translation: "in the future these things will happen to you:

Your enemies" or "soon you will endure troublesome times. Your enemies"

you ... your

The word "you" is singular because Jesus is speaking to the city as he would to a woman. But if this would be unnatural in your language, you could use a plural form of "you" to refer to the people of the city.

barricade

This refers to a wall to keep the people from getting out of the city.

Luke 19:44

They will strike you down to the ground, and your children with you
Jesus is speaking to the people of the city as if he were speaking to the city itself as he would speak to a woman. He speaks of the people who live in the city as if they are the woman's children, and thus the city's children. To strike down a city is to destroy its walls and buildings, and to strike down its children is to kill those who live in it.
Alternate translation: "They will completely destroy you and kill all who live in you" or "They will completely destroy your city and kill all of you"

They will not leave one stone upon another

"They will not leave any of the stones in place." Jesus uses hyperbole here to emphasize the extent of the devastation that enemies will cause in Jerusalem. The enemies will completely destroy the city, which is built of stones.
Alternate translation: "They will destroy Jerusalem"

you did not recognize

"you were not aware of" or "you were not grateful during" the time of your visitation

The abstract noun "visitation" can be translated as a verb phrase. Alternate translation: "the time when God visited you" or "the time during which God was with you."

visitation

This is a "visit" by an overseer to make sure that things are going well with those over whom he is in charge, not a casual social visit.

Luke 19:45

Connecting Statement:

This is the next event in this part of the story. Jesus enters the temple in Jerusalem.

Jesus entered the temple

You may need to make explicit that he first entered Jerusalem, where the temple was located. Alternate translation: "Jesus entered Jerusalem and then went to the temple courtyard"

entered the temple

Only priests were allowed to enter the temple building.

Alternate translation: "went into the temple courtyard"

cast out

"throw out" or "force out"

Luke 19:46

It is written

This is a quotation from Isaiah. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The scriptures say" or "A prophet wrote these words in the scriptures"

My house

The word "My" refers to God and "house" refers to the temple.

house of prayer

"a place where people pray to me"

a den of robbers

Jesus speaks of the temple as if it were a place where thieves come together. Alternate translation: "a place where thieves hide"

Luke 19:47

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of this part of the story. Verses 47-48 tell about ongoing action that continues after the main part of the story ends.

in the temple

"in the temple courtyard" or "at the temple"

destroy him

This hyperbole refers to killing Jesus. Alternate translation: "kill him"

Luke 19:48

were listening to him intently

"were paying close attention to what Jesus was saying"

Chapter 20

Luke 20 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 20:17, 42-43, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Using questions to trap people

When Jesus asked the Pharisees who gave John the authority to baptize ([Luke 20:4](#)), they could not answer because any answer they gave would give someone a reason to say that they were wrong ([Luke 20:5-6](#)). They thought that they would be able to say that Jesus was wrong when they asked him if people should pay taxes to Caesar ([Luke 20:22](#)), but Jesus gave them an answer that they had not thought of.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. In this chapter, Jesus quotes a psalm that records David calling his son "Lord," that is, "master." However, to the Jews, ancestors were greater than their descendants. In this passage, Jesus is trying to lead his hearers to the true understanding that the Messiah will himself be divine, and that he himself is the Messiah. ([Luke 20:41-44](#)).

Links:

Luke 20

20:1-8

Why did the Jewish leaders ask Jesus who gave him permission to do the things he did?

[20:2]

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus who gave him permission to do the things he did. Some scholars think the Jewish leaders were asking Jesus whether a person or God gave him permission to do these things. Other scholars think the Jewish leaders were asking Jesus to name the Jewish teacher who taught him. In ancient Israel, a teacher learned from another teacher.

See: Rabbi

What were “these things”?

[20:8]

The Jewish teachers asked “these things”.

Some scholars think they asked about the things Jesus taught.

Some scholars think that they asked about when Jesus made people to leave the temple because they were selling things.

Some scholars think they asked about Jesus riding into Jerusalem on a colt.

Some scholars think they asked about Jesus healing people in the temple (see: Matthew 21:14)

See: Temple

Why did Jesus not answer the Jewish leaders?

[20:8]

Jesus did not answer the Jewish leaders. Some scholars think that Jesus did not answer the question from the Jewish leaders because they would not answer his question to them. The Jewish leaders knew the answer to Jesus’ question.

20:9-19

What was a parable?

[20:9]

See: Parable

Why did Jesus speak about the vine growers?

[20:10]

Jesus spoke about the vine growers. Scholars think Jesus told this parable to say that the Jewish leaders were just like the vine growers in the parable. When God sent prophets and apostles to the people of Israel, the prophets were killed, and they would soon be killing the apostles (see: Luke 11:47-51; Matthew 23:37-39).

See: Parable; Prophet; Apostle

What was the “stone” about which Jesus spoke?

[20:17]

When Jesus spoke about the “stone” rejected by the builders, he was saying what was written in Psalm 118:22-23. This was a metaphor. Jesus was speaking about himself. That is, the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus.

See: Metaphor

What was the “cornerstone” about which Jesus spoke?

[20:17]

A “cornerstone” was spoken about in two ways in the days of Jesus. It was used to describe the large stone set in the ground that established the corner from which the foundation of a building was measured. It was also used to describe the stone at the top part of an arch. This stone held the arch together. Jesus used the word “cornerstone” as a metaphor. Jesus was speaking about himself. That is, Jesus himself is the foundation upon which the church, that is the body of Christ, is built. He holds all things together.

See: Metaphor; Church; Body of Christ

How will people be broken or crushed by the stone about which Jesus spoke?

[20:18]

When Jesus spoke about people falling on the stone, he was speaking about the people who rejected Jesus. When they rejected him, they are forever broken. This was a metaphor. They cannot be at peace with God. When Jesus spoke about the stone crushing people, he meant that God will judge people who reject Jesus. They will be crushed, that is, they will live forever in hell.

See: Isaiah 8:14-15

See: Hell; Day of Judgment; Punish (Punishment)

20:20-26

How did the Jewish leaders try to trick Jesus?

[20:20]

When the Jewish leaders asked a question about paying taxes, they tried to trick Jesus. They wanted Jesus to say something that made people angry. If Jesus said that people needed to pay taxes, the Jewish people would be angry and stop following him. If Jesus said that people should not pay taxes, then the Romans would be angry with him.

See: Tax (Tax Collector, Toll)

What were the things that belonged to Caesar?

[20:25]

Jesus spoke about things that belonged to Caesar. Some scholars think that because the name and face on the coin showed that it belonged to Caesar, then Caesar had the right to collect taxes from the people. Other scholars think Jesus was speaking very specifically about giving to Caesar what was due to him. That is, taxes and honor.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Tax (Tax Collector, Toll)

What are the things that belong to God?

[20:25]

Jesus spoke about things that belong to God. Scholars think that when Jesus spoke about the things that belong to God he was speaking about how people must worship, love, and obey God.

20:27-40

Who were the Sadducees?

[20:27]

See: Sadducees

What is the “resurrection”?

[20:27]

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

What did Jesus mean by saying that people who are resurrected will not “die anymore”?

[20:36]

The people who follow Jesus and are resurrected will never die again. That is, they will live together in God in heaven.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Heaven

Why did Jesus say, “they are equal to angels”?

[20:36]

Jesus said that those who are resurrected are “equal to angels”. He wanted people to know that they will never die. Angels do not die.

Advice to Translators: People who are resurrected do not become angels, rather they are like the angels in that they do not die. The translation must be clear to make that distinction.

See: Angel

Why did Jesus use the words “sons of God” to describe those who are resurrected?

[20:36]

People who believe in Jesus are “sons of God.” They are not sons of God in the same way Jesus is the Son of God.

See: Family of God; Son of God

Why did Jesus talk about Moses and the bush?

[20:37]

Jesus talked about Moses and the burning bush. Scholars think that because God revealed himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, these men are still alive in heaven. Jesus used the story of Moses and the bush so that people would know that there is a resurrection of the dead.

See: Exodus 3:6

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

20:41-44

Why did the ancient Jews believe the messiah is the Son of David?

[20:41]

The ancient Jews believed the messiah is the Son of David because it was written about in the Old Testament (see: Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24-25; Hosea 3:5). Jesus also believed this.

See: Matthew 22:41-42; Mark 12:35

See: Messiah (Christ); Son of David; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What was meant by the words, “The Lord said to my Lord”?

[20:42]

The Hebrew used two words for “Lord” in Psalm 110:1. The first use of the word is also the name Yahweh, which is the name of the God of Israel. The second use of the word “Lord” is translated as Lord and master.

See: Yahweh (I am); Lord

How was Jesus both David’s Lord and his son?

[20:41, 20:42]

Jesus was David's "Lord" because Jesus is God. However, Jesus was also David's son because Jesus was a descendant of David.

See: Lord; Jesus is God; Son of David; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

20:45-47

Who were the scribes?

[20:46]

See: Scribe

How did the scribes "devour widows' houses"?

[20:47]

The scribes devour widows' houses. Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about widows who were wealthy and the scribes were taking a very large donations from those widows. Other scholars think the scribes took the things the widows owned. Other scholars think the scribes, in helping widows, took more from the widows than what they should have taken for helping them.

See: Scribe

Why will the scribes "receive greater condemnation"?

[20:47]

The scribes will receive greater condemnation. Scholars think that God will punish the scribes more severely than other people who will be judged and punished.

See: Scribe; Condemn (Condemnation); Judge (Judgment); Punish (Punishment)

Luke 20:1

Connecting Statement:

The chief priests, scribes, and elders question Jesus in the temple.

It came about

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story.

in the temple

"in the temple courtyard" or "at the temple"

Luke 20:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 20:3

General Information:

Jesus responds to the chief priests, scribes, and elders.

He answered and said to them

"Jesus replied"

I will also ask you a question, and you tell me

The words "I will ... ask you a question" are a statement.

The words "you tell me" are a command.

Luke 20:4

Was it from heaven or from men

Jesus knows that John's authority comes from heaven, so he is not asking for information. He asks the question so the Jewish leaders will have to tell what they think to all who are listening. This question is rhetorical, but you will probably have to translate it as a question. Alternate translation: "Do you think John's authority to baptize people came from heaven or from men" or "Was it God who told John to baptize people, or did people tell him to do it" from heaven

"from God." Jewish people avoided referring to God by his name "Yahweh." Often they used the word "heaven" to refer to him.

Luke 20:5

They reasoned

"They discussed" or "They considered their answer"

with themselves

"among themselves" or "with each other"

If we say, 'From heaven,' he

Some languages might prefer an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "If we say that John's authority is from heaven, he"

From heaven

"From God." Jewish people avoided referring to God by his name "Yahweh." Often they used the word "heaven" to refer to him. See how these words are translated in [Luke 20:4]

he will say

"Jesus will say"

Luke 20:6

if we say, 'From men,'

Some languages might prefer an indirect quote. Alternate translation: "if we say that John's authority is from men," stone us

"kill us by throwing stones on us." God's Law commanded that his people stone those of his people who mocked him or his prophets.

Luke 20:7

So they answered

"So the chief priests, scribes and elders answered." The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened first. In this case, they had reasoned with themselves ([Luke 20:5-6](#)), and they did not have an answer they wanted to say.

they answered that they did not know where it came from.

This could be stated as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "they said, 'We do not know where it came from.'"

where it came from

"where John's baptism came from." Alternate translation: "where John's authority to baptize came from" or "who authorized John to baptize people"

Luke 20:8

Neither will I tell you

"And I will not tell you." Jesus knew they were not willing to tell him the answer, so he responded in the same manner. Alternate translation: "Just as you will not tell me, I will not tell you"

Luke 20:9

General Information:

Jesus begins to tell a parable to the people in the temple courtyard.

rented it out to vine growers

"allowed some vine growers to use it in exchange for payment" or "allowed some vine growers to use it and pay him later." Payment might be in the form of money or a portion of the harvest.

vine growers

These are people who tend grape vines and grow grapes.

Alternate translation: "grape farmers"

Luke 20:10

the appointed time

"the time they had agreed to pay him." This would have been at the harvest time.

of the fruit of the vineyard

"some of the grapes" or "some of what they produced in the vineyard." It could also refer to the things they made from grapes or the money they earned by selling the grapes.

sent him away empty-handed

An empty hand is a metaphor for "nothing." Alternate translation: "sent him away without paying him" or "sent him away without the grapes"

Luke 20:11

beat him

"beat that servant"

treated him shamefully

"humiliated him"

sent him away empty-handed

Having an empty hand is a metaphor for having nothing.

Alternate translation: "sent him away without paying him" or "sent him away without any grapes"

Luke 20:12

yet a third

"even a third servant" or "yet another servant." The word "yet" hints at the fact that the landowner should not have had to send the second servant, but he went beyond that and sent a third servant.

wounded him

"injured that servant"

threw him out

"threw him out of the vineyard"

Luke 20:13

What will I do?

This question emphasizes that the vineyard owner thought carefully about what he was going to do. Alternate translation: "Here is what I will do:"

Luke 20:14

when the vine growers saw him

"when the farmers saw the owner's son"

Let us kill him

They were not asking permission. The said this to encourage each other to kill the heir.

Luke 20:15

They threw him out of the vineyard

"The vine growers forced the son out of the vineyard"

What then will the lord of the vineyard do to them?

Jesus uses a question to get his listeners to pay attention to what the owner of the vineyard will do. Alternate

translation: "So now, listen to what the lord of the vineyard will do to them."

Luke 20:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes telling his parable to the crowd.

May it never be

"May it never happen"

Luke 20:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues teaching the crowd.

But Jesus looked at them

"But Jesus stared at them" or "But he looked straight at them." He did this to hold them accountable to understand what he was saying.

What is the meaning of that which is written: "The stone ... cornerstone"?

Jesus uses a question to teach the crowd. Alternate translation: "You should be able to understand that which is written: "The stone ... cornerstone.""

that which is written

"this scripture"

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone

This is the first of three metaphors in a prophecy from the book of Psalms. This one refers to the Messiah as if he were a stone that builders chose not to use, but that God made the most important stone.

The stone that the builders rejected

"The stone that the builders said was not good enough to use for building." In those days people used stones to build the walls of houses and other buildings.

the builders

This refers to the religious rulers who are rejecting Jesus as Messiah.

the cornerstone

"the chief stone of the building" or "the most important stone of the building"

Luke 20:18

Everyone who falls ... broken to pieces

This second metaphor speaks of people who reject the Messiah as if they fall over a stone and are injured.

will be broken to pieces

This is a result of falling onto the stone. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will break up into pieces"

the one on whom it falls

"the one that stone falls on." This third metaphor speaks about the Messiah judging those who reject him as if he were a large stone that would crush them.

Luke 20:19

sought to lay hands on him

In this verse, to "lay hands on" someone is to arrest that person. Alternate translation: "looked for a way to arrest Jesus"

in that very hour

"immediately"

they were afraid of the people

This is the reason that they did not arrest Jesus right away. The people respected Jesus, and the religious leaders were afraid of what the people might do if they arrested him.

Alternate translation: "they did not arrest him because they

were afraid of the people"

Luke 20:20

they sent out spies

"the scribes and chief priests sent spies to watch Jesus"

that they might find fault with his speech

"because they wanted to accuse Jesus of saying something bad"

to the rule and to the authority of the governor

"Rule" and "authority" are two ways of saying that they wanted the governor to judge Jesus. It can be translated with one or both expressions. Alternate translation: "so that the governor would punish Jesus"

Luke 20:21

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of the next event in the story. Some time has passed since Jesus was questioned in the temple by the chief priests. The spies are now questioning Jesus.

They asked him

"The spies asked Jesus"

Teacher, we know ... way of God

The spies were trying to deceive Jesus. They did not believe these things about Jesus.

we know

"we" refers only to the spies.

are not partial to anyone

Possible meanings are 1) "you tell the truth even if important people do not like it" or 2) "you do not favor one person over another"

but you teach the truth about the way of God

This is part of what the spies were saying that they knew about Jesus.

Luke 20:22

Is it lawful ... or not?

They hoped that Jesus would say either "yes" or "no." If he said "yes," then the Jewish people would be angry with him for telling them to pay taxes to a foreign government. If he said "no," then the religious leaders could tell the Romans that Jesus was teaching the people to break the Roman laws.

Is it lawful

They were asking about God's law, not about Caesar's law.

Alternate translation: "Does our law permit us?"

Caesar

Because Caesar was the ruler of the Roman government, they could refer to the Roman government by Caesar's name.

Luke 20:23

But Jesus understood their craftiness

"But Jesus understood how tricky they were" or "But Jesus saw that they were trying to trap him." The word "their" refers to the spies.

Luke 20:24

a denarius

This is a Roman silver coin worth a day's wages.

Whose image and name is on it?

Jesus uses a question to respond to those who were trying to trick him. Alternate translation: "Tell me, whose image and name do you see on it?"

image and name

"picture and name"

Luke 20:25

He said to them

"Then Jesus said to them"

Caesar

Here "Caesar" refers to the Roman government.

and to God

The word "give" is understood from the previous phrase. It can be repeated here. Alternate translation: "and give to God"

Luke 20:26

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of this event about the spies and the part of the story which began in Luke 20:1.

They were not able to find fault with what he had said

"The spies could not find anything wrong with what he said"

but marveling at his answer, they were silent

"but they were amazed at his answer and did not say anything"

Luke 20:27

General Information:

We do not know where this takes place, though it possibly takes place in the temple courtyard. Jesus is talking with some Sadducees.

the ones who say that there is no resurrection

This phrase identifies the Sadducees as being the group of Jews that say that no one would rise from the dead. It does not imply that some Sadducees believed that there is a resurrection and some did not.

Luke 20:28

if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and being childless

"if a man's brother dies when he has a wife but does not have children"

the man should take the brother's wife

"the man should marry his dead brother's widow"

raise up children for his brother

The Jews considered the first son born to a woman who married her dead husband's brother as if he were the son of the woman's first husband. This son inherited the property of his mother's first husband and carried on his name.

Luke 20:29

General Information:

The Sadducees tell Jesus a short story in verses 29-32. This is a story they made up as an example. In verse 33, they ask Jesus a question about the story they told.

There were seven brothers

This may have happened, but it is probably a story that they made up to test Jesus.

the first

"brother number one" or "the oldest"

died childless

"died without having any children" or "died, but did not have any children"

Luke 20:30

the second as well

The Sadducees kept the story short by not repeating many of the details. Alternate translation: "the second married

her and the same thing happened" or "the second brother married her and died without having any children"

the second

"brother number two" or "the oldest brother who was still alive"

Luke 20:31

The third took her

"The third married her"

The third

"Brother number three" or "The oldest brother who was still alive"

and in the same way the seven also left no children and died

The speakers kept the story short by omitting details.

Alternate translation: "in the same way the rest of the seven brothers married her and died without having any children"

the seven

"all seven of the brothers" or "each of the seven brothers"

Luke 20:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 20:33

Connecting Statement:

The Sadducees finish asking Jesus their question.

In the resurrection

"When people are raised from the dead" or "When dead people become alive again." Some languages have a way of showing that the Sadducees did not believe that there would be a resurrection, such as "In the supposed resurrection" or "When dead people are supposedly raised from the dead."

Luke 20:34

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to answer the Sadducees.

The sons of this age

"The people of this world" or "The people of this time." This is in contrast with those in heaven or the people who live after the resurrection.

marry and are given in marriage

In that culture they spoke of men marrying women and women being given in marriage to their husband. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "get married"

Luke 20:35

those who are regarded as worthy in that age

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people in that age whom God will consider to be worthy"

to receive the resurrection from the dead

"to be raised from the dead" or "to rise from death"

from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To receive resurrection from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

will neither marry nor be given in marriage

In that culture they spoke of men marrying women and women being given in marriage to their husband. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will not marry" or "will not get married." This is after the

resurrection.

Luke 20:36

Neither can they die anymore

This is after the resurrection. Alternate translation: "They will not be able to die anymore"

are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection

"are children of God because he has brought them back from the dead"

Luke 20:37

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes answering the Sadducees.

But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed

The word "even" is here because the Sadducees might not have been surprised that some scriptures say that the dead are raised, but they did not expect Moses to have written something like that. Alternate translation: "But even Moses showed that dead people rise from the dead"

the dead are raised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God causes the dead to live again"

in the place concerning the bush, where he calls the Lord

The implied information can be supplied. Alternate translation: "in the scripture about the burning bush, where he wrote about the Lord being"

the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob

"the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." They all worshiped the same God.

Luke 20:38

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Jesus explains how this story proves that people rise from the dead.

he is not the God of the dead, but of the living

These two phrases have similar meaning. They are used together for emphasis. Some languages have different ways of showing emphasis. Alternate translation: "the Lord is the God of living people only"

but of the living

"but the God of living people." Since these people died physically, they must still be alive spiritually. Alternate translation: "but the God of people whose spirits are alive, even though their bodies may have died"

because all live to him

"because in God's sight they all are still alive" or "because their spirits are alive in God's presence"

Luke 20:39

Some of the scribes answered

"Some of the scribes said to Jesus." There were scribes present when the Sadducees were questioning Jesus.

Luke 20:40

For they

It is unclear if this refers to the scribes, or the Sadducees, or both. It is best to keep the statement general.

they did not dare ask him any more questions

"they were afraid to ask him any more questions" or "they did not risk asking him any more questions." They understood that they did not know as much as Jesus did, but they did not want to say that. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "they did not ask him any more tricky

questions because they feared that his wise answers would make them appear foolish again"

Luke 20:41

General Information:

Jesus asks the scribes a question.

How do they say ... son?

"Why do they say ... son?" Jesus uses a question to make the scribes think about who the Messiah is. Alternate translation: "Let's think about them saying ... son." or "I will talk about them saying ... son."

they say

The prophets, the religious rulers, and the Jewish people in general knew that the Messiah was the son of David.

Alternate translation: "everyone says" or "people say"

David's son

"King David's descendant." The word "son" is used here to refer to a descendant. In this case it refers to the one who would reign over God's kingdom.

Luke 20:42

The Lord said to my Lord

This is a quotation from the book of Psalms which says "Yahweh said to my Lord." But the Jews stopped saying "Yahweh" and often said "Lord" instead. Alternate translation: "The Lord God said to my Lord" or "God said to my Lord"

my Lord

David was referring to the Christ as "my Lord."

Sit at my right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

Luke 20:43

until I make your enemies your footstool

The Messiah's enemies are spoken of as if they were furniture on which he would rest his feet. This was an image of submission. Alternate translation: "until I make your enemies like a footstool for you" or "until I conquer

your enemies for you"

Luke 20:44

David therefore calls the Christ 'Lord,'

In the culture of that time, a father was more respected than a son. David's use of the title 'Lord' for the Christ implies that he was greater than David.

so how is he David's son?

"so how can the Christ be David's son?" This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "and this shows that the Christ is not merely David's descendant"

Luke 20:45

Connecting Statement:

Jesus now directs his attention to his disciples and speaks mainly to them.

Luke 20:46

Beware of

"Be on guard against"

who desire to walk in long robes

Long robes would show that they were important.

Alternate translation: "who like to walk around wearing their important robes"

Luke 20:47

They also devour widows' houses

"They also eat up widows' houses." The scribes are spoken of as if they were hungry animals that eat up the widows' houses. The word "houses" is a synecdoche for both where the widow lives and all the possessions she puts in her home. Alternate translation: "They also take away from widows all their possessions"

for a show they make long prayers

"they pretend to be righteous and make long prayers" or "they make long prayers so that people will see them"

Men like this will receive greater condemnation

"They will receive a more severe judgment." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will certainly punish them very severely"

Chapter 21

Luke 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Jesus told his disciples much about what would happen before he returned.

Special concepts in this chapter

"For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,'"

Jesus taught that before he returned many people would falsely claim to be him returning. It will also be a time when many people will hate Jesus's followers and even want to kill them.

"Until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled"

The Jews spoke of the time between when the Babylonians forced their ancestors to go to Babylon and the time when the Messiah would come as "the times of the Gentiles," the time when the Gentiles would rule over the Jews.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[Luke 21:1 Notes](#)

Luke 21

21:1-4

What were mites?

[21:2]

Mites were a type of coin. They were tiny, copper coins that had very little value (see: Mark 12:42). In ancient times, a person would earn about 100 mites in a day.

See: Denarius

Why did Jesus say the widow gave more than other people?

[21:3]

Jesus said the widow gave more than other people. She did not give as much money as other people. However, Jesus said this because she gave everything she had. However, the rich only gave a small part of what they had.

21:5-38

Why did Jesus say, “not one stone will be left on another”?

[21:6]

Jesus said “not one stone will be left on another.” This was a metaphor. Jesus was speaking about the Romans destroying the temple and many of the walls in Jerusalem. This happened about forty years after Jesus died.

See: Metaphor; Temple

What were the things which were about to happen?

[21:7]

Certain things were about to happen. Scholars think the disciples were asking when the temple would be destroyed.

See: Matthew 24:3

See: Disciple; Temple

Why did Jesus say, “the end will not happen immediately”?

[21:9]

Jesus said, “the end will not happen immediately”. Scholars think Jesus was speaking about the Romans destroying the temple in Jerusalem, but he was also thinking about when he returns.

See: Temple; Jesus' Return to Earth

What are the “terrifying events” and the “great signs from heaven”?

[21:11]

Jesus spoke about “terrifying events” and “great signs from heaven.” Scholars think Jesus was speaking about things that happen in the sky. People have never seen these things before and it caused them to fear greatly. Perhaps they will affect the whole universe. They think Jesus was speaking about comets and meteors, such as have never been seen before.

See: Sign; Heaven

Why did Jesus say, “they will lay their hands on you”?

[21:12]

Jesus told the disciples “they will lay their hands on you.” He wanted them to know that some of them will be arrested, imprisoned, and tortured.

See: Disciple; Laying on of Hands ; Persecute (Persecution).

How will Jesus give “words and wisdom” to the disciples?

[21:15]

When Jesus told the disciples he would give them “words and wisdom,” he wanted them to know that the Holy Spirit would help the disciples know how to live in a way that honors God.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit; Reveal (Revelation)

What did it mean to be “given over”?

[21:16]

Someone who is “given over” or “delivered up” is betrayed. People help the leaders to arrest them so they can be punished.

See: Punish (Punishment); Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Jesus say, “not a hair of your head will perish”?

[21:18]

Jesus said, “not a hair of your head will perish.” Some scholars think Jesus wanted the disciples to know that people could not harm the disciples without God giving them permission to do this. However, more scholars think Jesus was speaking about God protecting the disciples. They will live forever with God in heaven forever. God will not punish them, even if people punish them on earth.

See: Disciple; Punish (Punishment); Heaven; Eternal Life

Why did Jesus say, “In your endurance you will gain your lives”?

[21:19]

Jesus said, “In your endurance you will gain your lives” or “souls”. Scholars think Jesus wanted people to keep trusting in

God when they were persecuted.

See: Persecute (Persecution); Soul

Why did Jesus say woe to those who are pregnant or nursing in those days?

[21:23]

Jesus said, “woe”(ὠαί/g3759) to those who are pregnant or nursing in those days. The things Jesus spoke were going to happen suddenly. This will make it more difficult for a pregnant or nursing mother.

See: Woe; Last Days

What was “the times of the Gentiles”?

[21:24]

The words “time of the Gentiles” refer to a certain period of time when the Gentiles will do something.” Some scholars think it is a certain period of time when God will allow the Gentiles to destroy Jerusalem. Other scholars believe it is a certain period of time when Gentiles will be saved (see: Romans 11:25).

See: Gentile; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What were the signs in the sun, moon, and the stars?

[21:25]

Jesus spoke about the signs in the sun, moon, and the stars. Scholars think Jesus was speaking about changes in the sun, moon, and stars (see: Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24). These things looked different than they have always looked.

See: Isaiah 34:4; Joel 2:30-31

See: Sign; Last Days

What was a parable?

[21:29]

See: Parable

What was a fig tree?

[21:29]

See: Luke 13:6

What was meant by the words, “the kingdom of God is near”?

[21:31]

Jesus said that the kingdom of God is near. Some scholars think Jesus was saying that the “kingdom of God” would begin soon. Other scholars think Jesus was saying the “kingdom of God” had already begun because God began ruling Christians in some way that he did not before.

See: Kingdom of God

What was “this generation”?

[21:32]

Jesus spoke about this “generation.”

Some scholars think a future generation will see Jesus return.

Some scholars think the generation was the generation who saw Jesus and the temple in Jerusalem destroyed about forty years after Jesus died.

Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about the Jewish people. There will still be Jews when Jesus returns.

Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about evil people. There will always be evil people until Jesus returns (see: Luke 11:29-32, 50-51).

See: Generation; Jesus' Return to Earth; Temple

Why did Jesus command people to be alert and pray at all times?

[21:36]

Jesus wanted people to be alert and pray at all times. Scholars think that Jesus wanted Christians to be ready for him to return at any moment. That is, they must not become tired of waiting and then start to sin again.

See: Pray (Prayer); Sin

Who is the “Son of Man”?

[21:36]

See: Son of Man

Luke 21:1

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins teaching his disciples, but it is uncertain whether this occurs on the same day that the Sadducees question Jesus

gifts

You may need to make explicit what the gifts are. Alternate translation: “gifts of money”

treasury

The “treasury” means the boxes in the temple courtyard where people put money as a gift to God.

Luke 21:2

a certain poor widow

This is a way of introducing a new character to the story.

two mites

“two small coins” or “two tiny copper coins.” These were the

least valuable of the coins people used then. Alternate translation: "two pennies" or "two small coins of little value"

Luke 21:3

Truly I say to you

This means that what Jesus was about to say was very important.

I say to you

Jesus was talking to his disciples. The word "you" is plural. this poor widow put in more than all of them

God considers her gift, a small amount of money, more significant than the large amounts of money the men gave. Alternate translation: "the small gift of this widow is more valuable than the larger gifts of the rich men"

Luke 21:4

gave gifts out of their abundance

"have a lot of money but only gave a small portion of it"

out of her poverty

"who has very little money"

Luke 21:5

Connecting Statement:

Jesus switches from talking about the widow to teaching about the temple.

offerings

things people had given to God

Luke 21:6

these things that you see

This refers to the beautiful temple and its decorations.

the days will come when

"there will be a time when" or "someday"

when not one stone will be left on another which will not be torn down

Jesus uses hyperbole here to emphasize the extent of the devastation that enemies will cause to the temple. The enemies will completely destroy the temple, which is built of stones. Alternate translation: "when all these things will be destroyed" or "when enemies will destroy all of these things"

not one stone will be left on another which will not be torn down

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:

"every stone will be removed from its place and torn down"

left on another which will not be torn down

A new sentence can be started here, and it can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "left on another. They will all be torn down" or "left on another. Enemies will tear down every stone"

Luke 21:7

they asked him

"the disciples asked Jesus" or "Jesus's disciples asked him"

these things

This refers to what Jesus has just said about enemies destroying the temple.

Luke 21:8

that you are not deceived

Jesus was talking to his disciples. The word "you" is plural. Alternate translation: "that you do not believe lies" or "that no one deceives you"

in my name

People coming in his name claim to represent him.

Alternate translation: "claiming to be me" or "claiming to

have my authority"

I am he

"I am the Christ" or "I am the Messiah"

Do not go after them

"Do not believe them" or "Do not become their disciples"

Luke 21:9

wars and riots

Here "wars" probably refers to fighting between countries, and "riots" probably refers to people fighting against their own leaders or against others in their country. Alternate translation: "wars and rebellions" or "wars and revolutions"

do not be terrified

"do not let these things terrify you" or "do not be afraid"

the end

Possible meanings are: (1) The end of the era in which the disciples to whom Jesus spoke were in at the time. Alternate translation: "the end of the age" or (2) The end of the heavens and earth as we know them. Alternate translation: "the end of the world"

will not happen immediately

Implied word can be supplied here. Alternate translation:

"will not happen immediately after the wars and riots" or

"will not happen immediately after those things happen"

Luke 21:10

Then he said to them

"Then Jesus said to his disciples." Since this is a continuation of Jesus speaking from the previous verse, some languages may prefer not to say "Then he said to them."

Nation will rise against nation

Here "nation" is a metonym for the people of the nation, and "rise against" is a metonym for attack. The word "nation" represents nations in general, not one particular nation. Alternate translation: "The people of one nation will attack the people of other nations" or "The people of some nations will attack the people of other nations"

Nation

This refers to ethnic groups of people rather than to countries.

kingdom against kingdom

The words "will rise" are understood from the previous phrase and mean attack. Alternate translation: "kingdom will rise against kingdom" or "the people of some kingdoms will attack the people of other kingdoms"

Luke 21:11

in various places famines and plagues

The words "there will be" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "there will be famines and plagues in many places" or "there will be times of hunger and diseases in different places"

terrifying events

"events that terrify people" or "events that cause people to be very afraid"

Luke 21:12

these things

This refers to the terrible things that Jesus has said will happen.

they will lay their hands on you

"they will grab you." This expression refers to people exercising authority over the disciples. Alternate translation: "they will arrest you"

they will

"people will" or "enemies will"

you

Jesus was talking to his disciples. The word "you" is plural. delivering you over to the synagogues

The word "synagogues" is a metonym for the people in the synagogues, specifically the leaders. Alternate translation: "giving you over to the leaders of the synagogues" or "taking you to the synagogues so that the people there can do to you whatever they want to do"

and prisons

"and delivering you over to the prisons" or "and putting you in prisons"

because of my name

The word "name" is here used to refer to Jesus himself. Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because you follow me"

Luke 21:13

for your testimony

"for you to tell them your testimony about me"

Luke 21:14

Therefore

"Because of this," referring to everything Jesus has said, beginning in [Luke 21:10]

resolve in your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds. Alternate translation: "make up your mind" or "decide firmly"

not to prepare your defense ahead of time

"not to figure out ahead of time what you will say in order to defend yourself against their accusations"

Luke 21:15

wisdom that all your adversaries will not be able to resist or contradict
"wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict"

I will give you words and wisdom

"I will tell you what wise things to say"

words and wisdom

These can be combined into one phrase. Alternate translation: "words of wisdom" or "wise words"

contradict

show to be false

Luke 21:16

you will be given over also by parents, brothers, relatives, and friends

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "even your parents, brothers, relatives, and friends will give you over to the authorities"

they will put some of you to death

"they will kill some of you." Possible meanings are 1) "the authorities will kill some of you" or 2) "those who deliver you up will kill some of you." The first meaning is more likely.

Luke 21:17

You will be hated by everyone

This can be translated in active form. The word "everyone" emphasizes how many people will hate the disciples, either through 1) exaggeration Alternate translation: "It will seem

like you are hated by everyone" or "It will seem like everyone hates you" or 2) a generalization. Alternate translation: "You will be hated by most people" or "Most people will hate you"

because of my name

"my name" here refers to Jesus. Alternate translation:

"because of me" or "because you follow me"

Luke 21:18

But not a hair from your head will perish

Jesus speaks of one of the smallest parts of a person. He is emphasizing that the whole person will not perish. Jesus had already said that some of them would be put to death, so some understand this to mean that they would not be harmed spiritually. Alternate translation: "But these things cannot really harm you" or "Even every hair on your head will be safe"

Luke 21:19

In your endurance

"By holding firm." This can be stated in the opposite way.

Alternate translation: "If you do not quit"

you will gain your lives

"you will save yourselves"

Luke 21:20

Jerusalem surrounded by armies

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"armies surrounding Jerusalem"

that its desolation is near

The word "desolation," which describes a place that is empty, is a metonym for Jerusalem after it has been destroyed and the Jews can no longer live there. Alternate translation: "that it will soon be destroyed" or "that they will soon destroy it"

Luke 21:21

flee

run away from danger

in the country

This refers to the rural areas outside Jerusalem, and not to the nation. Alternate translation: "outside the city"

enter the city

"enter Jerusalem"

Luke 21:22

these are days of vengeance

"these are days of punishment" or "this will be the time when God will punish this city"

all the things that are written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the things that the prophets wrote in the scriptures long ago"

will be fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"will happen"

Luke 21:23

to those who are nursing

"to mothers who are nursing their babies"

there will be great distress upon the land

Possible meanings are 1) the people of the land will be distressed or 2) there will be physical disasters in the land.

wrath to this people

"there will be wrath to the people at that time." God will

bring this wrath. Alternate translation: "this people will experience God's anger" or "God will be very angry and will punish this people"

Luke 21:24

They will fall by the edge of the sword

"They will be killed by the edge of the sword." Here "fall by the edge of the sword" represents being killed by enemy soldiers. Alternate translation: "Enemy soldiers will kill them"

they will be led captive into all the nations

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "their enemies will capture them and take them to other countries"

into all the nations

The word "all" is an exaggeration to emphasize that they will be led into many countries. Alternate translation: "into many other countries"

Jerusalem will be trampled by the Gentiles

Possible meanings are 1) the Gentiles will conquer Jerusalem and occupy it or 2) the Gentiles will destroy the city of Jerusalem or 3) the Gentiles will destroy the people of Jerusalem.

trampled by the Gentiles

This metaphor speaks of Jerusalem as if the people of other nations was walking on it and crushing it down with their feet. This refers to domination. Alternate translation: "conquered by the Gentiles" or "destroyed by the other nations"

the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the period of the Gentiles has come to an end"

Luke 21:25

The nations will be in distress

Here "the nations" refers to the people in them. Alternate translation: "The people of the nations will be distressed" distress, anxious because of the roar of the sea and waves "distress because they will be anxious about the roar of the sea and its waves" or "distress, and the loud noise of the sea and its rough movements will frighten them." This seems to refer to unusual storms or disasters involving the seas.

Luke 21:26

the things which are coming upon the world

"the things that will happen in the world" or "the things that will happen to the world"

the powers of the heavens will be shaken

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "God will shake the sun, moon, and stars so they will not move in their normal ways" or 2) "God will trouble the powerful spirits in the heavens." The first is recommended. Luke 21:27

Son of Man coming

Jesus is referring to himself. Alternate translation: "me, the Son Man, coming"

coming in a cloud

"coming down in a cloud"

with power and great glory

Here "power" probably refers to his authority to judge the world. Here "glory" may refer to a bright light. God sometimes shows his greatness with a very bright light.

Alternate translation: "powerfully and gloriously" or "and he will be powerful and very glorious"

Luke 21:28

stand up

Sometimes when people are afraid, they crouch down in order to avoid being seen or hurt. When they are no longer afraid, they get up. Alternate translation: "stand up with confidence"

lift up your heads

Lifting the head is a metonym for looking up. When they lift their heads up, they will be able to see their rescuer coming to them. Alternate translation: "look up"

because your redemption is coming near

God, who redeems, is spoken of as if he were the redemption that he causes. The word "redemption" is an abstract noun that can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "because God will soon redeem you"

redemption

God rescuing his people from those who want to harm them is spoken of as if he were buying back people who had become slaves because they could not pay their debts. Alternate translation: "rescue" or "salvation"

Luke 21:29

Connecting Statement:

As Jesus continues teaching his disciples, he tells them a parable.

Luke 21:30

When they sprout buds

"When new leaves start to grow"

summer is already near

"summer is about to start." Summer in Israel follows the sprouting of fig tree leaves and is the time when the figs ripen. Alternate translation: "harvest time is ready to start"

Luke 21:31

So also, when you see these things happening

The appearance of the signs that Jesus just described signal the arrival of the kingdom of God just as appearance of the leaves of the fig tree signal the arrival of summer.

the kingdom of God is near

"God will soon establish his kingdom." Alternate translation: "God will soon rule as king"

Luke 21:32

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues teaching his disciples.

Truly I say to you

This expression emphasizes the importance of what Jesus is about to say.

this generation

Possible meanings are 1) the generation that will see the first of the signs Jesus speaks of or 2) the generation Jesus is speaking to. The first is more likely.

will not pass away until

This could be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "will still be alive when"

Luke 21:33

Heaven and earth will pass away

"Heaven and earth will cease to exist." The word "heaven" here refers to the sky and the universe beyond it.

my words will never pass away

"my words will never cease to exist" or "my words will never fail." Jesus uses "words" here to refer to everything he says.

will never pass away

This could be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "will remain forever"

Luke 21:34

so that your hearts are not burdened

The "heart" here refers to the mind and thoughts of the person. Alternate translation: "so that you are not occupied"

are not burdened

Jesus here speaks of the following sins as if they were a physical weight that a person had to carry.

excessive drinking ... drunkenness

"drinking too much wine and becoming drunk." Excessive drinking is the action, and intoxication is the effect of that action.

the worries of life

"the things you worry about as you live every day"

that day does not close on you suddenly

The rest of this sentence, "like a trap," is in verse 35. Just as a trap closes on an animal when the animal does not expect it, that day will happen when people do not expect it.

Alternate translation: "that day does not happen when you are not expecting it, as when a trap closes suddenly on an animal" or "that day does not surprise you like a trap"

that day

This refers to the day when the Messiah returns. Alternate translation: "the day when the Son of Man comes"

Luke 21:35

like a trap

The first part of this statement, "that day does not close on you suddenly," is in verse 34. Just as a trap closes on an animal when the animal does not expect it, that day will happen when people do not expect it. Alternate translation: "that day does not happen when you are not expecting it, as when a trap closes suddenly on an animal" or "that day does not surprise you like a trap"

it will come upon everyone

"it will affect everyone" or "the events of that day will affect everyone"

on the face of the whole earth

The surface of the earth is spoken of as if it were the

outward part of the face of a person. Alternate translation: "on the surface of the whole earth" or "on the entire earth"

Luke 21:36

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes teaching his disciples.

be alert

"be ready for my coming"

strong enough to escape all these things

Possible meanings are 1) "strong enough to endure these things" or 2) "able to avoid these things."

these things that will take place

"these things that will happen." Jesus has just told them about terrible things that will happen, such as persecution, war, and captivity.

to stand before the Son of Man

"to stand with confidence before the Son of Man." This probably refers to when the Son of Man judges everyone. A person who is not ready will be afraid of the Son of Man and will not stand with confidence.

Luke 21:37

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story that begins in [Luke 20:1]

during the days he was teaching

"during the daytime he would teach" or "he would teach each day." The following verses tell about things that Jesus and the people did each day during the week before he died.

in the temple

Only priests were allowed in the temple. Alternate translation: "at the temple" or "in the temple courtyard"

at night he went out

"at night he would go out of the city" or "he went out each night"

Luke 21:38

All of the people

The word "all" is probably an exaggeration to emphasize that the crowd was very large. Alternate translation: "A very large number of people in the city" or "Almost everyone in the city"

came early in the morning

"would come early each morning"

to hear him in the temple

"to hear him teach in the temple courtyard"

Chapter 22

Luke 22 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The eating of the body and blood

[Luke 22:19-20](#) describes Jesus's last meal with his followers. At that time, Jesus told them that what they were eating and drinking were his body and his blood. Nearly all Christian churches celebrate "the Lord's Supper," the "Eucharist," or "Holy Communion" to remember this meal.

The new covenant

Some people think that Jesus established the new covenant during the supper. Others think he established it after he went up to heaven. Others think it will not be established until Jesus comes again. Your translation should say no more about this than the ULB does. (See: covenant)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[Luke 22:1 Notes](#)

Luke 22

22:1-6

What was the "festival of Unleavened Bread"?

[22:1]

See: Festival of Unleavened Bread; Passover

Why did the chief priests and the scribes discuss "how" to put Jesus to death?

[22:2]

The chief priests and scribes wanted to kill Jesus. Scholars think the chief priests and the scribes were talking about how to kill Jesus. They wanted to kill him in a way that was not against the law. They wanted to find something Jesus did that would make the Roman government kill him.

See: High Priest; Scribe

Why were the Jewish leaders afraid of the people?

[22:2]

The Jewish leaders were afraid of the people. Some scholars think the Jewish leaders were afraid of the people because the people might be angry if they arrested Jesus for the wrong reasons. Perhaps the people would riot and cause great trouble. A riot would make the Romans angry (see: Acts 19:40).

Advice to translators: A riot is when a large group of people get angry and they destroy things.

How did Satan enter into Judas Iscariot?

[22:3]

Satan entered into Judas. That is, Satan began to control Judas' thoughts and Judas began to obey Satan. Satan wanted Judas to betray Jesus (see: John 6:70-71; 13:2,27).

See: Satan (The Devil)

22:7-13

Why did the Jews have the Passover lamb?

[22:7]

The Jews had the Passover lamb because it reminded them of when they left Egypt. At this time, they killed a lamb and painted its blood onto the two side doorposts and the tops of the door frames of the houses (see: Exodus 12:5-7). God saw the blood on the door and he passed over the house with the blood on the door and did not kill the firstborn in the house (see: Exodus 12:12-13).

See: Passover; Lamb of God; Blood; Firstborn (Birthright)

Why did Jesus tell the disciples to look for a man bearing a pitcher of water?

[22:10]

In ancient Israel, only the women carried pitchers of water. Scholars think that when Jesus wanted his disciples to look for a man carrying a pitcher of water because there would only be one man carrying a pitcher of water. Then they would know who they must follow.

22:14-23

How will the Passover be fulfilled in the kingdom of God?

[22:16]

The Passover will be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. At that time, people will not sin and things will not die. Scholars think there will be a great feast and Christians will celebrate and be with Jesus forever. This is sometimes called the wedding feast of the Lamb.

See: Passover; Kingdom of God; Fulfill (Fulfillment); Sin; Lamb of God

What did Jesus mean when he said, "This is my body, which is given for you"?

[22:19]

Jesus said, "This is my body, which is given for you." He was speaking about dying so that people could be at peace with God.

See: Lord's Supper

Why did Jesus say, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood"?

[22:20]

See: Lord's Supper; New Covenant; Blood

How was the betrayal of Jesus "determined"?

[22:22]

God “determined”(ὁρίζω/g3724) that Judas would betray Jesus (see: Acts 2:23). That is, God knew that this would happen. However, Jesus said the person who betrayed him will answer to God. That is, even though God knew Jesus would be betrayed, God would punish Judas.

See: Foreknow (Foreknowledge); Predestine (Predestination); Punish (Punishment); Elect (Election); Will of God

22:24-30

Why did Jesus say, “let the one who is the greatest among you become like the youngest”?

[22:26]

In ancient times, the younger people typically served those who were older. They thought the older people were greater in some way and people should honor them. Jesus did not want his disciples to live as if they were greater than other people, rather he wanted them to serve other people.

When will Jesus give the disciples a kingdom?

[22:29]

Jesus will give his disciples a kingdom. That is, they will rule something. Some scholars say Jesus will give the disciples a kingdom after he returns to the earth. Fewer scholars think say Jesus gave them a kingdom when he said this. Jesus was a servant during his time on earth, so the disciples must also lead other people by serving them.

See: Disciple; Jesus' Return to Earth

How will the disciples judge the twelve tribes of Israel?

[22:30]

The disciples will judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Some scholars say the disciples will judge the twelve tribes of Israel for accepting or rejecting the gospel. Other scholars say the disciples will rule the twelve tribes of Israel some day. Perhaps this will happen after Jesus returns to the earth.

See: Tribes of Israel; Gospel; Jesus' Return to Earth

22:31-34

Why did Jesus say “Simon, Simon”?

[22:31]

Jesus said “Simon, Simon” because he wanted Simon to listen closely to what Jesus was going to tell him. Perhaps Jesus addressed Peter as “Simon” to remind him that he needed help because he was about to be tested.

See: Test

Why did Jesus say, “that he might sift you as wheat”?

[22:31]

Jesus told Simon that Satan wanted to “sift” him as wheat is sifted. This was a metaphor. Sifting was the violent, shaking action taken to separate grain. It was separated into something people wanted and something people did not want. Jesus was telling Simon that Satan wanted him not to trust in Jesus.

See: Satan (The Devil); Metaphor; Faith (Believe in)

Why did Jesus say “the rooster will not crow this day” before Simon denied him three times?

[22:34]

In ancient Israel, the Jewish day started at sundown, that is, in the evening. The rooster generally crows just before sunrise. Jesus wanted Simon to know that he would deny him three times sometime during the night before the sunrise.

22:35-38

Why did Jesus tell the disciples to buy swords?

[22:36]

Jesus told his disciples to buy swords.

Some scholars think Jesus was warning his disciples that they may need to defend themselves. Traveling on the roads was often dangerous.

Some scholars think Jesus used a metaphor when he spoke about swords. That is, he was warning the disciples that they were going to be persecuted or people were going to try to hurt them.

See: Disciple; Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution)

22:39-46

Where was the Mount of Olives?

[22:39]

See Map: Mount of Olives

What did it mean to “enter into temptation”?

[22:40]

When someone entered into temptation, they sinned when they were tempted. Jesus had already told the disciples that Satan will tempt them.

See: Tempt (Temptation); Satan (The Devil)

Why did Jesus say to God the Father, “If you are willing, remove this cup from me”?

[22:42]

Jesus asked God the Father to remove the cup from him if God the Father was willing to do this. The cup was a symbol. Jesus was speaking about the suffering he was about to endure. That is, Jesus was about to be tortured and then killed. Jesus was praying that God would rescue him from the suffering. However, he would do this if it was what God the Father wanted him to do.

See: God the Father; Will of God; Symbol

How did the angel from heaven strengthen Jesus?

[22:43]

The angel from heaven strengthened Jesus. Scholars think the angel helped Jesus to endure the pain he was having.

See: Angel; Heaven

Why did Luke say that Jesus’ “sweat became like great drops of blood”?

[22:44]

Luke said that Jesus’ “sweat became like great drops of blood”. Some scholars think Luke was saying that Jesus was sweating so much that sweat fell to the ground just as blood does when someone is bleeding. Other scholars think Luke was saying that Jesus’ sweat blood.

Why did Jesus say the disciples were “sleeping because of their sorrow”?

[22:45]

Jesus said the disciples were sleeping because they were sad. Some scholars think the disciples were exhausted because of the great “sorrow”(λύπη/g3077) they experienced being with Jesus that day. Other scholars say it was because they saw their Jesus in much pain.

22:47-53

Why did Jesus ask Judas if he was “betraying the Son of Man with a kiss”?

[22:48]

In ancient Israel, friends often greeted one another with a kiss of some kind. Some scholars think Jesus was sad that Judas was betraying him when he kissed Jesus. That is, Judas told people who Jesus was when he kissed Jesus. Judas was, in fact, handing Jesus over to his enemies, that is, to those who would crucify him.

See: Son of Man

What was the “authority of darkness”?

[22:53]

In the Bible, the “authority of darkness” was a symbol of Satan and every evil thing that served him. Jesus wanted people to know that the people who came out at night to arrest him were following Satan.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Satan (The Devil)

22:54-62

Why did the crowd take Jesus to the high priest?

[22:54]

The crowd took Jesus to the high priest. They wanted Jesus to answer the Jewish leaders who accused him of doing and saying evil things. The high priest could decide if Jesus was guilty of anything against the Law of Moses.

See: High Priest; Law of Moses

Why did Jesus appear before Pilate and Herod?

Jesus appeared before Pilate because Rome controlled Israel (see: Matthew 27: 11-26; John 18:28-40). The Jewish leaders were not able to kill Jesus without getting permission from the Roman government. However, Pilate did not find Jesus guilty of any crime worthy of death. Pilate sent Jesus to Herod because Jesus was from Galilee. Herod ruled over Galilee. The Romans gave him permission to do this.

See: King Herod; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

See Map: Galilee

22:63-65

Why did the guards mock and beat Jesus?

[22:63]

The guards mocked and beat Jesus. They insulted him while they were striking him with their fists. The Romans often hit people they arrested. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would sufferer in many ways (see: Isaiah 53).

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Messiah (Christ)

22:66-71

Who were the elders?

[22:66]

See: Elder

Why did the Jewish leaders ask Jesus if he was the “Christ”?

[22:67]

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus if he was the “Christ” because they did not believe he was the Messiah. They believed that if Jesus said that he was the Messiah, they could charge him with blasphemy. Then they would kill Jesus.

See: Messiah (Christ); Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

What was the “right hand of the power of God”?

[22:69]

In ancient times, when someone was seated at the “right hand” of the king, he was in the highest place of honor. Jesus wanted the Jewish leaders to know that he would soon be given the highest honor possible.

Why did Jesus answer the religious leaders’ question by saying, “You say that I am”?

[22:70]

Jesus said, “You say that I am”. Scholars think Jesus was saying, “I am the Son of God just as your question is asking”.

See: Son of God; Yahweh (I am)

Luke 22:1

General Information:

Judas agrees to betray Jesus. These verses give background information about this event.

Now

This word is used here to introduce a new event.

Festival of Unleavened Bread

The festival was called by this name because during the festival the Jews did not eat bread that was made with yeast. Alternate translation: "festival when they would eat unleavened bread"

was approaching

"was almost ready to begin"

Luke 22:2

seeking how

"looking for an opportunity" or "thinking of ways in which" they could put Jesus to death

The priests and scribes did not have the authority to kill Jesus themselves, but they hoped to get others to kill him. Alternate translation: "they could get someone to put Jesus to death" or "they could get someone to kill Jesus"

afraid of the people

Possible meanings are 1) "scared of what the people might do" or 2) "scared that the people would make Jesus king."

Luke 22:3

General Information:

This is the beginning of the action in this part of the story.

Satan entered into Judas, the one called Iscariot

What happened might have been similar to demon possession, but other demon-possessed people are obviously unable to control any of their own actions. Here Judas Iscariot seems to do everything he desires, but Satan was somehow at work in a special way. Whatever the intended meaning, Satan "entering" Judas Iscariot is a metaphor for Satan taking control of Judas Iscariot. Alternate translation: "Satan took control of Judas, the one called Iscariot"

Luke 22:4

chief priests

"the leaders of the priests"

captains

officers of the temple guards

how he would betray Jesus to them

"how he would help them arrest Jesus"

Luke 22:5

They were glad

"The chief priests and captains were glad"

to give him money

"to give Judas money"

Luke 22:6

He consented

"He agreed"

looked for an opportunity to give him over to them away from the crowd

This is an ongoing action that continues after this part of the story ends.

away from the crowd

"privately" or "when there was no crowd around him"

Luke 22:7

General Information:

Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare for the Passover meal. This verse gives background information about the event.

the day of unleavened bread

"the day of bread without yeast." This was the day the Jews would take all bread made with yeast out of their homes. Then they would celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven days.

the Passover lamb had to be sacrificed

Each family or group of people would kill a lamb and eat it together, so many lambs were killed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people had to kill a lamb for their Passover meal"

Luke 22:8

prepare

This is a general word meaning "make ready." Jesus was not necessarily telling Peter and John to do all the cooking, so that we may eat it

Jesus was including Peter and John when he said "we." Peter and John would be part of the group of the disciples that would eat the meal.

Luke 22:9

you want us to make preparations

The word "us" does not include Jesus. Jesus would not be part of the group that would prepare the meal.

make preparations

"make preparations for the meal" or "prepare the meal"

Luke 22:10

He answered them

"Jesus answered Peter and John"

Look

Jesus used this word to tell them to pay close attention and

to do exactly what he tells them.
 a man bearing a pitcher of water will meet you
 "you will see a man carrying a pitcher of water"
 bearing a pitcher of water
 "carrying a jar with water in it." He probably would be carrying the jar on his shoulder.
 Follow him into the house
 "Follow him, and go into the house"
 Luke 22:11
 The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room, where I ... my disciples?"
 The quote beginning with "Where is the guest room" is a direct quote of what Jesus, the teacher, wants to say to the master of his house. It can be translated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "Our teacher asks where the guest room is in which he ... his disciples." or "Our teacher says to show us the guest room where he ... us and the rest of his disciples."
 The Teacher
 This refers to Jesus.
 eat the Passover
 "eat the Passover meal"
 Luke 22:12
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus continues giving instructions to Peter and John.
 He will show you
 "The owner of the house will show you"
 upper room
 "room upstairs." If your community does not have houses with rooms above other rooms, you may need to consider how to describe buildings in the city.
 Luke 22:13
 So they went
 "So Peter and John went"
 Luke 22:14
 Connecting Statement:
 This is the next event in the part of the story about the Passover. Jesus and his disciples are sitting to eat the Passover meal.
 When the hour came
 "When it was time to eat the meal"
 he sat down
 "Jesus sat down"
 Luke 22:15
 I have greatly desired
 "I have wanted very much"
 before I suffer
 Jesus is referring ahead to his death. The word for "suffer" here means to go through an unusually difficult or painful experience.
 Luke 22:16
 For I say to you
 Jesus uses this phrase to emphasize the importance of what he will say next.
 until it is fulfilled
 This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) until the purpose of the Passover Festival is accomplished. Alternate translation: "until God fulfills it" or "until God completes the purpose of the Passover Festival" or 2) "until

we celebrate the final Passover Festival"
 Luke 22:17
 took a cup
 "picked up a cup of wine"
 when he had given thanks
 "when he had given thanks to God"
 he said
 "he said to his apostles"
 share it among yourselves
 They were to share the contents of the cup, and not the cup itself. Alternate translation: "share the wine in the cup among yourselves" or "each of you drink some of the wine from the cup"
 Luke 22:18
 For I say to you
 This phrase is used to emphasize the importance of what Jesus will say next.
 fruit of the vine
 This refers to the juice that is squeezed from the grapes that grow on grapevines. Wine is made from fermented grape juice.
 until the kingdom of God comes
 "until God establishes his kingdom" or "until God rules in his kingdom"
 Luke 22:19
 bread
 This bread did not have yeast in it, so it was flat.
 he broke it
 "he ripped it" or "he tore it." He may have divided it into many pieces or he may have divided it into two pieces and given them to the apostles to divide among themselves. If possible, use an expression that would apply to either situation.
 This is my body
 Possible meanings are 1) "This bread is my body" and 2) "This bread represents my body."
 my body, which is given for you
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "my body, which I will give for you" or "my body, which I will sacrifice for you"
 Do this
 "Eat this bread"
 in remembrance of me
 "in order to remember me"
 Luke 22:20
 This cup
 The word "cup" refers to the wine in the cup. Alternate translation: "The wine in this cup" or "This cup of wine" the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you
 Here "blood, which is poured out" represents death. Jesus's death will establish the new covenant that God will make with his people. Alternate translation: "the new covenant that God will put into effect because I have shed my blood for you"
 Luke 22:21
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus continues speaking to his apostles.
 The hand of the one who betrays me
 The hand here is a synecdoche that refers to the whole

person. Jesus speaks of Judas betraying him as if it has already happened. Alternate translation: "The person who is about to betray me" or "The man who is ready to betray me"

Luke 22:22

For the Son of Man indeed goes

"For, indeed, the Son of Man will go" or "For the Son of Man will die"

the Son of Man indeed goes

Jesus is speaking about himself in the third person.

Alternate translation: "I, the Son of Man, indeed go"

as it has been determined

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as God has determined" or "as God has planned"

But woe to that man through whom he is betrayed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"But woe to the man who betrays the Son of Man" or "But how terrible it will be for that man who betrays the Son of Man"

Luke 22:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 22:24

Then there arose also a quarrel among them

"Then the apostles began to argue among themselves"

was considered to be greatest

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"was the most important" or "the people thought was most important"

Luke 22:25

He said to them

"Jesus said to the apostles"

are lords over them

"rule forcefully over the Gentiles"

are called

Their people probably did not think that those rulers did good to them. Alternate translation: "like to be called" or "call themselves"

Luke 22:26

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues teaching his apostles.

it must not be like this with you

"you should not act like that"

the youngest

Older people were respected in that culture. The leaders were usually older people and were called "elders." The youngest person would be the least likely to lead, and the least important. Alternate translation: "the least important" and the one who leads like the one who serves

Words from the phrase before this apply to this phrase.

Alternate translation: "and let the one who leads become like the one who serves"

the one who serves

"a servant"

Luke 22:27

For

This connects Jesus's commands in verse 26 with this whole verse. It means that the most important person should serve because Jesus is a servant.

For who is greater ... serves?

"For who is more important ... serves?" Jesus uses this question to begin to explain to the apostles who is truly great. Alternate translation: "I want you to think about who is greater ... serves."

the one who sits at the table

"the one who is dining"

Is it not the one who sits at the table?

Jesus uses another question to teach the disciples. Alternate translation: "Of course the one who sits at the table is more important than the servant!"

Yet I am among you as one who serves

"But I am with you to be a servant" or "But I am with you to show you how a servant acts." The word "yet" is here because there is a contrast between what people would expect Jesus to be like and what he really was like.

Luke 22:28

have continued with me in my trials

"have stayed with me as I have struggled" or "have stayed with me while Satan has tempted me"

Luke 22:29

I set you over a kingdom, even as my Father has set me over a kingdom

Some languages may need to change the order. Alternate

translation: "Just as my father has given a kingdom to me, I give a kingdom to you"

I set you over a kingdom

"I make you rulers in God's kingdom" or "I give you

authority to rule in the kingdom" or "I will make you kings"

even as my Father has set me over a kingdom

"just as my Father has given me authority to rule as king in his kingdom"

Luke 22:30

you will sit on thrones

Kings sit on thrones. Sitting on a throne is a symbol of

ruling. Alternate translation: "you will work as kings" or

"you will do the work of kings"

Luke 22:31

General Information:

Jesus speaks directly to Simon.

Simon, Simon

Jesus said his name twice to show that what he was about to say to him was very important.

to have you, that he might sift you

The word "you" refers to all of the apostles. Languages that have different forms of "you" should use the plural form.

sift you as wheat

This means that Satan wanted to test the disciples to find something wrong. Alternate translation: "test you like someone passes grain through a sieve"

Luke 22:32

But I have prayed for you

The word "you" here refers specifically to Simon.

Languages that have different forms of "you" should use the singular form.

that your faith may not fail

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:

"that you will continue to have faith" or "that you will continue to trust me"

After you have turned back again

Here "turned back again" is a metaphor for starting to believe in someone again. Alternate translation: "After you start believing in me again" or "After you start serving me again"

strengthen your brothers

"encourage your brothers to be strong in their faith" or "help your brothers believe in me"

your brothers

This refers to the other disciples. Alternate translation: "your fellow believers" or "the other disciples"

Luke 22:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 22:34

the rooster will not crow this day before you deny three times that you know me

The order of the parts of the verse can be reversed.

Alternate translation: "you will deny three times that you know me before the rooster crows this day"

the rooster will not crow this day before you deny

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "the rooster will crow this day only after you deny" or "before the rooster crows today, you will deny"

the rooster will not crow

Here, the crowing of the rooster refers to a certain time of day. Roosters often crow just before the sun appears in the morning. Therefore, this refers to dawn.

rooster

a bird that calls out loudly around the time the sun comes up

this day

The Jewish day begins at sunset. Jesus was speaking after the sun had set. The rooster would crow just before morning. The morning was part of "this day." Alternate translation: "tonight" or "in the morning"

Luke 22:35

Connecting Statement:

Jesus turns his attention back to speaking to all of his disciples.

Jesus said to them, "When ... did you lack anything?" They answered, "Nothing."

Jesus uses a question to help the apostles remember how well the people provided for them as they traveled. Though this is a rhetorical question and Jesus is not asking for information, you should translate it as a question unless only a statement would cause the disciples to reply that they had lacked nothing.

When I sent you out

Jesus is talking to his apostles, so the word "you" is plural.

purse

A purse is a bag for holding money. Here it is used to refer to "money."

a bag of provisions

"travelers' bag" or "bag of food"

Nothing

It may be helpful to some audiences to include more about the conversation. Alternate translation: "We did not lack anything" or "We had everything we needed"

Luke 22:36

and likewise a bag of provisions

"and let him also take a bag of provisions" or "and also a bag of provisions"

The one who does not have a sword should sell his cloak

Jesus was not referring to a specific person who did not have a sword. Alternate translation: "If anyone does not have a sword, he should sell his cloak"

cloak

"coat" or "outer garment"

Luke 22:37

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes speaking with his disciples.

what is written about me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"what a prophet wrote about me in the scriptures"

must be fulfilled

The apostles would have understood that God would cause everything written in the scriptures to happen. Alternate translation: "God will fulfill" or "God will cause to happen"

He was counted with the lawless ones

Here Jesus is quoting the scriptures. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People counted him as a member of the group of lawless men"

the lawless ones

"those who break the law" or "the criminals"

For what is predicted about me is being fulfilled

Possible meanings are 1) "For what the prophet predicted about me is about to happen" or 2) "For my life is coming to an end"

Luke 22:38

they said

This refers to at least two of Jesus's apostles.

It is enough

Possible meanings are 1) they have enough swords. "We now have enough swords." or 2) Jesus wants them to stop talking about having swords. "No more of this talk about swords."

Luke 22:39

General Information:

Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives to pray.

Luke 22:40

that you do not enter into temptation

"that you are not tempted" or "that nothing tempts you and causes you to sin"

Luke 22:41

about a stone's throw

"about the distance that someone can throw a stone."

Alternate translation: "a short distance" or with an estimated measurement like "about thirty meters"

Luke 22:42

Father, if you are willing

Jesus will bear the guilt of every person's sin on the cross. He prays to his Father, asking if there is another way.

Father

This is an important title for God.

remove this cup from me

Jesus refers to what he will soon experience as if it were a cup of bitter liquid that he would have to drink. Alternate translation: "allow me to not drink from this cup" or "allow

me to not experience what is about to happen"

Nevertheless not my will, but yours be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"However, do what is according to your will rather than what is according to my will"

Luke 22:43

appeared to him

"appeared to Jesus"

strengthening him

"encouraging him"

Luke 22:44

Being in agony, he prayed

"He was suffering greatly, and so he prayed"

he prayed more earnestly

"he prayed more intensely"

his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground

"his sweat was falling to the ground like large drops of blood"

Luke 22:45

When he rose up from his prayer, he

"When Jesus got up after praying, he" or "After praying, Jesus got up and he"

found them sleeping because of their sorrow

"saw that they were sleeping because they were tired from their sadness"

Luke 22:46

Why are you sleeping?

Possible meanings are 1) "I am surprised that you are sleeping now." or 2) "You should not be sleeping now!"

that you may not enter into temptation

"so that you may not be tempted" or "so that nothing tempts you and causes you to sin"

Luke 22:47

behold, a crowd appeared

The word "behold" alerts us to a new group in the story.

Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "there was a crowd that appeared"

leading them

Judas was showing the people where Jesus was. He was not telling the crowd what to do. Alternate translation: "leading them to Jesus"

to kiss him

"to greet him with a kiss" or "to greet him by kissing him."

When men greeted other men who were family or friends, they would kiss them on one cheek or both cheeks. If your readers would find it embarrassing to say that a man would kiss another man, you could translate it in a more general way: "to give him a friendly greeting."

Luke 22:48

are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?

Jesus uses a question to rebuke Judas for betraying him with a kiss. Normally a kiss is a sign of love. Alternate translation: "it is a kiss you are using to betray the Son of Man!"

the Son of Man with

Jesus is using this term to refer to himself. Alternate translation: "me, the Son of Man, with"

Luke 22:49

those who were around Jesus

This refers to Jesus's disciples.

what was happening

This refers to the priests and soldiers coming to arrest Jesus.

strike with the sword

The question is about the type of fight they should engage in

Luke 22:50

one of them

"one of the disciples"

struck the servant of the high priest

"struck the servant of the high priest with a sword"

Luke 22:51

That is enough

"Do not do any more of that"

touched his ear

"touched the servant where his ear had been cut off"

Luke 22:52

Do you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs?

"Do you come out with swords and clubs because you think I am a robber?" Jesus uses this question to scold the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "You know that I am not a robber, yet you come out to me bringing swords and clubs."

Luke 22:53

I was daily with you

"I was among you every day"

in the temple

Only priests entered the temple. Alternate translation: "in the temple courts" or "at the temple"

lay your hands on me

In this verse, to lay hands on someone is to arrest that person. Alternate translation: "arrest me"

this is your hour

"this is the time for you to do whatever you want"

the authority of darkness

It may be helpful to repeat the reference to time.

"Darkness" is a metonym for Satan. Alternate translation: "the time of the authority of darkness" or "the time when God is allowing Satan to do whatever he wants"

Luke 22:54

led him away

"led Jesus away from the garden where they had arrested him"

into the high priest's house

"into the courtyard of the high priest's house"

Luke 22:55

they had kindled a fire

"some people had made a fire." The fire was to keep the people warm during the cool night. Alternate translation: "some people started a fire to keep warm"

the middle of the courtyard

This was the courtyard at the high priest's house. It had walls around it, but no roof.

in the midst of them

"together with them"

Luke 22:56

he sat in the light of the fire

He sat near the fire and its line shone on him.

and looked straight at him and said
 "and she looked straight at Peter and said to the other people in the courtyard"
 This man also was with him
 The woman was telling the people about Peter being with Jesus. She probably did not know Peter's name.
 Luke 22:57
 But Peter denied it
 "But Peter said that it was not true"
 Woman, I do not know him
 Peter did not know the woman's name. He was not insulting her by calling her "woman." If people would think he was insulting her, you could use a culturally acceptable way for a man to address a woman he does not know, or you could leave out the word.
 Luke 22:58
 You are also one of them
 "You are also one of those who were with Jesus"
 Man, I am not
 Peter did not know the man's name. He was not insulting him by calling him "Man." If people would think he was insulting him, you could use a culturally acceptable way for a man to address a man he does not know, or you could leave out the word.
 Luke 22:59
 insisted and said
 "said insistently" or "said loudly"
 Truly this man
 Here "this man" refers to Peter. The speaker probably did not know Peter's name.
 he is a Galilean
 The man could probably tell Peter was from Galilee from the way he talked.
 Luke 22:60
 Man
 Peter did not know the man's name. He was not insulting him by calling him "Man." If people would think he was insulting him, you could use a culturally acceptable way for a man to address a man he does not know, or you could leave out the word. See how you translated this in Luke 22:58.
 I do not know what you are saying
 "I do not know what you are talking about." This expression means that Peter completely disagrees with the man.
 Alternate translation: "what you said is not true at all" or "what you said is completely false"
 while he was speaking
 "while Peter was speaking"
 a rooster crowed
 Roosters often crow just before the sun appears in the morning. See how you translated a similar phrase in Luke 22:34.
 Luke 22:61
 Turning, the Lord looked at Peter
 "The Lord turned and looked at Peter"
 the word of the Lord
 "what Jesus had said" when Jesus had said that Peter would betray Jesus
 a rooster crows

Roosters often crow just before the sun appears in the morning. See how you translated a similar phrase in Luke 22:34.
 today
 The Jewish day started at sundown and continued to the next evening. Jesus had spoken the previous evening about what would happen shortly before dawn or at dawn.
 Alternate translation: "tonight"
 deny me three times
 "deny three times that you know me"
 Luke 22:62
 Peter went outside
 "Peter went out of the courtyard"
 Luke 22:63
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 Luke 22:64
 They put a cover over him
 "They covered his eyes so that he could not see"
 Prophecy! Who is the one who hit you?
 The guards did not believe that Jesus was a prophet. Rather, they believed that a real prophet would know who hit him even if he could not see. They called Jesus a prophet, but they were teasing him and showing him why they did not think that he was a prophet. Alternate translation: "Prove that you are a prophet. Tell us who hit you!" or "Hey prophet, who hit you?"
 Prophecy!
 "Speak words from God!" The implied information is that God would have to tell Jesus who struck him since Jesus was blindfolded and could not see.
 Luke 22:65
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 Luke 22:66
 General Information:
 It is now the next day and Jesus is brought before the council.
 As soon as it was day
 "At dawn the next morning"
 They led him into the Council
 Possible meanings are 1) "The elders had Jesus brought into the Council" or 2) "The guards led Jesus into the council of the elders." Some languages may avoid saying who led him by using the pronoun "they" or by using a passive verb: "Jesus was led into the council"
 Luke 22:67
 and said
 A new sentence can be started here if a period is put at the end of the previous verse. Alternate translation: "The elders said to Jesus"
 If you are the Christ, tell us
 "Tell us if you are the Christ"
 If I tell you, you will not believe
 This was a way for Jesus to respond without giving them a reason to say that he was guilty of blasphemy. Alternate translation: "If I tell you, you will not believe me"
 Luke 22:68
 if I ask you, you will not answer

This was a way for Jesus to rebuke them without giving them a reason to convict him. These words, along with "If I tell you, you will not believe" (verse 67), show that Jesus did not believe that the council really wanted to know the truth.

Luke 22:69

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the council.

from now on

"from this day" or "starting from today"

the Son of Man will

Jesus uses this phrase to refer to himself. Alternate

translation: "I, the Son of Man, will"

seated at the right hand of the power of God

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "seated in the place of honor beside the power of God"

the power of God

"the all-powerful God." Here "power" refers to his supreme

authority.

Luke 22:70

Then you are the Son of God?

The council asked this question because they wanted Jesus to explicitly confirm their understanding that he was saying he was the Son of God. Alternate translation: "So when you said that, did you mean that you are the Son of God?"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

You say that I am

"Yes, it is just like you say"

Luke 22:71

Why do we still need a witness?

They use a question for emphasis. Alternate translation:

"We have no further need for witnesses!"

heard from his own mouth

The phrase "his own mouth" refers to his speech. Alternate translation: "heard him say himself that he was the Son of God"

Chapter 23

Luke 23 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The ULB sets the last line of this chapter apart because it is more connected with chapter 24 than with chapter 23.

Special concepts in this chapter

Accuse

The chief priests and scribes accused Jesus of doing evil because they wanted Pilate to kill Jesus. But they were accusing him falsely, because Jesus had never done what they accused him of doing.

"The curtain of the temple was split in two"

The curtain in the temple was an important symbol that showed that people needed to have someone speak to God for them. They could not speak to God directly because all people are sinful and God hates sin. God split the curtain to show that Jesus's people can now speak to God directly because Jesus has paid for their sins.

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([Luke 23:53](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"I find no fault in this man"

Pilate was saying that he did not know of any reason why he should punish Jesus: Jesus had not broken any laws. Pilate was not saying that Jesus was perfect.

Links:

[Luke 23:1 Notes](#)

Luke 23

23:1-7

Who was Pilate?

[23:1]

Pilate was the Roman ruler of Judah. While he was in Jerusalem for the holiday, his home was at Caesarea.

See Map: Jerusalem; Caesarea

Why did the religious leaders take Jesus to Pilate?

[23:1]

The Jewish leaders took Jesus to Pilate. This was because they needed the Roman ruler's permission to kill someone.

What did the leaders mean when they accused Jesus of perverting the nation?

[23:2]

The leaders accused Jesus of perverting the nation. Some scholars think they believed Jesus caused people to fight against their Roman rulers. Other scholars think these leaders believed Jesus caused the Jewish people to riot and fight against the Jewish leaders.

Who was Herod Antipas?

[23:7]

See: King Herod

Why was Jesus taken to Herod?

[23:7]

Jesus was taken to Herod. Some scholars think Pilate sent Jesus to Herod so Herod would have something to report to Pilate about Jesus. Other scholars think Herod asked to meet Jesus so Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. Other scholars think Pilate sent Jesus to Herod so that Herod could determine whether the things said about Jesus were true.

See: King Herod

23:8-12

Why did Jesus not answer Herod's questions?

[23:9]

Jesus did not answer Herod's questions. Some scholars think this was because he knew that he was going to die. He knew that he needed to die so that people could be at peace with God. Other scholars think Jesus did not answer Herod's questions because he knew Herod wanted to do something evil.

Advice to Translators: Jesus did not answer Herod's questions. This does not mean that Jesus was guilty.

See: King Herod; Atone (Atonement)

Why did the soldiers dress Jesus in elegant clothes?

[23:11]

The soldiers dressed Jesus in the type of robe that only kings wore. They did this to mock Jesus. They did not think he was a king. They wanted other people to think this also.

See: Irony

23:13-24

Did Luke write the words in verse 17?

[23:17]

Some ancient copies of Luke have the words in verse 17. More and older ancient copies of Luke do not have these words. Scholars do not think Luke wrote these words. However, Matthew and Mark wrote these words (see: Matthew 27:15; Mark 15:6).

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Who was Barabbas?

[23:18]

Barabbas was a criminal who was in prison. Luke said that Barabbas had been involved with a rebellion. Scholars think he was also a violent person who fought against the Roman empire. They think the Jewish people asked for Barabbas to be freed because Barabbas was a hero to some of them. He was a hero because he tried to free Israel from Roman rule.

See: Rebel (Rebellion)

23:26-31

Where was Cyrene?

[23:26]

See Map: Cyrene

How did soldiers make Simon carry Jesus' cross?

[23:26]

The soldiers grabbed Simon from the crowd and forced him to carry Jesus' cross. Some scholars think the soldiers had Simon carry one piece of the cross while Jesus carried the other piece. Other scholars think Simon was made to carry one piece and the other piece was at the place where Jesus was going to be crucified. Other scholars think Simon carried one end of the cross while Jesus carried the other end.

See: Cross; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Who were the "daughters of Jerusalem"?

[23:28]

The "daughters of Jerusalem" were the women living in Jerusalem.

Why did Jesus tell the women not to weep for him?

[23:28]

Jesus told the women not to weep for him because God wanted Jesus to suffer and die. This was God's will. However, they needed to weep because the people of Jerusalem would soon experience great suffering. Scholars think Jesus was speaking about when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. This happened about forty years after Jesus died.

See: Will of God; Temple

Why will people “say to the mountains, ‘fall on us’ and the hills, ‘cover us’”?

[23:30]

Luke wrote about people speaking to the mountains and hills. This was a metaphor. Scholars think that they were going to greatly suffer and because of this they would want to die quickly.

See: Metaphor

Why did Jesus talk about a green tree and a dry tree?

[23:31]

Jesus talked about a green tree and a dry tree because he warned the Jewish people they will suffer. The green tree was a metaphor for Jesus. When Jesus talked about the green tree, he wanted people to know that he was going to greatly suffer, but he did not do anything wrong. When Jesus talked about the the dry tree, he was speaking about people who did the wrong things. These people will suffer more than Jesus.

See: Metaphor

23:32-38

Why was the place they took Jesus to called “The Skull”?

[23:33]

Scholars think the place they took Jesus was called “the skull” because it was a hill that looked like a skull. Other scholars think the place was called the skull because the Romans had executed many people there. It was not because there were human skulls lying on the ground.

What was crucifixion?

[23:33]

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

What did it mean to “cast lots”?

[23:34]

See: Cast Lots

Why did the soldiers offer Jesus vinegar to drink?

[23:36]

Scholars think different things about why the soldiers offered Jesus vinegar to drink.

Some scholars think this was to fulfill a prophecy in the Old Testament (see: Psalm 69:21). The soldiers did something evil. Some scholars think that offering Jesus vinegar to drink was an act of compassion because the drink was thought to satisfy thirst better than water.

Some scholars think the soldiers offered Jesus vinegar to drink in order to mock him. That is, only the common people drank vinegar, or sour wine. A king would never be offered vinegar or sour wine to drink.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did they put a sign over Jesus?

[23:38]

Scholars think the soldiers put a sign over Jesus so people would know why he was crucified. Some scholars say Pilate wanted to mock Jesus with the sign. Other scholars think Pilate wanted to mock the Jewish leaders because they put their own king to death.

See: John 19:19-22

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

23:39-43

Why did the criminal ask Jesus to remember him?

[23:42]

The criminal asked Jesus to remember him because the criminal wanted to enter the kingdom of God. That is, he wanted Jesus to remember him when he returned to rule as the Messiah.

See: Kingdom of God; Messiah (Christ)

What was “paradise”?

[23:43]

“Paradise” is another name for “heaven.”

See: Heaven

23:44-49

What was the sixth hour?

[23:44]

The sixth hour was midday. The ancient Jews divided a day into twelve parts. The hours varied in length according to the time of the year so that midday was always the sixth hour. It was about noon.

What did it mean that the sun's light failed?

[23:44]

Luke wrote about the sun's light fading. Some scholars think God used a strong wind that caused large amounts of dust to blow up and block the light of the sun. Other scholars think God used a miracle to blocked the light of the sun.

See: Miracle

What was the curtain of the temple?

[23:45]

Scholars think the curtain of the temple was an inner curtain that separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. It was very thick. Nothing could tear this curtain except God.

See: Temple; Holy Place; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies)

Why was the curtain of the temple split in two?

[23:45]

Scholars think different things about why the curtain of the temple split in two.

Some scholars think this happened so people would know that God who tore the curtain.

Some scholars think this was a metaphor. When Jesus died, people could now go to God without needing a priest.

Some scholars think this was a metaphor. God stopped living in the temple in some way.

Some scholars think this was a warning of the coming destruction of the temple.

See: Temple; Metaphor

What did it mean that Jesus committed his spirit to God the Father?

[23:46]

When Jesus said that he committed his spirit to God the Father, it meant that he completely trusted God.

See: Psalm 31:5

See: Spirit (Spiritual); God the Father

Why did the people beat their breasts when they left?

[23:48]

Scholars think different things about why the people beat their breasts when they left.

They were greatly saddened because of the way Jesus died.

They felt guilt because Jesus died and they beat their breasts as a sign of repentance because of their part in his death.

They knew something terrible happened because darkness came.

See: Sign; Repent (Repentance)

23:50-56

Who was Joseph?

[23:50]

This Joseph was a Jewish leader. Joseph was a popular name in ancient Israel.

Where was Arimathea?

[23:51]

See Map: Arimathea

What did it mean that Joseph was looking for the kingdom of God?

[23:51]

Joseph was looking for the kingdom of God. He was expecting the coming of the kingdom of God. Some scholars think Joseph may have believed that Jesus was the Messiah.

See: Kingdom of God; Messiah (Christ)

What was the Day of Preparation?

[23:54]

The Day of Preparation was the time to prepare for the Sabbath. It began on Thursday evening and lasted until Friday evening. People cleaned houses, bought supplies, and cooked food so that they did no work on the Sabbath.

See: Sabbath

Why did the women prepare spices and ointments?

[23:56]

The women prepared spices and ointments to put on the body of Jesus. The spices and ointments helped to hide the smell of a decaying body. It was also a sign of honor to anoint a body with spices and ointments, and was thought to preserve the body.

See: Sign; Anoint (Anointing)

Luke 23:1

General Information:

Jesus is brought before Pilate.

The whole company of them

"All of the Jewish leaders" or "All the members of the Council"

rose up
 This is an idiom that means that they began to act decisively.
 before Pilate
 To appear before someone means to enter into their authority. Alternate translation: "to be judged by Pilate"
 Luke 23:2
 We found
 "We" refers only the Council members, and not to Pilate of any other people nearby.
 misleading our nation
 "causing our people to do things that are not right" or "causing trouble by telling lies to our people"
 forbidding to give tribute
 "telling them not to pay taxes"
 to Caesar
 Caesar represents the Emperor of Rome. Alternate translation: "to the Emperor"
 Luke 23:3
 Pilate asked him
 "Pilate asked Jesus"
 You say so
 Possible meanings are 1) by saying this, Jesus implied that he is the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "Yes, as you said, I am" or "Yes. It is as you said" or 2) by saying this, Jesus was saying that Pilate, not Jesus, was the one calling him the King of the Jews. Alternate translation: "You yourself have said so"
 Luke 23:4
 multitudes
 large groups of people
 I find no guilt in this man
 "I do not find this man guilty of anything"
 Luke 23:5
 stirs up
 "causes trouble among"
 all Judea, beginning from Galilee even to this place
 This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "all Judea. He began causing trouble in Galilee and now is causing trouble here"
 Luke 23:6
 heard this
 "heard that Jesus began to teach in Galilee"
 he asked whether the man was a Galilean
 Pilate wanted to know from which area Jesus came because he wanted to have a lower-ranking government official judge Jesus. If Jesus were from Galilee, Pilate could have Herod judge Jesus because Herod had authority over Galilee.
 the man
 This refers to Jesus.
 Luke 23:7
 he learned
 "Pilate found out"
 he was under Herod's authority
 The passage does not state the implied fact that Herod was the ruler of Galilee. Alternate translation: "Jesus was under the authority of Herod because Herod ruled over Galilee"
 he sent

"Pilate sent"
 who himself
 This refers to Herod.
 in those days
 "at that time"
 Luke 23:8
 he was very glad
 "Herod was very glad"
 he had wanted to see him
 "Herod had wanted to see Jesus"
 He had heard about him
 "Herod had heard about Jesus"
 he hoped to see some sign done by him
 Here the word "hope" means to expect that something one desires might happen. Alternate translation: "Herod expected that he might see some sign done by him"
 to see some sign done by him
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to see him do some kind of sign" or "that he might see Jesus do some sign"
 sign
 a miracle that would show that Jesus was more than a mere man
 Luke 23:9
 Herod questioned Jesus in many words
 "Herod asked Jesus a lot of questions"
 answered him nothing
 "did not reply" or "did not give Herod an answer"
 Luke 23:10
 the scribes stood
 "the scribes were standing there"
 vigorously accusing him
 They were showing great anger and using strong words and accusing him of many things.
 Luke 23:11
 Herod with his soldiers
 "Herod and his soldiers"
 dressed him in splendid clothes
 "put beautiful clothes on him." The translation should not imply that this was done to honor or care for Jesus. They did it to mock Jesus and to make fun of him.
 Luke 23:12
 Herod and Pilate had become friends with each other that very day
 The implied information is that they became friends because Herod appreciated Pilate allowing him to judge Jesus. Alternate translation: "Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day because Pilate had sent Jesus to Herod for judgment"
 before this they had been enemies with each other
 This information is enclosed in parentheses to show that it is background information. Use a format that your audience would understand.
 Luke 23:13
 called together the chief priests and the rulers and the crowd of people
 "called the chief priests and the rulers and the crowd of people to come meet together"
 the crowd of people
 It is not likely that Pilate asked a crowd to come. The crowd was probably still there waiting to see what would happen

to Jesus. Alternate translation: "the crowd that was still there"

Luke 23:14

this man

This refers to Jesus.

like a man who

"saying that he"

misleading the people

"urging the people to act badly" or "trying to get the people to rebel against the government"

I, having questioned him before you,

"I have questioned Jesus in your presence and." It is implied that they were witnesses to the proceedings. Alternate translation: "I have questioned Jesus with you here as witnesses, and I"

find no guilt in this man

"do not think that he is guilty"

Luke 23:15

Connecting Statement:

Pilate continues speaking to the Jewish leaders and to the crowd.

No, nor does Herod

We can understand what Herod did not do from what Pilate said about himself in verse 14. Alternate translation: "Nor does Herod find guilt in this man" or "Even Herod thinks he is innocent"

nor does Herod, for

"nor does Herod, because" or "nor does Herod. We know this because"

he sent him back to us

"Herod sent Jesus to return to us." The word "us" refers to Pilate, his soldiers, and the priests and scribes, but not those who were listening to Pilate.

nothing worthy of death has been done by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he has not done anything to deserve a death sentence"

Luke 23:16

I will therefore punish him

Because Pilate had found no fault in Jesus he should have released him without punishment. It is not necessary to try to make this statement fit logically into the translation.

Pilate punished Jesus, whom he knew to be innocent, only because he was afraid of the crowd.

Luke 23:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 23:18

General Information:

Verse 19 tells us background information about who Barabbas is.

they cried out all together

"all the people in the crowd shouted"

Away with this man, and release

"Take this man away! Release." They are asking him to have his soldiers kill Jesus. Alternate translation: "Take this man away and execute him! Release"

release to us

"us" refers to the crowd only, and not to Pilate and his soldiers.

Luke 23:19

Barabbas was a man ... for murder

This is background information that Luke gives about who Barabbas was.

who had been put into prison

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom the Romans had put in prison"

a certain rebellion in the city

"trying to persuade the people of the city to rebel against the Roman government"

Luke 23:20

addressed them again

"spoke to them again" or "spoke again to the people in the crowd and to the religious rulers"

desiring to release Jesus

"because he wanted to set Jesus free"

Luke 23:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 23:22

He said to them a third time

"Pilate said to the crowd again, for the third time"

what evil has this man done?

Pilate uses this question to cause the crowd to understand that Jesus is innocent. Alternate translation: "this man has not done anything wrong!"

I have found no guilt deserving death in him

"I have not learned of anything he has done for which I should put him to death"

after punishing him, I will release him

As in Luke 23:16, Pilate should have released Jesus without punishment because he was innocent. However, he offered to punish Jesus to appease the crowd.

I will release him

"I will set him free"

Luke 23:23

they were insistent

"the crowd insisted"

with loud voices

"with shouting"

for him to be crucified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for Pilate to have his soldiers crucify Jesus"

Their voices convinced Pilate

"The crowd kept shouting until they convinced Pilate"

Luke 23:24

to grant their demand

"to do what the crowd requested"

Luke 23:25

He released the one they asked for

Pilate released Barrabas from prison. Alternate translation:

"Pilate freed Barabbas, whom the crowd had asked be released"

who had been put in prison ... murder

This is background information about where Barrabas was at that time. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Romans had put in prison ...

murder"

he delivered up Jesus to their will

"Pilate commanded the soldiers to bring Jesus to them to do whatever the crowd wanted to do"

Luke 23:26

As they led him away

"While the soldiers led Jesus away from where Pilate was" seized

The Roman soldiers had the authority to compel people to carry their loads. Do not translate this in a way that indicates that Simon was arrested or had done anything wrong.

one Simon of Cyrene

"a man named Simon, from the city of Cyrene"

coming from the country

"who was coming into Jerusalem from the countryside"

laid the cross on him

"put the cross on his shoulders"

following Jesus

"and he followed behind Jesus"

Luke 23:27

A great crowd

"A large crowd"

great crowd of the people, and of women

The women were part of the large crowd, and not a separate crowd.

mourned for him

"mourned for Jesus"

were following him

This does not mean that they were Jesus's disciples. It simply means they were walking along behind him.

Luke 23:28

turning to them

This indicates that Jesus turned to face the women and address them directly.

Daughters of Jerusalem

The "daughter" of a city means the women of the city. This was not rude. It was a normal form of address to a group of women from one location. Alternate translation: "You women who are from Jerusalem"

do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children

The person is a metonym for what happens to the person.

Alternate translation: "do not weep about the bad things that will happen to me. Instead, weep because worse things will happen to you and to your children" or "you are weeping because bad things are happening to me, but you will weep even more when worse things happen to you and your children"

Luke 23:29

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd.

For see

This introduces the reason why the women of Jerusalem should weep for themselves.

the days are coming

"there will soon be a time"

in which they will say

"when people will say"

the barren

"women who have not given birth to children"

the wombs that did not bear ... the breasts that did not nurse

These clauses are used to more fully describe "the barren."

Those women neither gave birth nor nursed children. It may be helpful to combine these together with "the barren." Alternate translation: "the women who have never given birth to children or nursed babies"

they

This can refer to either the Romans or the Jewish leaders, or to people in general.

Luke 23:30

Then

at that time

to the hills

Words are left out to keep the phrase short. Alternate

translation: "they will say to the hills"

Luke 23:31

For if they do these things while the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?

Jesus uses a question to help the crowd understand that people are doing bad things now in good times, so certainly they will do worse things in the bad times in the future.

Alternate translation: "You can see that they are doing these bad things while the tree is green, so you can be sure that they will do worse things when the tree is dry."

the tree is green

The green tree is a metaphor for something that is good. If your language has a similar metaphor, you should use it here.

it is dry

The dry wood is a metaphor for something that will be useful only to burn.

Luke 23:32

Other men, two criminals, were led away with him to be put to death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The soldiers led away with Jesus two criminals to execute them also"

Other men, two criminals

"Two other men who were criminals" or "Two criminals."

Luke avoids saying "other criminals" because Jesus was innocent, even though he was treated as a criminal. Luke calls the other two men criminals, but not Jesus.

Luke 23:33

When they came

The word "they" includes the soldiers, the criminals, and Jesus.

they crucified him

"the Roman soldiers crucified Jesus"

one on his right and one on his left

"they crucified one criminal on Jesus's right side and the other criminal on Jesus's left side"

Luke 23:34

Father, forgive them

The word "them" refers to those who were crucifying Jesus. Jesus speaks to his Father with compassion toward the men crucifying him.

Father

This is an important title for God.

for they do not know what they are doing

"because they do not understand what they are doing." The Roman soldiers did not understand that they were

crucifying the Son of God. Alternate translation: "for they do not really know whom they are crucifying"

they cast lots

The soldiers participated in a type of gambling. Alternate translation: "they gambled"

cast lots, dividing up his garments

"cast lots to decide who among the soldiers would take home each piece of Jesus's clothing"

Luke 23:35

The people stood

"The people were standing there"

him

This refers to Jesus.

He saved others. Let him save himself

Luke records the ironic words of the rulers. The only way Jesus could save others was by dying instead of saving himself.

Let him save himself

"Jesus should be able to save himself." They said this to mock Jesus. They did not believe he could save himself.

Alternate translation: "We would like to see him prove who he is by saving himself from the cross"

the chosen one

"the one that God has chosen"

Luke 23:36

him

Jesus

approaching him

"coming close to Jesus"

offering him vinegar

"offering Jesus vinegar to drink." Vinegar is a cheap drink that common people drink. The soldiers were mocking Jesus by giving a cheap drink to someone who claims to be a king.

Luke 23:37

If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself

The soldiers were mocking Jesus. Alternate translation: "We do not believe you are the King of the Jews, but if you are, prove us wrong by saving yourself"

Luke 23:38

a sign over him

"a placard at the top of Jesus's cross that stated"

This is the King of the Jews

The people who put this sign above Jesus were mocking him. They did not really think he was a king.

Luke 23:39

insulted him

"reviled Jesus"

Are you not the Christ? Save yourself

The criminal uses a question to mock Jesus. Alternate translation: "You claim to be the Christ. Save yourself" or "If you really were the Christ, you would save yourself"

Save yourself and us

The criminal did not really think that Jesus could rescue them from the cross.

Luke 23:40

the other rebuked him

"the other criminal rebuked him"

Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of

condemnation?

The criminal uses a question to scold the other criminal.

Alternate translation: "You should fear God, because you are under the same sentence of condemnation."

you are under the same sentence of condemnation

"the government has condemned you to be punished in the same way"

Luke 23:41

We indeed ... for we ... we deserve

These usages of "we" refer only to the two criminals, and not to Jesus or the other people.

We indeed are here justly

"Truly we deserve this punishment"

this man

This refers to Jesus.

Luke 23:42

Then he said

"The criminal also said"

remember me

"think about me and treat me well"

come into your kingdom

To "come into" a kingdom means to begin to rule. Alternate translation: "begin to rule as king"

Luke 23:43

Truly I say to you, today

"Truly" adds emphasis to what Jesus is saying. Alternate

translation: "I want you to know that today"

paradise

This is the place that righteous people go to when they die. Jesus was assuring the man that he would be with God and God would accept him. Alternate translation: "the place where the righteous people live" or "the place where people live well"

Luke 23:44

about the sixth hour

"about noon." This reflects the custom at the time of counting hours beginning with daybreak at 6 a.m.

darkness came over the whole land

"the entire land became dark"

until the ninth hour

"until 3 p.m." This reflects the custom at the time of counting hours beginning with daybreak at 6 a.m.

Luke 23:45

as the sun turned dark

This does not refer to sundown. Rather, the light of the sun turned dark during the middle of the day. Use a term to describe the sun becoming dark rather than the sun going down.

the curtain of the temple

"the curtain inside the temple." This was the curtain that separated the most holy place from the rest of the temple.

the curtain of the temple was split in two

"the curtain of the temple was torn into two pieces." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God tore the temple curtain into two pieces"

Luke 23:46

Crying with a loud voice

"Shouting loudly." It may be helpful to show how this is related to the events of the previous verses. Alternate

translation: "When that happened, Jesus shouted loudly"
 Father
 This is an important title for God.
 into your hands I commit my spirit
 "The phrase "into your hands" refers to God's care.
 Alternate translation: "I entrust my spirit to your care" or "I give my spirit to you, knowing you will care for it"
 Having said this
 "After Jesus said this"
 he died
 "Jesus died"
 Luke 23:47
 the centurion
 This was the title for the Roman officer who was in charge of the other Roman soldiers. He supervised the crucifixion.
 what was done
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the things that had happened"
 this was a righteous man
 "this man did nothing wrong" or "this man did not do anything wrong"
 Luke 23:48
 multitudes
 large groups of people
 who came together
 "who gathered together"
 witness this sight
 "see this event" or "observe what was happening"
 the things that were done
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what had happened"
 returned beating
 "returned to their homes beating"
 beating their breasts
 This was a symbol of sorrow and regret. Alternate translation: "hitting their own chests to show that they were sorrowful"
 Luke 23:49
 followed him
 "traveled with Jesus"
 at a distance
 "some distance away from Jesus"
 these things
 "what happened"
 Luke 23:50
 General Information:
 The author begins to give background information about the man who buried Jesus's body.
 Behold, there was a man
 The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this. Alternate translation: "There was a man who was"
 the Council
 "the Jewish Council"
 Luke 23:51
 General Information:
 The author finishes giving background information about the man who buried Jesus's body. It may be helpful to

reorder some of the information in this verse and the previous verse with a verse bridge, as the UDB does.
 with their plan and action
 What the decision was can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "with either the Council's decision to kill Jesus or with their action in killing him"
 a city of the Jews
 "a city in which most people were Jews"
 Luke 23:52
 This man, approaching Pilate, asked for the body of Jesus
 "This man went to Pilate and requested the body of Jesus, to bury it."
 Luke 23:53
 He took it down
 "Joseph took Jesus's body from the cross." He probably had help, so this may be a synecdoche. Alternate translation: "Joseph and some helpers took it down"
 wrapped it in fine linen
 "wrapped the body in a fine linen cloth." This was the normal burial custom at that time.
 that was cut in stone
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which someone had cut in a rock cliff"
 where no one had ever been laid
 This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "No one had ever before put a body in that tomb"
 Luke 23:54
 the Day of the Preparation
 "the day when people got ready for the Jewish day of rest called the Sabbath"
 the Sabbath was about to begin
 For the Jews, the day began at sunset. Alternate translation: "it was soon going to be sunset, the start of the Sabbath"
 Luke 23:55
 who had come with Jesus out of Galilee
 "who had traveled with Jesus from the region of Galilee"
 followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid
 This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "walked along behind Joseph and the men who were with him; the women saw the tomb and how the men laid Jesus's body inside the tomb"
 Luke 23:56
 They returned
 "The women went to the houses where the women were staying"
 prepared spices and ointments
 Because they had had no time to honor Jesus by putting fragrant spices and ointments on his body on the day he died, they were going to do it on the morning of the first day of the week. Alternate translation: "prepared spices and ointments to put on Jesus's body"
 they rested
 "the women did no work"
 according to the commandment
 "according to the Jewish law" or "as the Jewish law required." According to the law, they were not allowed to prepare his body on the Sabbath.

Luke 24 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([Luke 24:1](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

The faith of the women

Most of Luke's original readers would have thought of women as less important than men, but Luke carefully shows that some women loved Jesus very much and had more faith than the twelve disciples had.

Resurrection

Luke wants his readers to understand that Jesus came alive again in a physical body ([Luke 24:38-43](#)).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

"On the third day"

Jesus told his followers that he would become alive again "on the third day" ([Luke 18:33](#)). He died on a Friday afternoon (before sunset) and became alive again on a Sunday, so he became alive again "on the third day" because the Jews said that the day began and ended at sunset, and they counted any part of the day as a day. Friday was the first day, Saturday was the second day, and Sunday was the third day.

Two men in bright shining robes

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing with the women at Jesus's tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels were in human form. Two of the authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULB without trying to make the passages all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 28:1-2](#) and [Mark 16:5](#) and [Luke 24:4](#) and [John 20:12](#))

Links:

[Luke 24:1 Notes](#)

Luke 24

24:1-12

When was the first day of the week?

[24:1]

The first day of the week was after the sabbath. The sabbath was Saturday for Jews and some Christians. The first day of the week was Sunday. The women went to the tomb likely brought the spices at sunrise on the first day of the week.

Why was there a stone?

[24:2]

The stone covered the entry point of the tomb. The stone kept grave robbers out of the tomb and it also kept animals from entering the tomb. The stone was too large for women to move.

Who were the two men?

[24:4]

Scholars think that the two men who suddenly stood by the women were angels.

See: Angel

Why did the angels asking the women, "Why do you seek the living among the dead"?

[24:5]

When the angels asked the women a question, they knew that Jesus was alive. Therefore, the women were not going to find Jesus in the tomb.

Who were the "sinful men" into whose hands Jesus was delivered?

[24:7]

Scholars think the "sinful men" spoke about Judas and the crowd of men he brought to arrest Jesus. Jesus himself said he was to be delivered into the hands of Gentiles (see: [Luke 18:32](#)). Gentiles were considered to be sinful people.

See: Gentile; Sin

How many days was Jesus dead and in the tomb?

[24:7]

Jesus was dead and in the tomb three days. The first day was Friday, the second day was Saturday, and the third day was Sunday. The Jewish day began and ended when the sun went down.

What was “idle talk”?

[24:11]

Scholars think that “idle talk” was talk that was impossible to believe. That is, people who heard it did not understand it.

Why did Peter run to the tomb?

[24:12]

Some scholars think Peter ran to the tomb to see if the women were telling the truth about Jesus.

See: John 20:1-10

24:13-35

Where was Emmaus?

[24:13]

See Map: Emmaus

What was a “stadia”?

[24:13]

A stadia was about 190 meters.

What did it mean that two followers of Jesus were prevented from recognizing Jesus?

[24:16]

Scholars give several reasons why the two followers of Jesus were prevented from recognizing him.

They were not expecting to see Jesus alive again.

God did something so that the two men did not know it was Jesus.

The Holy Spirit waited until the right time for them to know that it was Jesus. This was when they sat close to Jesus to eat a meal.

Who was Cleopas?

[24:18]

Scholars do not know who Cleopas was. Some scholars say Cleopas as an uncle of Jesus. He was Joseph’s brother.

What was a Nazarene?

[24:19]

A Nazarene was a person who came from or lived in a town called Nazareth.

See Map: Nazareth

What were the scriptures to which Jesus referred?

[24:27]

The scriptures to which Jesus referred were the places in the Old Testament that told about the messiah before the messiah came.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Messiah (Christ)

What did it mean that Jesus “acted as though he were going further”?

[24:28]

Jesus “acted as though he were going further”. That is, it seemed that he was going to travel beyond the village. Scholars think Jesus would have continued on past the village if the two people had not asked him to stay with them.

How were the eyes of the two followers of Jesus opened?

[24:31]

Luke wrote that the eyes of the two people were opened. This was a metaphor. These people were able to recognize Jesus. Scholars think this happened when Jesus broke the bread and handed it to them.

See: Metaphor

What was meant by the words, “our heart burning within us”?

[24:32]

The words “our heart burning within us” was a metaphor. It meant that their hearts and minds were filled with joy, a sense of awe, hope, and excitement. It described how they felt when Jesus explained the Old Testament to them.

See: Metaphor; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

24:36-49

Why did Jesus give the greeting “peace be to you”?

[24:36]

In ancient times, people often greeted one another by saying, “peace be to you.” This was a way people asked for blessings for someone else.

See: Bless (Blessing)

Why did Jesus say to the disciples, “See my hands and my feet”?

[24:39]

Jesus said to the disciples, “See my hands and my feet”. Scholars think Jesus wanted them to look at his hands and feet because they showed the scars of his crucifixion (see: John 20:25-27).

See: Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus say, “a spirit does not have flesh and bones”?

[24:39]

Some scholars think that when Jesus said a “spirit”(πνεῦμα/g4151) does not have flesh and bones, he was telling the disciples he was not a ghost. That is, a ghost does not have a real physical body.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Disciple

What did Luke mean when he wrote, “They still could not believe it because of joy”?

[24:41]

Luke wrote, “They still could not believe.” Scholars think the disciples thought it was too good to be true, that Jesus was really alive again. This was because they were overcome with amazement.

What was meant by the words, “he opened their minds”?

[24:45]

When Jesus “opened their minds,” he caused his disciples to be able to understand all that was written in the Old Testament about the Messiah.

See: Disciple; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Messiah (Christ).

What was “repentance”?

[24:47]

See: Repent (Repentance)

What did it mean to preach “in his name”?

[24:47]

Some scholars think that to preach in the name of Jesus happened when Jesus gave someone permission to preach. Other scholars think that someone preached in Jesus’ name when they preached about the gospel.

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel

What were “these things” of which the disciples were witnesses?

[24:48]

When Jesus spoke about “these things” he was referring to his suffering, death, and resurrection, all of which the disciples were witnesses.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say, “I am sending you what my Father promised”?

[24:49]

Jesus said, “I am sending you what my Father promised.” This is the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Advice to Translators: It may be more clear to state that Jesus said “I am going to send you what my Father promised”.

See: God the Father; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Filling of the Holy Spirit

What did it mean to be “clothed with power from on high”?

[24:49]

To be “clothed with power from on high” was a metaphor. God gave power to the disciples. Scholars think God did this soon after Jesus returned to heaven (see: Acts 1:8; 2:1-4).

See: Metaphor; Disciple; Heaven

24:50-53

What did it mean that Jesus “blessed” his disciples?

[24:50]

See: Bless (Blessing)

Why was Jesus carried up into heaven?

[24:51]

Jesus had completed his work and returned to heaven. Jesus said this was necessary so that the Holy Spirit could come to people in a new way (see: John 16:7-11).

See: Heaven; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Filling of the Holy Spirit

How did the followers of Jesus “worship” Jesus?

[24:52]

Some scholars think people worshipped Jesus by bow down before him, or to lay face-down on the ground before him.

See: Worship

Why did the followers of Jesus have “great joy” after Jesus went to heaven?

[24:52]

Scholars give several reasons the followers of Jesus had “great joy”(χαρά/g5479) after Jesus went to heaven.

Jesus is Lord in heaven and he reigns over everything.

They were no longer afraid of dying because they would also go to heaven.

They had no more doubts. They knew Jesus was the Messiah.

They believed they will complete the things Jesus wanted them to do.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Heaven; Messiah (Christ)

What did it mean that the disciples were "continually in the temple"?

[24:53]

Scholars think Luke meant that the disciples were in the temple very often, likely every day. When in the temple, they were continually worshipping God and giving him thanks.

Luke 24:1

General Information:

The women (Luke 23:55) return to the tomb with spices to put on Jesus's body.

Very early on the first day of the week

"Before dawn on Sunday"

they came to the tomb

"the women arrived at the tomb." These were the women spoken of in Luke 23:55.

the tomb

This tomb was cut in the rock of a cliff.

bringing the spices

These were the same spices they prepared in Luke 23:56.

Luke 24:2

They found the stone

"They saw that the stone was"

the stone rolled away

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that someone had rolled the stone"

the stone

This was a large, cut, round stone big enough to completely block the doorway to the tomb. It required several men to roll it.

Luke 24:3

did not find the body of the Lord Jesus

You can state explicitly that they did not find it because it was not there. Alternate translation: "the body of the Lord Jesus was not there"

Luke 24:4

General Information:

Two angels appear and begin speaking to the women.

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Luke 24:5

were terrified

"became very afraid"

bowed down their faces to the earth

"bowed low to the ground." This action expresses their humility and submission to the men.

Why do you seek the living among the dead?

The men use a question to mildly criticize the women for looking in a tomb for a living person. Alternate translation: "You are looking for a living person among dead people!" or "You should not be looking for someone who is alive in a place where they bury dead people!"

Why do you seek

Here "you" is plural, referring to the women who came.

Luke 24:6

but has been raised

"but he has been made alive again." "Raised" here is an

idiom for "caused to live again." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because God has made him alive again"

Remember how

"Remember what"

to you

The word "you" is plural. It refers to the women and possibly the other disciples in addition.

Luke 24:7

Connecting Statement:

The angels finish speaking to the women.

that the Son of Man

This is the beginning of an indirect quote. It can also be translated with a direct quote, as in the UDB.

the Son of Man must be delivered up into the hands of sinful men and be crucified

The phrase "must be" means this is something that would certainly happen because God had already decided that it would happen. This can be translated in active form.

Alternate translation: "it was necessary that they hand the Son of Man over to sinful men who would crucify him"

into the hands

Here "hands" refers to power or control.

third day

The Jews counted any portion of a day as a day. Therefore, the day Jesus was raised was the "third day" because it followed the day of his burial and the Sabbath day.

Luke 24:8

remembered his words

Here "words" refers to the statement that Jesus made.

Alternate translation: "remembered what Jesus said"

Luke 24:9

Connecting Statement:

The women go to tell the apostles about what they found at the tomb.

the eleven and all the rest

"the eleven apostles and all the rest of the disciples who were with them"

the eleven

This is Luke's first reference to the "eleven" because there had always been twelve before. But Judas left the twelve and betrayed Jesus.

Luke 24:10

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

Here Luke gives the names of some of the women who came from the tomb and told the apostles what had happened there.

Luke 24:11

But this message seemed like idle talk to the apostles

"But the apostles thought that what the women said was foolish talk"

Luke 24:12

Yet Peter

This phrase contrasts Peter to the other apostles. He did not dismiss what the women said, but ran to the tomb to see for himself.

rose up

This is an idiom that means "began to act." Whether Peter was sitting or standing when he decided to act is not important. Alternate translation: "started out"

stooping

Peter had to bend over in order to see inside the tomb because tombs cut in solid rock were very low. Alternate translation: "bending himself at the waist"

the linen cloths by themselves

"only the linen cloths." This refers to the cloths that had been wrapped around Jesus's body when he was buried in [Luke 23:53]

departed to his home

"went away to his home"

Luke 24:13

General Information:

Two of the disciples are on their way to Emmaus.

Behold

The author uses this word to mark the beginning of a new event.

two of them

"two of the disciples"

that very day

"that same day." This refers to the day when the women found the tomb to be empty.

Emmaus

This is the name of a town.

sixty stadia

"eleven kilometers." A "stadium" was 185 meters.

Luke 24:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 24:15

It happened that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. It starts with Jesus approaching them. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Jesus himself

The word "himself" emphasizes the fact that the very Jesus they were talking about actually appeared to them. So far the women had seen the angels, but no one had seen Jesus.

Luke 24:16

their eyes were prevented from recognizing him

"their eyes were kept from recognizing Jesus." The men's ability to recognize Jesus is spoken of as their eyes' ability to recognize him. This can be stated in active form. It is most likely that it was God who prevented them from recognizing Jesus. Alternate translation: "something happened to them so they could not recognize him" or "God prevented them from recognizing him"

Luke 24:17

Jesus said to them

"Jesus said to the two men"

Luke 24:18

Cleopas

This is the name of a man.

Are you the only person ... days?

Cleopas uses this question to show his surprise that this man appears not to know about the things that have happened in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "You must be the only person ... days."

Are you

Here "you" is singular.

Luke 24:19

What things

"What things have happened" or "What things have taken place"

a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people

This means that God caused Jesus to be mighty and that the people saw that he was mighty. Alternate translation: "a prophet to whom God gave power to do and teach great things that were amazing to all the people"

Luke 24:20

delivered him up

"gave him over"

to be condemned to death and crucified him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in order for the governor to put Jesus to death by crucifying him"

Luke 24:21

Connecting Statement:

The two men continue responding to Jesus.

But we hoped that he was the one

Here the word "hope" means "expect" or "think" that something might be true. By saying "we hoped" the two men show that they no longer think that Jesus is the one who will redeem Israel. Alternate translation: "But we thought that he might be the one"

who was going to redeem Israel

The Romans ruled over the Jews. Alternate translation:

"who would free the Israelites from our Roman enemies"

Yes, and what is more,

This introduces another reason why they believed Jesus would not free Israel. Alternate translation: "Now that does not seem possible because"

the third day

The Jews counted any portion of a day as a day. Therefore, the day Jesus was raised was the "third day" because it followed the day of his burial and the Sabbath day. See how you translated this in [Luke 24:7]

since all these things happened

"since all the many actions that led up to the death of Jesus have taken place"

Luke 24:22

But also

This introduces another reason why it the men did not understand what was happening concerning Jesus.

of our company

"in our group"

having been at the tomb

The women were the ones who were at the tomb.

Luke 24:23

a vision of angels

"angels in a vision"

Luke 24:24

Connecting Statement:

The two men finish responding to Jesus.

they did not see him

"they did not see Jesus"

Luke 24:25

Jesus said to them

Jesus is speaking to the two disciples.

slow of heart to believe

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind. Alternate translation: "your minds are slow to believe" or "you are slow to believe"

Luke 24:26

Was it not necessary ... glory?

Jesus uses a question to remind the disciples about what the prophets said. Alternate translation: "It was necessary ... glory."

to enter into his glory

This refers to Jesus beginning to rule and to receive honor and glory.

Luke 24:27

beginning from Moses

Moses wrote the first books of the Bible. Alternate translation: "beginning with the writings of Moses"

Jesus interpreted to them

"Jesus explained to them"

Luke 24:28

Jesus acted as though he were going further

The two men understood from his actions that he was going on to another destination. Perhaps he kept walking on the road when they turned off to enter the gate into the village. There is no indication that Jesus deceived them with words.

Luke 24:29

they compelled him

You may need to make explicit what they compelled him to do. This is probably an exaggeration to show that they needed to speak with him for a long time before they could change his mind. The word "compel" means to use physical force, but it seems that they persuaded him using only words. Alternate translation: "they were able to persuade him to stay"

it is toward evening and the day is almost over

The Jewish day ended at sundown.

Jesus went in

"Jesus entered the house"

stay with them

"stay with the two disciples"

Luke 24:30

It happened

This phrase is used here to mark an important event in the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

the bread

This refers to bread made without yeast. It does not refer to food in general.

blessed it

"gave thanks for it" or "thanked God for it"

Luke 24:31

Then their eyes were opened

Their "eyes" represent their understanding. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then they understood" or "Then they realized"

they knew him

"they recognized him." These disciples had known him before his death.

he vanished out of their sight

This means that suddenly he was no longer there. It does not mean that he became invisible.

Luke 24:32

Was not our heart burning ... scriptures?

They use a question to emphasize how amazed they were about their encounter with Jesus. The intense feelings they had while talking to Jesus are spoken of as if they were a fire burning inside them. Alternate translation: "Our hearts were burning ... scriptures."

within us

The two men were speaking to each other. The word "us" is dual inclusive for languages that make these distinctions.

while he opened to us the scriptures

Jesus did not open a book or scroll. "opened" refers to their understanding. Alternate translation: "while he explained the scriptures to us" or "while he enabled us to understand the scriptures"

Luke 24:33

Connecting Statement:

The two men go to Jerusalem to the eleven disciples to tell them about Jesus.

They rose up

"They" refers to the two men.

rose up

"got up" or "stood up"

the eleven

This refers to Jesus's apostles. Judas was no longer included with them.

Luke 24:34

saying

"and those people told the two men"

Luke 24:35

So they told

"So the two men told them"

the things that happened on the way

This refers to Jesus appearing to them while they were on their way to the village of Emmaus.

how Jesus was recognized by them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"how they recognized Jesus"

in the breaking of the bread

"when Jesus broke the bread" or "when Jesus tore the bread"

Luke 24:36

General Information:

Jesus appears to the disciples. When the two men previously arrived at the house where the Eleven were, Jesus was not with them.

Jesus himself

The word "himself" focuses on Jesus and the surprise of Jesus actually appearing to them. Most of them had not

seen him after his resurrection.

in the midst of them

"among them"

Peace be to you

"May you have peace" or "May God give you peace!" The word "you" is plural.

Luke 24:37

But they were terrified

"But" indicates a strong contrast. Jesus told them to be at peace, but they were very afraid instead.

terrified and filled with fear

"startled and afraid." These two phrases mean about the same thing, and are used together to emphasize their fear.

a spirit

Here it refers to the spirit of a dead person.

Luke 24:38

Why are you troubled?

Jesus uses a question to comfort them. Alternate translation: "Do not be frightened."

Why do questions arise in your heart?

Jesus uses a question to mildly rebuke them. Jesus was telling them not to doubt that he was alive. The word "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind. Alternate translation: "Do not doubt in your minds!" or "Stop doubting!"

Luke 24:39

Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see me having

Jesus asks them to confirm by touch that he is not a ghost. It may be helpful to combine and reorder these two sentences. Alternate translation: "Touch me and feel that I have flesh and bones that a ghost would not have"

flesh and bones

This is a way of referring to the physical body.

Luke 24:40

his hands and his feet

It is understood that his hands and feet contained the nail marks from his crucifixion that would prove it was really Jesus. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the wounds in his hands and his feet"

Luke 24:41

They still could not believe it because of joy

"They were so full of joy that they still could not believe it was really true"

Luke 24:42

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Luke 24:43

ate it before them

Jesus does this to prove that he has a physical body. Spirits would not be able to eat food.

before them

"in front of them" or "while they were watching"

Luke 24:44

when I was with you

"when I was with you before"

all that was written ... Psalms must be fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God would fulfill all that was written ... Psalms" or "God

would cause all that was written ... Psalms to happen"

all that was written in the law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms

The words "law of Moses," "the Prophets," and "the Psalms" are proper names for parts of the Hebrew Bible. This can be stated in active form and using common nouns.

Alternate translation: "all that Moses wrote in the law, all that the prophets wrote, and all that the writers of the Psalms wrote about me"

Luke 24:45

Then he opened their minds, that they might understand the scriptures

To "open the mind" is an idiom that means to enable someone to understand. Alternate translation: "Then he enabled them to understand the scriptures"

Luke 24:46

Thus it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"This is what people long ago wrote"

rise again from the dead

In this verse the words "rise again" mean "come alive again." The words "the dead" speak of all dead people together in the underworld.

the third day

The Jews counted any portion of a day as a day. Therefore, the day Jesus was raised was the "third day" because it followed the day of his burial and the Sabbath day. See how you translated this in [Luke 24:7]

Luke 24:47

Repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all the nations

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Followers of the Christ should preach to people in all the nations that they need to repent and that they need God to forgive their sins through Jesus"

in his name

His "name" here refers to his authority. Alternate

translation: "by the Christ's authority"

all the nations

"all the ethnic communities" or "all the people groups"

beginning from Jerusalem

"starting in Jerusalem"

Luke 24:48

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the disciples.

You are witnesses

"You are to tell others that what you saw about me is true."

The disciples had observed Jesus's life, death, and resurrection and could describe to other people what he did.

Luke 24:49

I am sending you what my Father promised

"I will give you what my Father promised to give you." God had promised to give the Holy Spirit. The UDB makes this explicit.

Father

This is an important title for God.

you are clothed with power

God's power will cover them in the same way that clothes cover a person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate

translation: "you receive power"

from on high

"from above" or "from God"

Luke 24:50

Jesus led them out

"Jesus led the disciples outside the city"

He lifted up his hands

This was the action that priests performed when they blessed the people.

Luke 24:51

It happened

"It came about." This introduces a new event in the story.

while he was blessing them

"while Jesus was asking God to do good to them"

was carried

Since Luke does not specify who carried Jesus up, we do not know if it was God himself or one or more angels. If your language would have to specify who did the carrying, it

would be better to use "went" instead, as the UDB does.

Luke 24:52

General Information:

These verses tell us about the ongoing actions of the disciples as the story ends.

they worshiped him

"the disciples worshiped Jesus"

and returned

"and then returned"

Luke 24:53

continually in the temple

This is an exaggeration to express that they went into the temple courtyard every day.

in the temple

Only priests were allowed into the temple building.

Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

blessing God

"praising God"

Introduction to the Gospel of John

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Gospel of John

Introduction about who Jesus is (1:1-18) Jesus is baptized, and he chooses twelve disciples (1:19-51) Jesus preaches, teaches, and heals people (2-11) The seven days before Jesus's death (12-19) Mary anoints the feet of Jesus (12:1-11) Jesus rides a donkey into Jerusalem (12:12-19) Some Greek men want to see Jesus (12:20-36) The Jewish leaders reject Jesus (12:37-50) Jesus teaches his disciples (13-17) Jesus is arrested and undergoes trial (18:1-19:15) Jesus is crucified and buried (19:16-42) Jesus rises from the dead (20:1-29) John says why he wrote his gospel (20:30-31) Jesus meets with the disciples (21)

What is the Gospel of John about?

The Gospel of John is one of four books in the New Testament that describe some of the life of Jesus Christ. The authors of the gospels wrote about different aspects of who Jesus was and what he did. John said that he wrote his gospel "so that people might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God" (20:31).

John's Gospel is very different from the other three Gospels. John does not include some of the teachings and events that the other writers included in their gospels. Also, John wrote about some teachings and events that are not in the other gospels.

John wrote much about the signs Jesus did to prove that what Jesus said about himself was true. (See: sign)

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "The Gospel of John" or "The Gospel According to John." Or they may choose a title that may be clearer, such as, "The Good News About Jesus That John Wrote."

Who wrote the Gospel of John?

This book does not give the name of the author. However, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought that the Apostle John was the author.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Why does John write so much about the final week of Jesus's life?

John wrote much about Jesus's final week. He wanted his readers to think deeply about Jesus's final week and his death on the cross. He wanted people to understand that Jesus willingly died on the cross so that God could forgive them for sinning against him. (See: sin)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What do the words "remain," "reside," and "abide" mean in the Gospel of John?

John often used the words "remain," "reside", and "abide" as metaphors. John spoke of a believer becoming more faithful to Jesus and knowing Jesus better as if Jesus's word "remained" in the believer. Also, John spoke of someone being spiritually joined to someone else as if the person "remained" in the other person. Christians are said to "remain" in Christ and in God. The Father is said to "remain" in the Son, and the Son is said to "remain" in the Father. The Son is said to "remain" in believers. The Holy Spirit is also said to "remain" in the believers.

Many translators will find it impossible to represent these ideas in their languages in exactly the same way. For example, Jesus intended to express the idea of the Christian being spiritually together with him when he said, "He who eats my

flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him" (John 6:56). The UDB uses the idea of "will be joined to me, and I will be joined to him." But translators may have to find other ways of expressing the idea.

In the passage, "If my words remain in you" (John 15:7), the UDB expresses this idea as, "If you live by my message." Translators may find it possible to use this translation as a model.

What are the major issues in the text of the Gospel of John?

The following verses are found in older versions of the Bible but are not included in most modern versions. Translators are advised not to translate these verses. However, if the translators work in regions where there are older versions of the Bible that include these verses, the translators can include them. If they are translated, they should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they were probably not original to John's Gospel.

"waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel of the Lord occasionally went down into the pool and stirred the water and whoever went first after the stirring of the water, was made well from the disease they had." (5:3-4) "going through the midst of them, and so passed by" (8:59)

The following passage is included in most older and modern versions of the Bible. But it is not in the earliest copies of the Bible. Translators are advised to translate this passage. It should be put inside of square brackets ([]) to indicate that it may not have been original to John's Gospel.

The story of the adulterous woman (7:53–8:11)

Chapter 1

John 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:23, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

"The Word"

John uses the phrase "the Word" to refer to Jesus ([John 1:1, 14](#)). John is saying that God's most important message to all people is actually Jesus, a person with a physical body. (See: wordofgod)

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

"Children of God"

When people believe in Jesus, they go from being "children of wrath" to "children of God." They are adopted into the "family of God." This is an important image that is used many times in the New Testament. (See: believe and adoption)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

John uses the metaphors of light and darkness and of the Word to tell the reader that he will be writing more about good and evil and about what God wants to tell people through Jesus.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"In the beginning"

Some languages and cultures speak of the world as if it has always existed, as if it had no beginning. But "very long ago" is different from "in the beginning," and you need to be sure that your translation communicates correctly.

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[John 1:1 Notes](#) [John intro](#)

John 1 Commentary

1: 1-5

How did John use "word"?

[1:1]

John said that Jesus is the "word" (λόγος/g3056). All scholars think these first verses are about Jesus. However, John did not say Jesus' name. When John wrote these things, people knew that the "word" was the thing that created plants, animals, and human beings. In the same way they understood "word," John wanted his readers to understand that Jesus is this "word." That is, Jesus holds everything in the universe together. He makes everything and give it permission to exist.

How is Jesus both with God and God himself?

John said that Jesus is both God and with God. This is because he is God. He is not partly God, but is fully or completely God. However, he is a different person from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. God is three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), but they are only one God. That is, Jesus is different from God the Father and the Holy Spirit. John says he is “with”(μετά /g3326) God.

These verses show that Jesus is God. Jesus is God the Son, so he is fully God. John says that the “Word”(λόγος/g3056). That is, Jesus, created everything. Only God can do that.

Advice to Translators: In English, scholars talk about Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit as being different “persons” of God. This is because there is not a good way to describe how Jesus, the Son of God, is different than God the Father or God the Holy Spirit. People cannot fully know how this is true. The Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are not people. When scholars say they are different “persons,” they mean they are distinct even though they always want the same things, they are equal to one another, and they cannot be separated. There is only one God. God is one, he is not three different gods. The Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all one. They are all the same God, but not the same “person.” Jesus is completely God. But Jesus is not the Holy Spirit, and Jesus is not the Father. Also, the Father is completely God, but the Father is not Jesus or the Holy Spirit either. Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are not three smaller parts of one larger God. Also, God does not have three separate faces, that is, three separate sides. God also does not change into the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at different times. God is always Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

See: Trinity; Jesus is God

Why does John use the metaphor of light?

[1:4, 1:5]

John said Jesus is light to tell his readers three things about Jesus:

Jesus is light because he makes all Christians live forever with God. That is, they will be lit by the light of Jesus in their life. Also, Jesus’ light makes it so that people can see things. That is, Jesus causes a Christian to truly know God. Scriptures often use light as a metaphor to talk about knowing true things about God. John wanted his readers to know that Jesus’ light makes people happy. That is, when people do good things, they are in the light and they are happy. So when John says that some people are in light, he means that Jesus makes them happy. Also, John wanted his readers to know Jesus’ light makes people act more like Jesus if they stay in his light.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why does John use the metaphor of darkness?

[1:5]

In the same way John used the metaphor of light to talk about Jesus, John used the metaphor of darkness to talk about Satan and the things Satan does. That is, John wanted to say that Satan, people who sin and do evil, and evil things all happen because of sin.

John said darkness cannot stop the light from shining. John wanted people to know that nothing can stop Jesus from making those who believe in him live forever with God. Even Satan cannot stop him. John also wanted to say that Jesus will punish everyone who does not believe in him because they sin. They will be punished forever in hell.

Jesus is stronger than Satan and those who do not stop sinning. This is why John said that the darkness cannot stop the light from shining.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Satan (The Devil); Sin; Hell

1:6-8

Who is John?

[1:6]

These verses talk about John the Baptist. John the Baptist told people that the Messiah was coming. That is, John got people ready for the Messiah to come (See: 1:23). He got the people ready to believe in the Messiah when the Messiah came. The prophets in the Old Testament told about this Messiah coming (See: Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1).

John the Baptist and the author of this Gospel are not the same person. The apostle John wrote this book. He did not call himself “John” in his book. He called himself “the one whom Jesus loved” (See: 13:23).

See: Messiah (Christ); Faith (Believe in); Prophet; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Apostle

1: 9-13

What does it mean to be born of God?

[1:13]

Those who believe in Jesus are born of God and become part of God’s family. John calls these people children of God.

Before this, people were called “children of wrath” (See: Ephesians 2:3) and “children of the devil” (John 8:4; 1 John 3:10). Believing in Jesus makes a person different than they were before. Scripture calls this a new or second birth from God. In English, this is called regeneration.

This section is a group of prophecies about the Messiah. John said that the world was going to reject Jesus. Even most of the Jews rejected him (See: Isaiah 40:3).

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Faith (Believe in); Children of God; Wrath; Satan (The Devil); Prophecy

(Prophecy) ; Messiah (Christ)

1: 14-19

How did the Word become flesh?

[1:14]

John says that the “Word”(λόγος/g3056) became “flesh”(σῆμαίνω/g4591). That is, Jesus became a human.

When Jesus became a human, he continued to be God. So when people saw Jesus, they saw God. He was not just a man representing God in the same way a photograph represents a person. Also, they saw a real human, not something that only looked like a human.

This is why Christians know that Jesus is both God and a human.

See: Philippians 2:5-11

See: Incarnation; Jesus is God

What does “grace upon grace” mean?

[1:16]

John said “grace upon grace.” Many scholars think that John wanted to say God sent two gifts of “grace”(χάρις/5484). First, God gave the gift of the Law of Moses. Later, he sent another gift. This second gift of grace was that he forgave the sins of those who believe in Jesus. This second gift of grace is a free gift. It showed humans who God truly is (see: 1: 14). God gave people this second gift through Jesus.

In ancient Israel, the Law of Moses showed the people of Israel their need of God’s mercy. Also, the Law taught the people of God that they needed Jesus. The second gift was still to come. In ancient Israel, the Law of Moses helped people know how to please God and live their lives. After Jesus came, God’s grace and mercy alone helped people to know how to live in a way that pleases God.

While some scholars think the new law replaced the old law, other scholars think that John wanted to say that God sent the second gift to combine it with the first gift, not to replace it. If this is what John meant, then Jesus brings to Christians the second gift in order to finish the work of the first gift. That is, the Law of Moses.

See: Grace; Law of Moses; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin; Israel; Mercy

How did Jesus live with people who did not honor God?

[1:15]

John said Jesus “lived”(σκηνώω/g4637) with people who did not honor God. John wanted to say that when Jesus came to earth, he was where people did not think he was going to be. That is, he was with the sinners and people who did not honor God in the things that they lived.

The Old Testament says God “lived”(σκηνώω/g4637) with the people of Israel.

See: Leviticus 26:11-12; Ezekiel 37:27; Zechariah 2:10-11; Revelation 21:3

Who is the one and only God?

[1:18]

Many Greek manuscripts call Jesus “the one and only God.” Not every Greek manuscript contains the same words in 1:18. Both are good ways to talk about Jesus. However, scholars think John wrote “the one and only God.” Fewer scholars think John wrote “one and only Son,” but a few English translations use these words.

John thinks that his readers will understand that “one and only” means God the Son. He helps them understand that by adding the words, “who is at the side of Father.”

1:19-23

Who were the Jews?

[1:19]

John called the Jewish religious leaders “the Jews.” For John however, “The Jews” did not mean that John spoke about all Jews. Instead, he called the religious leaders “the Jews” because they represented all of the Jews.

How is John the Baptist the prophet Elijah?

[1:21]

Jesus said that John the Baptist was the prophet Elijah who the Old Testament said was to come before the Messiah. The book of Malachi said that the prophet Elijah will return to earth immediately before the Messiah came (See: Malachi 4:5-6). Jesus told his disciples that this person was not actually be Elijah, but someone with his same prophetic power. Malachi said that he will make the way for the Messiah to come. It is for this reason that Malachi said that Elijah will come again. The Jews waited for the Messiah to come to them. But, they also thought the prophet Elijah was to come back to them from the dead before the Messiah came.

See: Matthew 11:14

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

1:29-42

What are the different ways to baptize?

[1:31]

John said people are baptized in three ways:.

First, John the Baptist “baptized”(βαπτίζω/g0907) Jews. He baptized them to show that they repented for sinning. He did this to get the people ready for the Messiah. That is, ready to believe in him when he came. Second, John baptized Jesus. Jesus needed to be baptized before he began to serve and preach to the people. When John baptized Jesus, the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus. This showed that God chose him to do his work. Third, Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John said that Jesus will baptize those who believe in him with the Holy Spirit. Jesus does this to help Christians be obedient to God.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Repent (Repentance); Sin; Messiah (Christ); Holy Spirit

Why did John the Baptist call Jesus the Son of God?

[1:34]

John called Jesus the Son of God to show how God adopts all Christians into his family. That is, he makes them his sons and daughters. But, only Jesus is the “one and only or unique”(μονογενής/g3439) Son of God. Jesus is God. At the same time, he is the “one and only” or “unique”(μονογενής/g3439) Son of God (See: 1: 18).

See: Son of God; Adopt (Adoption); Children of God; Jesus is God

Why did John the Baptist call Jesus the Lamb of God?

[1:36]

See: Lamb of God

1:43-51

What did the Jews think about the town of Nazareth?

[1:46]

In ancient Israel, Nazareth was not a large town. It is not known why Nathaniel did not speak good about the town. Some scholars think Nathaniel did not like anyone who thought that the people of Nazareth did good things. Other scholars think that there was trouble between the people of Nazareth and the people of Cana. Nathaniel was from Cana. Also, it is possible that Nathaniel did not think that any great men came from a town so close to his own home. Later, people called Christians “people of Nazareth” to insult them. (See: Acts 24:5).

See Map: Nazareth

How did John show that the disciples began to believe in Jesus?

[1:49]

John said the disciples stopped what they did and followed Jesus. They did this even though they did not know very much about him. John showed later in his gospel that these men still misunderstood who Jesus really was. They began to believe in him, but not completely. It took time for them to truly know Jesus. But, they began to follow Jesus even though they did not fully understand what following him meant for them.

Why did John write that Jesus said, “Truly, truly I say to you”?

[1:51]

John said that Jesus said “‘Truly’(ἀμὴν/g0281), truly I say to you” thirty-five times in this book. Jesus used the word “truly” in order to strongly express certainty, belief, or faith. When Jesus said these words, he gave courage to those who heard him. He gave them courage to believe what he was saying.

Why did Jesus call himself the Son of Man?

[1:51]

See: Son of Man

John 1:1

In the beginning

This refers to the very earliest time before God created the heavens and the earth.

the Word

This refers to Jesus. Translate as “the Word” if possible. If “Word” is feminine in your language, it could be translated as “the one who is called the Word.”

John 1:2

General Information:

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John 1:3

All things were made through him

This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: “God made all things through him”

without him there was not one thing made that has been made

This can be translated with an active verb. If your language does not permit double negatives, these words should

communicate that the opposite of “all things were made through him” is false. Alternate translation: “God did not make anything without him” or “with him there was every thing made that has been made” or “God made with him every thing that God has made”

John 1:4

In him was life, and the life was the light of men

“In him was life” is a metonym for causing everything to live. And, “light” here is a metaphor for “truth.” Alternate translation: “He is the one who caused everything to live. And he revealed to people what is true about God”

In him

Here “him” refers to the one who is called the Word. life

Here use a general term for “life.” If you must be more specific, translate as “spiritual life.”

John 1:5

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it

Here "light" is a metaphor for what is true and good. Here "darkness" is a metaphor what is false and evil. Alternate translation: "The truth is like a light shining into a dark place, and no one in the dark place could put out the light"

John 1:6

General Information:

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John 1:7

testify about the light

Here "light" is a metaphor for the revelation of God in Jesus.

Alternate translation: "show how Jesus is like the true light of God"

John 1:8

General Information:

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John 1:9

The true light

Here light is a metaphor that represents Jesus as the one who both reveals the truth about God and is himself that truth.

John 1:10

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him

"Even though he was in this world, and God created everything through him, people still did not recognize him" the world did not know him

The "world" is a metonym that stands for all the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "the people did not know who he really was"

John 1:11

He came to his own, and his own did not receive him

"He came to his own fellow countrymen, and his own fellow countrymen did not accept him either"

receive him

"accept him." To receive someone is to welcome him and treat him with honor in hopes of building a relationship with him.

John 1:12

believed in his name

The word "name" is a metonym that stands for Jesus's identity and everything about him. Alternate translation: "believed in him"

he gave the right

"he gave them the authority" or "he made it possible for them"

children of God

The word "children" is a metaphor that represents our relationship to God, which is like children to a father.

John 1:13

General Information:

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John 1:14

The Word

This refers to Jesus. Translate as "the Word" if possible. If "Word" is feminine in your language, it could be translated as "the one who is called the Word." See how you translated this in John 1:1.

became flesh

Here "flesh" represents "a person" or "a human being."

Alternate translation: "became human" or "became a human being"

the one and only who came from the Father

The phrase "the one and only" means that he is unique, that no one else is like him. The phrase "who came from the Father" means that he is the Father's child. Alternate translation: "the unique Son of the Father" or "the only Son of the Father"

Father

This is an important title for God.

full of grace

"full of kind acts towards us, acts we do not deserve"

John 1:15

He who comes after me

John is speaking about Jesus. The phrase "comes after me" means that John's ministry has already started and Jesus's ministry will start later.

is greater than I am

"is more important than I am" or "has more authority than I have"

for he was before me

Be careful not to translate this in a way that suggests that Jesus is more important because he is older than John in human years. Jesus is greater and more important than John because he is God the Son, who has always been alive.

John 1:16

fullness

This word refers to God's grace that has no end.

grace after grace

"blessing after blessing"

John 1:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 1:18

the only God

This phrase refers to God the Son. Alternate translation:

"the only Son, who is himself God"

the only God

The Greek word that is translated here as "only" is translated by some as "only begotten." This means the only one that comes or proceeds from God. The phrases "Son" and "proceeds from" can be used to express some of the meaning of the word "begotten." Alternate translation: "the only begotten God" or "the only begotten Son, who is himself God" or "the only Son who proceeds from God and is himself God"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 1:19

the Jews sent

The word "Jews" here represents the "Jewish leaders."

Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders sent"

John 1:20

He confessed—he did not deny, but confessed

The phrase "he did not deny" says in negative terms the same thing that "He confessed" says in positive terms. This emphasizes that John was telling the truth and was strongly stating that he was not the Christ. Your language may have a different way of doing this.

John 1:21

What are you then?

"What then is the case, if you are not the Messiah?" or
"What then is going on?" or "What then are you doing?"

John 1:22

Connecting Statement:

John continues to speak with the priests and Levites.
they said to him

"the priests and Levites said to John"

we ... us

the priests and Levites, not John

John 1:23

He said

"John said"

I am a voice, crying in the wilderness

John is saying that Isaiah's prophecy is about himself. The word "voice" here refers to the person who is crying out in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "I am the one calling out in the wilderness"

Make the way of the Lord straight

Here the word "way" is used as a metaphor. Alternate translation: "Prepare yourselves for the Lord's arrival the same way that people prepare the road for an important person to use"

John 1:24

Now some from the Pharisees

This is background information about the people who questioned John.

John 1:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 1:26

General Information:

Verse 28 tells us background information about the setting of the story.

John 1:27

who comes after me

John is speaking about Jesus. The phrase "comes after me" means that John's ministry has already started and Jesus's ministry will start later.

me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie

Untying sandals was the work of a slave or servant. These words are a metaphor for the most unpleasant work of a servant. Alternate translation: "me, whom I am not worthy to serve in even the most unpleasant way" or "me. I am not even worthy to untie the strap of his sandal"

John 1:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 1:29

Lamb of God

This is a metaphor that represents God's perfect sacrifice. Jesus is called the "Lamb of God" because he was sacrificed to pay for people's sins.

world

The word "world" is a metonym and refers to all the people in the world.

John 1:30

The one who comes after me is more than me, for he was before me

See how you translated this in John 1:15.

John 1:31

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 1:32

like a dove

Possible meanings: 1) the Spirit descended in the form of a dove or 2) the Spirit descended in the way a dove descends.

heaven

The word "heaven" refers to the "sky."

John 1:33

The one on whom

"The one upon whom"

he is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit

"he is the one who will baptize in the Holy Spirit"

John 1:34

the Son of God

Some copies of this text say "Son of God"; others say "chosen one of God."

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

John 1:35

Again, the next day

This is another day. It is the second day that John sees Jesus.

John 1:36

Lamb of God

This is a metaphor that represents God's perfect sacrifice. Jesus is called the "Lamb of God" because he was sacrificed to pay for people's sins. See how you translated this same phrase in [John 1:29]

John 1:37

General Information:

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John 1:38

General Information:

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John 1:39

tenth hour

"hour 10." This phrase indicates a time in the afternoon, before dark, at which it would be too late to start traveling to another town, possibly around 4 p.m.

John 1:40

General Information:

These verses give us information about Andrew and how he brought his brother Peter to Jesus. This happened before they went and saw where Jesus was staying in John 1:39.

John 1:41

General Information:

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John 1:42

son of John

This is not John the Baptist. "John" was a very common name.

John 1:43

General Information:

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John 1:44

Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter

This is background information about Philip.

John 1:45

General Information:

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John 1:46

Nathaniel said to him

"Nathaniel said to Philip"

Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?

This remark appears in the form of a question in order to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "No good thing can come out of Nazareth!"

John 1:47

in whom is no deceit

This can be stated in a positive way. Alternate translation: "a completely truthful man"

John 1:48

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 1:49

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

John 1:50

Because I said to you, 'I ... tree,' do you believe?

This remark appears in the form of a question to provide emphasis. Alternate translation: "You believe only because I said, 'I ... tree!'"

John 1:51

Truly, truly

Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true.

Chapter 2

John 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Wine

The Jews drank wine at many meals and especially when they were celebrating special events. They did not believe that it was a sin to drink wine.

Driving out the money changers

When Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple, he showed that he had authority over the temple and over all of Israel.

"He knew what was in man"

Jesus knew what other people were thinking only because he was and is the Son of Man and the Son of God.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"His disciples remembered"

John used this phrase to stop telling the main history and to tell about something that happened much later. It was right after he scolded the pigeon sellers ([John 2:16](#)) that the Jewish authorities spoke to him. It was after Jesus became alive again that his disciples remembered what the prophet had written long before and that Jesus had talked about the temple of his body ([John 2:17](#) and [John 2:22](#)).

Links:

[John 2:1 Notes](#)

John 2

2:1-12

Why was Mary worried about the wine running out?

[2:3]

In ancient Israel, if the food and wine ran out at a wedding, the man's family was shamed or was embarrassed. In Israel, the man getting married and his family needed to make sure that everyone got plenty of food and drinks. His family gave a feast. These wedding feasts often lasted for several days. Because the man's family was going to be shamed when the wine ran out, Mary felt bad for the man and his family.

See: Wine (Winepress); Wedding

Why did Jesus say "My time has not yet come"?

[2:4]

John wrote the word "time" (ὥρα/g5610) when he wrote about someone doing something great. Here, Jesus said that he was not ready to show everyone that he was the Messiah.

See: Messiah (Christ)

Why did John write about Jesus turning water into wine at Cana?

[2:9]

Some scholars think John wrote about Jesus turning water into wine at Cana because he wanted to talk about the church. The Bible called the church the bride of Christ. That is, Jesus loves the church in the same way a man loves his bride. Also, a wedding feast was a metaphor for the people rejoicing with God forever.

Also, John said that this was Jesus' first miracle.

See: John 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20

See: Wine (Winepress); Church; Bride of Christ; Wedding; Miracle

See Map: Cana

What is a “sign”(σημεῖον/g4592)?

[2:11]

See: Sign

Who were Jesus’ brothers?

[2:12]

See: Family of Jesus

2:13-25

What is the Jewish Passover?

[2:13]

See: Passover

Why did John say Jesus went “up” to Jerusalem?

[2:13]

John said Jesus went “up” to Jerusalem because the city was on Mount Moriah. Mount Moriah is about 800 meters above sea level.

See Map: Jerusalem; Mount Moriah

Why were merchants selling animals and changing money in the temple?

[2:14]

Most people traveling to Jerusalem were not able to bring animals with them to sacrifice at the temple. Instead, they bought animals for their sacrifice in Jerusalem or at the temple. Merchants made a profit by selling animals at the temple. God commanded the Jewish priests to sacrifice an animal every morning and every evening at the temple. During some festivals, such as Passover, they sacrificed many more animals. Also, God commanded the Jewish people to sacrifice animals at the temple for many different reasons.

These merchants accepted only coins that the Jews made for their own country. When people brought other coins, they exchanged them for Jewish coins. The merchants made a profit when they changed money into Jewish coins. Therefore, they used the temple, a place to worship God, to make money.

See: Temple; Priest (Priesthood); Sacrifice; Worship

See Map: Jerusalem

Why did Jesus force the merchants to leave temple?

[2:15]

Jesus forced the merchants out of the temple because he was angry. He was angry because merchants were making money from people coming to worship God at the temple. Jesus told the people that the temple was for people to pray there. Also, it was for people to come there from all nations (see: Isaiah 56:7; Luke 19:46)

Advice to translators: In English, anger is used when talking about a strong emotion that dishonors God. Here, anger does not mean this. It is a strong emotion, but it does not dishonor God. Instead, it honors God because it is against something that God does not like.

See: Temple; Worship; Pray (Prayer)

Why did the Jewish leaders ask Jesus for a sign?

[2:18]

The Jewish leaders said that Jesus needed to give them a sign because they wanted to know that God gave him permission to do and say what he did and said. They did not think that God gave this permission to Jesus..

See: Sign

Which temple was Jesus talking about?

[2:19]

When Jesus said to destroy the temple and he was going to rebuild it in three days, he spoke about his body. Instead of giving the Jewish leaders a sign, Jesus made them a promise. They thought he spoke to them about the temple building. But, John said Jesus spoke about his own body. Jesus knew he was going to be crucified and three days later he was going to be alive again.

See: Temple; Sign; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why was destroying the Jewish temple significant to the Jews?

[2:19, 2:20]

The Jews honored the temple in Jerusalem because the presence of God was in the temple. The presence of God was directly connected to the presence of the temple among his people. After a time of rebellion by the Jewish people, God punished the Jews and allowed the Babylonians to destroy the temple. The Persians later conquered the Babylonians. The Persians later allowed the temple to be rebuilt. The original temple was far bigger and more elaborate than the rebuilt temple. Herod the Great later enlarged the temple and made it more elaborate than the original temple. When Jesus

spoke, the temple was very large.

After the Jews rejected Jesus, God punished the Jews by having the the Roman army destroy the temple. No one rebuilt the temple after this.

Advice to Translators: The "presence of God" in the temple means that God was in the temple in a special way. The Old Testament said that God lived in the temple. This is not the only place where God is. He is everywhere. Despite this, he was in the temple in a special way.

See: Presence of God; People of God; King Herod

Why did Jesus say the temple was going to be destroyed and rebuilt in three days?

[2:21, 2:22]

When Jesus spoke about the temple being destroyed and rebuilt in three days, he spoke about his body. He did not speak about the actual temple building. The Jews thought Jesus spoke about the huge temple building in Jerusalem where they were they sold and offered sacrifices. When Jesus said the temple was to be raised in three days after it was destroyed, Jesus was saying that his body was to be brought back to life again. Three days after Jesus died on a Roman cross, he resurrected from the dead.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Temple

Did Jesus know everything?

[2:24, 2:25]

Jesus knows everything. Jesus knows everything because he is God. He is not only part God. He is completely God. Jesus does not simply know about people, he knows them completely on the inside. That is, he knows there inner thoughts and knows why and how they do the things they do. He knows them better than they know themselves. He knew if the people around him truly believed in him or if his words and the things he did simply amazed them, and they followed him because they thought he was a great teacher and did miraculous things.

See: Jesus is God

John 2:1

General Information:

Jesus and his disciples are invited to a wedding. These verse give background information about the setting of the story.

Three days later

Most interpreters read this as on the third day after Jesus called Philip and Nathaniel to follow him. The first day occurs in John 1:35 and the second in John 1:43.

John 2:2

Jesus and his disciples were invited to the wedding

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "Someone invited Jesus and his disciples to the wedding"

John 2:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 2:4

Woman

This refers to Mary. If it is impolite for a son to call his mother "woman" in your language, use another word that is polite, or leave it out.

why do you come to me?

This question is asked to provide emphasis. Alternate translation: "this has nothing to do with me." or "you should not tell me what to do."

My time has not yet come

The word "time" is a metonym that represents the right occasion for Jesus to show that he is the Messiah by working miracles. Alternate translation: "It is not yet the right time for me to perform a mighty act"

John 2:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 2:6

two to three metretres

You may convert this to a modern measure. Alternate

translation: "75 to 115 liters"

John 2:7

to the brim

This means "to the very top" or "completely full."

John 2:8

the head waiter

This refers to the person in charge of the food and drink.

John 2:9

but the servants who had drawn the water knew

This is background information.

John 2:10

drunk

unable to tell the difference between cheap wine and expensive wine because of drinking too much alcohol

John 2:11

Connecting Statement:

This verse is not part of the main story, but rather it gives a comment about the story.

Cana

This is a place name.

revealed his glory

Here "his glory" refers to the mighty power of Jesus.

Alternate translation: "showed his power"

John 2:12

went down

This indicates that they went from a higher place to a lower place. Capernaum is northeast of Cana and is at a lower elevation.

his brothers

The word "brothers" includes both brothers and sisters. All Jesus's brothers and sisters were younger than he was.

John 2:13

General Information:

Jesus and his disciples go up to Jerusalem to the temple.

went up to Jerusalem

This indicates that he went from a lower place to a higher place. Jerusalem is built on a hill.

John 2:14

were sitting there

The next verse makes it clear that these people are in the temple courtyard. That area was intended for worship and not for commerce.

sellers of oxen and sheep and pigeons

People are buying animals in the temple courtyard to sacrifice them to God.

money changers

Jewish authorities required people who wanted to buy animals for sacrifices to exchange their money for special money from the "money changers."

John 2:15

So

This word marks an event that happens because of something else that has happened first. In this case, Jesus has seen the money changers sitting in the temple.

John 2:16

Stop making the house of my Father a marketplace

"Stop buying and selling things in my Father's house"

the house of my Father

This is a phrase Jesus uses to refer to the temple.

my Father

This is an important title that Jesus uses for God.

John 2:17

it was written

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "someone had written"

your house

This term refers to the temple, God's house.

consume

The word "consume" points to the metaphor of "fire."

Jesus's love for the temple is like a fire that burns within him.

John 2:18

sign

This refers to an event that proves something is true.

these things

This refers to Jesus's actions against the money changers in the temple.

John 2:19

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up

Jesus dared them to destroy the temple so that he could raise it up in three days. That would be the sign that he had authority to drive the sellers and animals out of the temple area. Jesus knew that they would not destroy the temple building. You can translate the words "destroy" and "raise"

using the usual words for tearing down and rebuilding a building. If a command form in your language would indicate that Jesus truly intended for them to destroy the temple, it can be translated as a condition with the word "if" instead. Alternate translation: "If you destroy this temple, I will rebuild it in three days"

raise it up

"cause it to stand"

John 2:20

forty-six years ... three days

"46 years ... 3 days"

you will raise it up in three days?

The Jewish authorities misunderstood Jesus's words and thought that Jesus wanted to tear down the literal temple and build it again in three days. "Raise" is an idiom for "rebuild." Alternate translation: "you will rebuild it in three days?" or "you cannot possibly rebuild it in three days!"

John 2:21

General Information:

This is the beginning of a comment on the story. It tells about something that happens later.

John 2:22

General Information:

This is the end of a comment on the story. It tells about something that happens later.

believed

Here "believe" means to accept something or trust that it is true.

this statement

This refers back to Jesus's statement in John 2:19.

John 2:23

Now when he was in Jerusalem

The word "now" introduces us to a new event in the story.

believed in his name

Here "name" is a metonym that represents the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "believed in him" or "trusted in him"

the signs that he did

Miracles can also be called "signs" because they are used as evidence that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over the universe.

John 2:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 2:25

about man, for he knew what was in man

Here the word "man" represents people in general.

Alternate translation: "about people, for he knew what was in people"

Chapter 3

John 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[John 3:1 Notes](#)

John 3

3: 1-15

Did Nicodemus think Jesus to be God's Son?

[3:2]

Scholars do not know if Nicodemus thought Jesus to be God's son. However, the miraculous things Jesus did amazed Nicodemus. These things showed him Jesus came from God. Jesus' words greatly affected Nicodemus. Nicodemus spoke well of Jesus to the other Jewish leaders at the Festival of Shelters (see: John 7:40-52). He also helped Joseph of Arimathea bury Jesus' body after Jesus died (see: John 19:38-40). Some scholars think Nicodemus was a priest who became Christian (see: Acts 6:7). Other scholars do not think he really believed in Jesus.

If Nicodemus later believed in Jesus, it was not easy for him. That is, if he believed in Jesus, the Jews would have rejected him as a teacher. These scholars think that Nicodemus stopped thinking he entered heaven because of the good things he did. Nicodemus now understood that he needed to humble himself. He needed Jesus to forgive him for sinning. Perhaps this is why John wrote that Jesus' words amazed Nicodemus.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Festival of Shelters

How can someone be "born again"?

[3:3]

Jesus told Nicodemus that he needed to be "born again" (ἄνωθεν/g0509). That is, he needed to be born a second time from God. This is a metaphor for what happens to the life of a person when they believe in Jesus. God makes a Christian a new person in some way. This confused Nicodemus. He thought that Jesus was saying that his mother needed to give birth to him again. Nicodemus knew a woman was unable to do this. However, Jesus meant that people needed to be born a second time to be able to live with God forever. It is the Holy Spirit who does this. That is, without the Holy Spirit gives some a second birth, the person cannot live together with God forever in heaven. A sinner must be made into a new person to be with God.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Metaphor

How is one born from water and the Spirit?

[3:5]

To be born "from the Spirit" means to be born from above. That is, born from God through the Holy Spirit (see: 3:5).

When he does this, the Holy Spirit makes the sinner into a new person in some way.

There are different ways to understand what it means when someone is born from water.

Some scholars think being born from water means that someone is born again. Perhaps John thought that when this happens they are baptized with water. Or perhaps John thought that when this happens God makes them clean from sin. He washes away their sin (see: 1 John 1:7). God promised to clean Israel with clean water from their sins and idols (see: Ezekiel 3:25-27). He said that when this happened, he made people different in some way. He said he did this by putting his Spirit in them (see: Numbers 19:17; Psalm 51:9-10; Isaiah 32:15;44:3-5; Jeremiah 2:13;17:13; Joel 2:28-29. Other scholars think John was thinking about a baby born from his mother (see: 3:6). There is water in the mother's womb around a baby before it is born. However, this was not a metaphor that was used very often.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Baptize (Baptism); Clean and Unclean; Sin; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Metaphor

Why did Jesus say Nicodemus did not understand the earthly things of which he spoke?

[3:10]

Jesus said Nicodemus did not understand "earthly(ἐπίγειος/g1919)" things because he did not understand Jesus' metaphors of childbirth and the wind. If Nicodemus was unable to understand when Jesus used earthly metaphors, he was unable to understand if Jesus spoke to him about God. Jesus tried to help Nicodemus understand. He did this by comparing the new life Christians have with babies having life on earth because of their mothers. He also compared the Holy Spirit to the blowing wind. However, Nicodemus was still unable to understand.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Metaphor; Holy Spirit

3:16-21

Why did John talk about the "world" κόσμος/g2889)?

[3:16]

Here, when John spoke about the "world(κόσμος/g2889)", he was talking about all of the people living in the world. John talked about all of these people because it is all people whom God calls to believe in his Son Jesus. However, often when John wrote "the world," he sometimes was talking about something different. In 1 John 2:15, he wrote "world" as a

metaphor for how Satan does evil and how people sin. This is because Satan was given permission over everyone who sins. This is why God commands Christians not to love the evil things in this world. This is also why John says that God loved them by giving his only Son to die for them. He loves all people very, very much.

See: World; Faith (Believe in); Satan (The Devil); Sin

Did Jesus die for the sins of the whole world?

[3:16]

Some scholars think that Jesus died for all people. That is, those who believe in him and those who do not believe in him.

Here John calls all people “the world.” God caused Jesus to die. In this way, he caused Jesus to suffer for everyone who sins (see: 1 John 2:2). But, this does not save the people who reject Jesus.

Other scholars think that Jesus died only for the sins of the people who believe in him. That is, Jesus died for people all over the world. People who believe in him can come from any tribe of people and can speak any language.

3:17-21

Does Jesus judge the world?

[3:17]

According to John 5:22, God gave permission to Jesus to judge everything and everyone. In John 3:17-18, John wrote that God did not send Jesus into the world to judge people. When God sent Jesus to earth, it was not to condemn or judge people. Jesus came as the promised Messiah. That is, he came to save people from their sins. However, Jesus is coming again to judge the world. He will judge those who are not Christians. People who believe in Jesus is the Son of God are not judged. Their sins are forgiven. They are one of God’s children.

See: Judge (Judgment); Condemn (Condemnation); Messiah (Christ); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Children of God

Who is the light?

[2:19]

Jesus is the light. Light is often a metaphor in Scripture.

See: John 8:12

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

What is darkness?

[2:19]

Sin, evil, and everything that is against Jesus is spoke about as if it were darkness. This is a common metaphor in Scripture. When people sin, they stay in the dark. They stay away from the light. That is they stay far from Jesus. They even hide from him. But those who live in a way that honors God are not afraid of God. They do not need to hide from him.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

3: 22-30

Why did John baptize people?

[3:22]

John baptized people as a sign that they repented of their sins (see: Acts 19:4). Some Jews who wanted to honor God came to him to be baptized. They wanted to be clean from their sins. John did this to help make them ready for the coming of the Messiah.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Sign; Repent (Repentance); Sin; Clean and Unclean; Messiah (Christ)

What did God send John the Baptist to do?

[3:27, 3:28]

God sent John to tell the people about the Messiah. John showed the people who was the Messiah. That it, he showed them Jesus (see: John 1:29).

John used a metaphor to say how he was a friend to Jesus. In the same way the man getting married is greater than his friends at his wedding, so Jesus was greater than John. His friends help him and rejoice for him. In the same way, John helped Jesus and rejoiced because Jesus came. Also, John knew that he must soon stop working when Jesus began his own work.

See: Messiah (Christ); Metaphor

3: 31-36

How does someone disobey the son?

[3:36]

John talked about “disobeying”(ἀπειθέω/g0544) the son. John was talking about refusing to believe in Jesus. This is how they disobeyed the Jesus, the Son of God. They reject Jesus because they do not think he is who he says he is. Or they refuse to believe because they do not want to believe in him.

See: Son of God; Faith (Believe in)

Who speaks in John 3?

There are parts of John 3 where it is not clear who is speaking. These places are 3:16 and 3:31. In many languages, writers

use quotation marks to show who is speaking. However, John did not originally do this. Some scholars think that Jesus continued speaking in 3:16-21. But, other scholars think that it is John who spoke in these verses. Some scholars think John the Baptist continued speaking in 3:31-36. But other scholars think that it is the Apostle John who spoke in this passage. See: Apostle

John 3:1

General Information:

Nicodemus comes to see Jesus.

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the story and to introduce Nicodemus.

John 3:2

we know

Here "we" is exclusive, referring only to Nicodemus and the other members of the Jewish council.

John 3:3

Connecting Statement:

Jesus and Nicodemus continue talking.

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

born again

"born from above" or "born of God"

he cannot see the kingdom of God

Possible meanings of seeing the kingdom of God are 1) seeing the place God rules over or 2) knowing what God's kingdom is like or 3) belonging to the kingdom of God.

John 3:4

How can a man be born when he is old?

Nicodemus uses this question to emphasize that this cannot happen. Alternate translation: "A man certainly cannot be born again when he is old!"

He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?

Nicodemus also uses this question to emphasize his belief that a second birth is impossible. "Certainly, he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb!"

a second time

"again" or "twice"

womb

the part of a woman's body where a baby grows

John 3:5

Truly, truly

You can translate this in the same way you did in John 3:3.

born of water and the Spirit

There are two possible meanings: 1) "baptized in water and in the Spirit" or 2) "born physically and spiritually"

he cannot enter into the kingdom of God

Entering God's kingdom means that the people belong to God, God rules over them, and they will live with him forever. AT: "he cannot belong to the kingdom of God"

John 3:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 3:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to Nicodemus.

You must be born again

"You must be born from above"

John 3:8

The wind blows wherever it wishes

In the source language, wind and Spirit are the same word.

The speaker here refers to the wind as if it were a person.

Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit is like a wind that blows wherever it wants"

John 3:9

How can these things be?

This question adds emphasis to the statement. Alternate translation: "This cannot be!" or "This is not able to happen!"

John 3:10

Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

Jesus knows that Nicodemus is a teacher. He is not looking for information. Alternate translation: "You are a teacher of Israel, so I am surprised you do not understand these things!" or "You are a teacher of Israel, so you should understand these things!"

Are you a teacher ... yet you do not understand

The word "you" is singular and refers to Nicodemus.

John 3:11

you do not accept

The word "you" is plural and refers either the Pharisees [John 3:1]

Truly, truly

Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated this in John 1:51.

we speak

When Jesus said "we," he was not including Nicodemus.

John 3:12

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues responding to Nicodemus.

I told you ... you do not believe ... how will you believe if I tell you

In all three places "you" is plural and refers to Jews in general.

how will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things?

This question emphasizes the disbelief of Nicodemus and the Jews. Alternate translation: "you certainly will not believe if I tell you about heavenly things!"

heavenly things

spiritual things

John 3:13

No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven

This double negative emphasizes that he who descended from heaven is the only one who has ascended into heaven. Alternate translation: "The only one who has ascended into heaven is he who descended from heaven"

John 3:14

Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of

Man be lifted up

This figure of speech is called a simile. Some people will "lift up" Jesus just as Moses "lifted up" the bronze serpent in the wilderness.

in the wilderness

The wilderness is a dry, desert place, but here it refers specifically to the place where Moses and the Israelites walked around for forty years.

John 3:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 3:16

God so loved the world

Here "world" is a metonym that refers to everyone in the world.

loved

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. God himself is love and is the source of true love.

John 3:17

For God did not send the Son into the world in order to condemn the world, but in order to save the world through him

These two clauses mean nearly the same thing, said twice for emphasis, first in the negative and then in the positive. Some languages may indicate emphasis in a different way. Alternate translation: God's real reason for sending his Son into the world was to save it"

to condemn

"to punish." Usually "punish" implies that the person who has been punished is then accepted by God. When a person is condemned, he is punished but never accepted by God.

John 3:18

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

John 3:19

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes responding to Nicodemus.

The light has come into the world

The word "light" is a metaphor for God's truth that is revealed in Jesus. Jesus speaks of himself in the third person. If your language does not allow people to speak of themselves in the third person, you may need to specify who the light is. The "world" is a metonym for all of the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "The one who is like a light has revealed God's truth to all people" or "I, who am like a light, have come into the world"

men loved the darkness

Here "darkness" is a metaphor for evil.

John 3:20

so that his deeds will not be exposed

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that the light will not show the things he does" or "so that the light does not make clear his deeds"

John 3:21

plainly seen that his deeds

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "people may clearly see his deeds" or "everyone may clearly

see the things he does"

John 3:22

After this

This refers to after Jesus had spoken with Nicodemus. See how you translated this in John 2:12.

John 3:23

Aenon

This word means "springs," as of water.

Salim

a village or town next to the Jordan River

because there was much water there

"because there were many springs in that place"

were being baptized

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "John was baptizing them" or "he was baptizing them"

John 3:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 3:25

Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and a Jew

This can be stated in an active form for clarity. Alternate translation: "Then John's disciples and a Jew began to argue"

a dispute

a fight using words

John 3:26

you have testified, look, he is baptizing,

In this phrase, "look" is a command meaning "pay attention!" Alternate translation: "you have testified, 'Look! He is baptizing,'" or "you have testified. 'Look at that! He is baptizing,'"

John 3:27

A man cannot receive anything unless

"Nobody has any power unless"

it has been given to him from heaven

Here "heaven" is used as a metonym to refer to God. This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has given it to him"

John 3:28

You yourselves

This "You" is plural and refers to all the people John is talking to. Alternate translation: "You all" or "All of you"

I have been sent before him

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "God sent me to arrive before him"

John 3:29

Connecting Statement:

John the Baptist continues speaking.

The bride belongs to the bridegroom

Here the "bride" and "bridegroom" are metaphors. Jesus is like the "bridegroom" and John is like the friend of the "bridegroom."

This, then, is my joy made complete

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So then I rejoice greatly" or "So I rejoice much"

my joy

The word "my" refers to John the Baptist, the one who is speaking.

John 3:30

He must increase

"He" refers to the bridegroom, Jesus, who will continue to grow in importance.

John 3:31

He who comes from above is above all

"He who comes from heaven is more important than anyone else"

He who is from the earth is from the earth and speaks about the earth
John means that Jesus is greater than he is since Jesus is from heaven, and John was born on the earth. Alternate translation: "He who is born in this world is like everyone else who lives in the world and he speaks about what happens in this world"

He who comes from heaven is above all

This means the same thing as the first sentence. John repeats this for emphasis.

John 3:32

He testifies about what he has seen and heard

John is speaking about Jesus. Alternate translation: "The one from heaven tells about what he has seen and heard in heaven"

no one accepts his testimony

Here John exaggerates to emphasize that only a few people believe Jesus. Alternate translation: "very few people believe him"

John 3:33

He who has received his testimony

"Anyone who believes what Jesus says" has confirmed

"proves" or "agrees"

John 3:34

Connecting Statement:

John the Baptist finishes speaking.

For the one whom God has sent speaks

"This Jesus, whom God has sent to represent him, speaks"

For he does not give the Spirit by measure

"For he is the one to whom God gave all the power of his Spirit"

John 3:35

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

given ... into his hand

This means to be put in his power or control.

John 3:36

He who believes

"A person who believes" or "Anyone who believes" the wrath of God stays on him

The abstract noun "wrath" can be translated with the verb "punish." Alternate translation: "God will continue to punish him"

Chapter 4

John 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

John 4:4-38 forms one story centered on the teaching of Jesus as the "living water," the one who gives eternal life to all who believe in him. (See: believe)

Special concepts in this chapter

"It was necessary for him to pass through Samaria"

Jews avoided traveling through the region of Samaria because the Samaritans were descendants of ungodly people. So Jesus had to do what most Jews did not want to do. (See: godly and kingdom of israel)

"The hour is coming"

Jesus used these words to begin prophecies about times that could be shorter or longer than sixty minutes. "The hour" in which true worshipers will worship in spirit and truth is longer than sixty minutes.

The proper place of worship

Long before Jesus lived, the Samaritan people had broken the law of Moses by setting up a false temple in their land ([John 4:20](#)). Jesus explained to the woman that it was no longer important where people worshiped ([John 4:21-24](#)).

Harvest

Harvest is when people go out to get the food they have planted so they can bring it to their houses and eat it. Jesus used this as a metaphor to teach his followers that they need to go and tell other people about Jesus so those people can be part of God's kingdom. (See: faith)

"The Samaritan woman"

John probably told this story to show the difference between the Samaritan woman, who believed, and the Jews, who did not believe and later killed Jesus. (See: believe)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"In spirit and truth"

The people who truly know who God is and enjoy worshiping him and love him for who he is are the ones who truly please him. Where they worship is not important.

Links:

[John 4:1 Notes](#)

John 4

4: 1-4

Who were the Samaritans?

[4:4]

The Samaritans were the people who lived in the region of Samaria. Long before this time, Israel was one nation and it was divided into two nations, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. In the Old Testament, the northern kingdom, Israel, did not honor God. God punished them and they were conquered by Assyria. After this happened, the people of this Israel married gentiles. They were no longer true Israelites. The Jews who honored God hated the Samaritans. They knew that the Samaritans often married Gentile women, something that the Law of Moses did not allow them to do. They said they obeyed God, but they did not. They worshipped him in the wrong ways and they also worshipped idols and other gods. Therefore, God rejected the Samaritans and he did not consider them to be his people.

See: John 4:22

See: Samaria; Israel (Northern Kingdom) ; Judah (Southern Kingdom); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Punish (Punishment); Gentile; Law of Moses; Worship; Idolatry (Idol); False gods; People of God

Map: Samaria

Why did many Jews not travel through Samaria?

[4:4]

The land of Samaria was between Judea and Galilee. When Jews wanted to travel from Jerusalem to Galilee, the shortest way was to go through Samaria.

However, the Jews hated the Samaritans. Many Jews who wanted to honor God often went around Samaria, even though this took much longer because of their hate for these people. Perhaps they thought the people would make them unclean. But, most Jews traveled through it because that way took less time.

See: Samaria; Clean and Unclean

See Map: Samaria, Judea, Galilee

4:5-6

What was the city of Sychar in the Old Testament?

[4:5]

Some scholars think that the city of Sychar and Shechem in the Old Testament are the same city. Other scholars think these are two different cities. They think that Sychar is the town of Askar that exists today. Both of these places were near a well that Jacob dug and the place where the Joseph from the Old Testament was buried.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

See Map: Sychar, Shechem, Askar

4: 7-12

What did Jesus say he was able to give to the Samaritan woman?

[4:10]

Jesus says he was able to give the Samaritan woman “the gift of God.” He wanted to say that God was able to allow her to live with God forever in heaven (see: Romans 6:23). The Jews were amazed when Jesus told her this. They thought the Samaritans rejected God and did not want to honor God.

The Samaritan woman married six times. Many Jews thought she was very sinful. This is because it was uncommon for the Jews to get married more than once. However, Jesus offered to forgive her.

John also speaks about “living” (ζῶν/g2198) water as a metaphor. “Living water” can mean running water or fresh water. It can also mean water that makes plants and people live. Jesus wanted to say that people were able to live forever with God if they believe in him.

See: Heaven; Samaria; Sin; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Metaphor

4:13-21

How did the Samaritans try to honor God differently from the Jews?

[4:20]

The Jews worshiped God in the temple in Jerusalem, but the Samaritans worshiped God in a temple in Samaria on Mount Gerizim. Because God commanded the Jews to worship him in Jerusalem, the Samaritans sinned in their worship.

Also, the Samaritans only thought in part of the Old Testament was from God and rejected the rest of the Old Testament. They also possessed their own priests. These priests were not part of the tribe of Levi. The Law of Moses said that the priests must be from the tribe of Levi.

However, both the Samaritans and the Jews waited for God to send the Messiah to them.

See: Samaria; Worship; Temple; Sin; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Priest (Priesthood); Tribes of Israel; Law of Moses

See Map: Jerusalem, Samaria, and Mount Gerizim

What future time did Jesus speak about to the woman?

[4:21]

When Jesus spoke with the woman, he thought about what was going to happen in the future. The Romans were going to destroy the Temple in Jerusalem. The Christians were going to worship God anywhere. They did not need to go to Jerusalem to worship anymore.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Temple; Worship

4:22-26

What does it mean that “salvation” is from the Jews?

[4:22]

Jesus said that “salvation”(σωτηρία/g4991) is from the Jews. Jesus taught the woman that God worked to save mankind, and that he did this through the Jews, not through the Samaritans. While Jesus did not agree with what the Samaritans thought about God, Jesus was kind to the woman. Jesus was the Messiah and he was a Jew and not a Samaritan.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Samaria; Messiah (Christ)

What does it mean for people to worship God in “Spirit” and in “truth”?

[4:24]

People worship God in “Spirit”(πνεῦμα/g4151) when they worship him anywhere, not only in the temple or other building (see: acts 17:24-26). That is, because they now worship him by the Holy Spirit’s power.

God gave Christians a new way to worship him. This new way is in “truth”(ἀλήθεια/g0225). That is, because they now know who God truly is, they can worship him in the right way. This also means that they know that Jesus is God. When they worship Jesus, they know that they are worshiping God (see: John 14:6). People who worship God in this way praise and honor him because they know the truth about him.

See: Worship; Temple; Holy Spirit

4:27-42

Why were the disciples shocked that Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman?

[4:27]

Some Jewish men never spoke with a woman unless she was his wife. They thought that it was wrong to speak to other woman. Also, many Jews did not speak with Samaritans. Jews thought Samaritans were unclean.

But, Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman. He asked her for a drink of water. Usually, the Jews refused to drink or eat with Samaritans because they thought they were unclean.

See: Samaria; Clean and Unclean

Why did the disciples not ask Jesus why he talked with the woman?

[4:27]

The disciples never thought Jesus was going to speak to a Samaritan woman. They thought, in the same way most Jews did, that the Samaritans were unclean, and they were people whom God did not accept. They thought that Jesus, their teacher, did wrong by talking with the woman. They were too ashamed to ask him why he was talking with her.

See: Samaria; Clean and Unclean

What happened to the people of Sychar?

[4:29, 4:30]

Many of the people of Sychar began to believe that Jesus was the Messiah. They did this even though Jesus had told the woman that her people did not know God, whom they said they worshiped.

No one thought the Samaritans were going to believe in Jesus. But many did believe in Jesus. Also, the disciples thought that the Jews were going to accept their Messiah, but most of the Jews rejected him.

See: Messiah (Christ); Worship; Samaria; Disciple

See Map: Sychar

Can Samaritans live with God forever?

[4:29]

The Jews did not think the people of Sychar were going to call Jesus the “Savior of the world.” This means that they were still learning about Jesus, yet they believed in him. Later, Jesus commanded his disciples to be witnesses for him in Samaria (see: Acts 1:8).

The Samaritans did not worship God in the right way, and they only thought the first five books of the Old Testament were from God. They did not believe that God did anything for Israel after Moses died.

The title “the Savior of the world” is in the New Testament only here and in 1 John 4:14.

See: Savior; Disciple; Witness (Martyr); Samaria; Worship; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

See Map: Sychar, Samaria

What does the metaphor about doing the harvest mean in the New Testament?

[4:35]

See: Harvest; Metaphor

4:43-45

Why did John have the proverb about a prophet in his hometown?

[4:44]

John said that Jesus left Sychar after only two days, because the people reject a prophet in the prophet's hometown never. But, the people of Sychar believed in Jesus. Sychar was not Jesus' hometown. Therefore, scholars do not agree about what John meant.

Some scholars think John meant that Galilee was Jesus' home region. The people of Galilee did not believe Jesus when he arrived there (see: 4:45). Later, they rejected him (see: Mark 6:1-6).

Other scholars think that John meant that all Israel was Jesus' home region, and that most of the Jews were going to reject him.

Still other scholars think that John was talking about Sychar. Many of the people of that town believed in Jesus, yet he left after only two days. John gives the proverb to explain why he left (see: 4:44). Jesus went to teach the Jews and the Samaritans. He never stayed for very long in one place. Perhaps John wanted to say that if Jesus stayed anywhere, this place became his hometown. If the people did not welcome him, Jesus kept on traveling.

See: Proverb; Prophet; Samaria

See Map: Sychar, Galilee

4:46-54

Why did the official's whole family believe in Jesus?

[4:53]

The official's whole family believed in Jesus. In many places, all of the people in a family or household usually think in the way in which the leader of that family thinks. The family of the official probably trusted him to think in the right ways.

When he began to believe in Jesus, all his family also believed in Jesus..

In other places, people in families are more free to think in the way each person wishes to think. These people may not understand why the official's family believed in Jesus at the same time.

Why did John count the number of "signs" that Jesus did in Galilee?

[4:54]

John called the miracle he did a "sign"(σημεῖον/g4592)." He also did this with the first miraculous thing he did, which was changing water into wine. He means that both of these things showed the people that God truly sent Jesus to them to be the Messiah he promised to send.

See: Sign; Miracle; Wine (Winepress)

John 4:1

General Information:

John 4:1-6 gives the background to the next event, Jesus's conversation with a Samaritan woman.

Connecting Statement:

A long sentence begins here.

Now when Jesus knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was making and baptizing more disciples than John

"Now Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John. When he knew that the Pharisees had heard that he was doing this"

Now when Jesus knew

The word "now" is used here to mark a break in the main events. Here John starts to tell a new part of the narrative.

John 4:2

Jesus himself was not baptizing

The reflexive pronoun "himself" adds emphasis that it was not Jesus who was baptizing, but his disciples.

John 4:3

he left Judea and went back again to Galilee

You may need to rearrange the entire sentence that begins with the words "Now when Jesus" in verse 1. "Now Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John (although Jesus himself was not baptizing, but his disciples were). The Pharisees heard that Jesus was doing this. When Jesus knew that the Pharisees learned what he was doing, he left Judea and went back again to Galilee"

John 4:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:5

General Information:

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John 4:6

General Information:

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John 4:7

Give me some water

This is a polite request, not a command.

John 4:8

For his disciples had gone

He did not ask his disciples to draw water for him because they had gone.

John 4:9

Then the Samaritan woman said to him

The word "him" refers to Jesus.

How is it that you, being a Jew, are asking me, being a Samaritan woman, for something to drink?

This remark appears in the form of a question to express the Samaritan woman's surprise that Jesus asked her for a drink. Alternate translation: "I cannot believe that you, being a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink!"

have no dealings with

"do not associate with"

John 4:10

living water

Jesus uses the metaphor "living water" to refer to the Holy Spirit, who works in a person to transform and bring new life.

John 4:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:12

You are not greater, are you, than our father Jacob ... livestock?

This remark occurs in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "You are not greater than our father Jacob ... livestock!"

our father Jacob

"our ancestor Jacob"

drank from it

"drank water that came from it"

John 4:13

will be thirsty again

"will need to drink water again"

John 4:14

the water that I will give him will become a fountain of water in him

Here the word "fountain" is a metaphor for life-giving spring of water. Alternate translation: "the water that I will give him will become like a spring of water in him"

eternal life

Here "life" refers to the "spiritual life" that only God can give.

John 4:15

Sir

In this context, the Samaritan woman is addressing Jesus as "Sir," which is a term of respect or politeness.

draw water

"get water" or "pull water up from the well" using a container and rope

John 4:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:17

You have said correctly

"You spoke well when you said" or "You chose your words skillfully when you said." Jesus is acknowledging that what she had said was strictly true but was hiding a fact about her that she expected Jesus to disapprove of. He was saying neither that it was a good thing that she had no husband nor that her answer showed that she was morally good.

John 4:18

What you have said is true

Jesus said this to emphasize the words "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'" in verse 17. He wanted the woman to know that he knew she was telling the truth.

John 4:19

Sir

In this context the Samaritan woman is addresssing Jesus as "sir," which is a term of respect or politeness.

I see that you are a prophet

"I can understand that you are a prophet"

John 4:20

Our fathers

"Our forefathers" or "Our ancestors"

John 4:21

Believe me

To believe someone is to acknowledge what the person has said is true.

you will worship the Father

Eternal salvation from sin comes from God the Father, who is Yahweh, the God of the Jews.

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 4:22

You worship what you do not know. We worship what we know

Jesus means that God revealed himself and his commands to the Jewish people, not to the Samaritans. Through the Scriptures the Jewish people know who God is better than the Samaritans.

for salvation is from the Jews

This means that God has chosen the Jews as his special people who will tell all other people about his salvation. It also means that the Christ, the one who will save the world, will be a Jew. It does not mean the Jewish people will save others from their sins. Alternate translation: "for all people will know about God's salvation because of the Jews"

salvation is from the Jews

Eternal salvation from sin comes from God the Father, who is Yahweh, the God of the Jews.

John 4:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the Samaritan woman.

However, the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will

"However, it is now the right time for true worshipers to" the Father

This is an important title for God.

in spirit and truth

Possible meanings are the "spirit" here is 1) the inner person, the mind and heart, what a person thinks and what he loves, different from where he goes to worship and what ceremonies he performs, or 2) the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "in the Spirit and in truth" or "with the Spirit's help and in truth"

in ... truth

thinking correctly of what is true about God

John 4:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:25

I know that the Messiah ... Christ

Both of these words mean "God's promised king."

he will explain everything to us

This statement implies that he will tell them everything they need to know. Alternate translation: "he will tell us everything we need to know"

John 4:26

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:27

At that moment his disciples returned

"Just as Jesus was saying this, his disciples returned from town"

Now they were wondering why he was speaking with a woman

It was very unusual for a Jew to speak with a woman he did not know, especially if that woman was a Samaritan.

no one said, "What ... looking for?" or "Why ... her?"

Possible meanings are 1) "no one asked Jesus, 'What ... looking for?' or 'Why ... her?'" or 2) "no one asked the woman, 'What ... looking for?' or asked Jesus, 'Why ... her?'"
John 4:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:29

Come, see a man who told me everything that I have ever done
The Samaritan woman exaggerates to show that she is impressed by how much Jesus knows about her. Alternate translation: "Come see a man who knows very much about me, even though I have never met him before"

This could not be the Christ, could it?

The woman is not sure that Jesus is the Christ, so she asks a question that expects "no" for an answer, but she also asks a question instead of making a statement because she wants the people to decide for themselves.

John 4:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:31

In the meantime

"While the woman was going into town"

the disciples were urging him

"the disciples were telling Jesus" or "the disciples were encouraging Jesus"

John 4:32

I have food to eat that you do not know about

Here Jesus is not talking about literal "food," but is preparing his disciples for a spiritual lesson in John 4:34.

John 4:33

No one has brought him anything to eat, have they?

The disciples think Jesus is talking about literal "food." They begin asking each other this question, expecting a "no" response. Alternate translation: "Surely no one brought him any food while we were in town!"

John 4:34

My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work
Here "food" is a metaphor that represents "obeying God's will." Alternate translation: "Just as food satisfies a hungry person, obeying God's will is what satisfies me"

John 4:35

Do you not say

"Is this not one of your popular sayings"

look up and see the fields, for they are already ripe for harvest

The words "fields" and "ripe for harvest" are metaphors.

The "fields" represent people. The words "ripe for harvest" mean that people are ready to receive the message of Jesus, like fields that are ready to be harvested. Alternate translation: "look up and see the the people! They are ready to believe my message, like crops in the fields that are ready for people to harvest them"

John 4:36

and gathers fruit for everlasting life

Here "fruit for everlasting life" is a metaphor that represents people who believe Christ's message and receive eternal life. Alternate translation: "and the people who believe the message and receive eternal life are like the fruit that a harvester gathers"

John 4:37

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.

One sows, and another reaps

The words "sows" and "reaps" are metaphors. The one who "sows" shares the message of Jesus. The one who "reaps" helps the people to receive the message of Jesus. Alternate translation: "One person plants the seeds, and another person reaps the crops"

John 4:38

you have entered into their labor

"you are now joining in their work"

John 4:39

believed in him

To "believe in" someone means to "trust in" that person.

Here this also means that they believed he was the Son of God.

He told me everything that I have done

This is an exaggeration. The woman was impressed by how much Jesus knew about her. Alternate translation: "He told me many things about my life"

John 4:40

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:41

his word

Here "word" is a metonym that stands for the message that Jesus proclaimed. Alternate translation: "his message"

John 4:42

world

The "world" is a metonym for all the believers throughout the world. Alternate translation: "all the believers in the world"

John 4:43

General Information:

Jesus goes down to Galilee and heals a boy. Verse 44 gives us background information about something Jesus had said previously.

from there

from Judea

John 4:44

For Jesus himself declared

The reflexive pronoun "himself" is added to emphasize that Jesus had "declared" or said this.. You can translate this in your language in a way that will give emphasis to a person. a prophet has no honor in his own country

"people do not show respect or honor to a prophet of their own country" or "a prophet is not respected by the people in his own community"

John 4:45

at the festival

Here the festival is the Passover.

John 4:46

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

Here the author starts a new part of the story. If you have a way of doing this in your language, you may consider using it.

royal official

someone who is in the service of the king

John 4:47

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:48

Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe

"Unless ... not believe" here is a double negative. In some languages it is more natural to translate this statement in a positive form. Alternate translation: "You will believe only if you see a signs and wonders"

John 4:49

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:50

believed the word

Here "word" is a metonym that refers to the message that Jesus spoke. Alternate translation: "believed the message"

John 4:51

While

This word is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time. As the official was going home, his servants were coming to meet him on the road.

John 4:52

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 4:53

So he himself and his whole household believed

The reflexive pronoun "himself" is used here to emphasize the word "he." If you have a way of doing this in your language, you may consider using it.

John 4:54

sign

Miracles can also be called "signs" because they are used as indicators or evidence that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over the universe.

Chapter 5

John 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Healing water

Many of the Jews believed that God would heal people who got into some of the pools in Jerusalem when the waters were "stirred up."

Testimony

Testimony is what one person says about another person. What a person says about himself is not as important as what other people say about that person. Jesus told the Jews that God had told them who Jesus was, so he did not need to tell them who he was. This was because God had told the writers of the Old Testament what his Messiah would do, and Jesus had done everything they had written that he would do.

The resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment

God will make some people alive again and because he gives them his grace, they will live with him forever. But he will make some people alive again and because he will treat them justly, they will live apart from him forever.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The Son, the Son of God, and the Son of Man

Jesus refers to himself in this chapter as the "Son"

Links:

[John 5:1 Notes](#)

John 5

5:1-9

Which feast did John talk about?

[5:1]

John did not say which feast was happening at this time. However, there were several Jewish feast in Jerusalem every year..

See: Passover; Festival of Shelters

What was the pool of Bethsaida?

[5:2]

The people thought the pool in Bethsaida healed people when the waters "stirred"(ταράσσω/g5015). Because of this, sick people and those with physical problems laid down by the pool and waited for the water to move. When the water moved, they tried to be the first person to get into the pool to be healed.

Some scholars think it is possible that an underground spring flowed into the pool of Bethsaida and sometimes caused the water in the pool to move. Other scholars think that the pool's water contained minerals that healed the body.

See Map: Bethsaida

What did John originally write in 5:4?

[5:4]

The oldest and best copies of the Greek New Testament do not include verse 4. However, some translation may include verse 4. Although John probably did not write this verse, it describes what people thought about how the pool of Bethesda healed people. Some people believed that an angel stirred the waters and then healed the first person who got into the pool. Perhaps, this verse was added by someone in order to explain this to people reading this chapter.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Why was the man sick and why did he need help into the pool?

[5:7]

The sick man was probably paralyzed. He told Jesus that he needed another person to help him get into the pool because the man could not stand or walk. Jesus' question about whether he wanted to be healed surprised the man. He laid by the pool for such a long time and no one ever helped him into the pool. He probably did not think that he was ever going to be healed. John does not say if the man believed in Jesus before Jesus healed him. Also, John does not say if the man ever believed in Jesus at any time.

Advice to Translators: Someone who is paralyzed cannot move their legs or cannot move their arms and legs.

5:10-15

Who were the Jews who questioned the man Jesus healed?

[5:10]

Some Jews asked the man Jesus healed certain questions. The Jews were Jewish leaders known as scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees.

See: Scribe; Pharisees; Sadducees

Why did the Jewish leaders not want Jesus to heal this man on the Sabbath day?

[5:10]

The Jewish leaders became angry when Jesus healed the man on a Sabbath day because their Law of Moses did not allow a person to do any work on the Sabbath day (see: Exodus 20:10; Jeremiah 17:21-22). These leaders thought that when someone healed another person, they were working. Also, the Jewish leaders thought that carrying a bed was work. When the man picked up his bed and walked, they thought that he broke the Law of Moses and disobeyed God. However, they thought the wrong thing about the Law of Moses. Neither Jesus nor the man disobeyed the Law of Moses. The Jewish leaders cared more about obeying the things they believed about the Law of Moses than about doing good things on the Sabbath. They thought that Jesus did something evil by healing this man. Because of this, the Jewish leaders thought Jesus was a false teacher and began to persecute him (see: 5:16,18).

See: Sabbath; Law of Moses; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Jesus tell the healed man to stop sinning?

[5:14]

Scholars give three reasons why Jesus told the healed man to stop sinning:

Jesus knew the healed man needed to believe in him. It is a sin to not believe in Jesus. John never says this healed man believed in Jesus, even though Jesus healed him. The man told the Jews that it was Jesus who healed him on the Sabbath. Those who did not believe in Jesus often told the Pharisees what Jesus did. (see: John 11:44-46) Some scholars think that this man was paralyzed because he sinned. However, John does not say what was that sin. Sometimes sin may cause someone to be sick or have physical problems. Perhaps Jesus chose this man from the people waiting at the pool because of a specific sin in his life.

Advice to Translators: Someone who is paralyzed cannot move their legs or cannot move their arms and legs.

See: Sin; Sabbath; Pharisees

5:16-24

Why were the Jewish leaders angry with Jesus when he said that God is his father?

[5:17, 5:18]

The Jewish leaders became very angry with Jesus when he said that God is his father and that both he and his father continued working. The Jewish leaders opposed Jesus for working on the Sabbath day. Jesus said that his father is still working. That is, God rested on the seventh day from working to create the world, but he never stopped working to care for the world. When Jesus says that he is working with his father, the Jewish leaders knew he said that he was doing what only God did. So Jesus said he was God. According to the Law of Moses, if someone said they were God, they were to be punished. They needed to die. That is, they would be punished if they were not God.

See: God the Father; Sabbath; Jesus is God; Law of Moses

In what way is the Father "working even now"?

[5:17]

The Jewish teachers knew that God the Father not only created the world, he also sustains the world (see: Jeremiah 10:12-13). In the Book of Colossians, Paul spoke also about Jesus sustaining the world (see: Colossians 1:16-17). The writer of the Book of Hebrews spoke about Jesus sustaining all things by his word (see: Hebrews 1:3).

See: God the Father

How is God the Father Jesus' father?

[5:19, 5:20]

See: God the Father; Son of God; Jesus is God; Trinity

Why did Jesus need to be able to do the things only God can do (raise and give life to the dead, pass judgment, receive the same honor)?

[5:21, 5:22, 5:23]

Jesus needed to be able to do the things only God can do because Jesus is God. Everything God the Father can do, Jesus, God the son can do also. God the Father raises the dead. Soon, the Father will raise the Son from the dead (see: John 20). Then the Son will also give life to whomever he wants to give life (see: 1 Corinthians 5). God the Father gave Jesus permission to judge everything. Jesus, God the Son, also receives the same honor that God the Father receives. If someone rejects Jesus, they also reject God the Father. Everyone who believes in Jesus will live together with God in heaven forever. See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Jesus is God; Trinity; God the Father; Son of God; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Eternal Life; Heaven

In what ways did Jesus show that he was equal to the Father?

[5:23]

Jesus said God the Father “raises the dead” and Jesus also raised the dead (see: Luke 7:11-15; John 11:43-44). Although God the Father is the only one who can perfectly judge people, he gives Jesus permission to judge people because Jesus can also perfectly judge people (see: 5:22; Psalm 50:6). Jesus said that whatever he sees the Father doing, this is what he does also. This shows that Jesus and God the Father both want the same things to happen.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; God the Father; Judge (Judgment)

5:25-30

What does it mean that the Father and the Son have life in themselves?

[5:26]

John said that God The Father and God the Son have life in themselves. That is, they live because they have always live and because they want to live. They do not need anyone or anything to live. The Father and the Son have always and will always live. Those who believe in Jesus are also given eternal life (see: 5:24; 1 John 1:1-3). That is, they will live together with God in heaven forever.

See: God the Father; Son of God; Eternal Life; Heaven

What judgment did the Father give the Son to carry out?

[5:27]

Scholars think God gave Jesus permission to judge people in future when Jesus returns to earth to begin his kingdom (see: Daniel 7:13-14). However, these scholars also think that Jesus began judging the world when he came to the earth before. Jesus judged men because they rejected Jesus. When John spoke about this he chose to speak using the metaphor of light and dark.

See: Day of Judgment; Jesus' Return to Earth; Kingdom of God; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

What is the “resurrection of life”?

[5:29]

Jesus resurrects all people. Those who loved the light, that is they believed in Jesus, will live together with God in heaven forever. Also, they will be given new bodies (see: 1 Corinthians 15:42-45).

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Day of Judgment; Heaven

What is the “resurrection of judgment”?

[5:29]

Again, Jesus resurrects all people. But, those who loved the darkness, that is they rejected Jesus, will be punished forever (see: Revelation 14:9-11).

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Day of Judgment; Hell

Why does Jesus judge people perfectly?

[5:30]

Jesus judges people perfectly because he listens to God. He judges in the same way God the Father judges.

See: Judge (Judgment); God the Father

5:31-38

Who is Jesus talking about when he says, “there is another who bears witness of me”?

[5:32] Jesus spoke about God the Father when he said, “there is another who bears witness of me.” Another time, Jesus said that he did not speak his own words. However, he only spoke what God the Father told him to speak (see: 12:49-50).

See: Witness (Martyr); God the Father

How did John the Baptist witness about Jesus?

[5:33]

John boldly spoke to the crowds that Jesus was the light that came into the world (see: 1:6-7). John said the Jewish leaders that there was one coming who was greater than himself (see: 1:19-28). Also, John told people that Jesus was the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (see: 1:29-34).

See: Witness (Martyr); Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Lamb of God; Sin
What is the testimony greater than John's testimony?
[5:36]

Jesus said that the things he did were a greater witness than what John said about him. That is, they proved that he was God and the Messiah more than the things John said. This is because God the Father gave him these things to do (see: 5:19-21). Perhaps Jesus did the same things that God the Father did and this caused people to know that God sent Jesus.
See: Testify (Testimony); Witness (Martyr); Jesus is God; Messiah (Christ); God the Father

5:39-47

Why did the Jewish leaders not know Jesus was the one who gave them peace with God?
[5:39, 5:40]

The Jewish leaders studied the Old Testament because they believed that they had found about how to have peace with God. However, they did not believe the right things. They did not understand that the Old Testament talked about Jesus, the Messiah. Only by believing in Jesus can someone be at peace with God.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Messiah (Christ)
Why did Jesus say he did not "receive praise from men"?
[5:41]

Jesus did many things and taught the disciples how to live as Christians in order to glorify God the Father. Jesus did none of these things so that people would honor him. There were people who honored Jesus for the things he did, but Jesus honored God.

See: Glory (Glorify); God the Father
How did the Jewish leaders show they did not truly love God?
[5:42]

The Jewish leaders showed they did not truly love God because they rejected Jesus. Although God sent Jesus, they did not believe in him. John said Jesus is the light that came into the world. However, the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus as the light and chose to love darkness. That is, they chose to love the things they believed instead of the things God taught. Jesus told the Jews they were going to listen to false teachers, and they were going to welcome those false teachers. Perhaps Jesus spoke these words to warn the Jewish leaders (see: Matthew 24:4-5).

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); False Teacher
In what way did Moses write about Jesus?
[5:46]

Moses wrote in the Law about a prophet who was going to come in the future. This prophet was going to be greater than even Moses. The Jews put all their trust in Moses and the Law of Moses. Even though Moses wrote about a prophet to come, the Jews did not see Jesus as this promised prophet (see: Deuteronomy 18:15-19).

Jesus said the Jews did not believe the writings of Moses because they did not understand what Moses wrote (see: Luke 16:31).

See: Matthew 5:17-18
See: Law of Moses; Prophet

John 5:1

General Information:

This is the next event in the story, in which Jesus goes up to Jerusalem and heals a man. These verses give background information about the setting of the story.

After this

This refers to after Jesus healed the official's son. See how you translated this in John 3:22.

there was a Jewish festival

"the Jews were celebrating a festival"

went up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem is located on the top of a hill. Roads to Jerusalem went up and down smaller hills. If your language has a different word for going up a hill than for walking on level ground, you may use it here.

John 5:2

pool

This was a hole in the ground that people filled with water. Sometimes they lined the pools with tiles or other stonework.

Bethesda

a place name

roofed porches

roofed structures with at least one wall missing and attached to buildings

John 5:3

A large number of people

"Many people"

John 5:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 5:5

General Information:

Verse 5 introduces the man lying beside the pool to the story.

was there

"was at the Bethesda pool" (John 5:1)

thirty-eight years

"38 years"

John 5:6

he realized

"he understood" or "he found out"

he said to him
 "Jesus said to the paralyzed man"
 John 5:7
 Sir, I do not have
 Here the word "sir" is a polite form of address.
 when the water is stirred up
 This can be translated in an active form. Alternate translation: "when the angel moves the water" into the pool
 This was a hole in the ground that people filled with water. Sometimes they lined the pools with tiles or other stonework. See how you translated "pool" in John 5:2.
 another steps down before me
 "someone else always goes down the steps into the water before me"
 John 5:8
 Get up
 "Stand up"
 take up your bed, and walk
 "pick up your sleeping mat, and walk"
 John 5:9
 the man was healed
 "the man became healthy again"
 Now that day
 The writer uses the word "now" to show that the words that follow are background information.
 John 5:10
 So the Jews said to him
 The Jews (especially the leaders of the Jews) became angry when they saw the man carrying his mat on the Sabbath.
 It is the Sabbath
 "It is God's Day of Rest"
 John 5:11
 He who made me healthy
 "The man who made me well"
 John 5:12
 They asked him
 "The Jewish leaders asked the man who was healed"
 John 5:13
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 John 5:14
 Jesus found him
 "Jesus found the man he had healed"
 See
 The word "See" is used here to draw attention to the words that follow.
 John 5:15
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 John 5:16
 Now
 The writer uses the word "now" to show that the words that follow are background information.
 the Jews
 Here "the Jews" is a synecdoche which represent the "Jewish leaders." Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"
 John 5:17
 is working

This refers to doing labor, including anything that is done to serve other people.
 My Father
 This is an important title for God.
 John 5:18
 making himself equal to God
 "saying that he was like God" or "saying that he had as much authority as God"
 John 5:19
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus continues speaking to the Jewish leaders.
 Truly, truly
 Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated this in John 1:51.
 whatever the Father is doing, the Son does in the same way
 Jesus, as the Son of God, followed and obeyed his Father's leadership on earth, because Jesus knew the Father loved him.
 Son ... Father
 These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God.
 John 5:20
 you will be amazed
 "you will be surprised" or "you will be shocked"
 For the Father loves the Son
 Jesus, as the Son of God, followed and obeyed his Father's leadership on earth, because Jesus knew the Father loved him.
 loves
 The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. God himself is love and is the source of true love.
 John 5:21
 Father ... Son
 These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.
 life
 This refers to "spiritual life."
 John 5:22
 For the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgment to the Son
 The word "for" marks a comparison. The Son of God carries out judgment for God the Father.
 John 5:23
 honor the Son just as ... the Father. The one who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father
 God the Son must be honored and worshiped just like God the Father. If we fail to honor God the Son, then we also fail to honor God the Father.
 John 5:24
 Truly, truly
 See how you translated this in John 1:51.
 he who hears my word
 Here "word" is a metonym that represents the message of Jesus. Alternate translation: "anyone who hears my message"
 will not be condemned
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he

will not receive condemnation" or "God will not condemn him"

John 5:25

Truly, truly

Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated this in John 1:51.

the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live

The voice of Jesus, the Son of God, will raise dead people from the grave.

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

John 5:26

For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has also given to the Son so that he has life in himself

The word "For" marks a comparison. The Son of God has the power to give life, just as the Father does.

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

life

This means spiritual life.

John 5:27

Father ... Son of Man

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

the Father has given the Son authority to carry out judgment

The Son of God has the authority of God the Father to judge.

John 5:28

Do not be amazed at this

"This" refers to the fact that Jesus, as the Son of Man, has the power to give eternal life and to carry out judgment.

hear his voice

"hear my voice"

John 5:29

to the resurrection of life

This tells what will happen to those who have done good.

Alternate translation: "will rise to live" or "will rise and live"

to the resurrection of judgment

This tells what will happen to those who have done evil.

Alternate translation: "will rise to be judged" or "will rise and be judged"

John 5:30

the will of him who sent me

The word "him" refers to God the Father.

John 5:31

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 5:32

There is another who testifies about me

"There is someone else who tells people about me"

another

This refers to God.

the testimony that he gives about me is true

"what he tells people about me is true"

John 5:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 5:34

the testimony that I receive is not from man

"I do not need people's testimony"

that you might be saved

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "so God can save you"

John 5:35

John was a lamp that was burning and shining, and you were willing to rejoice in his light for a while

Here "lamp" and "light" are metaphors. John taught the people about God and this was like a lamp shining its light into the dark. Alternate translation: "John taught you about God and this was like a lamp shining its light. And for a while what John said made you happy"

John 5:36

the works that the Father has given me to accomplish ... that the Father has sent me

God the Father has sent God the Son, Jesus, to earth. Jesus completes what the Father gives him to do.

Father

This is an important title for God.

the very works that I do, testify about me that the Father has sent me

Here Jesus says that the miracles "testify" or "tell the

people" about him. Alternate translation: "what I do, shows the people that God has sent me"

John 5:37

The Father who sent me has himself testified

The reflexive pronoun "himself" emphasizes that it is the Father, not someone less important, who has testified.

John 5:38

You do not have his word remaining in you, for you are not believing in the one whom he has sent

"You do not believe in the one he has sent. That is how I know that you do not have his word remaining in you"

You do not have his word remaining in you

Jesus speaks of people living according to God's word as if they were houses and God's word were a person that lived in houses. Alternate translation: "You do not live according to his word" or "You do not obey his word"

his word

"the message he spoke to you"

John 5:39

in them you have eternal life

"you will find eternal life if you read them" or "the scriptures will tell you how you can have eternal life"

John 5:40

you are not willing to come to me

"you refuse to believe my message"

John 5:41

receive glory

The word "glory" here is a metonym for the praise that people give to a person who has glory or is glorious.

Alternate translation: "receive praise"

receive

accept

John 5:42

you do not have the love of God in yourselves

This can mean 1) "you really do not love God" or 2) "you

have really not received God's love."

John 5:43

in my Father's name

Here the word "name" is a metonym that represents God's power and authority. Alternate translation: "with my Father's authority"

Father

This is an important title for God.

receive

welcome as a friend

If another should come in his own name

The word "name" is a metonym that represents authority. Alternate translation: "If another should come in his own authority"

John 5:44

How can you believe, you who accept glory ... God?

This remark appears in the form of a question in order to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "There is no way you can believe because you accept glory ... God!"

believe

This means to trust in Jesus.

accept glory ... seeking the glory

The word "glory" here is a metonym for the praise that people give to a person who has glory or is glorious.

Alternate translation: "accept praise ... seeking the praise"

John 5:45

in whom you have hoped

Here the word "hope" means "expect" or "trust," and the person who hopes in this way believes that he will receive what he hopes for. It can be stated clearly what they hoped for in Moses. Alternate translation: "whom you expect to help you" or "whom you trust to defend you before the Father you"

John 5:46

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 5:47

If you do not believe his writings, how are you going to believe my words?

This remark appears in the form of a question to provide emphasis. Alternate translation: "You do not believe his writings, so you will never believe my words!"

my words

"what I say"

Chapter 6

John 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

King

The king of any nation was the richest and most powerful person in that nation. The people wanted Jesus to be their king because he gave them food and so they thought he would make the Jews into the richest and most powerful nation in the world. They did not understand that Jesus came to die so God could forgive his people's sins and that the world would persecute his people.

Important metaphors in this chapter

Bread

Bread was the most common and important food in Jesus's day, and so the word "bread" was their general word for "food." It is often difficult to translate the word "bread" into the languages of people who do not eat bread because the general word for food in some languages refers to food that did not exist in Jesus's culture. Jesus used the word "bread" to refer to himself. He wanted them to understand that they need him so they can have eternal life.

Eating the flesh and drinking the blood

When Jesus said, "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves," he knew that before he died he would tell his followers to do this by eating bread and drinking wine. In the event this chapter describes, he expected that his hearers would understand that he was using a metaphor but would not understand what the metaphor referred to. (See: flesh and blood)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Parenthetical Ideas

Several times in this passage, John explains something or gives the reader some context to better understand the story. These explanation are intended to give the reader some additional knowledge without interrupting the flow of the narrative. The information is placed inside parentheses.

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[John 6:1 Notes](#)

John 6

6:1-15

What is the Passover?

[6:4]

Passover is a feast that Jews celebrated. They held this feast in Jerusalem. John said that the feast of the Passover “neared”(ἐγγύς/g1451). He did not say when this would happen (see: 2:13).

See: Passover

Why did Jesus “test” Philip?

[6:5]

Some scholars think Jesus “tested”(πειράζω/g3985) Philip to teach him something. Jesus taught this way often. Other scholars think Jesus showed Philip that he was truly the Messiah.

See: Test; Messiah (Christ)

How did Philip and Andrew respond to Jesus’ question about buying bread?

[6:7]

Philip said 200 denarii was not enough money to buy bread for all the people. This was a very large crowd because this was a large amount of money. Usually, it would take someone about 200 days to make 200 denarii. Andrew said he found a boy with five loaves of bread and two fish. However, this was not enough to feed this large crowd.

See: Denarius

How many people were in this crowd?

[6:10]

John said 5000 men sat in the crowd of people. Perhaps, this was only the number of men. There were also women and children in the crowd (see: Matthew 14:21). Therefore, there were more than 5000 people in the crowd.

What did Jesus do with the bread and the fish?

[6:11]

John said that Jesus “gave thanks”(εὐχαριστέω/g2168). Some scholars think that Jesus “gave thanks” for the food. They think his giving thanks caused the miracle to happen. Other scholars think Jesus “gave thanks” to God, because God gave them the food. Jesus gave the food to the disciples for them to give to the people (see: Matthew 14:19).

See: Thanksgiving; Miracle

How did the crowds respond to Jesus’ miracle?

[6:14]

Because people saw the “sign”(σημεῖον/g4592) Jesus did for them, they said he was a prophet. The people thought a prophet was coming into the world (see: Deuteronomy 18:15-19). Jesus knew the crowds wanted to make him their king. Some scholars think Jesus knew this even though no one said this because he was God and knew what people thought. John said that Jesus went away from the crowds and went up the mountain (see: Matthew 14:22-23).

See: Miracle; Sign; Prophet; Jesus is God

6:16-25

Why did the disciples leave on a boat to Capernaum without Jesus?

[6:17]

The book of Matthew said that Jesus told his disciples to get into the boat and go to Capernaum without him (see: Matthew 14:22). The disciples did what Jesus told them to do.

See: Disciple

See Map: Capernaum

When did the disciples see Jesus again?

[6:19]

After the disciples went about five kilometers in the boat, Jesus came to the boat. Jesus walked on the water. Jesus told them not to be afraid because “it is I” because he frightened the disciples. Some scholars think Jesus simply told the disciples that it was just him who was walking on the water. Other scholars think Jesus declared that he is God. This is because “it is I” can also be translated as “I am.” This is the same thing God said when he told Moses his name (see: Exodus 3:14).

See: Disciple; Yahweh (I am)

How did they get to Capernaum?

[6:21]

When Jesus stepped into the disciple’s boat, John said they made it to where they were going immediately. Some scholars think this was another miracle. Other scholars think John meant that nothing stopped them from getting to the other side of the lake.

See: Disciple; Miracle

See Map: Capernaum

What did the crowd call Jesus?

[6:25]

The crowd called Jesus “rabbi”(ῥαββί/g4461). People called a teacher who was qualified to speak about the Law of Moses and how to live by the Law of Moses a “Rabbi.”

See: Law of Moses

6:26-40

What is the food that endures to living forever?

[6:27]

John said that certain food endures to living forever. Scholars disagree about what John was thinking about when he said this.

Some scholars think John was thinking about Jesus. That is, Jesus allows people to live together with God in heaven forever. John also said Jesus was the bread who gave people life (see: 6: 50-51). Some scholars think John was speaking about doing the things God wanted them to do. Some scholars think John was speaking about living together with God in heaven forever.

See: Heaven

How does Jesus have the seal of God on him?

[6:27]

Some scholars think that the “seal of God” and the image of God are the same (see: Colossians 1:15). More scholars think that the “seal of God” is a metaphor for God saying that Jesus is the only one who has the power to give food that endures to living forever.

See: Seal; Image; Metaphor

How did Jesus describe the “work of God?”

[6:29]

Jesus said that the “work of God” is the same as to “believing (πιστεύω/g4100) in the person God sent to the world. That is, it is the same as believing in Jesus. This means that people need to trust Jesus as the one who gives people the ability to live together with God in heaven forever (see: 6:27; Acts 4:10-12).

See: Faith (Believe in); Heaven

What kind of sign did the people think was coming?

[6:30]

Because the people spoke about the miracle of “manna”(μάννα/g3131) in the wilderness, scholars think they looked for a “sign”(σημεῖον/g4592) far greater than the one given during the time of Moses.

See: Sign; Miracle; Manna

What did Jesus tell the people about the “true bread” from heaven?

[6:32]

Jesus said the Father gives the “true(ἀληθινός/g0228) bread” that comes from heaven. This bread gives life, but it is a certain type of life. It is living together with God in heaven forever. Also, Jesus told the people that God the Father gave the bread from heaven during the days of Moses. That bread was food that fed the people physically in the wilderness. Jesus used the phrase “true bread” to speak about himself. That is, he makes it so that people can live together with God in heaven forever. Jesus clearly said, “I Am the bread of life.” Jesus told the people that to have the bread of life, they needed to come to him and believe in him.

See: Heaven; God the Father; Wilderness

What is the “will of the Father?”

[6:40]

See: Will of God

6:41-65

How does God the Father “draw”(ἐλκύω/g1670) people to Jesus?

[6:44]

Some scholars think that all people are born rejecting God and not wanting to believe in Jesus. They think that someone cannot believe in Jesus without God first doing something. That is, they cannot believe in Jesus unless God uses the Holy Spirit to convince them or make them believe in Jesus. Other scholars think God “draws”(ἐλκύω/g1670) people by showing himself in the world he has made. They think the world shows God’s power and also his great love and concern for mankind. These scholars think God also showed people his love by dying for their sins. This draws people to believe in Jesus.

See: Elect (Election); Holy Spirit; Sin

How is Jesus the “bread of life?”

[6:51]

Jesus said he was the “bread of life.” He wanted to say that he would die so that people would live together with God in heaven forever. Some scholars think Jesus is saying that he not only makes it so that people can live together with God in heaven, he also makes things last forever. This is the opposite of the manna given in the wilderness. That is, this bread only gave life for a short time.

See: Heaven; Manna; Wilderness

How does a person eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man?

[6:53]

Jesus used the metaphor of eating his flesh and drinking his blood to show what a person must do to live together with God in heaven forever. When someone believes in Jesus, they do so “inside” of them, they make Jesus part of them in some way. When a person eats bread or drinks water, the food and drink becomes part of that person. It gives him energy for living. Jesus gave his actual flesh when he died on the cross. His blood was actually spilled out on the cross. When a person believes in Jesus, he is believing in the flesh and blood of Jesus being given as a sacrifice on the cross.

See: Metaphor; Heaven; Cross; Sacrifice; Blood

How did Jesus’ followers react when Jesus described himself as the “bread of life”?

[6:60]

Many disciples thought that the words of Jesus were difficult to understand. Perhaps they did not really understand what he was saying to them.

See: Disciple

How did Jesus explain the meaning of his words to the disciples?

[6:63]

Both the Jewish leaders and the disciples of Jesus did not understand the words Jesus spoke. Jesus explained that the things he said came from the Spirit of God, therefore they could only be understood by the Spirit. The Jewish leaders and the disciples were trying to understand the words of Jesus through their own wisdom.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit; Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

What did the twelve disciples say about Jesus?

[6:68]

Peter spoke for the twelve disciples and said to Jesus, “you have the words of eternal life”(see: 6:67). They also knew that Jesus was the “Holy One”(ἅγιος/g0040) of God. This means they believed that Jesus was the Messiah that God promised from long ago.

See: Disciple; Eternal Life; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Messiah (Christ)

John 6:1

General Information:

Jesus has traveled from Jerusalem to Galilee. A crowd has followed him up a mountainside. These verses tell the setting of this part of the story.

After these things

The phrase “these things” refers to the events in John 5:1-46 and introduces the event that follows.

Jesus went away

It is implied in the text that Jesus traveled by boat and took his disciples with him. Alternate translation: “Jesus traveled by boat with his disciples”

John 6:2

A great crowd

“A large number of people”

signs

This refers to the miracles that are used as evidence that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over everything.

John 6:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:4

Now the Passover, the Jewish festival, was near

John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about when the events happened.

John 6:5

General Information:

The action in the story begins in verse 5.

John 6:6

But Jesus said this to test Philip, for he himself knew what he was going to do

John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to explain why Jesus asked Philip where to buy

bread.

for he himself knew

The reflexive pronoun “himself” makes it clear that the word “he” refers to Jesus. Jesus knew what he would do.

John 6:7

Two hundred denarii worth of bread

The word “denarii” is the plural of “denarius.” Alternate translation: “The amount of bread that costs two hundred days’ wages”

John 6:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:9

loaves

Loaves of bread are lumps of dough that are shaped and baked. These were probably small dense, round loaves.

what are these among so many?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that they do not have enough food to feed everyone. Alternate translation: “these few loaves and fishes are not enough to feed so many people!”

John 6:10

sit down

“lie down”

Now there was much grass in the place

John briefly stops telling about the events in the story in order to give background information about the place where this event happens.

So the men sat down, about five thousand in number

While the crowd probably included women and children ([John 6:4-5](#)), here John is counting only the men.

John 6:11

giving thanks

Jesus prayed to God the Father and thanked him for the fish and the loaves.

he gave it
 "he" here represents "Jesus and his disciples." Alternate translation: "Jesus and his disciples gave it"

John 6:12
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:13
 General Information:
 Jesus withdraws from the crowd. This is the end of the part of the story about Jesus feeding the crowd on the mountain. they gathered
 "the disciples gathered"

left over
 the food that no one had eaten

John 6:14
 this sign
 Jesus feeding the 5,000 people with five barley loaves and two fish
 the prophet
 the special prophet who Moses said would come into the world

John 6:15
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:16
 Connecting Statement:
 This is the next event in the story. Jesus's disciples go out onto the lake in a boat.

John 6:17
 It was dark by this time, and Jesus had not yet come to them
 Use your language's way of showing that this is background information.

John 6:18
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:19
 they had rowed
 Boats usually had two, four, or six people rowing with rowers on each side working together. Your culture may have different ways of making a boat go across a large body of water.
 about twenty-five or thirty stadia
 A "stadium" is 185 meters. Alternate translation: "about five or six kilometers"

John 6:20
 Do not be afraid
 "Stop being afraid!"

John 6:21
 they were willing to receive him into the boat
 It is implied that Jesus gets into the boat. Alternate translation: "they gladly received him into the boat"

John 6:22
 the sea
 "the Sea of Galilee"
 there was no other boat there except the one
 This double negative emphasizes that the one boat is the only one that was there. Alternate translation: "there was only that one boat there"

John 6:23

However, there were ... the Lord had given thanks
 Use your language's way of showing that this is background information.

boats that came from Tiberias
 Here, John provides more background information. The next day, after Jesus fed the people, some boats with people from Tiberias came to see Jesus. However, Jesus and his disciples had left the night before.

John 6:24
 General Information:
 The people go to Capernaum to find Jesus. When they see him, they start asking him questions.

John 6:25
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:26
 Truly, truly
 See how you translated this in John 1:51.

John 6:27
 eternal life which the Son of Man will give you, for God the Father has set his seal on him
 God the Father has given his approval to Jesus, the Son of Man, to give eternal life to those who believe in him.
 Son of Man ... God the Father
 These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God.
 has set his seal on him
 To "set a seal" on something means to place a mark on it to show to whom it belongs. This means that the Son belongs to the Father and that the Father approves of him in every way.

John 6:28
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:29
 General Information:
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John 6:30
 General Information:
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John 6:31
 Our fathers
 "Our forefathers" or "Our ancestors"
 heaven
 This refers to the place where God lives.

John 6:32
 Truly, truly
 See how you translated this in John 1:51.
 it is my Father who is giving you the true bread from heaven
 The "true bread" is a metaphor for Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Father gives to you the Son as the true bread from heaven"

my Father
 This is an important title for God.

John 6:33
 gives life to the world
 "gives spiritual life to the world"
 the world
 Here the "world" is a metonym for all of the people in the

world who trust in Jesus.

John 6:34

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:35

I am the bread of life

Through metaphor, Jesus compares himself with bread. Just as bread is necessary for our physical life, Jesus is necessary for our spiritual life. Alternate translation: "Just as food keeps you alive physically, I can give you spiritual life"

believes in

This means to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, to trust him as Savior, and to live in a way that honors him.

John 6:36

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:37

Everyone whom the Father gives me will come to me

God the Father and God the Son will save forever those who believe in Jesus.

Father

This is an important title for God.

he who comes to me I will certainly not throw out

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I will keep everyone who comes to me"

John 6:38

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the crowd.

him who sent me

"my Father, who sent me"

John 6:39

I would lose not one of all those

Here litotes is used to emphasize that Jesus will keep everyone that God gives to him. Alternate translation: "I should keep all of them"

will raise them up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "will cause them to live again"

John 6:40

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:41

Connecting Statement:

The Jewish leaders interrupt Jesus as he is speaking to the crowd.

grumbled

talked unhappily

I am the bread

Just as bread is necessary for our physical life, Jesus is necessary for our spiritual life. See how you translated this in [John 6:35]

John 6:42

Is not this Jesus son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that the Jewish leaders believe that Jesus is no one special. Alternate translation: "This is just Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know!"

How then does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that the Jewish leaders do not believe that Jesus came from heaven. Alternate translation: "He is lying when he says that he came from heaven!"

John 6:43

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the crowd and now also to the Jewish leaders.

John 6:44

raise him up

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "cause him to live again"

draws

This can mean 1) "pulls" or 2) "attracts."

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 6:45

It is written in the prophets

This is a passive statement that can be translated in an active form. Alternate translation: "The prophets wrote"

Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me

The Jews thought Jesus was the "son of Joseph" (John 6:42), but he is the Son of God because his Father is God, not Joseph. Those who truly learn from God the Father believe in Jesus, who is God the Son.

John 6:46

Connecting Statement:

Jesus now continues speaking to the crowd and the Jewish leaders.

Not that anyone has seen the Father, except he who is from God—he has seen the Father

"I am not saying that anyone has seen the Father. Only he who is from God—he has seen the Father"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 6:47

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

he who believes has eternal life

God gives "eternal life" to those who trust in Jesus, the Son of God.

John 6:48

I am the bread of life

Just as bread is necessary for our physical life, Jesus is necessary for our spiritual life. See how you translated this in [John 6:35]

John 6:49

Your fathers

"Your forefathers" or "Your ancestors"

died

This refers to physical death.

John 6:50

This is the bread

Here "bread" is a metaphor that points to Jesus who is the one who gives spiritual life just as bread sustains physical life. Alternate translation: "I am like the true bread"

not die

"live forever." Here the word "die" refers to spiritual death.

John 6:51

living bread

This means "the bread that causes people to live" (John 6:35).

for the life of the world

Here "the world" is a metonym that represents the lives of all the people in the world. Alternate translation: "that will give life to all the people in the world"

John 6:52

Connecting Statement:

Some Jews who are present begin to argue among themselves and Jesus responds to their question.

How can this man give us his flesh to eat?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that the Jewish leaders are reacting negatively to what Jesus has said about "his flesh." Alternate translation: "There is no way that this man can give us his flesh to eat!"

John 6:53

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood

Here the phrases "eat the flesh" and "drink his blood" are a metaphor that shows how trusting in Jesus, the Son of Man, is like receiving spiritual food and drink. However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor clearer than Jesus did.

you will not have life in yourselves

"you will not receive eternal life"

John 6:54

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to all those listening to him.

Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life

The phrases "eats my flesh" and "drinks my blood" are a metaphor for trusting Jesus. Just as people need food and drink in order to live, people need to trust Jesus in order to have eternal life. However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor more clear than Jesus did.

raise him up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "cause him to live again"

at the last day

"on the day when God judges everyone"

John 6:55

my flesh is true food ... my blood is true drink

The phrases "true food" and "true drink" are a metaphor that means Jesus gives life to those who trust in him.

However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor clearer than Jesus did.

John 6:56

remains in me, and I in him

"has a close relationship with me"

John 6:57

so he who eats me

The phrase "eats me" is a metaphor for trusting Jesus. However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor clearer than Jesus did.

living Father

Possible meanings are 1) "the Father who gives life" or 2) "the Father who is alive."

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 6:58

This is the bread that has come down from heaven

Jesus was speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "I am the bread that has come down from heaven"

This is the bread that has come down from heaven

The bread is a metaphor for what gives life. However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor clearer than Jesus did.

He who eats this bread will live forever

Jesus spoke about himself as "this bread." Alternate translation: "He who eats me, the bread, will live forever"

He who eats this bread

Here "eats this bread" is a metaphor for trusting Jesus.

However, the Jews did not understand this. Do not make the meaning of this metaphor clearer than Jesus did.

the fathers

"the forefathers" or "the ancestors"

John 6:59

Jesus said these things in the synagogue ... in Capernaum

Here John gives background information about when this event happened.

John 6:60

Connecting Statement:

Some of the disciples ask a question and Jesus responds, as he continues speaking to the crowd.

who can hear it?

The disciples use this question to emphasize that they cannot do this. Alternate translation: "no one can hear it!" or "it is too hard to hear!"

hear it

Possible meanings are 1) "hear it" is a synecdoche for "understand it" or 2) "hear it" is a synecdoche for "agree with it"

John 6:61

Does this offend you?

"Does this shock you?" or "Does this upset you?"

John 6:62

Then what if you should see the Son of Man going up to where he was before?

Jesus offers this remark in the form of a question to emphasize that his disciples will see other things that are also hard to understand. Alternate translation: "Then you will not know what to think when you see me, the Son of Man, going up into heaven!"

John 6:63

profits

The word "profit" means to cause good things to happen.

words

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus's words in [John 6:32-58]

The words that I have spoken to you

"What I have told you"

are spirit, and they are life

Possible meanings are 1) "are about the Spirit and eternal life" or 2) "are from the Spirit and give eternal life" or 3)

"are about spiritual things and life."

John 6:64

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd.

For Jesus knew from the beginning who were the ones ... who it was who would betray him

Here John gives background information about what Jesus knew would happen.

John 6:65

no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father

Whoever wants to believe must come to God through the Son. Only God the Father allows people to come to Jesus.

Father

This is an important title for God.

come to me

"follow me and receive eternal life"

John 6:66

no longer walked with him

Jesus went from one place to another by walking, so it is literally true that they did not walk where and when he walked, but the reader should also be able to understand that this metaphor indicates that they no longer wanted to hear what he had to say.

his disciples

Here "his disciples" refers to the general group of people

who followed Jesus.

John 6:67

the twelve

This is an ellipsis for "the twelve disciples," a specific group of twelve men who followed Jesus for his entire ministry.

Alternate translation: "the twelve disciples"

John 6:68

Lord, to whom would we go?

Simon Peter gives this remark in the form of a question to emphasize that he desires to follow only Jesus. Alternate translation: "Lord, we could never follow anyone but you!"

John 6:69

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 6:70

Did not I choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?

Jesus gives this remark in the form of a question to draw attention to the fact that one of the disciples will betray him. Alternate translation: "I chose you all myself, yet one of you is a servant of Satan!"

John 6:71

General Information:

Verse 71 is not part of the main story. Here John comments on what Jesus said.

Chapter 7

John 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This whole chapter concerns the concept of believing Jesus to be the Messiah. Some people believed this to be true while others rejected it. Some were willing to recognize his power and even the possibility that he was a prophet, but most were unwilling to believe that he was the Messiah. (See: christ and prophet)

Translators may wish to include a note at verse 53 to explain to the reader why they have chosen or chosen not to translate verses 7:53-8:11.

Special concepts in this chapter

"My time has not yet come"

This phrase and "his hour had not yet come" are used in this chapter to indicate that Jesus is in control of the events unfolding in his life.

"Living water"

This is an important image used in the New Testament. It is a metaphor. Because this metaphor is given in a desert environment, it probably emphasizes that Jesus is able to give life sustaining nourishment.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Prophecy

Jesus gives a prophecy about his life without an explicit statement in [John 7:33-34](#).

Irony

Nicodemus explains to the other Pharisees that the Law requires him to hear directly from a person before making a judgment about them. The Pharisees in turn made a judgment about Jesus without speaking to Jesus.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Did not believe in him"

Jesus's brothers did not believe Jesus was the Messiah. (See: believe)

"The Jews"

This term is used in two different ways in this passage. It is used specifically in reference to the Jewish leaders who were trying to kill him ([John 7:1](#)). It is also used in reference to the people of Judea in general who had a positive opinion of Jesus ([John 7:13](#)). The translator may wish to use the terms "Jewish leaders" and "Jewish people" or "Jews (leaders)" and "Jews (in general)."

Links:

[John 7:1 Notes](#)

John 7

7:1-5

Which “Jews” wanted to kill Jesus?

[7:1]

John spoke about certain Jews who wanted to kill Jesus. When John said this, he was speaking about some of the Jewish leaders who wanted to kill Jesus at previous times (see: 5:18).

What is the Feast of Shelters?

[7:2]

The Festival of “Shelters”(σκηνοπηγία/g4634) was one of three great feasts for the people of Israel. Jews celebrated every year because of God’s command (see: Leviticus 23:33-43). The people built shelters from palm branches. This is what gave the festival its name. They lived in these shelters during the feast. This festival celebrated God’s faithfulness during Israel’s wandering in the wilderness (see: Exodus 12-40). During this time, Israel lived in temporary shelters. The festival celebrated the fall harvest and had seven days of sacrifices. On the eighth day, they rested and gave more offerings and all the people came together.

See: Festival of Shelters

7:6-9

What did Jesus mean by saying, “my time has not yet come”?

[7:6]

Some scholars think Jesus’ used the word “time”(καιρός/2540) to speak about the moment which Jesus revealed himself to be the messiah. Some scholars think Jesus was thinking that it was not yet time for him to die. Other scholars think Jesus was simply waiting for the best time to go to the festival. The best time was after the crowds gathered for the feast.

See: Messiah (Christ); Reveal (Revelation)

Why does the “world” hate Jesus?

[7:7]

When Jesus spoke about the “world”(κόσμος/2889), he spoke about all the things that opposed God in every way. That is, the world is opposed to God because God gave the Devil permission to rule the world. And the Devil hates that Jesus speaks the truth about God. The Jewish religious leaders also hated Jesus because he spoke the truth about God.

See: World; Satan (The Devil)

What did Jesus mean by saying, “I am not going up to the feast”?

[7:8]

Some ancient copies of the Bible said “I am not going up to this feast.” This means that Jesus was not going to the feast at any time. Other ancient copies of the Bible said “I am not yet going up to the feast.” This means that Jesus was going to the feast, but he was not going to the feast yet. They both mean that it was not the right time for Jesus to go up to the feast.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

7:10-13

Why did the people fear the Jewish leaders?

[7:13]

Though many of the people at the feast knew Jesus to be a good man and that he did many miracles, they feared speaking about Jesus because the Jewish leaders punished those who spoke well of Jesus. Perhaps the Jewish leaders believed Jesus did not speak the truth about God.

See: Miracle

7:14-15

Why did the Jewish leaders say Jesus never studied the scriptures?

[7:15]

Jesus taught the scriptures in a way the Jewish leaders did not know. People living in that time period only studied the scriptures when they were taught by a rabbi. When someone taught, the Jewish leaders knew which rabbi was their teacher. The Jewish leaders did not know who taught Jesus. Therefore, they said that Jesus never studied the scriptures.

See: Rabbi

7:16-18

How is a person willing to do what God wants?

[7:17]

When a person is “willing”(θέλω/g2309) to do what God wants, it means he makes a choice to learn what God wants him to do and wants to do the things God wants him to do. He can do this by going through and learning the scriptures to see what they say about God and the things God wants.

What are the benefits for the person who is willing to do what God wants?

[7:17, 7:18]

A person who is willing to do what God wants, will be able to know if someone is teaching the truth about God. That is, because a person learns about what God wants by reading and studying the scriptures, he will know what is the truth about God.

7:19-24

How did circumcision come from the fathers?

[7:22]

The Law of Moses told the Jews to circumcise their male children. God commanded Abraham to use circumcision. This was before the birth of Moses (see: Genesis 17:9-14). The Jews circumcised each male child eight days after birth. If the eighth day was a Sabbath, they circumcised the baby on the Sabbath.

See: Law of Moses; Circumcise (Circumcision); Sabbath

How did the Jewish leaders not observe the sabbath correctly?

[7:23]

The sabbath laws did not forbid people from doing good on the sabbath day. However, the Jewish leaders avoided doing any kind of work. This made it seem that they obeyed the sabbath laws in the Law of Moses. Jesus challenged the thinking of the Jewish leaders with doing good things on the sabbath (see: Matthew 12:11-12; Luke 13:14-17). Once again, Jesus told the Jewish leaders to judge by what is “right”(δικαιος/g1342) and good.

See: Sabbath; Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses

7:25-32

Why did some people in Jerusalem not believe Jesus was the Messiah?

[7:26, 7:27]

Some people thought that Jesus cannot be the Messiah. They knew Jesus grew up in Nazareth. They thought the Messiah came through a miracle and when no one thought he would come. Malachi said that the Lord will suddenly come to His temple (see: Malachi 3:1). Therefore, some people thought no one would know from where the Messiah comes.

See: Messiah (Christ); Miracle, Temple

Why did some people in Jerusalem believe Jesus was the Messiah?

[7:31]

These Jews believed Jesus was the messiah because they knew when the true messiah came to Israel, he was not going to do more miraculous signs than Jesus already did.

See: Messiah (Christ); Miracle; Sign

Why were the Jewish leaders not able to arrest Jesus?

[7:30]

The Jewish leaders wanted to arrest Jesus, but it was not his “hour.” That is, it was not the time he knew that he would be killed and wanted to die so that people could have peace with God (see: 8:20; 12:23-27; 13:1; 17:1). Jesus was not able to be arrested until God allowed it to happen.

7:32-36

Where was Jesus going that others were unable to come?

[7:34]

Many scholars think Jesus spoke about going to the cross to die for sin, rising from the dead, and then going to the Father in heaven. The Jewish leaders did not know that Jesus spoke about returning to heaven. That is, from where he came.

They thought Jesus spoke about going to one of the Gentile nations.

See: Cross; Sin; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; God the Father; Heaven; Gentile

7:37-39

How do people come to Jesus to drink?

[7:37]

Many scholars think that in the same way God gave water from a rock in the wilderness to provide the physical needs of the people of Israel, “drinking” from Jesus provided their spiritual needs (see: Numbers 20:1-13). This was a metaphor. People come to Jesus and drink by believing in him. The Bible speaks of this. Jesus said that for those people who believe in him, there will be living water flowing from them. The living water is a metaphor for the Spirit of God who comes to live in those who believe in Jesus Christ (see: Ephesians 1:13-14).

See: Wilderness; Spirit (Spiritual); Metaphor; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

7: 40-52

Why did Jesus’ words divide the people?

[7:43]

John wrote five different ways the things Jesus said divided the people.

Some people thought Jesus was the Messiah. They even said this. Other people did not think he was the Messiah. They

thought the Messiah to come from Bethlehem. They did not know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He moved to Galilee and grew up in that area. Some people wanted Jesus arrested because he made them angry. He confused many officials because they never heard anyone speak in the way he spoke. The Jewish leaders began to question whether any of the officials believed in Jesus. They set out to prove that no prophet came from Galilee.

See: Messiah (Christ); Prophet

See Map: Bethlehem, Galilee

John 7:1

General Information:

Jesus is in Galilee speaking to his brothers. These verses tell about when this event occurred.

After these things

These words tell the reader that the writer will begin talking about a new event. "After he finished speaking with the disciples" (John 6:66-71) or "Some time later"

traveled

The reader should understand that Jesus is probably walking rather than riding on an animal or in a vehicle.

the Jews were seeking to kill him

Here "the Jews" is a synecdoche for "the Jewish leaders."

Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders were making plans to kill him"

John 7:2

Now the Jewish Festival of Shelters was near

"Now the time for the festival of the Jews was near" or

"Now it was almost time for the Jewish festival of Shelters"

John 7:3

brothers

This refers to the actual younger brothers of Jesus, the sons of Mary and Joseph.

the works that you do

The word "works" refers to the miracles that Jesus had performed.

John 7:4

he himself

The word "himself" is a reflexive pronoun that emphasizes the word "he."

the world

Here "the world" is a metonym for all of the people in the world. Alternate translation: "all people" or "everyone"

John 7:5

For even his brothers did not believe in him

This sentence is a stop from the main story. Here John gives background information about the brothers of Jesus.

his brothers

All of Jesus's brothers were younger than he was. This can be made explicit in the translation as long as it does not suggest that Jesus also had older brothers. Alternate translation: "his younger brothers"

John 7:6

My time has not yet come

The word "time" is a metonym. Jesus is implying that it is not the right time for him to bring his ministry to a close. Alternate translation: "It is not the right time for me to end my work"

your time is always ready

"any time is good for you"

John 7:7

The world cannot hate you

Here the "world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "The people in the world cannot hate you"

I testify about it that its works are evil

"I tell them that what they are doing is evil"

John 7:8

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his brothers.

my time has not yet been fulfilled

Here Jesus is implying that if he goes to Jerusalem, he will bring his work to an end. Alternate translation: "It is not the right time for me to go to Jerusalem"

John 7:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 7:10

General Information:

The setting of the story has changed. Jesus and his brothers are now at the festival.

when his brothers

All of Jesus's brothers were younger than he was. This can be made explicit in the translation as long as it does not suggest that Jesus also had older brothers. Alternate translation: "when his younger brothers"

he also went up

Jerusalem is at a higher elevation than Galilee where Jesus and his brothers were previously.

not publicly but in secret

These two phrases mean the same thing. The idea is repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: "very secretly"

John 7:11

The Jews were looking for him

Here the word "Jews" is a synecdoche for "the Jewish leaders." The word "him" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders were looking for Jesus"

John 7:12

he leads the crowds astray

Here "leads ... astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "he deceives the people"

John 7:13

fear

This refers to the unpleasant feeling a person has when there is a threat of harm to himself or others.

the Jews

The word "Jews" is a synecdoche for the leaders of the Jews who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

John 7:14

General Information:

Jesus is now teaching the Jews in the temple.

John 7:15

How does this man know so much?

The remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize the Jewish leaders' surprise that Jesus has so much knowledge. Alternate translation: "It is amazing how much he knows about the scriptures!"

John 7:16

but is of him who sent me

"but comes from God, the one who sent me"

John 7:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the Jews.

John 7:18

but whoever seeks the glory of him who sent him, that person is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him

"when a person only seeks to honor the one who sent him, that person is speaking the truth. He does not lie"

John 7:19

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the Jews.

Did not Moses give you the law?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "It was Moses who gave you the law"

keeps the law

"obeys the law"

Why do you seek to kill me?

Jesus questions the motives of the Jewish leaders who want to kill him for breaking the law of Moses. He implies that the leaders themselves do not keep that same Law.

Alternate translation: "You break the Law yourselves and yet you want to kill me!"

John 7:20

You have a demon

"This shows that you are crazy, or maybe a demon is controlling you!"

Who seeks to kill you?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "No one is trying to kill you!"

John 7:21

one work

"one miracle" or "one sign"

you all marvel

"you all are shocked"

John 7:22

not that it is from Moses, but from the ancestors

Here John provides additional information about circumcision.

on the Sabbath you circumcise a man

Jesus implies that the act of circumcision also involves work. Alternate translation: "you circumcise a male baby on the Sabbath. That is working too"

on the Sabbath

"on the Jewish Day of Rest"

John 7:23

If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath so that the law of Moses is not broken

"If you circumcise a male baby on the Sabbath so that you

do not break the law of Moses"

why are you angry with me because I made a man completely healthy on the Sabbath?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "you should not be angry with me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath!"

on the Sabbath

"on the Jewish Day of Rest"

John 7:24

Do not judge according to appearance, but judge righteously

Jesus implies that the people should not decide what is right, based only on what they can see. Behind the action is a motive that cannot be seen. Alternate translation: "Stop judging people according to what you see! Be more concerned with what is right according to God"

John 7:25

Is not this the one they seek to kill?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "This is Jesus whom they are seeking to kill!"

John 7:26

they say nothing to him

This implies that the Jewish leaders are not opposing Jesus. Alternate translation: "they say nothing to oppose him"

It cannot be that the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ, can it?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "Maybe they have decided that he is truly the Messiah!"

John 7:27

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 7:28

cried out

"spoke in a loud voice"

in the temple

Jesus and the people were actually in the courtyard of the temple. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

You both know me and know where I come from

John uses irony in this statement. The people believe that Jesus is from Nazareth. They do not know that God sent him from heaven and that he was born in Bethlehem.

Alternate translation: "You all know me and you think you know where I come from"

of myself

"on my own authority." See how you translated "of himself" in John 5:19.

he who sent me is true

"God is the one who sent me and he is true"

John 7:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 7:30

his hour had not yet come

The word "hour" is a metonym that represents the right time for Jesus to be arrested, according to God's plan.

Alternate translation: "it was not the right time to arrest him"

John 7:31

When the Christ comes, will he do more signs than what this one has done?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "When the Christ comes, surely he will not be able to do more signs than this man has done!"

signs

This refers to the miracles that prove that Jesus is the Christ.

John 7:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 7:33

I am still with you for a short amount of time

"I will remain with you for only a short period of time"

then I go to him who sent me

Here Jesus refers to God the Father, who sent him.

John 7:34

where I go, you will not be able to come

"you will not be able to come to the place where I am"

John 7:35

The Jews therefore said among themselves

The "Jews" is a synecdoche that represents the leaders of the Jews who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders said among themselves"

the dispersion

This refers to the Jews that were spread all across the Greek world, outside of Palestine.

John 7:36

What is this word that he said

This "word" is a metonym which stands for the meaning of the message that Jesus had shared, which the Jewish leaders had failed to understand. Alternate translation:

"What is he talking about when he said"

John 7:37

General Information:

Some time has passed. It is now the last day of the festival and Jesus speaks to the crowd.

great day

It is "great" because it is the last, or most important, day of the festival.

If anyone is thirsty

Here the word "thirsty" is a metaphor that means one's great desire for the things of God, just as one "thirsts" for water. Alternate translation: "Anyone who desires the things of God like a thirsty man desires water"

let him come to me and drink

The word "drink" is a metaphor that means to receive the spiritual life that Jesus provides. Alternate translation: "let him come to me and quench his spiritual thirst"

John 7:38

He who believes in me, just as the scripture says

"As the scripture says about anyone who believes in me"

rivers of living water will flow

The "rivers of living water" is a metaphor that represents the life that Jesus provides for those who are spiritually "thirsty." Alternate translation: "spiritual life will flow like rivers of water"

living water

Possible meanings are 1) "water that gives life" or 2) "water that causes people to live."

from his belly

Here the belly represents the inside of a person, specifically the non-physical part of a person. Alternate translation: "from inside of him" or "from his heart"

John 7:39

General Information:

In this verse the author gives information to clarify what Jesus is talking about.

But he

Here "he" refers to Jesus.

the Spirit had not yet been given

John implies that the Spirit would later come to live in those who trusted Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Spirit had not yet come to live in the believers"

because Jesus was not yet glorified

Here the word "glorified" refers to the time when God would honor the Son after his death and resurrection.

John 7:40

This is indeed the prophet

By saying this, the people are indicating that they believe Jesus is the prophet like Moses that God had promised to send. Alternate translation: "This is indeed the prophet who is like Moses that we have been waiting for"

John 7:41

Does the Christ come from Galilee?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "The Christ cannot come from Galilee!"

John 7:42

Have the scriptures not said that the Christ will come from the descendants of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "The scriptures teach that Christ will come from the line of David and from Bethlehem, the village where David was!"

Have the scriptures not said ... was?

The scriptures are referred to as if they were actually speaking as a person speaks. Alternate translation: "Did the prophets not write in the scriptures ... was?" or "The prophets wrote in the scriptures ... was."

where David was

"where David lived"

John 7:43

So there arose a division in the crowds because of him

The crowds could not agree about who or what Jesus was.

John 7:44

but no one laid hands on him

To lay hands on someone is an idiom which means to grab him or to hold onto him. Alternate translation: "but no one grabbed him to arrest him"

John 7:45

the officers

"the temple guards"

John 7:46

Never has anyone spoken like this

The officers exaggerate to show how impressed they are by

what Jesus said. You may need to make explicit that the officers were not claiming to know everything that every person in all times and places had ever said. Alternate translation: "We have never heard anyone say such amazing things as this man!"

John 7:47

So the Pharisees

"Because they said that, the Pharisees"

answered them

"answered the officers"

Have you also been deceived?

The remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. The Pharisees are shocked at the response of the officers. Alternate translation: "You have been deceived too!"

John 7:48

Have any of the rulers believed in him, or any of the Pharisees?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "None of the rulers or Pharisees have believed in him!"

John 7:49

the law

This is a reference to the law of the Pharisees and not the law of Moses.

But this crowd that does not know the law, they are cursed

"As for this crowd that does not know the law, God will cause them to perish!"

John 7:50

one of the Pharisees, who came to him earlier

John provides this information to remind us of who

Nicodemus is. Your language may have a special way to mark background information.

John 7:51

Does our law judge a man ... what he does?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Our Jewish law does not allow us to judge a man ... what he does!"

Does our law judge a man ... does?

Here Nicodemus speaks of the law as if it were a person. If this is not natural in your language, you may translate it with a personal subject. Alternate translation: "Do we judge a man ... does?" or "We do not judge a man ... does."

John 7:52

Are you also from Galilee?

The Jewish leaders know that Nicodemus is not from Galilee. They ask this question as a way of scoffing at him. Alternate translation: "You must also be one of those inferior persons from Galilee!"

Search and see

This is an ellipsis. You may wish to include the information that does not appear. Alternate translation: "Search carefully and read what is written in the Scriptures"

no prophet comes from Galilee

This probably refers to the belief that Jesus was born in Galilee.

John 7:53

General Information:

The best early texts do not have 7:53-8:11. The ULB has set them apart in square brackets

Chapter 8

John 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Translators may wish to include a note at verse 1 to explain to the reader why they have chosen to translate or to not translate verses 8:1-11.

Special concepts in this chapter

A light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: light and darkness and righteous)

I AM

John records Jesus as saying these words four times in this book, three times in this chapter. They stand alone as a complete sentence, and they literally translate the Hebrew word for "I AM," by which Yahweh identified himself to Moses. For these reasons, many people believe that when Jesus said these words he was claiming to be Yahweh. (See: yahweh).

The Scribes and Pharisees' trap

The Scribes and Pharisees wanted to trick Jesus. They wanted him to say either that they should keep the law of Moses by killing a woman whom they had found committing adultery or that they should disobey the law of Moses and forgive her sin. Jesus knew that they were trying to trick him and that they did not really want to keep the law of Moses. He knew this because the law said that both the woman and the man should die, but they did not bring the man to Jesus. (See: adultery)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[John 8:1 Notes](#)

John 8

8:1-6

Why is John 7:53-8:11 not inside of all Bibles?

[8:1]

Many ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have John 7:53-8:11. Many Bible translations do not have these verses because some scholars do not think John wrote these verses when he wrote this book. However, some Bible translations have the verses because other scholars think John wrote these words even though some old copies of the Greek New Testament are missing these verses. Some English bibles place these verses in brackets: []. The brackets tell the translators that scholars do not know whether John wrote these verses. Overall, the oldest copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these verses, but many old copies of the Greek New Testament have these verses.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

What is the Mount of Olives?

[8:1]

See: Mount of Olives

See Map: Mount of Olives

Where was the Jewish Temple?

[8:2]

See: Temple

See Map: Jerusalem

Why did the scribes and Pharisees bring a woman adultery before Jesus?

[8:4]

The Pharisees brought the adulterous woman to Jesus because they wanted to trap him with questions about the Law of Moses. They asked Jesus whether he thought the woman needed to be killed. The Law of Moses said that adulterers were to be stoned to death (see: Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22). If Jesus told the Pharisees to kill the woman, this was against the law of the Roman Empire. That is, the law of the Roman Empire said that only the Roman government was able to put people to death for their crimes (see: 18:31). If Jesus told the Pharisees to let the woman go free, then he broke the Law of Moses.

See: Adultery; Scribe; Pharisees; Law of Moses; Scribe, Pharisees, Law of Moses; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did Jesus write on the ground with his finger?

[8:6]

Scholars do not know why Jesus wrote on the ground with his finger. Some scholars think that Jesus' bending down and writing on the ground meant that he ignored the Pharisees and that they accused the woman. Other scholars think he did this to show that Jesus was not going to judge the woman. Still other scholars think Jesus drew a picture to show the message spoken by the prophet Jeremiah. That is, what happens to those who forsake God (see: Jeremiah 17:13).

See: Prophet

8:7-9

How did Jesus challenge the Scribes and Pharisees?

[8:7]

Jesus challenged the scribes and Pharisees when he got the crowd to focus on the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees instead of the woman's sins. Some Pharisees thought they obeyed the Law of Moses. While they did obey some of the Law of Moses, they did not obey the whole Law of Moses. This is because they did not understand the Law of Moses. The Pharisees knew they sinned. They knew they could not judge the woman because they were sinners also.

See: Scribe; Pharisees; Hypocrisy (Hypocrite); Sin; Law of Moses

8:12

Why did Jesus call himself the "light of the world"?

[8:12]

Jesus said "I am the light of the world" so that people would know that he is God (see: 1 John 1:5; Isaiah 42:5-6). This is the second time Jesus said "I am" statement made by Jesus about which John has written (see: 6:35). Many scholars think Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" toward the end of the Festival of Shelters. Part of this celebration included the lighting of many oil lamps and candles within the temple. This feast is still celebrated by the Jewish people today around the world. However, they are no longer able to celebrate in the temple because it was destroyed. The lighting of the oil lamps reminded the people of how God appeared as a column of fire when he led the people of Israel through the wilderness (see: Exodus 13:18-22).

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Yahweh (I am); Festival of Shelters; Temple; Wilderness

8:13-20

How did Jesus respond when the Pharisees' accused the woman?

[8:14]

Jesus said the Pharisees were wrong to accuse the woman. The Law of Moses said they needed two witnesses to prove an accusation true (see: Deuteronomy 19:15). Jesus said he two witnesses, God the Father and himself. Jesus explained why his witness was true. That is, he knew everything. The Pharisees did not know this because they only saw things and heard things. They did not know things about heaven (see: 7:27-28; 9:29). John the Baptist also said that Jesus was the light of the world (see:1:8-9).

See: Pharisees; Law of Moses; Witness (Martyr); God the Father; Heaven; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why did the Pharisees ask Jesus about his father?

[8:19]

Some scholars think the Pharisees knew Jesus spoke about God being his father. However, they did not allow a witness who could not be seen. Therefore, they asked where was his father.

See: Pharisees; God the Father

8:21-24

What did Jesus mean when he said, “I am going away”?

[8:21]

Jesus said, “I am going away.” Perhaps Jesus spoke of going to God the Father. That is, he went to the cross to die, he resurrected, and then he went to God the Father in heaven (see: 7:33-36).

See: God the Father; Cross; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Heaven

Why did Jesus tell the Jews they were going to die in their sin?

[8:21]

Jesus told the Jews they were going to die in their sin because they did not believe God the Father sent Jesus to the earth. The Jews believed obeying the Law of Moses and doing good things gave them peace with God. However, scripture teaches that no one can be at peace with God because they do good things (see: Galatians 2:16). They needed to believe in God and that God the Father sent Jesus to the earth.

See: Sin; God the Father; Law of Moses

8:25-30

Why did the Pharisees question Jesus about who he was?

[8:25]

Because Jesus said “I am” the Jews began to question Jesus. These were the words God used when he told Moses his name (see: Exodus 3:14). Therefore, the Jews knew when Jesus said “I am,” he was saying that he is God. Jews did not even say the name “I am” when talking about God. They feared they might not say it correctly. They thought saying God’s name wrong dishonored God. Therefore, the Jews did not want to listen to Jesus about who he said he was. They thought he dishonored God both by saying God’s name.

See: Yahweh (I am)

What does it mean that the Son of Man will be lifted up?

[8:28]

John said that the Son of Man will be lifted up. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the time when he would be nailed to and lifted up on the cross to die. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about his being lifted up on the cross and being lifted up into heaven. That is, he went to heaven after he was resurrected.

See: Cross; Heaven; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What did Jesus mean by saying, “then you will know”?

[8:28]

Jesus said that “you will know.” Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the time that came after his resurrection when he showed proved to people that he is God. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about a time in the future when the temple was going to be destroyed in the same way Jesus prophesied. The Pharisees were going to know because of the words Jesus spoke, not because the Holy Spirit helped them to believe Jesus.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Temple; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Pharisees; Holy Spirit

8:31-41

How do Christians remain in Jesus’ words?

[8:31]

Some scholars think that to “remain”(μένω/g3306) in Jesus’ words is to continue following his teaching. That is, to obey the words he taught. Other scholars think Jesus was talking about Jesus’ words helping to change someone.

Jesus said that those who remain in his word will “know”(γινώσκω/g1097) the truth. That is, they will know that the things said in Scripture are true and that they will live in the right way. The truth rules the Christian’s life. Jesus said this truth set a person “free”(ἐλευθερώω/g1659). That is, Christians will know that sin no longer rules their lives.

See: Free (Freedom)

How did the people respond to Jesus’ statement about truth setting them free?

[8:32]

John wrote that the people responded “against him”(πρός/g4314; αὐτός/g0846) when he said the truth will set them free. Some scholars think these people were those that did believe the words of Jesus (see: 8:31) at one time. Other scholars think these people were the Jews that never believed Jesus’ words. The people against Jesus thought they were free because they were descendants of Abraham.

See: Free (Freedom); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

How did Jesus respond to the Jews’ claim of Abraham as their father?

[8:41]

Jesus agreed the Jews were physical descendants of Abraham. However, Jesus told the Jews they followed a different father. That is, because they did not do the things that Abraham did, they were not his true descendants. Jesus told the Jews they did not receive his “word” (λόγος/g3056) because they followed a different father. But, the Jews then told Jesus that God was their father. Perhaps Jesus was saying that they were acting like another father, Satan (see: 1 John 3:10).

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Satan (The Devil); Children of God

8:42-47

How did Jesus respond to the Jews’ claim of God being their father?

[8:42]

Jesus told the Jews if God was their father, then they needed to love Jesus. That is, Jesus is from God (see: 5:19-24; 1 John 5:1). And those who loved God their Father also loved God’s Son, Jesus. Jesus tells the Jews they belong to the devil. He said the devil was their father, not God. This is because the Jews did not understand the truth of Jesus’ words.

See: 1 John 3:10

See: God the Father; Son of God; Children of God; Satan (The Devil)

Why did the Jews not believe the words of Jesus?

[8:45, 8:46]

Jesus said “because”(ὅτι/g3754) he speaks the truth, the Jews did not believe him. What proved that a person was a child of God was that he loved the truth. Because Jesus is the truth, they were going to believe in him if they were really God’s children. The children of the devil did not accept the truth. The devil is the father of lies. That is, he was the first liar. Jesus told the Jews they did not “hear”(ἀκούω/g0191) the words of God because they did not truly belong to God.

See: Children of God; Satan (The Devil)

8:48-53

Why did the Jews say that Jesus was possessed by a demon?

[8:48]

Some scholars think because Jesus accused the Jews of following a different father than that of Abraham or even God, the Jews said Jesus was possessed by a demon. These scholars think the Jews thought Jesus’ claim to come from God was an insult to God. The Jews said that this proved that a demon possessed Jesus. They also called Jesus a Samaritan. The Jews hated Samaritans and thought they did not believe in the true God.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Samaria

In what way did the Jews dishonor Jesus?

[8:49]

The Jews dishonored Jesus by accusing him of many things that were not true. Not only did they accuse Jesus of having a demon, but they accused him of being a Samaritan. They also accused him of disobeying what the Law of Moses said about the sabbath (see: 5:18). They also dishonored Jesus because they did not believe in him when he said he was equal with God. Jesus said earlier in the Book of John that whoever did not honor the Son also did not honor the Father (see: 5:22-23). Jesus also honored the Father by stating he does not want the people to honor him.

See: Demon; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Samaria; Law of Moses; Sabbath; Son of God; God the Father; Jesus is God

In what way will a person who keeps Jesus’ word never die?

[8:51]

When a person “keeps”(τηρέω/g5083) the word of Jesus, they obey the things Jesus told them to do. Then people know that Jesus has given him a new type of life and that he will live together with God in heaven. That is, he heard the things Jesus said to do and did the things Jesus said to do. Because this person believes in Jesus and does what honors him, John wanted to say that he will never be “die,” that is he will never be separated from God. This is what the scriptures call the “second death.” The Jews were only thinking about the first death by saying that Abraham died. They did not know who Jesus is. They did not understand the things that he said.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Eternal Life; Heaven; Die (Death)

8:54-56

What did Jesus mean by saying “my glory is nothing?”

[8:54]

By saying “my glory is nothing” Jesus said that he completely obeyed God the Father. It is the Father who honors Jesus.

Perhaps Jesus spoke about the glory that was going to follow his death his resurrection, and his return to God Father (see: 17:5).

See: Glory (Glorify); God the Father; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; God the Father

In what way did the Jews not know God?

[8:55]

Jesus told the Jews they did not “know”(γινώσκω/g1097) God because those who know God also do what he told them to do. Jesus said he knows God and does what God the Father tells him to do. The Jews did not know God because they did not honor God the Son whom God sent (see: 5:37-47).

See: God the Father; Son of God

In what way did Abraham see Jesus’ day?

[8:56]

Some scholars think Abraham saw Jesus’ day when his son Isaac was born. God promised Abraham a son, and he said he was going to bless the whole world through this son. Other scholars think Abraham saw Jesus’ day when Abraham walked up the mountain to sacrifice his son Isaac. There Abraham saw God give the “lamb” for the sacrifice. In place of Isaac, God sent a ram to be sacrificed to him. This ram was a symbol of Jesus coming to be sacrificed for people’s sins (See: Genesis 22; Exodus 12; John 1:29). He is the “lamb of God.” These scholars think when God gave the ram for the sacrifice, He showed Abraham about the Messiah’s coming.

See: Bless (Blessing); Lamb of God; Sacrifice; Symbol; Messiah (Christ)

8:57-59

Who did Jesus say he is?

[8:58]

Jesus told the Jews he is the “I Am.” Jesus was saying that he is God. This is how he knew Abraham. The Jews thought Jesus insulted God by saying this. They began to pick up stones to throw at Jesus. The Law of Moses said to stone someone who insulted God (see: Leviticus 24:16).

See: Yahweh (I am); Law of Moses

John 8:1

General Information:

While some texts have 7:53-8:11, the best and earliest texts do not include them.

Connecting Statement:

Verse 1 tells us where Jesus went at the end of the previous chapter.

John 8:2

all the people

This is a general way of speaking. It means “many people.”

John 8:3

The scribes and the Pharisees brought

Here the phrase “the scribes and the Pharisees” is a synecdoche that represents some of the members of these two groups. Alternate translation: “Some scribes and Pharisees brought” or “Some men who taught the Jewish laws and some who were Pharisees brought”

a woman caught in the act of adultery

This is a passive statement. You may translate it in an active form. Alternate translation: “a woman whom they had found committing adultery”

John 8:4

General Information:

While some texts have 7:53-8:11, the best and earliest texts do not include them.

John 8:5

such people

“people like that” or “people who do that”

what do you say about her?

“so you tell us. What should we do about her?”

John 8:6

to trap him

This means to use a trick question.

so that they might have something to accuse him about

What they would accuse him of can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: “so that they could accuse him of saying something wrong” or “so that they could accuse him of not obeying the law of Moses or the Roman law”

John 8:7

General Information:

While some texts have 7:53-8:11, the best and earliest texts do not include them.

When they continued

The word “they” refers to the scribes and Pharisees.

The one among you who has no sin

The abstract noun “sin” can be expressed with the verb sin.

Alternate translation: “The one among you is has never sinned” or “If any one of you has never sinned”

let him

“let that person”

John 8:8

he stooped down

“he bent down”

John 8:9

General Information:

While some texts have 7:53-8:11, the best and earliest texts do not include them.

one by one

“one after another”

John 8:10

Woman, where are your accusers

When Jesus called her “woman,” he was not trying to make her feel insignificant. If people in your language group would think that he was doing that, this can be translated without the word “Woman.”

John 8:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 8:12

General Information:

Jesus is speaking to a crowd near the treasury in the temple after either the events of [John 7:1-52]

I am the light of the world

Here the "light" is a metaphor for the revelation that comes from God. Alternate translation: "I am the one who gives light to the world"

the world

This is a metonym for the people. Alternate translation: "the people of the world"

he who follows me

This is an idiom that means "everyone who does what I teach" or "everyone who obeys me"

will not walk in the darkness

To "walk in darkness" is a metaphor for living a sinful life. Alternate translation: "will not live as if he were in the darkness of sin"

light of life

The "light of life" is a metaphor for the truth from God that gives spiritual life. Alternate translation: "truth that brings eternal life"

John 8:13

You testify about yourself

"You are just saying these things about yourself"

your testimony is not true

The Pharisees are implying that the witness of only one person is not true because it cannot be verified. Alternate translation: "you cannot be your own witness" or "what you say about yourself may not be true"

John 8:14

Even if I testify about myself

"Even if I say these things about myself"

John 8:15

the flesh

"human standards and the laws of men"

I judge no one

Possible meanings are 1) "I do not judge anyone yet" or 2) "I am not judging anyone now."

John 8:16

if I judge

Possible meanings are 1) "if I judge people" or 2) "whenever I judge people"

my judgment is true

Possible meanings are 1) "my judgment will be right" or 2) "my judgment is right."

I am not alone, but I am with the Father who sent me

Jesus, the Son of God, has authority because of his special relationship with his Father.

I am not alone

The implied information is that Jesus is not alone in his judgment. Alternate translation: "I am not alone in how I judge" or "I do not judge alone"

I am with the Father who sent me

The Father and the Son judge together. Alternate translation: "the Father who sent me also judges with me" or "the Father who sent me judges as I do"

the Father

This is an important title for God. If your language must state whose Father this is, you could say "my Father" since Jesus switches to that in the following verses.

John 8:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the Pharisees and other people about himself.

Yes, and in your law

The word "Yes" shows that Jesus is adding to what he was saying before.

it is written

This is a passive phrase. You may translate it in an active form with a personal subject. Alternate translation: "Moses wrote"

the testimony of two men is true

The logic implied here is that one person can verify the words of another. Alternate translation: "if two men say the same thing, then people know it is true"

John 8:18

I am he who testifies about myself

Jesus testifies about himself. Alternate translation: "I give evidence to you about myself"

the Father who sent me testifies about me

The Father also testifies about Jesus. You could make it explicit that this means Jesus's testimony is true. Alternate translation: "my Father who sent me also brings evidence about me. So you should believe that what we tell you is true"

the Father

This is an important title for God. If your language must state whose Father this is, you could say "my Father" since Jesus switches to that in the following verses.

John 8:19

You know neither me nor my Father; if you had known me, you would have known my Father also

Jesus indicates that to know him is to also know the Father. Both Father and Son are God. "Father" is an important title for God.

my Father

This is an important title for God.

John 8:20

General Information:

Here there is a break in Jesus's speaking where the author give us background information regarding where Jesus had been teaching. Some languages may require the information about the setting to be placed at the beginning of this part of the story in [John 8:12]

his hour had not yet come

The word "hour" is a metonym for the time for Jesus to die. Alternate translation: "it was not yet the right time for Jesus to die"

John 8:21

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the crowd.

die in your sin

Here the word "die" refers to spiritual death. Alternate translation: "die while you are still sinful" or "you will die while you are sinning"

you cannot come
 "you are not able to come"
 John 8:22
 The Jews said
 Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for "the Jewish leaders."
 Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders said" or "The Jewish authorities said"
 John 8:23
 You are from below
 "You were born in this world"
 I am from above
 "I came from heaven"
 You are of this world
 "You belong to this world"
 I am not of this world
 "I do not belong to this world"
 John 8:24
 you will die in your sins
 "you will die without God's forgiving your sins"
 that I AM
 Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is identifying himself as Yahweh, who identified himself to Moses as "I AM," or 2) Jesus expects the people to understand that he is referring to what he already has already said about himself: "I am from above."
 John 8:25
 They said
 The word "They" refers to the Jewish leaders (John 8:22).
 John 8:26
 these things I say to the world
 Here the "world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "these things I say to all the people"
 John 8:27
 the Father
 This is a special title for God. Some languages may require the use of a possessive before the noun. Alternate translation: "his Father"
 John 8:28
 When you have lifted up
 This refers to placing Jesus on the cross to kill him.
 lifted up the Son of Man
 Jesus used the title "Son of Man" to refer to himself.
 Alternate translation: "lifted me, the Son of Man, up"
 I AM
 Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is identifying himself as Yahweh, who identified himself to Moses as "I AM," or 2) Jesus is saying, "I am the one I claim to be."
 As the Father taught me, I speak these things
 "I am only saying what my Father taught me to say." The word "Father" is an important title for God.
 John 8:29
 He who sent me
 The word "He" refers to God.
 John 8:30
 As Jesus was saying these things
 "As Jesus spoke these words"
 many believed in him
 "many people trusted him"

John 8:31
 remain in my word
 This is an idiom that means "to obey Jesus." Alternate translation: "obey what I have said"
 my disciples
 "my followers"
 John 8:32
 the truth will set you free
 This is personification. Jesus speaks of "the truth" as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "if you obey the truth, God will set you free"
 the truth
 This refers to what Jesus reveals about God. Alternate translation: "what is true about God"
 John 8:33
 how can you say, 'You will be set free'?
 This remark appears in the form of a question to express the Jewish leaders' shock at what Jesus has said. Alternate translation: "We do not need to be set free!"
 John 8:34
 Truly, truly
 See how you translated this in John 1:51.
 is the slave of sin
 Here the word "slave" is a metaphor. This implies that "sin" is like a master for the one who sins. Alternate translation: "is like a slave to sin"
 John 8:35
 in the house forever
 Here "house" is a metonym for "family." Alternate translation: "as a permanent member of a family"
 the son remains forever
 This is an ellipsis. You may translate it by including the implied words. Alternate translation: "the son is a member of the family forever"
 John 8:36
 if the Son sets you free, you will be truly free
 It is implied that Jesus is talking about freedom from sin, which is a metaphor for being able not to sin. Alternate translation: "if the Son sets you free, you will truly be able to refrain from sin"
 if the Son sets you free
 "Son" is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus was speaking about himself. Alternate translation: "If I, the Son, set you free"
 John 8:37
 Connecting Statement:
 Jesus continues speaking to the Jews.
 my word has no place in you
 Here "word" is a metonym for the "teachings" or "message" of Jesus, which the Jewish leaders do not accept. Alternate translation: "you do not accept my teachings" or "you do not allow my message to change your life"
 John 8:38
 I say what I have seen with my Father
 "I am telling you about the things I saw when I was with my Father"
 you also do what you heard from your father
 The Jewish leaders do not understand that by "your father" Jesus is referring to the devil. Alternate translation: "you

also continue doing what your father has told you to do"

John 8:39

father

forefather

John 8:40

Abraham did not do this

"Abraham never tried to kill anyone who told him the true revelation from God"

John 8:41

You do the works of your father

Jesus implies that their father is the devil. Alternate translation: "No! You are doing the things that your real father did"

We were not born in sexual immorality

Here the Jewish leaders imply that Jesus does not know who his real father is. Alternate translation: "We do not know about you, but we are not illegitimate children" or "We were all born from proper marriages"

we have one Father: God

Here the Jewish leaders claim God as their spiritual Father. This is an important title for God.

John 8:42

love

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

John 8:43

Why do you not understand my words?

Jesus is using this question mainly to rebuke the Jewish leaders for not listening to him. Alternate translation: "I will tell you why you do not understand what I say!"

It is because you cannot hear my words

Here "words" is a metonym for the "teachings" of Jesus. Alternate translation: "It is because you will not accept my teachings."

John 8:44

You are of your father, the devil

"You belong to your father, Satan"

the father of lies

Here "father" is a metaphor for the one who originates all lies. Alternate translation: "he is the one who created all lies in the beginning"

John 8:45

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the Jews.

because I speak the truth

"because I tell you true things about God"

John 8:46

Which one of you convicts me of sin?

Jesus uses this question to emphasize that he has never sinned. Alternate translation: "None of you can show that I have ever sinned!"

If I speak the truth

"If I say things that are true"

why do you not believe me?

Jesus uses this question to scold the Jewish leaders for their unbelief. Alternate translation: "you have no reason for not believing in me!"

John 8:47

the words of God

Here "words" is a metonym for the "message" of God.

Alternate translation: "the message of God" or "the truth that comes from God"

John 8:48

The Jews

The "Jews" is a synecdoche that represents the "Jewish leaders" who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders"

Do we not truly say that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?

The Jewish leaders use this question to accuse Jesus and to dishonor him. Alternate translation: "We are certainly right in saying that you are a Samaritan and that a demon lives in you!"

John 8:49

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 8:50

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues answering the Jews.

there is one seeking and judging

This refers to God.

John 8:51

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

keeps my word

Here "word" is a metonym for the "teachings" of Jesus.

Alternate translation: "obeys my teachings" or "does what I say"

see death

This is an idiom that means to experience death. Here Jesus is referring to spiritual death. Alternate translation: "die spiritually"

John 8:52

Jews

Here "Jews" is a metonym for the "Jewish leaders" who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jewish leaders"

If anyone keeps my word

"If anyone obeys my teaching"

taste death

This is an idiom that means to experience death. The Jewish leaders mistakenly assume that Jesus is speaking only about physical death. Alternate translation: "die"

John 8:53

You are not greater than our father Abraham who died, are you?

The Jewish leaders use this question to emphasize that Jesus is not greater than Abraham. Alternate translation:

"You are certainly not greater than our father Abraham who indeed died!"

father

forefather

Who do you make yourself out to be?

The Jews use this question to rebuke Jesus for thinking that he is more important than Abraham. Alternate translation:

"You should not think that you are so important!"

John 8:54

it is my Father who glorifies me—about whom you say that he is your God

The word "Father" is an important title for God. No one

knows God the Father like Jesus, the Son of God. Alternate translation: "it is my Father who honors me, and you say that he is your God"

John 8:55

keep his word

Here "word" is a metonym for what God says. Alternate translation: "I obey what he says to do"

John 8:56

my day

This is a metonym for what Jesus would accomplish during his life. Alternate translation: "what I would do during my life"

he saw it and was glad

"he foresaw my coming through God's revelation and he rejoiced"

John 8:57

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Jesus speaking with the Jews in the temple, which began in John 8:12.

The Jews said to him

Here the "Jews" is a synecdoche for the "Jewish leaders"

who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders said to him"

You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham?

The Jewish leaders use this question to express their shock that Jesus claims to have seen Abraham. Alternate translation: "You are less than fifty years old. You could not have seen Abraham!"

John 8:58

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

I AM

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is identifying himself as Yahweh, who identified himself to Moses as "I AM," or 2) Jesus is saying, "before Abraham existed, I existed."

John 8:59

Then they picked up stones to throw at him

The Jewish leaders are outraged at what Jesus has said.

Here it is implied that they wanted to kill him because he had made himself equal to God. Alternate translation:

"Then they picked up stones to kill him because he claimed to be equal with God"

Chapter 9

John 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Who sinned?"

Many of the Jews of Jesus's time believed that if a person was blind or deaf or crippled, it was because he or his parents or someone in his family had sinned. This was not the teaching of the law of Moses. (See: sin and lawofmoses)

"He does not keep the Sabbath"

The Pharisees thought that Jesus was working, and so breaking the Sabbath, by making mud. (See: sabbath)

Important metaphors in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Seeing and being blind

Jesus calls the Pharisees blind because they see that Jesus is able to heal blind people but they still do not believe that God sent him

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[John 9:1 Notes](#)

John 9

9:1-5

Why did the disciples ask Jesus, "who sinned?"

[9:2]

Some Jews thought a parent's sin caused their children to suffer or be ill. Here, Jesus said sin did not cause this man's blindness. This man was born blind to serve God in some way. Because he was blind, this allowed God to work in a special way in the man's life. That is, God used this man's problem to tell people about God.

See: Sin; Serve

Why did Jesus say he needed to work "while it was day"?

[9:4]

Some scholars think Jesus said he needed to work while it was day to say he needed to do the work of God while he was on the earth with his disciples. Other scholars think when Jesus said work must be done while it is day, he spoke about

the amount of time God allowed for the gospel to be preached.

See: Disciple; Gospel; Preach (Preacher)

Why did Jesus say, "Night is coming"?

[9:4]

Jesus said, "Night is coming." Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about the disciples who were going to suffer after he died. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about when God will judge people. This is because night is dark. John also said that God is light. Perhaps John wanted to warn people that there will be a time when those who reject God will not be separated from God forever.

See: Disciple; Day of Judgment; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why did Jesus say, "As long as I am in the world"?

[9:5]

Jesus said, "as long as I am in the world." Some scholars think Jesus spoke about his time on earth before he died. He did not live for very long, therefore he needed to work quickly. Other scholars think Jesus said he will always be in the world, even after he died. Jesus continues to live on the earth in some way through the Holy Spirit even after Jesus died.

See: Holy Spirit

How is Jesus the light of the world?

[9:5]

John said that Jesus is the "light of the world." This is a type of metaphor. One reason Jesus is the light of the world is because he is life. That is, he creates all people and makes them new and different after they believe in Jesus. John said Jesus is life, and the life was the "light of men" (see: 1:4-5). Jesus said that people who follow him will be given this light, that is, they will live forever with God in heaven (see: 8:12).

People can also see things because of light. Another reason Jesus is the light of the world is because he made the world in a way that everyone can see that there is a God who created the world (see: 1:9; Romans 1:19-20). Because God gave light for all people to know, it means all people are able to know and believe in God. But, many people did not believe (see: 1:10-11; Romans 1:18-23).

Jesus showed another reason he is the light of the world. He opened the eyes of a man born blind. Before Jesus, all the man could not see any light. Therefore, Jesus made it so that people could see light.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Heaven

9:6-7

Why did Jesus rub mud over the man's eyes?

[9:6]

Some scholars think Jesus rubbed mud over the man's eyes to show that he could do certain things that only God could do. In the same way God created man from the dust on the ground, Jesus used dust to create eyes that were able to see (see: Genesis 2:7). Some scholars think the man did not possess eyes at all. Others scholars think he possessed eyes, but that he was blind. Whether he had eyes or not, Jesus healed the man.

Why did Jesus send the blind man to the pool of Siloam?

[9:7]

Jesus sent the blind man to the pool of "Siloam" because people thought its waters were sacred. The Siloam pool is still inside the wall of ancient Jerusalem. A spring flows into it through a long tunnel cut through rock during the lifetime of King Hezekiah (see: 2 Kings 20:20). Some scholars think Jesus sent the man to the pool of Siloam to tell them that in the same way the Jews rejected the waters of "Shiloah" in the Old Testament, so they rejected Jesus in the New Testament (see: Isaiah 8:6).

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); New Testament

Map: Siloam

9:8-16

What did the man's neighbors say about him?

[9:8]

Some of the man's neighbors talked about how he was the man who used to sit and beg. Others said it must be a different man, someone who looked like the beggar. Scholars think the miracle performed on the man was so amazing, some of the people were unable to think it was the same beggar who was healed.

See: Miracle

Why was the man brought to the Pharisees after he was healed?

[9:13]

The man was brought to the Pharisees after he was healed. This is because no one ever saw a miracle of someone being given back their sight. The people brought the man to the Pharisees after he was healed so that they could hear how this kind of miracle happened.

See: Pharisees; Miracle

How did the Pharisees respond to the healing of the blind man?

[9:16]

Because Jesus healed the blind man on the Sabbath, some of the Pharisees thought God did not send Jesus. They thought it was wrong to heal someone on the sabbath. This is because they thought that it was work, which was against the Law of Moses. It was not against the Law of Moses. Other Pharisees thought Jesus was a sinner because of this, and they thought that no sinner ever healed a blind man before. This miracle caused a division between the members of the Pharisees.

See: Sabbath; Pharisees; Law of Moses; Miracle

9:17-18

Jesus healed a man. Who did he think Jesus was?

[9:17]

The healed man told the Pharisees that he thought that Jesus was a prophet. When the man's neighbors asked him about who healed him, he said, "the man called Jesus." Some scholars think when the man told the Pharisees that Jesus is a prophet, and he thought people should respect Jesus. However, some of the Pharisees refused to believe Jesus came from God. They thought Jesus was someone who sinned because he did not obey the Sabbath and the Law of Moses in the way they thought it needed to be obeyed.

See: Pharisees; Prophet; Sin; Sabbath; Law of Moses

Why did the Jews ask to speak with the parents of the man he healed?

[9:18]

After Jesus healed the man, the Jews wanted to speak to the man's parents because they did not believe he was born blind. Some scholars think the Jews did not believe the words of the man's neighbors. That is, that they did not think that the man was truly born blind. They also did not believe the witness of the healed man himself.

9:19-23

Why did the parents say their son was "of age"?

[9:21]

The parents said that their son was "of age." Some scholars think the parents simply said their son was no longer a child. That is, he was a man and he was able to answer the Jews' questions for himself. Other scholars think the parents said their son was of the certain age, according to the Jewish law, to give his own answers. According to Jewish laws, a person to give a testimony needed to be thirteen years old. In either case, the parents did not give a direct answer to the Jews who asked them questions.

Advice to Translators: Here, "Jewish law" does not refer to the Law of Moses. Instead, it refers to the laws the Jewish leaders made.

See: Testify (Testimony)

Why did John write that the parents "feared the Jews"?

[9:22]

The parents feared the Jews because they said that anyone who believes that Jesus is the Messiah was no longer able to go to the synagogue. By this time in the life of Jesus, the leaders of the Jews opposed him and the things he taught. These Jews scared the people in a way that the people did not say anything about Jesus, and they gave no answers to direct questions about Jesus (see: 7:13). This caused the parents to have the Jews question their son. The parents did not want to have the Jewish leadership against them.

See: Messiah (Christ); Synagogue

9:24-34

Why did the Pharisees tell the healed man to "give glory to God"?

[9:24]

The Pharisees told the man Jesus healed to "give glory to God" to tell the man that he needed to agree with them that Jesus was a sinner (see: Joshua 7:19). The Pharisees wanted to hear that Jesus was a sinner. They already decided that he was a sinner because he was against the false things they taught.

The man told the Pharisees he did not know if Jesus was a sinner. However, he did know that Jesus healed him, and he knew Jesus healed him.

See: Pharisees; Glory (Glorify); Sin

Why did the Pharisees continue asking the man about his healing?

[9:26]

Some scholars think the Pharisees continued asking the healed man about his healing because they wanted to find out that the man was lying. In this way, they wanted to say the healing and the fact that Jesus did the healing was not true. Some scholars think the man mocked the Pharisees with his answer because he asked them if they wanted to follow Jesus too.

See: Pharisees

How did the Pharisees respond to the man who was healed?

[9:28]

Scholars think an argument began between the Pharisees and the man Jesus healed. They argued about which prophet they followed. The Pharisees did not think that God spoke to Jesus. They chose only to believe in Moses. They did think God spoke to Moses. They said they did not know from where Jesus came.

See: Pharisees; Prophet

Why did the man Jesus healed think the Pharisees' answer was amazing?

[9:30]

The man Jesus healed thought the question of the Pharisees was amazing because never before has anyone given sight to someone who was blind from birth. The man thought that being healed was enough proof that Jesus came from God. He also knew that God did not listen to sinners. But the Pharisees thought they were right about Jesus, because they that he was a sinner. They did not accept the truth about the man's healing. The Pharisees mocked him. Then they sent him out from the synagogue. That is, the man was unable to be a part of the synagogue meetings and activities anymore. The Pharisees already decided they were going to remove anyone from the synagogue who said Jesus was the messiah.

See: Pharisees; Synagogue; Messiah (Christ)

9:35-38

Who did Jesus say he was to the man he healed?

[9:35, 9:37]

Jesus told the healed man that the "Son of Man" spoke to him at that time. The Gospel of John uses the phrase "Son of Man" many times when speaking about Jesus (see: 1:49-51; 3:13-14; 5:27; 8:28).

See: Daniel 7:13

See: Son of Man

9:39-41

What is the "judgment" for which Jesus came into the world?

[9:39]

Jesus spoke earlier about how judgment came into the world (see: 3:17-21). Those who do not believe in Jesus are judged already. Jesus brought good news from God to all people who believe in him. Some Jews believed that they could be at peace with God by following the Law of Moses, they rejected Jesus. The Law of Moses "judged already" those who did not believe in Jesus because the Law of Moses spoke about the coming of another prophet, the Messiah. By rejecting Jesus, they disobeyed the Law of Moses.(see: 5:46-47). Jesus told the Pharisees they were guilty because they following the Law of Moses and were sinners would be judged.

See: Judge (Judgment); Law of Moses; Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Pharisees; Guilty .

John 9:1

General Information:

As Jesus and his disciples are walking along, they come across a blind man.

Now

This word shows that the author is about to describe a new event.

as Jesus passed by

Here "Jesus" is a synecdoche for Jesus and the disciples.

Alternate translation: "as Jesus and his disciples passed by"

John 9:2

who sinned, this man or his parents, so that he was born blind?

This question reflects the ancient Jewish belief that sin caused all illnesses and other deformities. The rabbis also taught that it was possible for a baby to sin while still in the womb. Alternate translation: "Teacher, we know that sin causes a person to be blind. Whose sin caused this man to be born blind? Did this man himself sin, or was it his parents who sinned?"

John 9:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 9:4

We

This "We" includes both Jesus and the disciples he is talking to.

day ... Night

Here "day" and "night" are metaphors. Jesus is comparing the time when people can do God's work to daytime, the time when people normally work, and nighttime to when they cannot do God's work.

John 9:5

in the world

Here the "world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "living among the people of this world"

the light of the world

Here "light" is a metaphor for the true revelation of God.

Alternate translation: "the one who shows what is true, just as light allows people to see what is in the darkness"

John 9:6

made mud with the saliva

Jesus used his fingers to mix the dirt and saliva. Alternate translation: "and used his fingers to mix the dirt and saliva to make mud"

smear the mud on his eyes

"smear the mud on the man's eyes"

John 9:7

wash ... washed

You may need to make explicit that Jesus wanted him to wash the mud off of his eyes in the pool and that that is what the man did.

which is translated "Sent"

A brief stop occurs here in the story. Here John explains to

his readers what "Siloam" means. Alternate translation: "which means 'Sent'"

John 9:8

Is not this the man that used to sit and beg?

This remark appears in the form of a question to express the surprise of the people. Alternate translation: "This man is the one who used to sit and beg!"

John 9:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 9:10

Connecting Statement:

The neighbors of the man who had been blind continue to speak to him.

Then how were your eyes opened?

"Then what caused you to be able to see?" or "How is it that you can see now?"

John 9:11

smear it on my eyes

"used his fingers to cover my eyes with mud." See how you translated a similar phrase in John 9:6.

John 9:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 9:13

They brought the man who used to be blind to the Pharisees

The people insisted that the man go with them to the Pharisees. They did not physically force him to go.

John 9:14

General Information:

This verse tells background information about when Jesus healed the man.

Sabbath day

"Jewish Day of Rest"

John 9:15

Then again the Pharisees asked him

"So the Pharisees also asked him"

John 9:16

he does not keep the Sabbath

This means Jesus does not obey the law about doing no work on the Jewish Day of Rest.

How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that Jesus's signs prove he is not a sinner. Alternate translation: "A sinner can not do such signs!"

signs

This is another word for miracles. "Signs" give evidence that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over the universe.

John 9:17

He is a prophet

"I think he is a prophet"

John 9:18

General Information:

Here John stops the main story. Here he provides background information about the Jews' disbelief.

Now the Jews still did not believe

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the "Jewish leaders" who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "Now the Jewish

leaders still did not believe"

John 9:19

They asked the parents

"They" refers to the Jewish leaders.

John 9:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 9:21

he is an adult

"he is a man" or "he is no longer a child"

John 9:22

General Information:

In this verse there is a stop from the main story. Here John provides background information about the man's parents being afraid of the Jews.

they were afraid of the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the "Jewish leaders" who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "they were afraid of what the Jewish leaders might do to them"

afraid

This refers to the unpleasant feeling a person has when there is a threat of harm to oneself or others.

would confess him to be the Christ

"would say that Jesus is the Christ"

he would be thrown out of the synagogue

Here "be thrown out of the synagogue" is a metaphor for no longer being allowed to go into the synagogue and no longer belonging to the group of people who attend services at the synagogue. Alternate translation: "he would not be allowed to go into the synagogue" or "he would no longer belong to the synagogue"

John 9:23

He is an adult

"he is a man" or "he is no longer a child." See how you translated this in John 9:21.

John 9:24

they called the man

Here, "they" refers to the Jews. (John 9:18)

Give glory to God

This is an idiom that people used when taking an oath.

Alternate translation: "In the presence of God, tell the truth" or "Speak the truth before God"

this man

This refers to Jesus.

John 9:25

that man

This refers to the man who had been blind.

John 9:26

Connecting Statement:

The Jews continue to speak to the man who had been blind. John 9:27

Why do you want to hear it again?

This remark appears in the form of a question to express the man's amazement that the Jewish leaders have asked him to tell them again what happened. Alternate translation: "I am surprised that you want to hear again what happened to me!"

You do not want to become his disciples too, do you?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add irony

to the man's statement. He knows that the Jewish leaders do not want to follow Jesus. Here he ridicules them. Alternate translation: "It sounds like you also want to become his disciples!"

John 9:28

You are his disciple

"You are following Jesus!"

but we are disciples of Moses

The pronoun "we" is exclusive. The Jewish leaders are speaking only of themselves. Alternate translation: "but we are following Moses"

John 9:29

We know that God has spoken to Moses

"We are sure that God has spoken to Moses"

we do not know where this one is from

Here the Jewish leaders are referring to Jesus. They imply that he has no authority to call disciples. Alternate translation: "we do not know where he comes from or where he gets his authority"

John 9:30

that you do not know where he is from

The man is surprised that the Jewish leaders question Jesus's authority when they know he has the power to heal. Alternate translation: "that you do not know where he gets his authority"

John 9:31

does not listen to sinners ... he listens to him

"does not answer the prayers of sinners ... God answers his prayers"

John 9:32

Connecting Statement:

The man who had been blind continues speaking to the Jews.

Since the world began

"Since the beginning of time" or "As far back as anyone can remember"

it has never been heard that anyone opened

This is a passive statement. You can translate it in an active form. Alternate translation: "no one has ever heard of anyone who healed a man who was blind from birth"

John 9:33

If this man were not from God, he could do nothing

This sentence uses a double negative pattern. Alternate translation: "Only a man from God could do something like that"

John 9:34

You were completely born in sins, and you are teaching us?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. It also implies that the man was born blind because of the sins of his parents. Alternate translation: "You were born as a result of your parents' sins. You are not qualified to teach us!"

they threw him out

"they threw him out of the synagogue"

John 9:35

General Information:

Jesus finds the man whom he healed ([John 9:1-7](#)) and begins to speak to him and the crowd.

believe in the Son of Man

This means to "believe in Jesus," to believe that he is the Son of God, to trust him as Savior, and live in a way that honors him.

the Son of Man

Here the reader needs to understand that Jesus was speaking as if "the Son of Man" were another person. The man who had been born blind did not realize that Jesus was speaking of himself when he spoke of "the Son of Man." You should translate so that the man does not learn that Jesus is the Son of Man until verse 37.

John 9:36

General Information:

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John 9:37

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 9:38

General Information:

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John 9:39

came into this world

The "world" is a metonym for "the people who live in the world." Alternate translation: "came to live among the people of this world"

so that those who do not see may see

Here "seeing" is a metaphor for being able to understand spiritual things. Alternate translation: "so that those who do not see spiritually may see spiritually"

so that those who see

When Jesus speaks here of those that see, he is speaking of those who think that they understand spiritual things. Alternate translation: "so that those who think that they see spiritually"

may become blind

Here "blind" is a metaphor for not being able to understand spiritual things. Alternate translation: "may never see spiritually"

John 9:40

and asked him, "Are we also blind?"

Here "blind" is a metaphor for not understanding spiritual things. The Pharisees do not believe that they are spiritually blind, but they realize that Jesus might say that they are spiritually blind, so they use this question to challenge him. Alternate translation: "and said to him, 'Are you saying that we are blind?'" or "and said to him, 'You seem to be saying that we, too, are blind.'"

John 9:41

If you were blind, you would have no sin

Blindness is a metaphor for not understanding spiritual things, and having sin is a metonym for being guilty of sin. Alternate translation: "If you truly were spiritually blind, you would not be guilty of your sin"

but now you say, 'We see,' so your sin remains

Here "seeing" is a metaphor for understanding spiritual things, and "sin remaining" is a metonym for continuing to be guilty of one's sin. Alternate translation: "but since you think that you understand spiritual truth, you remain guilty of your sin"

John 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Blasphemy

When a person claims that he is God or that God has told him to speak when God has not told him to speak, this is called blasphemy. The law of Moses commanded the Israelites to kill blasphemers by stoning them to death. When Jesus said, "I and the Father are one," the Jews thought he was blaspheming, so they took up stones to kill him. (See: blasphemy and lawofmoses)

Important metaphors in this chapter

Sheep

Jesus spoke of people as sheep because sheep do not see well, they do not think well, they often walk away from those who care for them, and they cannot defend themselves when other animals attack them. God's people also rebel against him and do not know when they are doing wrong.

Sheep pen

A sheep pen was a space with a stone wall around it in which shepherds would keep their sheep. Once they were inside the sheep pen, the sheep could not run away, and animals and thieves could not easily get inside to kill or steal them.

Laying down and taking up life

Jesus speaks of his life as if it were a physical object that he could lay down on the ground, a metaphor for dying, or pick up again, a metaphor for becoming alive again.

Links:

[John 10:1 Notes](#)

John 10

10:1-6

Why did Jesus teach about sheep and the sheep pen?

[10:1]

Jesus spoke about sheep and a sheep pen. Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about the leaders of the Jews, because they were supposed to be the shepherds of Israel (see: Ezekiel 34:1-10). They think Jesus was speaking about how the Jewish leaders treated the blind man who had been healed. They rejected the work of God through Jesus, and they rejected the things the man said and expelled him from the synagogue. Jesus spoke about the Jewish leaders being the thieves and robbers when he taught. In the same way sheep follow the shepherd when he spoke, so Christians follow the things Jesus said. When they did this, they obeyed God. In the same way the thief and robber avoided the door when they tried to get into the sheep pen, the Jewish leaders tried to get to God in some other way than by Jesus. John said Jesus is the door in this passage.

In scripture, when someone does not understand, it is said that they cannot see. This is a type of metaphor. They pharisees did not understand the things Jesus taught, therefore John said they could not see (see: 9:40-41).

See: Shepherd; Synagogue; Metaphor; Pharisees

Advice to Translators: A pen is a place where animals live. In this passage, a door can also be translated as gate.

10:7-13

What did Jesus mean when he said, "I am the gate of the sheep"?

[10:7]

As the shepherd (see: 10:1-5), Jesus led his sheep out to pasture. As the gate of the sheep, scholars think Jesus spoke that he protected the sheep. John wanted to say that those who believe in Jesus will live together with God in heaven forever. This is the only way for someone to be at peace with God (see: 14:6).

Advice to Translators: In this passage, a gate is often translated door. A pasture is a field where animals eat.

See: Shepherd; Door (Metaphor); Heaven

Who were the thieves and robbers "who came before"?

[10:8]

Scholars think Jesus was speaking about false prophets and teachers who said that someone could be at peace with God by obeying the Law of Moses. The false teachers only served themselves, and they did not serve God (see: Luke 11:39-46). They rejected the things Jesus taught.

See: False Prophet; False Teacher; Law of Moses; Serve

Why did Jesus state "I am the gate" a second time?

[10:9]

Jesus was stating very clearly that he is the only way for his sheep to enter into a place of safety, and the only way they

could go out to feed in the pastures. This was a metaphor. John wanted to say that Jesus was the only way that someone could be at peace with God and live with Jesus in heaven forever.

Advice to Translators: In this passage, a gate is often translated door. A pasture is a field where animals eat.

See: Door (Metaphor); Heaven

What did it mean to have life abundantly?

[10:10]

Jesus said that those who believe in Jesus have life abundantly. He wanted to say that those who believe in Jesus more than just that people will have safety and enough to eat and drink. They will also live together with God in heaven forever.

How was Jesus the “good shepherd”?

[10:11]

Some scholars think Jesus contrasted himself with people who were hired to care for the sheep. They think Jesus was saying the “good shepherd” loved the sheep in a different way than people hired to care for sheep. Those who were hired would run from danger, but the “good shepherd” stayed to defend and care for the sheep (see: 1 Samuel 17:34-36). Those who owned the sheep loved them, while those who worked for other people did not love the sheep.

Other scholars think Jesus was the “good shepherd” because he was the shepherd who had come from God. Jesus, the good shepherd died for his sheep. This was a metaphor about people who believe in Jesus getting to live together with God in heaven (see: 1 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 13:20).

See: Shepherd; Atonement (Atonement); Metaphor

10:14-18

Why did Jesus say, “I am the good shepherd” a second time?

[10:14]

When Jesus spoke of himself as the “good shepherd” the second time, he spoke about how close he was to his sheep. That is, Jesus was close to all those who believe in him and they know him (see: 17:9-10).

See: Shepherd

Who were the sheep that were from a different sheep pen?

[10:16]

Scholars think Jesus was telling the Jews that there were also sheep to be gathered from the Gentile nations (see: 11:51-52; Romans 1:16; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:11-22). People from all nations were to be gathered under one shepherd, Jesus.

See: Gentile; Shepherd

What did Jesus mean, when speaking about laying down his life, that he would “take it again”?

[10:17]

When Jesus said, “I lay down my life so that I may take it again” he was telling people that he would die. He also said that he would be resurrected. This was what he planned. He also said that the Holy Spirit would begin to do things in a new way (see: 7:37-39; 17:5; Acts 2:1-4).

Jesus also told people that God gave him permission to lay down his life and to take it up again. Everything that happened to Jesus was part of God’s plan. Even though Jesus was beaten and nailed to the cross by men, none of it happened outside of God’s plan (see: Acts 2:22-24)

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Holy Spirit; Cross; Will of God

10:19-21

Why were the Jewish leaders divided?

[10:19]

Some of the Jewish leaders decided to reject everything about Jesus and who he said he was. Other leaders were not so quick to reject him, because no one had ever done the miracles Jesus did. Those leaders could not accept that a man doing the kind of miracles Jesus performed could be possessed by a demon.

See: Miracle; Demon

10:22-30

What was the Festival of Dedication?

[10:22]

See: Festival of Dedication

Why did the Jews want Jesus to speak “openly” about who he is?

[10:24]

The Jews wanted Jesus to speak openly about who he is. Scholars think the Jewish leaders were attempting to trap Jesus into saying something for which they could accuse him, and therefore further reject him. Perhaps the Jewish leaders were afraid of losing their positions as religious leaders (see: 11:48).

What did Jesus mean when he told the Pharisees, “You are not among my sheep”?

[10:26]

When Jesus told the Pharisees they were not his sheep, he was saying that God had not chosen them to be Jesus' sheep, that is to be Christians (see: 6:44; 12:37). The sheep that belonged to Jesus showed that they belonged by obeying him. Most of the Jewish leaders only rejected Jesus, the things he taught, and that he was God.

See: Pharisees; Shepherd

What are the great promises Jesus gave to those who were his sheep?

[10:28]

Jesus promised something to those who were his sheep, that those who believe in Jesus. He promised that they would live together with God in heaven forever (see: 3:16; 17:3). He also told those who believed in him that no one could ever “snatch” (ἀρπάξω/g0726) them out of the Father's hand. This was a metaphor.

Some scholars think that he wanted to say that Christians did not need to fear being mocked or accused by the Jewish leaders because they believe in Jesus. Other scholars think that he wanted to say that once someone believes in Jesus, nothing can stop them from living together with God in heaven forever. This promise was certain and could not be changed (see: 6:37-40). Other scholars think John wanted to say that God protects people. They think the only thing that can stop a Christian from living together with God in heaven forever is a Christian choosing to reject God and not wanting to live with God forever.

When Jesus said this, everyone knew that Jesus taught people that he is God.

See: Shepherd; Heaven; Metaphor; Eternal Security

What did it mean that the Father and the Son are one?

[10:30]

God the Father and God the Son are the same. Some scholars think they are perfectly “one” in the sense that they do the same types of things. The things God the Father did, Jesus did too (see: 5:19). This did not mean that God the Father and God the Son were one person. Other scholars think John wanted to say that God the Father and Jesus wanted the same things to happen or that they were both perfectly good (see: 1:1-2).

See: God the Father; Son of God; Trinity; Jesus is God

10:31-39

Why did the Pharisees accuse Jesus of saying that he is God?

[10:33]

The Pharisees knew that Jesus was claiming to be God. Because they rejected Jesus, they accused him of blasphemy. According to the Law of Moses, when someone blasphemed, that person was to be punished and killed.

See: Pharisees; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Law of Moses

Why did Jesus use the words from scripture which say, “you are gods”?

[10:34]

Jesus used the words from scripture which say, “you are gods” to show that human leaders, such as kings and judges, could be called gods (see: Psalm 82:1-8). They were not God, but perhaps John wanted to say that they did something that only God could do, judge people. Or perhaps they did things for God.

See: Judge (Judgment)

What did it mean that “scripture cannot be broken”?

[10:35]

John said that “scripture cannot be broken.” This was a type of metaphor. Some scholars think Jesus was saying the scriptures are always right because God wrote. Because of this, the scripture cannot be wrong or change. Jesus did not reject the Law of Moses (see: Matthew 5:17-18).

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses

Why did Jesus tell the Jewish leaders to “believe the works”?

[10:38]

Jesus did not expect the Jewish leaders to believe when he told them who he is. For this reason, Jesus told the leaders of the Jews to “believe the works.” That is, they should believe him because of the things he did. He did things that only God could do and he did things that honored God.

Why did Jesus leave the area and go back across the Jordan?

[10:40]

Jesus left and went back across the Jordan River. Perhaps he did this because people were trying to attack Jesus. Therefore, he went back across the Jordan River where John baptized people (see: 5:18; 8:37; 10:31).

See Map: Jordan River

See: Baptize (Baptism)

John 10:1

General Information:

Jesus begins to speak in parables.

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to speak to the Pharisees. This is the same

part of the story which began in John 9:35.

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

sheep pen

This is a fenced area where a shepherd keeps his sheep.

a thief and a robber

This is the use of two words with similar meanings to add emphasis.

John 10:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 10:3

The gatekeeper opens for him

"The gatekeeper opens the gate for the shepherd"

The gatekeeper

This is a hired man who watches the gate of the sheep pen at night while the shepherd is away.

The sheep hear his voice

"The sheep hear the shepherd's voice"

John 10:4

he goes ahead of them

"he walks in front of them"

for they know his voice

"because they recognize his voice"

John 10:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 10:6

they did not understand

Possible meanings: 1) "the disciples did not understand" or 2) "the crowd did not understand."

this parable

This is an illustration from the work of shepherds, using metaphors. The "shepherd" is a metaphor for Jesus. The "sheep" represent those who follow Jesus, and the "strangers" are the Jewish leaders, including the Pharisees, who try to deceive the people.

John 10:7

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to explain the meaning of the parables he had spoken.

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

I am the gate of the sheep

Here "gate" is a metaphor that means Jesus provides access into the sheepfold where God's people dwell in his presence. Alternate translation: "I am like the gate that the sheep use to enter into the sheepfold"

John 10:8

Everyone who came before me

This refers to other teachers who have taught the people, including the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "All of the teachers who came without my authority"

a thief and a robber

These words are metaphors. Jesus calls those teachers "a thief and a robber" because their teachings were false, and they were trying to lead God's people while not understanding the truth. As a result, they deceived the people.

John 10:9

I am the gate

Here "gate" is a metaphor. By referring to himself as "the gate," Jesus is showing that he offers a true way to enter the

kingdom of God. Alternate translation: "I myself am like that gate"

pasture

The word "pasture" means a grassy area where sheep eat.

John 10:10

does not come except to steal and kill and destroy

In some languages it is more natural to use a positive statement. Alternate translation: "comes only to steal, kill, and destroy"

steal and kill and destroy

Here the implied metaphor is "sheep," which represents God's people. Alternate translation: "steal and kill and destroy the sheep"

so that they will have life

The word "they" refers to the sheep. "Life" refers to eternal life. Alternate translation: "so that they will really live, lacking nothing"

John 10:11

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues his parable about the good shepherd.

I am the good shepherd

Here "good shepherd" is a metaphor that represents Jesus.

Alternate translation: "I am like a good shepherd"

lays down his life

To lay down something means to give up control of it. To lay down one's life is a mild way to refer to dying. Alternate translation: "dies"

John 10:12

The hired servant

The "hired servant" is a metaphor that represents the Jewish leaders and teachers. Alternate translation: "The one who is like a hired servant"

abandons the sheep

Here the word "sheep" is a metaphor that represents God's people. Like a hired servant who abandons the sheep, Jesus says that the Jewish leaders and teachers do not care for God's people.

John 10:13

does not care for the sheep

Here the word "sheep" is a metaphor that represents God's people. Jesus says that the Jewish leaders and teachers are like a hired servant who abandons the sheep, and they do not care for God's people.

John 10:14

I am the good shepherd

Here the "good shepherd" is a metaphor for Jesus. Alternate translation: "I am like a good shepherd"

John 10:15

The Father knows me, and I know the Father

God the Father and God the Son know each other unlike anyone else knows them. "Father" is an important title for God.

I lay down my life for the sheep

This is a mild way for Jesus to say that he will die to protect his sheep. Alternate translation: "I die for the sheep"

John 10:16

I have other sheep

Here "other sheep" is a metaphor for followers of Jesus who are not Jews.

one flock and one shepherd

Here "flock" and "shepherd" are metaphors. All of Jesus's followers, Jews and non-Jews, will be like one flock of sheep. He will be like a shepherd who cares for all of them.

John 10:17

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes speaking to the crowd.

This is why the Father loves me: I lay down my life

God's eternal plan was for God the Son to give his life to pay for the sins of humanity. Jesus's death on the cross reveals the intense love of the Son for the Father and of the Father for the Son.

Father

This is an important title for God.

loves

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.

I lay down my life so that I may take it again

This is a mild way for Jesus to say he will die and then will become alive again. Alternate translation: "I allow myself to die in order that I may bring myself back to life"

John 10:18

I lay it down of myself

The reflexive pronoun "myself" is used here to emphasize that Jesus lays down his own life. No one takes it from him. Alternate translation: "I myself lay it down"

I have received this command from my Father

"This is what my Father has commanded me to do." The word "Father" is an important title for God.

John 10:19

Connecting Statement:

These verses tell how the Jews responded to what Jesus had said.

John 10:20

Why do you listen to him?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize the point that the people should not listen to Jesus. Alternate translation: "Do not listen to him!"

John 10:21

Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "Certainly a demon cannot cause a blind man to see!" or "Certainly a demon cannot give sight to blind people!"

John 10:22

General Information:

During the Festival of Dedication, some Jews begin to question Jesus. Verses 22 and 23 give background information about the setting of the story.

It was winter

Winter is the coldest time of the year. You may use your language's term for the coldest season if your reader understands that in Israel this was in December, not in June.

Festival of the Dedication

This is an eight-day winter holiday Jews use to remember a miracle where God made a small amount of oil remain lit in

a lampstand for eight days. They lit the lampstand to dedicate the Jewish temple to God. To dedicate something is to promise to use it for a special purpose.

John 10:23

Jesus was walking in the temple

The area where Jesus was walking was actually a courtyard that was outside the temple building. Alternate translation: "Jesus was walking in the temple courtyard"

porch

This is a structure attached to the entrance of a building; it has a roof and it may or may not have walls.

John 10:24

Then the Jews surrounded him

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "Then the Jewish leaders surrounded him"

hold us doubting

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "keep us wondering" or "keep us from knowing for sure"

John 10:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to respond to the Jews.

in the name of my Father

Here "name" is a metonym for the power of God. Here "Father" is an important title for God. Jesus performed miracles through his Father's power and authority.

Alternate translation: "through my Father's power" or "with my Father's power"

these testify concerning me

His miracles offer proof about him like a person who testifies would offer proof in a court of law. Alternate translation: "these offer proof concerning me"

John 10:26

not my sheep

The word "sheep" is a metaphor for the followers of Jesus.

Alternate translation: "not my followers" or "not my disciples"

John 10:27

My sheep hear my voice

The word "sheep" is a metaphor for the followers of Jesus. The metaphor of Jesus as the "shepherd" is also implied.

Alternate translation: "Just as sheep obey the voice of their true shepherd, my followers heed my voice"

John 10:28

no one will snatch them out of my hand

Here the word "hand" is a metonym that represents the protective care of Jesus. Alternate translation: "no one will steal them away from me" or "they will remain secure forever in my care"

John 10:29

My Father, who has given them to me

The word "Father" is an important title for God.

snatch them out of the hand of the Father

The word "hand" is a metonym that represents God's possession and protective care. Alternate translation: "steal them from my Father"

John 10:30

I and the Father are one

Here "are one" means they are completely united and alike.

It does not mean they are the same person. Alternate translation: "I and the Father are completely united" or "I and the Father are exactly alike"

Father

The word "Father" is an important title for God.

John 10:31

Then the Jews took up stones again

The word "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "Then the Jewish leaders started picking up stones again"

John 10:32

Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father

Jesus performed the miracles by the power of God. The word "Father" is an important title for God.

For which of those works are you stoning me?

This question uses irony. Jesus knows the Jewish leaders do not want to stone him because he has done good works.

John 10:33

The Jews answered him

The word "Jews" is a synecdoche that represents the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish opponents replied" or "The Jewish leaders answered him"

making yourself God

"claiming to be God"

John 10:34

Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods"?"

Jesus uses a question to emphasize that the Jewish leaders should know that this is written in scripture. Alternate translation: "You should already know that it is written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods.""

You are gods

Here Jesus quotes a scripture where God calls his followers "gods," perhaps because he has chosen them to represent him on earth.

John 10:35

the word of God came

Jesus speaks of God's message as though it were a person who moved toward those who heard it. Alternate translation: "God spoke his message"

the scripture cannot be broken

Possible meanings are 1) "no one can change the scripture" or 2) "the scripture will always be true."

John 10:36

do you say to him whom the Father set apart and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

Jesus used this question to rebuke his opponents for saying that he was blaspheming when he called himself "the Son of God." Alternate translation: "you should not say to the very one whom the Father set apart to send into the world,

'You are blaspheming,' when I say that I am the Son of God!"

You are blaspheming

"You are insulting God." Jesus's opponents understood that when said that he is the Son of God, he was implying that he is equal with God.

Father ... Son of God

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

John 10:37

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes responding to the Jews.

Father

This is an important title for God.

believe me

Here the word "believe" means to accept or trust what Jesus said is true.

John 10:38

believe in the works

Here "believe in" is to acknowledge that the works Jesus does are from the Father.

the Father is in me and that I am in the Father

These are idioms that express the close personal relationship between God and Jesus. Alternate translation: "my Father and I are completely joined together as one"

John 10:39

went away out of their hand

The word "hand" is a metonym that represents the custody or possession of the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "got away from them again"

John 10:40

beyond the Jordan

Jesus had been on the west side of the Jordan River.

Alternate translation: "to the east side of the Jordan River"

he stayed there

Jesus remained on the east side of Jordan for a short period of time. Alternate translation: "Jesus stayed there for several days"

John 10:41

John indeed did no signs, but all the things that John has said about this man are true

"It is true that John did no signs, but he certainly did speak the truth about this man, who does signs."

signs

These are miracles that prove that something is true or that give someone credibility.

John 10:42

believed in

Here "believed in" means accepted or trusted what Jesus said was true.

Chapter 11

John 11 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they

are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Passover

After Jesus made Lazarus become alive again, the Jewish leaders were trying hard to kill him, so he started traveling from place to place in secret. Now the Pharisees knew that he would probably come to Jerusalem for the Passover because God had commanded all Jewish men to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem, so they planned to catch him and kill him then. (See: passover)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"One man dies for the people"

The law of Moses commanded the priests to kill animals so that God would forgive the people's sins. The high priest Caiaphas said, "It is better for you that one man dies for the people than that the whole nation perishes" ([John 11:50](#)). He said this because he loved his "place" and "nation" ([John 11:48](#)) more than he loved the God who had made Lazarus become alive again. He wanted Jesus to die so that the Romans would not destroy the temple and Jerusalem, but God wanted Jesus to die so that he could forgive all of his people's sins.

Condition that is contrary to fact

When Martha said, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died," she was speaking of a situation that could have happened but did not happen. Jesus had not come sooner, and her brother died.

Links:

[John 11:1 Notes](#)

John 11

11:1-16

Who were Lazarus, Mary, and Martha?

[11:1]

Lazarus, Mary, and Martha were Jesus' close friends. Both John and Luke wrote about their friendship (See: 11:1-12:11; Luke 10:38-42).

See Map: Bethany

Why did Jesus say, "This illness does not lead to death"?

[11:4]

Jesus said, "This illness does not lead to death." Jesus was not saying that Lazarus will not die from his sickness. In fact, he did die. He was dead for four days. He meant that Lazarus would not remain dead. How did the death of Lazarus glorify God?

Scholars think Lazarus died so that God could show his glory to people. God made his power known to people by bringing Lazarus back to life after he died. God made his love and compassion known to people by doing this. God glorified Jesus through this miracle.

See: Glory (Glorify); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Love; Miracle

Why did Jesus wait two days before travelling to visit Mary and Martha?

[11:6]

Jesus waited for two days before traveling to visit Mary and Martha for two reasons. Jesus wanted to give time for people to know Lazarus was dead. Perhaps Jesus wanted to make it known that he had the power to bring Lazarus back to life. He controlled what happens after people die. He wanted everyone to know that the miracle did not have any other possible reasons for occurring. Jesus wanted Mary and Martha to know he loved them very much. He wanted to help them to trust him.

See: Miracle

Why did Jesus use the metaphors of day and night?

[11:9, 11:10]

Many scholars think Jesus used the metaphor of the day to speak of his ministry on the earth. These scholars think Jesus told his disciples he was safe because he did the things his Father wanted him to do. John spoke about Jesus being the "light of the world" (see: 9:5). These scholars think Jesus used the metaphor of the night to speak of when Jesus returned to heaven.

See: Metaphor; Disciple; God the Father; Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Heaven

Why did Jesus say, "Lazarus has fallen asleep"?

[11:11]

The New Testament uses the metaphor of sleep to mean someone died (see: Matthew 9:24; Acts 7:60; 1 Thessalonians 4:13). This was a common metaphor during the time of the New Testament but not during the time of the Old Testament and for the Jewish people. This is why the disciples did not know Jesus said that Lazarus was dead when the disciple said he was sleeping.

See: New Testament; Metaphor; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Disciple

Why did Thomas say, “that we may die with him”?

[11:16]

When Thomas said “let us also go that we may die with him,” people knew that he was being courageous and devoted to Jesus. He knew the Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus. Perhaps Thomas thought the disciples would be killed with Jesus.

See: Disciple

11:17-37

Why does John say Lazarus was in the tomb for four days?

[11:17]

John said that Lazarus was in the tomb for four days so that people would know that Lazarus was dead and not just sick. At this time, the Jews thought the soul of a dead person remained near a grave for three days. It did this hoping to return to the body. The body began to decay after four days, and the soul no longer remained with the body. Some scholars think Jesus did not go immediately to Bethany because he wanted to bring more honor to God. They think Jesus wanted people to know that he could make the dead live and that he could stop decay and remove uncleanness.

See: Soul; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Clean and Unclean

Why did Martha say, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died”?

[11:21]

Martha said, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” She knew that Jesus could have saved her brother and she was very sad because he died. Martha’s also knew God would do whatever Jesus asked him to do. Perhaps she thought good things would happen because Lazarus died. Martha knew Lazarus would live again at the last day.

See: Day of Judgment; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say, “I am the resurrection and the life”?

[11:25]

Jesus said “I am.” Jesus wanted people to know that they could not come back to life after they died without him. Only by believing in Jesus can someone be at peace with God and live together with God in heaven forever. Some scholars think Jesus spoke these words to Martha because he wanted her to trust him completely. They think Jesus spoke these things so that Martha would know that he had the ability to do these things.

See: Yahweh (I am); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Martha say, “Yes, Lord”?

[11:27]

Martha said, “Yes, Lord” so that people would know that she knew Jesus was the messiah.

See: John 20:30-31; Matthew 16:16

See: Lord; Messiah (Christ)

Why was Jesus “deeply moved”?

[11:33]

When Jesus was “deeply moved”(ἐμβριμάομαι/g1690), he was angered. Some scholars think Jesus was angered because of the problems sin caused in the world. That is, it caused sickness, disease, and death which causes great sorrow. Other scholars think the people grieving caused Jesus to be angry because they did not have hope. They did not believe in Jesus because if they did, they would know that they would live together with God in heaven forever. They would have hope.

See: Sin; Hope; Heaven

In what way had “Jesus wept”?

[11:35]

John said that Jesus wept. Scholars think Jesus wept silently, but he was very sad. His tears made known his genuine sympathy. This was unlike certain people in ancient Israel who were paid to cry after people died. They think Jesus felt sympathy for both Mary and Martha for their great loss. The Jews at the tomb thought Jesus wept because of his great love for Lazarus.

Advice to Translators: Sympathy means that someone feels sorrow for someone else because something bad has happened to them.

11:38-44

How did Martha see the “glory of God”?

[11:40]

Martha saw the power of God when Jesus made Lazarus alive again. Scholars think whenever Jesus made known the power of God, it was to glorify God. Scholars also think that all those seeing Lazarus made alive again saw a miracle. Also, those who believed in Jesus saw the miracle in the same way as the glory of God was made known to them.

See: Glory (Glorify); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Miracle

What did Jesus’ public prayer make known to the crowd?

[11:41, 11:42]

Scholars think that Jesus’ prayer made the crowd know that he was sent by God the Father and that he all the things that God the Father told him to do. They think Jesus’ wanted some of the crowd to see him pray and believe that God truly sent

Jesus into the world.

See: Pray (Prayer); God the Father

How did Jesus make Lazarus alive again?

[11:43]

Jesus made Lazarus alive again by calling his name. He commanded Lazarus to come out of the tomb. Some scholars think the command of Jesus to Lazarus will be the same command given for all those who die believing in Jesus. Jesus will call their name and command them to come out of their graves on the last day (see: 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Tomb; Day of Judgment; Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Lazarus have clothes on his hands and feet?

[11:44]

In ancient Israel, a dead body was wrapped in a large sheet of cloth before being buried. They tied the feet together at the ankles with another cloth. And they tied the arms to the body with linen strips. These wrappings made it difficult for Lazarus to move and walk.

11:45-57

Why did John say that Caiaphas was high priest for “that year”?

[11:49]

When John said that Caiaphas was the high priest for “that year,” he meant that Caiaphas was high priest during this specific year. That is, the year of Jesus’ death and resurrection. It did not mean Caiaphas was high priest for only one year (see: 18:12-14).

See: High Priest; Resurrect (Resurrection)

How did Caiaphas prophecy that Jesus would die?

[11:50]

John wrote that Caiaphas said that one man should die for the nation was a prophecy. John meant that God gave Caiaphas those words to speak. Caiaphas did not know he prophesied about Jesus dying. They think Caiaphas was only worried that Jesus or his followers might threaten the Sadducees in some way. Caiaphas did not want this because he thought this would cause the nation to “perish”(ἀπόλλυμι/g0622). The Romans allowed the Jews to have the temple and worship God. However, the Jews could not cause any problems for the Romans. Caiaphas thought that Jesus or his followers might cause fighting among the Jews. This would cause problems for the Romans, and they would destroy the Jewish temple and nation for this.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Sadducees; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Temple; Worship

What did the words, “the children of God who are scattered would be gathered together into one” mean?

[11:52]

At that time John wrote, there were many Jews who believed that Jesus was the messiah. The persecution of Christians caused them to go to other countries. God promised that he will bring them back together (see: Isaiah 43:5-7; Ezekiel 34:11-12). Some scholars think John also spoke about the Gentiles as well as the Jews (see: 12:32; Ephesians 2:11-18).

See: Children of God; Messiah (Christ); Persecute (Persecution) ; Gentile

Where was the town of Ephraim?

[11:54]

See map: Ephraim

What was the “Passover of the Jews”?

[11:55]

See: Passover

Why did John write that they needed “to purify themselves”?

[[11:55]

The Law of Moses has instructions for Jews who were unclean. It took seven days for someone to become clean. At the end of the seven days, the one who was unclean was pronounced clean. So, many Jews went up to Jerusalem early so they might be made clean before the Passover began (see: Numbers 9:6-12; 19:11-12).

See: Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean; Passover

John 11:1

General Information:

These verses introduce the story of Lazarus and give background information about him and his sister Mary.

John 11:2

It was Mary who anointed the Lord ... her hair

As John introduces Mary, the sister of Martha, he also shares information concerning what would later happen in the story.

John 11:3

sent for Jesus

"asked Jesus to come"

love

Here "love" refers to brotherly love, a natural, human love between friends or relatives.

John 11:4

This sickness is not to death

Jesus implies that he knows what will happen related to Lazarus and his sickness. Alternate translation: "Death will not be the final result of this sickness"

death

This refers to physical death.

but instead it is for the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified by it

Jesus implies that he knows what the outcome will be.

Alternate translation: "but the purpose is that the people might see how great God is because of what his power will allow me to do"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

John 11:5

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus

This is background information.

John 11:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 11:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 11:8

Rabbi, right now the Jews are trying to stone you, and you are going back there again?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize that the disciples do not want Jesus to go to Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Teacher, you surely do not want to go back there! The Jews were trying to stone you the last time you were there!"

the Jews

This is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

John 11:9

Are there not twelve hours of light in a day?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "You know that the day has twelve hours of light!"

If someone walks in the daytime, he will not stumble, because he sees by the light of this world

People who walk in the light of the day can see well and do not stumble. "Light" is a metaphor for "truth." Jesus is implying that people who live according to truth will be able to successfully do the things that God wants them to do.

John 11:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.

if he walks at night

Here "night" is a metaphor that refers to one's walking without God's light.

the light is not in him

Possible meanings are 1) "he cannot see" or "he does not have God's light."

John 11:11

Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep

"Has fallen asleep" is an idiom that means "has begun to sleep" or "is sleeping." Jesus meant that Lazarus had died, but the disciples did not understand this. So it is important to keep the idea of sleeping in the translation.

but I am going so that I may wake him out of sleep

"Wake him out of sleep" is an idiom that means "cause

someone who is sleeping to wake up." Jesus meant that he was going to bring Lazarus back to life. But his disciples did not understand this. So it is important to keep the idea of waking him up in the translation. Alternate translation: "but I am going there to wake him up"

John 11:12

if he has fallen asleep

The disciples misunderstand Jesus to mean that Lazarus is resting and will recover.

John 11:13

General Information:

In this verse there is a stop in the story. Here John comments on the disciples' misunderstanding about what Jesus meant when he said Lazarus was asleep.

John 11:14

Then Jesus said to them plainly

"So Jesus told them in words that they could understand"

John 11:15

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.

for your sakes

"for your benefit"

that I was not there so that you may believe

"that I was not there. Because of this you will learn to trust me more"

John 11:16

who was called Didymus

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom they called Didymus"

Didymus

This is a male name that means "twin."

John 11:17

General Information:

Jesus is now in Bethany. These verses give background information about the setting and about what has happened before Jesus arrived.

he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "he learned that people had put Lazarus in a tomb four days before"

John 11:18

fifteen stadia away

"about three kilometers away." A "stadium" is 185 meters.

John 11:19

about their brother

Lazarus was their younger brother. Alternate translation: "about their younger brother"

John 11:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 11:21

my brother would not have died

Lazarus was the younger brother. Alternate translation: "my younger brother would still be alive"

John 11:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 11:23

Your brother will rise again

Lazarus was the younger brother. Alternate translation:
"Your younger brother will become alive again"

John 11:24

he will rise again

"he will become alive again"

John 11:25

I am the resurrection and the life

The abstract nouns "resurrection" and "life" can be stated
as verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "I am the one who
raises those who die and causes them to live again"

he who believes in me, even if he dies, will live

"even a person who dies will live forever, if he believes in
me"

John 11:26

whoever lives and believes in me will never die

"those who live and trust in me will never be separated
eternally from God" or "those who live and trust in me will
be spiritually alive with God forever"

will never die

Here "die" refers to spiritual death.

John 11:27

She said to him

"Martha said to Jesus"

Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God ... coming into
the world

Martha believes that Jesus is Lord, the Christ (the Messiah),
the Son of God.

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

John 11:28

she went away and called her sister Mary

Mary is the younger sister of Martha. Alternate translation:
"she went away and called her younger sister Mary"

Teacher

This is a title referring to Jesus.

is calling for you

"is asking that you come"

John 11:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 11:30

Now Jesus had not yet come into the village

Here John provides a brief break in the story to give
background information regarding the location of Jesus.

John 11:31

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 11:32

fell down at his feet

Mary lay down or knelt at the feet of Jesus to show respect.
my brother would not have died

Lazarus was Mary's younger brother. See how you
translated this in [John 11:21]

John 11:33

he was deeply moved in his spirit and was troubled

John combines these phrases that have similar meanings to
express the intense emotional distress and possible anger
that Jesus experienced. Alternate translation: "he was
greatly upset"

John 11:34

Where have you laid him

This is a milder way of asking, "Where have you buried
him?"

John 11:35

Jesus wept

"Jesus began to cry" or "Jesus started crying"

John 11:36

loved

This refers to brotherly love or human love for a friend or
family member.

John 11:37

Could not this man, who opened the eyes of a blind man, also have
made this man not die?

This remark appears in the form of a question to express
the Jews' surprise that Jesus did not heal Lazarus. Alternate
translation: "He could heal a man who was blind, so he
should have been able to heal this man so he would not
have died!" or "Since he did not keep this man from dying,
maybe he did not really heal the man who was born blind,
as they say he did!"

opened the eyes

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "healed the eyes"

John 11:38

Now it was a cave, and a stone lay against it

John pauses the story briefly to describe the tomb where
the people had buried Lazarus.

John 11:39

Martha, the sister of Lazarus

Martha and Mary were older sisters of Lazarus. Alternate
translation: "Martha, the older sister of Lazarus"

by this time the body will be decaying

"by this time there will be a bad smell" or "the body is
already stinking"

John 11:40

Did I not say to you that, if you believed, you would see the glory of
God?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add
emphasis to the point that God is about to do something
wonderful. Alternate translation: "I told you that if you
trusted me, you would see what God can do!"

John 11:41

Jesus lifted up his eyes

This is an idiom that means to look up. Alternate
translation: "Jesus looked up toward heaven"

Father, I thank you that you listened to me

Jesus prays directly to the Father so that others around him
will hear his prayer. Alternate translation: "Father, I thank
you that you have heard me" or "Father, I thank you that
you have heard my prayer"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 11:42

that you have sent me

Jesus had authority to teach the people because God the
Father had sent him to do that. Also where the Father sent
Jesus can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "that I am
here because you have sent me to them"

John 11:43

After he had said this
"After Jesus had prayed"
he cried out with a loud voice
"he shouted"

John 11:44

his feet and hands were bound with cloths, and his face was bound about with a cloth

A burial custom of this time was to wrap the dead body with long strips of linen cloth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone had wrapped strips of cloth around his hands and feet. They had also tied a cloth around his face"

Jesus said to them

The word "them" refers to the people who were there and saw the miracle.

John 11:45

General Information:

These verses tell us what happened after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

John 11:46

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 11:47

General Information:

Because so many people have told them that Lazarus is alive again, the chief priests and Pharisees gather the Jewish council for a meeting.

Then the chief priests

"Then the leaders among the priests"

Then

The author uses this word to tell the reader that the events that begin in this verse are a result of the events of [John 11:45-46](#).

What will we do?

It is implied here that the council members are talking about Jesus. Alternate translation: "What are we going to do about Jesus?"

John 11:48

all will believe in him

The Jewish leaders were afraid that the people would try to make Jesus their king. Alternate translation: "everyone will trust in him and rebel against Rome"

the Romans will come

This is a synecdoche for the Roman army. Alternate translation: "the Roman army will come"

take away both our place and our nation

"destroy both our temple and our nation"

John 11:49

a certain man among them

This is a way to introduce a new character to the story. If you have a way to do this in your language, you can use it here.

You know nothing

This is an exaggeration that Caiaphas uses to insult his hearers. Alternate translation: "You do not understand what is happening" or "You speak as though you know nothing"

John 11:50

than that the whole nation perishes

Caiaphas implies that the Roman army would kill all of the people of the Jewish nation if Jesus is allowed to live and cause a rebellion. The word "nation" here is a synecdoche that represents all of the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "than that the Romans kill all the people of our nation"

John 11:51

General Information:

In verses 51 and 52 John explains that Caiaphas was prophesying even though he did not realize it at the time. This is background information.

die for the nation

The word "nation" is a synecdoche and refers to the people of the nation of Israel.

John 11:52

and not only for the nation

The words "that he should die" are understood from the previous clause. Alternate translation: "and that he should die not only for the nation"

would be gathered together into one

This is an ellipsis. The word "people" is implied by the context. Alternate translation: "would be gathered into one people"

children of God

This refers to people who belong to God through faith in Jesus and are spiritually God's children.

John 11:53

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 11:54

General Information:

Jesus leaves Bethany and goes to Ephraim.

walk openly among the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders and "walk openly" is a metaphor for "live where everyone could see him." Alternate translation: "live where all the Jews could see him" or "walk openly among the Jewish leaders who opposed him"

the country

the rural area outside cities where fewer people live

There he stayed with the disciples

Jesus and his disciples stayed in Ephraim for a while.

Alternate translation: "There he stayed with his disciples for a short period of time"

John 11:55

General Information:

Here the story shifts to telling about what many of the Jews are doing now that Passover is near.

went up to Jerusalem

The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than the surrounding areas.

John 11:56

General Information:

The content of verse 57 occurs before that of verse 56. If this order might confuse your readers, you can combine these verses and put the text of verse 57 before the text of verse 56.

They were looking for Jesus

The word "they" refers to the Jewish people who had

traveled to Jerusalem.

What do you think? That he will not come to the festival?

The speakers were sure that if Jesus came to the festival the Jewish leaders would arrest him. The meaning of these rhetorical questions is not clear. Possible meanings are 1) the speakers were not sure that he would come. Alternate translation: "Do you think that he will come to the festival?" or "I do not know what to think. He might come to the festival, or he might not." 2) The speakers were sure that

Jesus would not come. Alternate translation: "We can be sure that he will not come to the festival."

John 11:57

Now the chief priests

This is background information that explains why the Jewish worshipers were wondering if Jesus would come to the festival or not. If your language has a way to mark background information, use it here.

Chapter 12

John 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 12:38 and 40, which is from the Old Testament.

Verse 16 is a commentary on these events. It is possible to put this entire verse in parentheses in order to set it apart from the narrative of the story.

Special concepts in this chapter

Mary anointed Jesus's feet

The Jews would put oil on a person's head to make that person feel welcome and comfortable. They would also put oil on a person's body after the person had died but before they buried the body. But they would never think to put oil on a person's feet, because they thought that feet were dirty.

The donkey and the colt

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on an animal. In this way he was like a king who came into a city after he had won an important battle. Also, the kings of Israel in the Old Testament rode on donkeys. Other kings rode on horses. So Jesus was showing that he was the king of Israel and that he was not like other kings.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about this event. Matthew and Mark wrote that the disciples brought Jesus a donkey. John wrote that Jesus found a donkey. Luke wrote that they brought him a colt. Only Matthew wrote that there were both a donkey and a colt. No one knows for sure whether Jesus rode the donkey or the colt. It is best to translate each of these accounts as it appears in the ULB without trying to make them all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 21:1-7](#) and [Mark 11:1-7](#) and [Luke 19:29-36](#) and [John 12:14-15](#))

Glory

Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. In this chapter John says that the glory of Jesus is his resurrection ([John 12:16](#)).

Important figures of speech in this chapter

The metaphors of light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: [and righteous](#))

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in 12:25: "He who loves his life will lose it; but he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." But in 12:26 Jesus explains what it means to keep one's life for eternal life. ([John 12:25-26](#)).

Links:

[John 12:1 Notes](#)

John 12

12:1-11

Why did Lazarus, Martha, and Mary give this dinner for Jesus?

[12:2]

Lazarus, Martha, and Mary gave Jesus dinner at their home. Jesus made Lazarus alive again, so they wanted to honor him. Perhaps they also did this because Passover began in six days. This was Jesus' final Passover while on earth.

Scholars think this was the dinner Matthew, Mark and Luke about (See: [Matthew 26:6-13](#), [Mark 14:3-9](#), and [Luke 7:36-38](#)).

See: Passover

See Map: Bethany (showing how close it is to Jerusalem)

What perfume did Mary pour on Jesus?

[12:3]

Mary poured nard on Jesus. This was very expensive. It was a sweet smelling oil. It was made from the roots of a plant. Mary used a "litra" of the perfume. That is, she used about half a litre. What did Jesus want his disciples to think about his being anointed (12:7-8)? Jesus wanted his disciples to think of how he was going to die soon. He knew he was going to die. But he also knew that his disciples did not know this.

Jesus told them not to sell the perfume. Jesus did not say this because he did not want his disciples to help the poor people. Instead, he wanted them to listen to him while he was still on earth. They could worship God in person while he was on the earth. This was not something everyone could do. They could help the poor after he was gone.

See: Disciple; Worship

Why did many Jewish leaders want to kill Lazarus?

[12:10, 12:11]

Many Jewish leaders wanted to kill Lazarus because of Jesus. Jesus made Lazarus alive again. This caused many people to follow Jesus. They believed he was the Messiah. But the Jewish leaders did not believe Jesus was the Messiah, and they did not want other people to believe in him. So they thought that if they killed Lazarus, people will stop believing in Jesus.

See: Messiah (Christ)

12:12-19

Did Matthew, Mark and Luke write about Jesus' "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem?

[12:12, 12:13]

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all speak of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem before his crucifixion. He entered into the city in the same way a king would enter into a city after a great victory. Because all four of these men wrote about this happening, scholars think they really wanted people to know about it.

See: Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, and Luke 19:29-38

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did many people come to see Jesus ?

[12:18]

Many people came to see Jesus because they wanted to see his miracles. The people who saw Jesus make Lazarus alive again (See: 12:17) told other people that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem from Bethany. So, many people went to see him. They wanted to see the man who made Lazarus alive again. They wanted to hear what he said. They wanted to see if the Pharisees would arrest him.

Jesus was honored in Jerusalem in the same way a powerful man was honored. In ancient times, after a general or king defeated their enemies, they rode into their capital city. Their soldiers and the men they captured followed them to give them honor. Many people came to welcome them.

See: Miracle; Pharisees

Why did the people wave palm branches?

[12:13]

The people waved palm branches to honor Jesus. They did this while he entered the city. They cut these branches from date palm trees. These were on the side of the road leading to Jerusalem.

What did the people shout?

[12:13]

The people who came to greet Jesus shouted words that honored him. "Hosanna" is an Aramaic word. People used this to honor someone. They wanted to say "We praise you!" They also shouted words from Scripture to honor Jesus (See: Psalm 118:25-26). They called him a man coming to speak for God. They called him a king.

Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey?

[12:14]

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey to fulfill a prophecy (See: Zechariah 9:9). In ancient Israel, leaders rode on horses when they fought against each other. However, they rode on donkeys when there was peace. Jesus rode on a donkey. He wanted the people to think of a gentle king.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy)

Why did the Pharisees say, "the world has gone after him"?

[12:19]

The Pharisees said, "the world has gone after him" because all the people welcomed Jesus. This worried them. They worried that people might stop listening to them. Instead, they would listen to Jesus. This caused them to begin planning to kill Jesus.

See: Pharisees

12:20-50

Why did John write about the "Greeks"?

[12:20]

John wrote about "Greeks." These people were not Jewish. John was a Jew. When John was alive, Jewish people said "Greek" to speak of a non-Jewish person. That is, John wrote of Gentiles coming to the Passover festival.

See: Gentile; Passover

Why did John write that Philip was from Bethsaida in Galilee?

[12:21]

John wrote that Philip was from Bethsaida in Galilee. Many "Greeks" or Gentiles lived in this town. Therefore, Philip knew how to talk to them. Perhaps he knew some of the people who came to talk to him. He also knew Jesus. So, he was the person to tell these people about Jesus.

See: Gentile

See Map: Bethsaida and Galilee

Why did Philip talk to Andrew?

[12:22]

Philip talked to Andrew because Andrew was good at telling people about Jesus. Andrew was Peter's brother. He brought Peter to meet Jesus (See: 1:41). He also took Jesus to heal their mother (See: Mark 1:29-30). So, Philip wanted Andrew to help get Jesus to speak with these Gentiles.

See: Gentile

12:23-26

Why did Jesus say, "the hour has come"?

[12:23]

Jesus said "the hour has come." He wanted to make known that something was happening that they needed to pay attention to. He did not mean a specific time. Instead, he meant that people were ready for this thing to happen.

Why did Jesus say, "Son of Man"?

[12:23]

Jesus called himself "Son of Man." He wanted people to think about him in a special way. The Old Testament used the words "Son of Man" to speak of the messiah. Therefore, Jesus wanted people to know he was the messiah spoken of in the Old Testament.

See: Son of Man; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus talk about wheat?

[12:24]

Jesus told a parable about wheat. This was a metaphor. He used it to talk about when he would die. He wanted people to know that he would be made alive again after he died. He wanted people to think about how one grain of wheat becomes a living plant after it is placed in the ground.

Also, he spoke of how one grain of wheat grows a plant that has many more grains of wheat on it. So, Jesus wanted to say that many people would believe in him after he died.

See: Parable; Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection)

12:27-29

Why did Jesus talk about the "hour"?

[12:27]

Jesus talked about the "hour." That is, he would soon suffer and die on the cross. He was not speaking about a certain time of the day. Instead, he wanted to say that something would soon happen. This was his crucifixion.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Cross

Why did Jesus say, "Father, glorify your name"?

[12:28]

Jesus said "Father, glorify your name." Jesus wanted to honor God when he died. Jesus died so that people could be at peace with God. This honored God.

See: God the Father; Glory (Glorify); Name

What was the voice that "came from heaven"?

[12:28]

God the Father was the voice that "came from heaven." The Father answered Jesus' prayer.

God said "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." He said that Jesus' death fulfilled the Father's plan for the world. He made it so that people could be at peace with God. By doing this, he honored God. God also said that Jesus' dying and being made alive again honored the Father in the present time and in a future time.

See: God the Father; Heaven; Pray (Prayer); Glory (Glorify); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say, "judgment of this world" and "ruler of this world"?

[12:31]

Jesus wanted people to think of God and the wrong things they did when he said "judgment of this world." God will judge everyone because everyone does wrong things. He wanted people to think about Satan when he said "ruler of this world." God gave some permission to Satan to "rule" the world for a while. However, God will judge Satan. God will "throw him

out" of the world forever (See: 1 Peter 5:8, Romans 16:20, Revelation 2:13, 12:9, 20:7-10).

See: Judge (Judgment); World; Satan (The Devil)

Why did Jesus say he would be "lifted up"?

[12:32]

Jesus said he would be "lifted up from the earth." That is, he would be crucified. People were tied and nailed to crosses during crucifixion. Then the cross was lifted up with the person on it. This was above the ground so people could see them. So Jesus was physically "lifted up" when he was crucified.

Normally, a crucified person was shamed. However, Jesus was not shamed, he was honored because he died for people.

Jesus also wanted people to believe in him. He said people will believe in him after he died.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Shame (Ashamed); Atone (Atonement)

Why did the people ask Jesus about the "Son of Man"?

[12:34]

People did not understand Jesus when he spoke about the "Son of Man." So they asked him what this meant. The Jewish people thought the messiah was going to make Israel a great nation again. They thought he was going to live forever and rule them forever (See: Psalms 72:17, 89:35-37, Isaiah 9:7, and Ezekiel 37:25). "Son of Man" was a title for this messiah (See: Daniel 7:13-14).

Some of the people believed Jesus was the messiah. However, they did not understand him when he said he was going to die. They did not understand how the "Son of Man" could die. So they asked Jesus to make known what he was saying.

Advice to Translators: A title is a specific name someone is given because of a particular position they hold. For example, mother is a title given to a child's female parent. These titles always have special meaning. The title itself gives specific information about the person with the title. We know the title "mother" means that woman has at least one child. In the same way, "Son of Man" gives us specific information about the messiah and how he fulfilled prophecy.

See: Son of Man; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus talk about the "light"?

[12:35, 12:36]

Jesus used the metaphor of light to speak of himself. He wanted to say that he was not merely a man. He is God. "Light" meant good and pure. God is the best and purest of all things. So Jesus used this metaphor to say he is God.

However, he also wanted people to know that he was not going to live on earth much longer. So he said they will only have the "light" for "a short amount of time." He also used the metaphor of walking. He wanted people to think about how they should believe in him and do the things that he did. He wanted them to believe and do the things he did while he was still on earth.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Jesus is God; Walk

Why did some people not believe in Jesus?

[12:37, 12:39]

Many of the Jewish people did not believe in Jesus. The Jewish leaders taught them wrong things about the messiah. Also, many people did not understand the things taught in Scripture. Because of these things, they did not want to believe in Jesus. So, God "hardened their hearts." That is, he allowed them to not believe. He gave them what they wanted. The prophet Isaiah said this will happen (See: Isaiah 53:1, 6:10).

See: Messiah (Christ); Heart (Metaphor); Prophet

How did Isaiah see "the glory of Jesus"?

[12:41]

Isaiah saw "the glory of Jesus" in a vision from God (See: Isaiah 6: 1-4) Isaiah lived before Jesus was on earth. But Jesus is God. So Jesus was with God the Father in heaven before he was born. Jesus shares God's glory. Therefore, Isaiah saw Jesus when he saw the glory of God.

See: Glory (Glorify); Vision; Jesus is God; God the Father; Heaven

What did John want to say about some of the rulers?

[12:42]

John wrote "some of the rulers." because not all the Jewish leaders were against Jesus. Some of them believed in him. However, they did not tell others that they believed in him because they were afraid of the Pharisees. If they said they believed in Jesus, the Pharisees would not allow them to worship in the Jewish synagogues.

See: Pharisees; Worship; Synagogue

Why did Jesus "cry out"?

[12:44]

Jesus cried out to say several things:

He wanted to speak of "the one who sent me." That is, God the Father. He wanted to say that people needed to believe in him. He said that when people believe in him, they also believe in God. This is because Jesus and the Father are both God. He wanted to speak about himself in a metaphor of light (See: 12:34-36). He used the metaphor of darkness. He wanted people to think about their sins. He saves people in the same way that light shines and removes darkness. He wanted to say that God will judge people. He will punish people who do not believe in Jesus. He wanted to say that he only spoke the

things God told him to speak. He wanted to say everyone who believe in Jesus will live together with God in heaven forever.

Advice to Translators: Crying out means to speak in a very loud voice.

See: God the Father; Jesus is God; Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Judge (Judgment); Punish (Punishment); Heaven

John 12:1

General Information:

Jesus is at dinner in Bethany when Mary anoints his feet with oil.

Six days before the Passover

The author uses these words to mark the beginning of a new event.

had raised from the dead

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "had made alive again"

John 12:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 12:3

a litra

You may convert this to a the measure system used in your area. The word "litra" was used for measures of about 300 milliliters of liquids or about 300 grams of solids. Because the perfume was a liquid, the word here probably refers to the liquid measure as guessed by those who saw the size of the container.

perfume

This is a good-smelling liquid made by using the oils of pleasant smelling plants and flowers.

nard

This is a perfume made from a pink, bell-shaped flower in the mountains of Nepal, China, and India.

The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume

This can be translated in an active form. Alternate translation: "The scent of her perfume filled the house"

John 12:4

the one who would betray him

"the one who later enabled Jesus's enemies to seize him"

John 12:5

Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?

This is a rhetorical question. You can translate it as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "This perfume could have been sold for three hundred denarii and the money could have been given to the poor!"

three hundred denarii

You can translate this as a numeral. Alternate translation: "300 denarii"

denarii

A denarius was the amount of silver that a common laborer could earn in one day of work.

John 12:6

Now he said this ... would steal from what was put in it

John explains why Judas asked the question about the poor. If your language has a way of indicating background information, you can use it here.

he said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief

"he said this because he was a thief. He did not care about the poor"

John 12:7

Allow her to keep what she has for the day of my burial

Jesus implies that the woman's actions can be understood as anticipating his death and burial. Alternate translation: "Allow her to show how much she appreciates me! In this way she has prepared my body for burial"

John 12:8

You will always have the poor with you

Jesus implies that there will always be opportunities to help the poor people. Alternate translation: "There will always be poor people among you, and you can help them whenever you want"

But you will not always have me

In this way, Jesus implies that he will die. Alternate translation: "But I will not always be here with you"

John 12:9

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here John tells about a new group of people that has come to Bethany from Jerusalem.

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld.

John 12:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 12:11

because of him

The fact that Lazarus was alive again caused many Jews to believe in Jesus.

believed in Jesus

This implies that many of the Jewish people were trusting in Jesus as the Son of God. Alternate translation: "were putting their trust in Jesus"

John 12:12

General Information:

Jesus enters Jerusalem and the people honor him as a king.

On the next day

The author uses these words to mark the beginning of a new event.

a great crowd

"a great crowd of people"

John 12:13

Hosanna

This means "May God save us now!"

Blessed

This expresses a desire for God to cause good things to happen to a person.

comes in the name of the Lord

Here the word "name" is a metonym for the person's authority and power. Alternate translation: "comes as the

representative of the Lord" or "comes in the power of the Lord"

John 12:14

Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it

Here John gives background information that Jesus secures a donkey. He implies that Jesus will ride the donkey into Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "he found a young donkey and sat on it, riding into the city"

as it was written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "as the prophets wrote in the Scripture"

John 12:15

daughter of Zion

"Daughter of Zion" here is a metonym that refers to the people of Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "you people of Jerusalem"

John 12:16

General Information:

John, the writer, interrupts here to give the reader some background information about what the disciples later understood.

His disciples did not understand these things

Here the words "these things" refer to the words that the prophet had written about Jesus.

when Jesus was glorified

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "when God glorified Jesus"

they had done these things to him

The words "these things" refer to what the people did when Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey (praising him and waving the palm branches).

John 12:17

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main narrative. Here John explains that many of the people came to meet Jesus because they heard others say that he had raised Lazarus from the dead.

John 12:18

they heard that he had done this sign

"they heard others say that he had done this sign"

this sign

A "sign" is an event or occurrence that proves something is true. In this case, the "sign" of raising Lazarus proves that Jesus is the Messiah.

John 12:19

Look, you can do nothing good

The Pharisees imply here that it might be impossible to stop Jesus. Alternate translation: "It seems like we can do nothing to stop him"

see, the world has gone after him

The Pharisees use this exaggeration to express their shock that so many people have come out to meet Jesus. Alternate translation: "It looks like everyone is becoming his disciple" the world

Here "the world" is a metonym that represents

John 12:20

Now certain Greeks

The phrase "now certain" marks the introduction of new characters to the story.

Greeks ... to worship at the festival

John implies that these "Greeks" were going to worship God during the Passover. Alternate translation: "Greeks ... to worship God at the Passover festival"

John 12:21

Bethsaida

This was a town in the province of Galilee.

John 12:22

they told Jesus

Philip and Andrew tell Jesus about the Greeks' request to see him. You can translate this by adding the implied words. Alternate translation: "they told Jesus what the Greeks had said"

John 12:23

General Information:

Jesus begins to respond to Philip and Andrew.

The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified

Jesus implies that it is now the right time for God to honor the Son of Man through his upcoming suffering, death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "God will soon honor me when I die and rise again"

John 12:24

Truly, truly, I say to you

Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated "Truly, truly" in John 1:51.

unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies ... it will bear much fruit

Here "a grain of wheat" or "seed" is a metaphor for Jesus's death, burial and resurrection. Just as a seed is planted and grows again into a plant that will bear much fruit, so will many people trust in Jesus after he is killed, buried, and raised back to life.

John 12:25

He who loves his life will lose it

Here "loves his life" means to consider one's own physical life to be more valuable than the lives of others. Alternate translation: "Whoever values his own life more than the lives of others will not receive eternal life"

he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life

Here the one who "hates his life" refers to one who loves his own life less than he loves the lives of others. Alternate translation: "whoever considers the lives of others as more important than his own life will live with God forever"

John 12:26

where I am, there will my servant also be

Jesus implies that those who serve him will be with him in heaven. Alternate translation: "when I am in heaven, my servant will also be there with me"

the Father will honor him

Here "Father" is an important title for God.

John 12:27

what should I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'?

This remark appears in the form of a rhetorical question. Although Jesus desires to avoid crucifixion, he chooses to be obedient to God and to be killed. Alternate translation: "I will not pray, 'Father, save me from this hour!'"

Father

This is an important title for God.

this hour

Here "this hour" is a metonym that represents when Jesus would suffer and die on the cross.

John 12:28

glorify your name

Here the word "name" is a metonym that refers to God.

Alternate translation: "make your glory known" or "reveal your glory"

a voice came from heaven

This represents God speaking. Sometimes people avoid referring directly to God because they respect him.

Alternate translation: "God spoke from the heavens"

John 12:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 12:30

General Information:

Jesus explains why the voice spoke from heaven.

John 12:31

Now is the judgment of this world

Here "this world" is a metonym that refers to all the people in the world. Alternate translation: "Now is the time for God to judge all of the people"

Now will the ruler of this world be thrown out

Here "ruler" refers to Satan. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Now is the time when I will destroy the power of Satan, who rules this world"

John 12:32

When I am lifted up from the earth

Here Jesus refers to his crucifixion. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "When people raise me high on a cross"

will draw everyone to myself

Through his crucifixion, Jesus will provide a way for everyone to trust in him.

John 12:33

General Information:

Here John tells us background information about what Jesus said about being "lifted up."

He said this to indicate what kind of death he would die

John interprets Jesus's words to mean that people will crucify him. Alternate translation: "He said this to let the people know how he would die"

John 12:34

The Son of Man must be lifted up

The phrase "lifted up" means crucified. You may translate this in a way that includes the implied words "on a cross." Alternate translation: "The Son of Man must be lifted up on a cross"

Who is this Son of Man?

Possible meanings are 1) "What is the identity of this Son of Man? or 2) "What kind of Son of Man are you talking about?"

John 12:35

The light will still be with you for a short amount of time. Walk while you have the light, so that darkness does not overtake you. He who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going

Here "light" is a metaphor for Jesus's teachings which

reveal the truth of God. To "walk in darkness" is a metaphor

that means to live without God's truth. Alternate

translation: "My words are like a light to you, to help you understand how to live as God wants you to. I will not be with you much longer. You need to follow my instructions while I am still with you. If you reject my words, it will be like walking in darkness and you cannot see where you are going"

John 12:36

While you have the light, believe in the light so that you may be sons of light

The "light" is a metaphor for the teachings of Jesus which reveal the truth of God. "sons of light" is a metaphor for those who accept the message of Jesus and live according to God's truth. Alternate translation: "While I am with you, believe what I teach so that God's truth will be in you"

John 12:37

General Information:

This is a stop in the main story. Here John begins to explain about the fulfillment of prophecies that had been spoken by the prophet Isaiah.

John 12:38

so that the word of Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "in order to fulfill the message of Isaiah the prophet"

Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

This appears in the form of two rhetorical questions to express the prophet's dismay that the people do not believe his message. They may be stated as a single rhetorical question, Alternate translation: "Lord, hardly anyone has believed our message, even though they have seen that you are powerfully able to save them!"

the arm of the Lord

This is a metonym that refers to the Lord's ability to rescue with power.

John 12:39

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 12:40

he has hardened their heart ... understand with their heart

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "hardened their heart" is a metaphor for making someone become stubborn. Also, to "understand with their heart" means to "truly understand." Alternate translation: "he has made them stubborn ... truly understand"

and turn

Here "turn" is a metaphor for "repent." Alternate translation: "and they would repent"

John 12:41

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 12:42

so that they would not be banned from the synagogue

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so people would not stop them from going to the synagogue"

John 12:43

They loved the glory that comes from people more than the glory that

comes from God

The word "glory" here is a metonym for the praise that people give others who are glorious. Alternate translation: "They wanted people to praise them more than they wanted God to praise them"

John 12:44

General Information:

Here John returns to the main story. This is another time when Jesus begins to speak to the crowd.

Jesus cried out and said

Here John implies that a crowd of people had gathered to hear Jesus speak. Alternate translation: "Jesus shouted out to the crowd that had gathered"

John 12:45

the one who sees me sees him who sent me

Here the word "him" refers to God. Alternate translation: "the one who sees me sees God, who sent me"

John 12:46

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to the crowd.

I have come as a light into the world

Here the "light" is a metaphor for the revelation that comes from God. Also, "world" is a metonym for "people." See how you translated a similar phrase in [John 8:12]

may not remain in the darkness

Here "darkness" is a metaphor for living in ignorance of God's truth. Alternate translation: "may not continue to be spiritually blind"

the world

Here "the world" is a metonym that represents all of the people in the world.

John 12:47

If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I have not come to judge the world, but to save the world

Here "to judge the world" implies condemnation. Jesus did not come to condemn people. Alternate translation: "If anyone hears my teaching and rejects it, I do not condemn him. I have not come to condemn people. Instead, I have come to save those who trust in me"

John 12:48

on the last day

"at the time when God judges people's sins"

John 12:49

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 12:50

I know that his command is eternal life

"I know that the words that he commanded me to speak are the words that give life forever"

Chapter 13

John 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The events of this chapter are commonly referred to as the last supper or the Lord's supper. This Passover feast in many ways parallels Jesus's sacrifice as the lamb of God. (See: passover)

Special concepts in this chapter

The washing of feet

People in the ancient Near East thought that feet were very dirty. Only servants would wash people's feet. The disciples did not want Jesus to wash their feet because they considered him their master and themselves his servants, but he wanted to show them that they needed to serve each other.

I AM

John records Jesus as saying these words four times in this book, once in this chapter. They stand alone as a complete sentence, and they literally translate the Hebrew word for "I AM," by which Yahweh identified himself to Moses. For these reasons, many people believe that when Jesus said these words he was claiming to be Yahweh. (See: yahweh).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Son of Man"

Jesus refers to himself as the "Son of Man" in this chapter

Links:

[John 13:1 Notes](#)

John 13

13:1-17

Why did John write that Jesus "knew his hour had come"?

[13:1]

John wrote that Jesus "knew his hour had come." That is, Jesus knew he was going to die soon. The metaphor of an "hour" was about a certain time, which was the end of Jesus's life.

See: Metaphor

Why did John write that the devil "put it into the heart" of Judas Iscariot?

[13:2]

John wrote that the devil "put it into the heart" of Judas Iscariot. That is, Judas wanted to help the people who wanted to

kill Jesus. John wrote that the devil gave Judas these thoughts. He wanted his readers to know this was an evil idea.

See: Satan (The Devil); Heart (Metaphor)

Why did John write, "the Father had given everything over into Jesus hands"?

[13:3]

John wrote, "the Father had given everything over into Jesus' hands." He wanted to say that God the Father gave Jesus power over everything that happened. Some scholars think God gave Jesus permission to choose when and how he would die. They think this because John also wrote that Jesus "had come from God and was going back to God" (13:3). Other scholars think God gave Jesus power over the whole world. They think this because many other verses talk about this (see: Mark 5:30, Acts 10:38, Romans 1:4, Colossians 1:15-18, 2 Peter 1:16). Other scholars think that John wanted to say both of these things.

See: God the Father

Why did Jesus wash his disciples' feet?

[13:5]

Jesus washed his disciples' feet for two reasons:

He did this to clean their feet. The roads in Palestine were made of dirt. People walked everywhere. So their feet had dirt on them. He did this so that they would know that they needed to serve other people (See: 13:14-16). Only servants or slaves washed people's feet. When Jesus lived, it was shameful to wash someone else's feet. But Jesus washed his disciples' feet. He is the Son of God and not a servant or slave. He rules over everything, yet he served others. He wanted people to serve other people.

See: Disciple; Serve; Shame (Ashamed); Son of God

What did Peter want to say to Jesus?

[13:6]

Peter told Jesus he did not want Jesus to wash his feet. He thought that washing feet was a shameful thing to do. First, he asked this as a question. Then, he said, "Lord, you will never wash my feet." But Jesus said he must wash him. Then, Peter wanted Jesus to wash his hands and head. He wanted to have Jesus wash all of him. Some scholars think Peter thought this was less shameful than washing only Peter's feet. Other scholars think Peter was saying that he really wanted to follow Jesus.

See: Shame (Ashamed)

What did Jesus want to say to Peter?

[13:7, 13:10]

Jesus wanted to say that it honors God when Christians help other people. This is true even when someone serves others by doing something others think is shameful. Jesus wanted his disciples to honor God. So he wanted them to help other people (See: 13:14-15). He wanted them to do things that help other people, even if they feel shame while they are doing it.

See: Serve; Shame (Ashamed); Disciple

13:18-30

Who was Jesus speaking of in 13:18?

[13:18]

Jesus spoke of Judas Iscariot in 13:18. Jesus knew Judas was going to help the Jewish leaders to find Jesus. Jesus wanted his other disciples to know that this was something that must happen.

Jesus also spoke of his other disciples. He wanted them to know that all of them except Judas were loyal disciples. They trusted Jesus and he trusted them. He also wanted them to know that God forgave their sins. So he called them "clean" (see: 13:10) and "chosen" (see: 13:18).

See: Disciple; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Clean and Unclean; Elect (Election)

Who did Jesus talk about in 13:19-20?

[13:19, 13:20]

Jesus talked about himself in 13:19-20. He wanted to say that he is God. God gave himself the name "I am" (see: Exodus 3:14). He did this when he spoke to Moses. Jesus used the same words "I am" (see: John 8:58). He wanted people to know that he is God.

Jesus also talked about "him who sent me." He wanted to say that he spoke for God because God sent him to earth.

See: Yahweh (I am); Jesus is God

13:23-30

Why did John write, "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved"?

[13:23]

John wrote "one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved" in 13:23. Scholars think this was because John wrote about himself. John did not write his name in his gospel. Instead, he wrote "one whom Jesus loved" (see: John 19:26, John 20:2, John 21:7; John 21:20).

See: Disciple; Love; Gospel

Why did John write "lying down at the table against Jesus' side"?

[13:23]

John wrote "lying down at the table against Jesus' side." This was how people ate meals. At that time, people ate meals lying down around a table. They laid on their left arm with their feet pointing away from the table. They used their right hand to eat. Each person was near the persons lying next to them. So John was "at Jesus' side." Because he was near Jesus, he could easily lean against Jesus's side and ask him a question (see: 13:25).

Why did Jesus dip bread and give it to Judas Iscariot?

[13:26]

Jesus dipped bread and gave it to Judas Iscariot. He knew that Judas would betray him. Normally, dipping bread and giving it to someone gave that person great honor. However, Jesus knew Judas was going to give him to the Jewish leaders to be killed. Instead of honoring Judas, Judas was shamed.

See: Shame (Ashamed)

Why did John write about Judas and Satan in 13:27?

[13:27]

John wrote that Satan went into Judas to make known that Judas was doing what Satan wanted him to do. Some scholars think Satan controlled what Judas did. Judas was one of Jesus' disciples. However, Judas did not agree with what Jesus said and did. Therefore, he planned with Jesus' enemies. Because of this, he allowed Satan to "enter" him and take control of him. He wanted to do the things that Satan wanted him to do.

Other scholars think Satan only tempted Judas. The longer Judas did what Satan wanted him to do, the more he was doing what Satan wanted him to do. So in this way, Satan was doing what he wanted through Judas.

See: Satan (The Devil); Disciple; Tempt (Temptation)

13:31-38

Why did Jesus talk about being "glorified"?

[13:31]

Jesus talked about his being "glorified" in 13:31-32. He wanted his disciples to think about how God sent Jesus to earth. He wanted them to know that he did what God said to do. This would honor God. Also, God would greatly honor Jesus for this.

Jesus spoke about himself when he said "Son of Man."

When Jesus said he would be glorified immediately, he spoke of how would be killed and made alive again very soon (see: 13:32).

See: Glory (Glorify); Disciple; Son of Man

Why did Jesus say "you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later"?

[13:36]

Jesus told Peter "you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later" (13:36). Jesus was speaking about how Peter would die. He used "follow" as a metaphor to talk about being killed in the same way Jesus was killed. The Romans crucified Jesus the next day. Jesus knew Peter would be crucified for believing in Jesus. But this did not happen for many years. So Jesus said it would happen "later."

See: Metaphor; Crucify (Crucifixion)

John 13:1

General Information:

It is not yet Passover and Jesus is together with his disciples for supper. These verses explain the setting of the story and give background information about Jesus and Judas.

Father

This is an important title for God.

loved

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.

John 13:2

Connecting Statement:

John begins to give background information for a part of the story that begins in verse 4.

Now

This word shows that the author has stopped describing the action and is about to give background information before continuing the story. You should translate using the way your language introduces background information.

the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot son of Simon to betray Jesus

The phrase "put it into the heart" is an idiom that means to cause someone to think about something. Alternate translation: "the devil had already caused Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to think about betraying Jesus"

John 13:3

Connecting Statement:

John continues to tell us background information about what Jesus knew. The action in the story begins in verse 4.

Father

This is an important title for God.

had given everything over into his hands

Here "his hands" is a metonym for power and authority.

Alternate translation: "had given him complete power and authority over everything"

he had come from God and was going back to God

Jesus had always been with the Father, and would return there after his work on earth was finished.

John 13:4

Connecting Statement:

John has finished giving the background to this part of the story [John 13:2-3](#) and tells what Jesus did next.

got up from dinner and took off his outer clothing

Because the region was very dusty, it was customary for the host of a dinner to provide a servant to wash the feet of the guests. Jesus took off his outer clothing so he would look like a servant.

John 13:5

began to wash the feet of the disciples

Because the region was very dusty, it was customary for the host of a dinner to provide a servant to wash the feet of the guests. Jesus did the work of the servant by washing the disciples' feet.

John 13:6

Lord, are you going to wash my feet?

Peter's question shows that he is not willing for Jesus to wash his feet. Alternate translation: "Lord, it is not right for you to wash the feet of me, a sinner!"

John 13:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 13:8

If I do not wash you, you have no share with me

Here Jesus begins to speak about "washing" to mean making someone spiritually clean or pure. Since Jesus said in 13:7 that the disciples would not fully understand what was happening, translations should keep the "washing" imagery and not try to explain it in the text.

If I do not wash you

It can be stated explicitly that Jesus is talking about washing feet. Alternate translation: "If I do not wash your feet" (

you have no share with me

The word "share" means a part of an inheritance. Here it is a metaphor meaning that Peter would not have fellowship or anything in common with Jesus. Alternate translation: "you will not be my disciple" or "you will not belong to me"

John 13:9

General Information:

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John 13:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to speak to Simon Peter.

He who is bathed has no need, except to wash his feet, but he is completely clean; you are clean, but not everyone

Here Jesus speaks about "bathed" and "wash" and "clean" to mean making someone spiritually clean or pure. Since Jesus said in 13:7 that the disciples would not fully understand what was happening, translations should keep the "washing" imagery and not try to explain it in the text.

He who is bathed has no need, except to wash his feet, but he is completely clean

The word "but" shows the contrast between a person needing to be cleaned and a person already being being clean. In some languages "but" would not be used.

Alternate translation: "He who is bathed has no need, except to wash his feet, because he is completely clean" or "He who is bathed has no need, except to wash his feet; he is completely clean"

He who is bathed has no need, except to wash his feet

This double negative emphasizes that to wash the feet is the only thing that he who is bathed needs. Alternate translation: "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet" or "The only thing a person who has bathed needs is to wash his feet"

has no need

It is implied that this need concerns washing the whole body. Alternate translation: "has no need to be fully bathed" or "does not need me to wash his whole body"

John 13:11

Not all of you are clean

Here "clean" means spiritually clean or pure. Since Jesus said in 13:7 that the disciples would not fully understand what was happening, translations should keep the "clean" imagery and not try to explain it in the text.

John 13:12

Do you understand what I have done for you?

This remark appears in the form of a question so Jesus can emphasize the importance of what he is teaching his disciples. Alternate translation: "You need to understand what I have done for you!"

John 13:13

You call me 'teacher' and 'Lord,'

Here Jesus implies that his disciples have great respect for him. Alternate translation: "You show me great respect when you call me 'teacher' and 'Lord.'"

John 13:14

General Information:

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John 13:15

you should also do just as I did for you

Jesus implies that his disciples should be willing to follow his example and serve one another. Alternate translation: "you should also humbly serve each other"

John 13:16

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues to speak to his disciples.

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

greater

"more important"

John 13:17

you are blessed

Here "bless" means to cause good, beneficial things to happen to a person. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless you"

John 13:18

this is so that the scripture will be fulfilled

With this sentence, Jesus introduces something he will tell them in verse 21 that fulfills what the scripture says. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "this is in order to fulfill the scripture"

the scripture

"this scripture"

He who eats my bread lifted up his heel against me

Jesus quoted the scripture that will be fulfilled. Here the phrase "eats my bread" is an idiom for someone who pretends to be a friend. The phrase "lifted up his heel" is

also an idiom, which means someone who has become an enemy. If you have idioms in your language that have these meanings, you can use them here. Alternate translation: "The one who has pretended to be my friend has turned out to be an enemy"

John 13:19

I tell you this now before it happens

"I am telling you now what is going to happen before it happens"

I AM

Possible meanings are 1) Jesus is identifying himself as Yahweh, who identified himself to Moses as "I AM," or 2) Jesus is saying, "I am the one I claim to be."

John 13:20

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

John 13:21

troubled

concerned, upset

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

John 13:22

The disciples looked at each other, wondering of whom he was speaking.

"The disciples looked at each other and wondered: 'Who will betray Jesus?'"

John 13:23

One of his disciples, whom Jesus loved

This refers to John.

lying down at the table

During the time of Christ, Jews would often dine together in the Greek style, in which they lay on their sides on low couches.

Jesus' side

Lying with one's head against the side of another diner in the Greek style was considered to be the place of greatest friendship with him.

loved

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

John 13:24

General Information:

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John 13:25

General Information:

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John 13:26

Iscairiot

This indicates that Judas was from the village of Kerioth.

John 13:27

Then after the bread

The words "Judas took" are understood from the context. Alternate translation: "Then after Judas took the bread"

Satan entered into him

This is an idiom that means Satan took complete control of Judas. Alternate translation: "Satan took control of him" or "Satan started to command him"

so Jesus said to him

Here Jesus is speaking to Judas.

What you are doing, do it quickly

"Do quickly what you are planning to do"

John 13:28

General Information:

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John 13:29

that he should give something to the poor

You can translate this as a direct quote. Alternate translation: "'Go and give some money to the poor'"

John 13:30

he went out immediately. It was night

John seems to draw attention here to the fact that Judas will do his evil or "dark" deed in the darkness of the night.

Alternate translation: "he went out immediately into the dark night"

John 13:31

Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "Now people are about to see how the Son of Man will receive honor and how God will receive honor through what the Son of Man is doing"

John 13:32

God will also glorify the Son in himself, and he will glorify him at once

The word "him" refers to the Son of Man. The word "himself" is a reflexive pronoun that refers to God.

Alternate translation: "God himself will immediately give honor to the Son of Man"

John 13:33

Little children

Jesus uses the term "Little children" to communicate that he loves the disciples as though they were his children.

as I said to the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "as I said to the Jewish leaders"

John 13:34

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.

love

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.

John 13:35

everyone

You may need to make explicit that this exaggeration refers only to those people who see how the disciples love each other.

John 13:36

General Information:

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John 13:37

lay down my life

"give up my life" or "die"

John 13:38

Will you lay down your life for me?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to Jesus's statement. Alternate translation: "You

say that you will die for me, but the truth is that you will not!"
the rooster will not crow before you have denied me three times

"you will say that you do not know me three times before the rooster crows"

Chapter 14

John 14 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"My Father's house"

Jesus used these words to speak of heaven, where God lives, not of the temple. (See: heaven)

The Holy Spirit

Jesus told his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to them. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter ([John 14:16](#)) who is always with God's people to help them and to speak to God for them. He is also the Spirit of truth ([John 14:17](#)) who tells God's people what is true about God so they know him better and serve him well. (See: holyspirit)

Links:

[John 14:1 Notes](#)

John 14

14:1-7

Where were Jesus and his disciples?

Jesus and his disciples were still in the upstairs room. They stayed in this room while Jesus taught them.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus talk about his "Father's house"?

[14:2]

Jesus used a metaphor when he talked about his Father's house. His father's house is heaven. It is the place where God lives.

See: Metaphor; Heaven; God the Father

What are the "many rooms" Jesus talked about?

[14:2]

Jesus talked about "many rooms" in his "Father's house." This was a metaphor. There are many places in heaven. These are places where people can live with God. God wants to have many people with him. Scholars think Jesus wanted the disciples to think about some buildings the Romans built. These buildings were large and meant for many people to live inside together.

See: Metaphor; Heaven; Disciple; God the Father

Why did Jesus say that he would "come again"?

[14:3]

Jesus said he would "come again." Some scholars think Jesus was speaking about when he would return to the earth again. This will happen at the time of the end of the world. Other scholars think he also wanted his disciples to know he would come back after he died.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Disciple

Why did Jesus say that he will "receive you to myself"?

[14:3]

Jesus said that he will "receive you to myself." He was saying that he will take the people who believe in him to be with God forever.

What was the "way" Jesus talked about?

[14:4]

Jesus used the metaphor of a "way" to talk about how people believe in him and do the things he wants them to do. Some scholars think he was talking about how God saves a person can be at peace with God because they believe in Jesus. Other scholars think Jesus was also talking about how Christians obey God.

See: Metaphor; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Jesus say "I am"?

[14:6]

See: John 6:35

See: Yahweh (I am)

Why did Jesus say he is "the way, the truth, and the life"?

[14:6]

Jesus said he is "the way, the truth, and the life." This is used a metaphor. He talked about how he made it possible for

people to do the things that honor God. He did this when he died. He wanted to say that God will save people from their sinning only if they believe in Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Atonement (Atonement)

Why did Jesus say "if you had known me, you would have known the Father"?

[14:7]

Jesus said "if you had known me, you would have known the Father." He was saying that he is God. So, if someone knows Jesus, that person also knows God. Jesus often said "the Father" when he wanted to talk about God.

See: Trinity; God the Father; Jesus is God

14:9-11

What did Jesus say in 14:9-11?

[14:9]

In 14:9-11, Jesus said more about what he said in 14:7. That is, he told Philip and the other disciples again that he is God. When he said "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (14:10a, 14:11), he wanted his disciples to know that he is God. He was not saying that he was inside of God.

When he said "the Father living in me is doing his work" (14:10b), he wanted his disciples to know that God did the things that Jesus did. So when people saw Jesus do something, that was the same as seeing God do it.

See: Disciple; Jesus is God; Trinity; God the Father

Why did Jesus say that people need to believe in him?

[14:11]

Jesus said people need to believe in him because he is God. However, Jesus knew it is hard for people to know how he and the Father are in each other. So he told his disciples that there is another reason to believe in him.

He told his disciples they need to believe in him because of the miracles he did. He knew he had done many things so that people would know his great power. He did things that only God could do. So Jesus told his disciples that these miracles allowed them to know that he is God.

See: Jesus is God; God the Father; Disciple; Miracle

14:12-17

Who is the "comforter" or "advocate" about which Jesus spoke?

[14:16]

The "comforter" that Jesus spoke about is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comforts and encourages Christians. Also, the Holy Spirit speaks for Christians when they are unable to speak (See: Romans 8:26). Therefore, the Holy Spirit is called a "comforter."

Advice to Translators: Use the same word in your language that is used in the Bible in your language for 4:16 to mean comforter or advocate.

See: 14:26

See: Holy Spirit

Why did Jesus say the Holy Spirit "lives with you and will be in you"?

[14:17]

Jesus said the Holy Spirit "lives with" and "will be in" Christians. The Holy Spirit comes into a person in some way when the person believes in Jesus. While Jesus was on earth, the Holy Spirit was in him. When he returned to heaven, the Holy Spirit went inside of every person who believes in Jesus.

Jesus wanted Christians to know that he does not leave them alone after they believe in him. Instead, in some way the Holy Spirit will live in them. He does not force them to do things. Demons do this when they possess a person. Instead, the Holy Spirit helps people. He guides them. He comforts them. He encourages them. He teaches them. The Holy Spirit is God. So Jesus said this to say that in some way God lives with a person after they believe in Jesus.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, Heaven; Sin; Demon; Holy Spirit

14:18-21

How did Jesus not leave his disciples alone?

[14:18]

Jesus did not leave his disciples alone because he went back to them after God made him alive again. The disciples continued to see and speak with Jesus during the 40 days after he died and was resurrected. Jesus came back to them to prove he was no longer dead. So, this fulfilled the promise he made to them here.

Jesus also did not leave his disciples alone because he sent his Spirit to live in them (See: John 14:15-17; Acts 2). Jesus' spirit and the Holy Spirit are the same person.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Disciple

What is "that day" about which Jesus spoke?

[14:20]

"That day" (14:20) was the day Jesus was made alive again. He knew that when his disciples saw that he was alive again,

they would be able to understand what he told them at the Passover supper. They would understand that he is God. Scholars think Jesus also spoke about the time when he would return to earth, that is the last days. He will return at the ending of the world. He used words that Jewish people sometimes used when they wanted to speak about the ending of the world.

See: Passover; Jesus is God; Last Days; Jesus' Return to Earth

Who is the "Father" about which Jesus spoke?

[14:20]

When Jesus spoke about the "Father," he wanted his disciples to think about God.

See: Trinity; God the Father; Disciple

Why did Jesus say he is "in" his Father, and we are "in" him, and he is "in" us?

[14:20]

When Jesus said he is "in" his Father, he said that he is God. He did not say that he was inside of God.

He also said that Christians are in some way joined to him when they believe in him. However, Christians are not God.

That is, Jesus is "in" the Father in a different way than Christians are "in" Jesus.

See: Trinity; God the Father; Jesus is God; In Christ

14:28-31

Why did Jesus say the Father is "greater" than Jesus?

[14:28]

Jesus said the Father is "greater" than Jesus (see: 14:28) because he obeyed the Father. The Father made a plan before he created the world. He planned how people's sins could be forgiven. Jesus obeyed that plan when he died on the cross. In the same way a son obeys his father because the son is ruled by the father, so Jesus obeys God the Father. However, Jesus is God (See: John 5:18).

See: Trinity; God the Father; Will of God; Sin; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Cross; Jesus is God

Who is the "ruler of this world"?

[14:30]

The "ruler of this world" is Satan (See: John 12:31, Ephesians 2:2, and 2 Corinthians 4:4). God is the ruler of Satan and the world. However, God gave Satan permission to rule in some way.

Satan wanted to kill Jesus. Jesus said Satan could not force Jesus to do anything. So Satan was not given permission to kill Jesus. However, Jesus gave people permission to crucify him when Satan tempted them. Jesus did this to obey God the father's plan. Therefore, Satan did not kill Jesus. Instead, Jesus gave his life for people's sins.

See: Satan (The Devil); Crucify (Crucifixion); Tempt (Temptation); God the Father; Atone (Atonement)

John 14:1

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story from the previous chapter continues. Jesus reclines at the table with his disciples and continues to speak to them.

Do not let your heart be troubled

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being.

Alternate translation: "Stop being so anxious and worried"

John 14:2

In my Father's house are many rooms

"There are many places to live in my Father's house"

In my Father's house

This refers to heaven, where God lives.

Father

This is an important title for God.

many rooms

The word "room" can refer to a single room, or to a larger dwelling.

I am going to prepare a place for you

Jesus will prepare a place in heaven for every person who trusts in him. The "you" is plural and refers to all his disciples.

John 14:3

General Information:

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John 14:4

the way

Possible meanings of this metaphor are 1) "the way to God" or 2) "the one who takes people to God."

John 14:5

how can we know the way?

"how can we know how to get there?"

John 14:6

the truth

Possible meanings of this metaphor are 1) "the true person" or 2) "the one who speaks true words about God."

the life

This is a metaphor that means Jesus can give life to people.

Alternate translation: "the one who can make people alive"

no one comes to the Father except through me

This double negative emphasizes that through Jesus is the only way that anyone can come to the Father. Alternate

translation: "everyone comes to the Father only through me" or "the only way anyone comes to the Father is through me"

comes to the Father

You may need to make explicit that "comes" includes the idea of living with the Father forever. Alternate translation: "No one can come to the Father and live with him unless he comes through me"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 14:7

General Information:

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John 14:8

Lord, show us the Father

The "Father" is an important title for God.

John 14:9

I have been with you for such a long time and you still do not know me, Philip?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to Jesus's words. Alternate translation: "Philip, I have been with you disciples already for a very long time. You should know me by now!"

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father

To see Jesus, who is God the Son, is to see God the Father.

The "Father" is an important title for God.

How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize Jesus's words to Philip. Alternate translation: "So you really should not be saying, 'Show us the Father!'"

John 14:10

Connecting Statement:

Jesus asks Philip a question and then he continues to speak to all of his disciples.

Do you not believe ... in me?

This remark appears in the form of a question to emphasize Jesus's words to Philip. Alternate translation: "You really should believe ... in me."

Father

This is an important title for God.

The words that I say to you I do not speak from my own authority

"What I am telling you is not from me" or "The words I tell you are not from me"

The words that I say to you

Here "you" is plural. Jesus is now speaking to all of his disciples.

John 14:11

I am in the Father, and the Father is in me

This is an idiom that means God the Father and Jesus have a unique relationship. Alternate translation: "I am one with the Father, and the Father is one with me" or "my Father and I are just as though we were one"

John 14:12

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

believes in me

This means to believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

Father

This is an important title that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

John 14:13

Whatever you ask in my name

Here "name" is a metonym that represents the authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "Whatever you ask, using my authority"

so that the Father will be glorified in the Son

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so I can show everyone how great my Father is"

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship

between God and Jesus.

John 14:14

If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it

Here "name" is a metonym that represents the authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "If you ask me anything as one of my followers, I will do it" or "Whatever you ask of me, I will do it because you belong to me"

John 14:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 14:16

another Comforter

This refers to the Holy Spirit.

John 14:17

Spirit of truth

This refers to the Holy Spirit who teaches people what is true about God.

The world cannot receive him because it does not

Here the "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "The unbelieving people in this world will never welcome him because they do not" or "Those who oppose God will not accept him because they do not"

John 14:18

leave you as orphans

Here Jesus implies that he will not leave his disciples with no one to care for them. Alternate translation: "leave you with no one to care for you"

John 14:19

the world

Here the "world" is a metonym that represents the people who do not belong to God. Alternate translation: "the unbelievers"

John 14:20

you will know that I am in my Father

God the Father and Jesus live as one person. Alternate translation: "you will know that my Father and I are just like one person"

my Father

This is an important title for God.

you are in me, and that I am in you

"you and I are just like one person"

John 14:21

loves

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.

he who loves me will be loved by my Father

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "my Father will love anyone who loves me"

my Father

This is an important title for God.

John 14:22

Judas (not Iscariot)

This refers to another disciple whose name was Judas, not to the disciple who was from the village of Kerioth who betrayed Jesus.

why is it that you will show yourself to us

Here the word "show" refers to revealing how wonderful Jesus is. Alternate translation: "why will you reveal yourself only to us" or "why will you only let us see how wonderful you are"

not to the world

Here "world" is a metonym that represents the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "not to those who do not belong to God"

John 14:23

Connecting Statement:

Jesus responds to Judas (not Iscariot).

If anyone loves me, he will keep my word

"The one who loves me will do what I have told him to do" loves

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.

My Father

This is an important title for God.

we will come to him and we will make our home with him

The Father and the Son will share life with those who obey what Jesus commands. Alternate translation: "we will come to live with him, and will have a personal relationship with him"

John 14:24

The word that you hear is not from me but from the Father who sent me

"The things I have told you are not things that I have decided to say on my own"

The word

"The message"

that you hear

Here when Jesus says "you" he is speaking to all of his disciples.

John 14:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 14:26

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 14:27

world

The "world" is a metonym that represents those people who do not love God.

Do not let your heart be troubled, and do not be afraid

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being.

Alternate translation: "So stop being anxious, and do not be afraid"

John 14:28

loved

This kind of love comes from God and desires the good of others, even when it does not benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.

I am going to the Father

Here Jesus implies that he will return to his Father.

Alternate translation: "I am going back to the Father"

the Father is greater than I

Here Jesus implies that the Father has greater authority than the Son while the Son is on the earth. Alternate translation: "the Father has greater authority than I have here"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 14:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 14:30

the ruler of this world is

Here "ruler" refers to Satan. See how you translated this in John 12:31. Alternate translation: "Satan, who rules this world, is"

the ruler ... is coming

Here Jesus implies that Satan is coming to attack him.

Alternate translation: "Satan is coming to attack me"

John 14:31

in order that the world will know

Here the "world" is a metonym for the people who do not belong to God. Alternate translation: "in order that the ones who do not belong to God may know"

the Father

This is an important title for God.

Chapter 15

John 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Special concepts in this chapter

Vine

Jesus used the vine as a metaphor for himself. This is because the vine of the grape plant is what takes water and minerals from the ground to the leaves and grapes. Without the vine, the grapes and leaves die. He wanted his followers to know that unless they loved and obeyed him, they would be unable to do anything that pleased God.

Links:

[John 15:1 Notes](#)

John 15

15:1-8

Where are Jesus and his eleven disciples in John 15?

Some scholars think Jesus and his eleven disciples walked to the Garden of Gethsemane in John 15-17. At the end of John 14 (see: John 14:31) Jesus told the disciples they must leave the upstairs room. These scholars think Jesus continued to teach the disciples while they walked to the Garden of Gethsemane. Fewer scholars think Jesus and his disciples went to the temple on the way to Gethsemane. These scholars think that Jesus and the disciples did not arrive in the garden of Gethsemane until John 18:1.

See: Disciple

See Map: Jerusalem and Surrounding Area (during Jesus' lifetime) (including Temple, Kidron Valley, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Bethphage, Bethany)

What is a "vine"?

[15:1]

A vine is a kind of plant that grows grapes. In these verses, when Jesus talked about "fruit," he wanted his listeners to think about grapes. Someone needs to carefully care for a vine so it will make as many grapes as possible. Fruit is a metaphor used many times in the Bible.

See: Vine (Vineyard); Metaphor; Fruit (Metaphor)

Why did Jesus say "I am"?

[15:1]

Jesus said "I am" in 15:1 to say that he is God. This is because Jesus and God have the same name. In 8:58, Jesus said "before Abraham was, I am." Jesus said this so the people would think about Exodus 3:14. In Exodus 3:14, Moses saw God in a burning bush. In that verse, God told Moses that God's name is "I am." So, in John 15:1, Jesus said "I am" to tell the disciples that he is God.

There are several other places in the gospel of John where Jesus said "I am" to say that he is God (See: 4:26, 6:36, 41, 48, 7:28-29, 8:23-24, 9:5, 10:7-14, 10:36, 11:25, 14:6, 14:10-12).

See: Disciple; Yahweh (I am); Trinity

Why did Jesus call himself the "true vine"?

[15:1]

Jesus called himself the "true vine." This was a metaphor. He said this to speak about how people need to follow God.

People need to believe in Jesus if they want God to save them from the punishment for their sinning. Grapevines grow in a vineyard. So Jesus spoke about people growing in God's kingdom. This happens when people believe in Jesus. So Jesus is the "true vine."

Jesus said that Israel was not the "true vine." That is, the people of Israel believed they followed God. So they thought they were God's true vine (see: Psalm 80:7-9). But they stopped doing the things that honor God (see: Isaiah 5:1-2). So they were no longer the "true vine." Jesus is now God's "true vine." People who want to honor God must believe in Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Sin; Kingdom of God; Vine (Vineyard); Messiah (Christ)

What is a "gardener"?

[15:1, 15:2]

A "gardener" is a person who grows plants in a garden. In these verses, Jesus talked about a person who grows vines in a vineyard. A vineyard is a kind of garden where people grow vines that produce grapes.

See: Vine (Vineyard)

Why did Jesus say "my Father is the gardener"?

[15:1, 15:2]

Jesus said "my Father is the gardener." This was a metaphor. Jesus used this metaphor to talk about God. Jesus often "Father" when he wanted to talk about God. In 15:1, he said that God is the "gardener" to say that God cares for people who believe in Jesus.

In a vineyard, the gardener removes vine branches that do not grow. But the gardener carefully trims vine branches that do grow. He trims away things that will harm the branches. This helps the vine to grow more grapes. So Jesus wanted his disciples to think about how God helps people who believe in Jesus. God helps them the way the gardener helps branches that are growing.

See: Metaphor; God the Father; Vine (Vineyard)

Why did Jesus say "bear fruit"?

[15:2, 15:4, 15:5, 15:8]

When Jesus said "bear fruit," he continued to use the metaphor of a vine. He wanted his disciples to think about all they could do to honor God. Branches in a vineyard grow grapes. In the same way, Christians that grow will do things that honor God. Jesus called this "fruit."

See: Metaphor; Fruit (Metaphor); Vine (Vineyard)

Who bears "no fruit"?

[15:2]

When Jesus said some people bear "no fruit" (15:2), he wanted his disciples to think about people who do not honor God. Some scholars think he spoke about Christians who do not do the things that Jesus taught. That is, they say they believe in Jesus, but they do not do the things that he taught them to do. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about people who do not

believe in him. Because they do not believe in him, they cannot honor God.

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

Why did Jesus say his disciples were "already clean"?

[15:3]

Jesus said his disciples were "already clean." He said this to say they were already at peace with God. They did not need to do anything new to be at peace with God. In John 13:10, Jesus said his disciples were clean, except for Judas Iscariot. He said that his disciples (except Judas Iscariot) believed in Jesus. So God forgave them from the punishment of sinning because they believed in Jesus. Because God forgave their sins, they were "clean." They did not need to have their sins forgiven again.

See: Metaphor; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Clean and Unclean; Disciple; Sin

Why did Jesus say "remain in me"?

[15:4]

See: Abide

Why did Jesus speak about branches being burned?

[15:6]

When Jesus spoke about branches being burned (15:6), he wanted his disciples to think about Christians who do not remain in him (see 15:4). He continued to use the metaphor of a vine. In a vineyard, branches that did not make grapes were cut off and burned. This is because they were useless to the owner of the vineyard.

These burned branches were a metaphor for Christians who do not remain in Jesus. They are useless branches. They are not connected to the vine. That is, they are not connected to Jesus. Anyone not connected to Jesus will be thrown away and burned in the same way a dead branch is thrown away and burned.

Sometimes, the word burning is used in the Bible to talk about hell. However, scholars think when Jesus spoke about burning branches in 15:6 he did not want to speak about hell.

See: Disciple; Abide; Metaphor; Vine (Vineyard); Hell

Why did Jesus say "ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you"?

[15:7]

When Jesus said "ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you", he wanted his disciples to know they needed to do the things that God wanted them to do. When a person believes in Jesus, people need to obey Jesus. They should do the things Jesus wants them to do. So when a Christian prays, they should pray for God's will. That is, he will ask God what it is God wants him to do. This kind of prayer honors God. So God will honor the person who prays this way by answering his prayers.

Jesus did not want to say that God will do anything a person wants him to do. Sometimes Christians think about and pray about things that do not honor God. God will not give people the things that do not honor him.

See: Will of God

Who is the "Father" that Jesus spoke about which Jesus spoke?

[15:8]

When Jesus spoke about the "Father," he wanted his disciples to think about God. Jesus often spoke about the "Father" when he wanted to speak about God.

See: Disciple; God the Father

15:9-17

Why did Jesus say "my joy will be in you" and "your joy will be complete"?

[15:11]

When Jesus said "my joy will be in you" and "your joy will be complete," he wanted his disciples to know that people can have true joy only if they believe in Jesus and obey him.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

Why did Jesus say a person who believes in Jesus needs to "lay down his life"?

[15:13]

Jesus said a person that believes in him needs to be ready to "lay down his life" for another person. That is, they need to serve other people and perhaps even be willing to die for other people. He said this because he wanted the people who believe in him to "love one another." This is how they are to love one another.

Jesus did not want to say that all Christians need to be killed. He said this to talk about how some Christians will die so other people will know how much they love Jesus. He wanted to say that they would choose to do this. That is, they will choose to obey Jesus instead of not being killed.

What did Jesus want to say in 15:14-15?

[15:14, 15:15]

In 15:14-15, Jesus spoke about how much he loves Christians. He told his disciples they were his "friends." In 15:10-13, he spoke about how his disciples must obey him. They do this in the same way a friend does what their friend tells them to do because they love him. So, Jesus spoke about his disciples as "friends" to say that he wanted them to obey him because

they loved him.

See: Disciple

15:18-27

Why did Jesus speak about "hate"?

[15:18]

When Jesus spoke about "hate" in 15:18-21, he wanted his disciples to know that if they believed in him, then other people will persecute them. This is because they do not believe in Jesus.

Jesus said that people would persecute him. The Romans persecuted him by killing him. So, he wanted his disciples to know that people will persecute them for believing in him.

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Jesus say "of the world"?

[15:19]

When Jesus spoke about people who are "of the world," he wanted his disciples to think about people who do not believe in him. They do things that do not honor God.

See: World

Why did Jesus say "because of my name"?

[15:21]

Jesus said "because of my name" to speak about people who believed in him. That is, people who are "Christians" (see: Acts 11:26).

See: Name

Why did Jesus say "him who sent me"?

[15:21]

When Jesus spoke about "him who sent me," he wanted his disciples to think about God. God the Father sent God the Son into the world to be the messiah.

See: Disciple; Trinity; God the Father; Son of God; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Jesus say "now they have no excuse for their sin"?

[15:22]

When Jesus said "now they have no excuse for their sin," he wanted to speak about how people needed to believe in him. God sent Jesus to tell people about God. He did this so they would believe in him and he would forgive them from the punishment of sinning. But when people do not believe in Jesus, they reject God. This is because Jesus is God.

Some scholars think Jesus spoke only about the Jewish people who did not believe in him. These people had the Romans kill Jesus. That was the sin for which they had no excuse. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about anyone who did not believe in Jesus after they have heard the gospel. Still other scholars think Jesus spoke about both these groups of people. Advice to translators: When someone does something bad, they often make an excuse. They do this so they will not be punished for doing something bad. They defend themselves by saying an excuse. Someone makes an excuse by saying that they had a good reason for doing the bad thing they did. An excuse is them saying to people why they did doing something. Here, the words "they have no excuse" are being used to say that there is nothing they can say to explain why they rejected Jesus.

See: Sin; Jesus is God; Gospel

Who is the "Comforter" (or "Advocate") about which Jesus spoke?

[15:26]

The "comforter" or "advocate" about which Jesus spoke is the Holy Spirit. One of the things the Holy Spirit does for Christians is to comfort and encourage them. Another thing the Holy Spirit does is to ask God the Father to do good things for them.

Advice to Translators: Use the same word in your language that is used in your Bible for comforter or advocate in 4:16.

See: 14:16,26

See: Holy Spirit; God the Father

John 15:1

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story from the previous chapter continues. Jesus reclines at the table with his disciples and continues to speak to them.

I am the true vine

Here the "true vine" is a metaphor. Jesus compares himself to a vine or a vine stem. He is the source of life that causes people to live in a way that pleases God. Alternate translation: "I am like a vine that produces good fruit"

my Father is the gardener

The "gardener" is a metaphor. A "gardener" is a person who takes care of the vine to ensure it is as fruitful as possible.

Alternate translation: "my Father is like a gardener"

my Father

This is an important title for God.

John 15:2

He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit

Here "every branch" represents people, and "bear fruit" represents living in a way that pleases God.

takes away

"cuts off and takes away"

prunes every branch
"trims every branch"

John 15:3

You are already clean because of the message that I have spoken to you
The implied metaphor here is the "clean branches" that have already been "pruned." Alternate translation: "It is as if you have already been pruned and are clean branches because you have obeyed what I have taught you"

you

The word "you" throughout this passage is plural and refers to the disciples of Jesus.

John 15:4

Remain in me, and I in you

"If you remain joined to me, I will remain joined to you" or
"Remain joined to me, and I will remain joined to you"

unless you remain in me

By remaining in Christ, those who belong to him depend on him for everything. Alternate translation: "unless you stay joined to me and depend upon me for everything"

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches

The "vine" is a metaphor that represents Jesus. The "branches" is a metaphor that represent those who trust in Jesus and belong to him. Alternate translation: "I am like a vine, and you are like branches that are attached to the vine"

He who remains in me and I in him

"He who stays joined to me and I stay joined to him"

he bears much fruit

The implied metaphor here is the fruitful branch that represents the believer who pleases God. Just as a branch that is attached to the vine will bear much fruit, those who stay joined to Jesus will do many things that please God. Alternate translation: "you will bear much fruit"

John 15:6

he is thrown away like a branch and dries up

Here the implied metaphor is the unfruitful branch that represents those who do not stay joined to Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the vinedresser throws him away like a branch and it dries up" they are burned up

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the fire burns them"

John 15:7

ask whatever you wish

Jesus implies that believers must ask God to answer their prayers. Alternate translation: "ask God whatever you wish"

it will be done for you

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "he will do it for you"

John 15:8

My Father is glorified in this, that

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "It causes people to honor my Father when"

My Father

This is an important title for God.

in this, that you bear much fruit

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for living to please God.

Alternate translation: "when you live in a way that pleases him"

prove that you are my disciples

"show you are my disciples" or "demonstrate you are my disciples"

John 15:9

As the Father has loved me, I have also loved you

Jesus shares the love that God the Father has for him with those who trust in him. Here "Father" is an important title for God.

Remain in my love

"Continue to accept my love"

John 15:10

If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, as I have kept the commandments of my Father and remain in his love

When Jesus's followers obey him, they show their love for him. Alternate translation: "When you do the things I have told you to do, you are living in my love, just as I obey my Father and live in his love"

my Father

Here "Father" is an important title for God.

John 15:11

I have spoken these things to you so that my joy will be in you

"I have told you these things so that you will have the same kind of joy that I have"

so that your joy will be made full

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "so that you will be completely joyful" or "so that your joy may have nothing missing"

John 15:12

General Information:

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John 15:13

life

This refers to physical life.

John 15:14

General Information:

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John 15:15

everything that I heard from my Father I have made known to you

"I have told you everything my Father told me"

my Father

Here "Father" is an important title for God.

John 15:16

You did not choose me

Jesus implies that his followers did not decide on their own to become his disciples. Alternate translation: "You did not decide to become my disciples"

go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain

Here "fruit" is a metaphor that represents a life that is pleasing to God. Alternate translation: "live lives that please God so that the results of what you do last forever"

whatever you ask of the Father in my name, he will give it to you

Here "name" is a metonym that represents the authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because you belong to me, whatever you ask of the Father, he will give it to you"

the Father

This is an important title for God.

John 15:17

General Information:

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John 15:18

the world

the people who do not belong to God and are opposed to him

John 15:19

the world

the people who do not belong to God and are opposed to him

love

This refers to human, brotherly love or love for a friend or family member.

John 15:20

Remember the word that I said to you

Here "word" is a metonym for the message of Jesus.

Alternate translation: "Remember the message that I spoke to you"

John 15:21

because of my name

Here "my name" is a metonym that represents Jesus. People will make his followers suffer because they belong to him.

Alternate translation: "because you belong to me"

John 15:22

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin

Jesus implies here that he has shared God's message with those who do not trust him. Alternate translation: "Because I have come and told them God's message, they have no excuse when God judges them for their sins"

they would not have sin

"they would not be guilty of sin"

John 15:23

He who hates me also hates my Father

To hate God the Son is to hate God the Father.

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 15:24

If I had not done the works ... they would have no sin, but

You can translate this double negative in a positive form.

Alternate translation: "Because I have done the works ... they have sin, and"

they would have no sin

"they would not be guilty of sin." See how you translated "they would not have sin" in John 15:22.

they have seen and hated both me and my Father

To hate God the Son is to hate God the Father.

John 15:25

to fulfill the word that is written in their law

You can translate this in an active form. "Word" here is a metonym for the entire message of God. Alternate translation: "to fulfill the prophecy in their law"

law

This refers generally to the entire Old Testament, which contained all of God's instructions for his people.

John 15:26

will send ... from the Father ... the Spirit of truth ... he will testify about me

God the Father would soon send God the Spirit to show the world that Jesus is God the Son.

Father

This is an important title for God.

the Spirit of truth

This is a title for the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "the Spirit who tells the truth about God and me"

John 15:27

You also must testify

Here "testify" means to tell others about Jesus. Alternate translation: "You also must tell everyone what you know about me"

You also must

Some English versions of the Bible translate "must" as "will." Alternate translation: "You also will"

the beginning

Here the "beginning" is a metonym that means the first days of Jesus's ministry. Alternate translation: "from the very first days when I began teaching the people and doing miracles"

Chapter 16

John 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The Holy Spirit

Jesus told his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to them. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter ([John 16:7](#)) who is always with God's people to help them and to speak to God for them. He is also the Spirit of truth ([John 16:13](#)) who tells God's people what is true about God so they know him better and serve him well. (See: holyspirit)

"The hour is coming"

Jesus used these words to begin prophecies about times that could be shorter or longer than sixty minutes. "The hour" in which people would persecute his followers ([John 16:2](#)) was days, weeks, and years long, but "the hour" in which his disciples would scatter and leave him alone ([John 16:32](#)) was less than sixty minutes long. (See: prophet)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Simile

Jesus said that just as a woman is in pain as she gives birth to a baby and his followers would be sad when he died. But the woman is glad after the baby is born, and his followers would be happy when he became alive again.

Links:

[John 16:1 Notes](#)

John 16

16:1-4

Where were Jesus and his eleven disciples in John 16?

In John 16, Jesus and his eleven disciples continued to walk to Gethsemane. At the end of John 14 (see: John 14:31), Jesus told the disciples they needed to leave the upstairs room. Some scholars think Jesus and his eleven disciples walked to the Garden of Gethsemane in John 15-17. Jesus continued to teach them while they walked to the Garden of Gethsemane.

They did not arrive in the Garden of Gethsemane until John 18:1.

Fewer scholars think that in John 16, Jesus and his disciples were at the temple on the way to Gethsemane.

See: Disciple; Temple

See Map: Jerusalem and Surrounding Area (during Jesus' lifetime) (including Temple, Kidron Valley, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Bethphage, Bethany)

What did Jesus want to say in 16:1-4?

[16:1, 16:2, 16:3, 16:4]

Jesus said things in 16:1-4 to tell his disciples they would be persecuted soon. He wanted them to be ready for this. If they were ready, they would not stop trusting Jesus when other people persecuted them (16:1). Jesus protected his disciples from persecution while he was with them (16:4). However, other people would persecute his followers after he died.

Disciple; Persecute (Persecution)

Who was "you"?

[16:1]

Jesus was talking to the eleven disciples when he said "you." However, Jesus also wanted all Christians to know what he said. There were only eleven disciples because Judas left them (see: John 13:27-30). Judas went to betray Jesus.

See: Disciple

What are "these things"?

[16:1]

Jesus wanted the disciples to remember what he told them in chapter 15 when he said "these things." He wanted them to "remain" in him (15:4). He wanted them to be ready when other people hated and persecuted them (15:20-21).

See: Disciple; Abide; Persecute (Persecution)

How does a person "fall away"?

[16:1]

Jesus spoke about falling away. This was a metaphor. He wanted to talk about how someone can stop believing or trusting in Jesus in some way. He wanted to warn the disciples so they would not stop trusting him.

Some scholars think Jesus wanted to speak about a Christian rejecting him completely and permanently. If they did this, they would not live together with him in heaven. Other scholars think Jesus spoke about a Christian not following him for only a short period of time. They will still live together with Jesus in heaven forever.

See: Fall (Fall Away, Stand); Metaphor; Disciple; Eternal Security; Heaven

Why did Jesus say "the hour" and "their hour"?

[16:2, 16:4]

Jesus used the metaphor "the hour" because he wanted to talk about some time soon. Soon, Jesus' enemies would start to persecute his followers. He was not speaking about a certain time of day. Instead, he wanted to speak again about when his enemies would persecute his followers when he said "their hour."

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Metaphor

Why did Jesus say "throw you out of the synagogues"?

[16:2]

Jesus warned his disciples that Jewish leaders would keep them from worshipping with other Jews when he said "throw you out of the synagogues." Synagogues were buildings where Jewish people worshipped God. "Throw out" is a metaphor for not allowing a person to enter a place anymore. It was very bad for Jews when the Jews threw someone out of the synagogue. That person's Jewish friends did not talk to him anymore. He could not worship with other Jews.

See: Disciple; Synagogue; Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution) : Worship

Who is the "Father"?

[16:3]

The "Father" is God. Jesus often spoke about the "Father" when he wanted to speak about God.

See: God the Father; Trinity

16:5-15

Why did Jesus say "him who sent me"?

[16:5]

Jesus wanted his followers to think about God the Father when he said "him who sent me."

See: God the Father; Trinity

Why did Jesus say none of his disciples asked him where he was going?

[16:5]

Jesus wanted to say that none of his disciples asked him where he was going at the time he spoke these words in 16:5. Earlier Peter (see: John 13:36) and Thomas (see: John 14:5) asked Jesus where he was going. However, they did not ask him where he was going later in 16:5.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus say he would "go away"?

[16:7]

Jesus said he would "go away" because he wanted his disciples to know he had to die. He used "go away" as a metaphor for his crucifixion. He was crucified to save people from sin. So, he could not remain with the disciples.

See: Disciple; Metaphor; Crucify (Crucifixion); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins).

Why was it "better" for Jesus' followers that he go away?

[16:7]

Jesus wanted his disciples to know that there was something better than having him with them when he said it was "better." He wanted to tell them about the Holy Spirit. Jesus had to be crucified for the Holy Spirit to be able to enter into those who believe in Jesus. He lives in them forever. This was "better" than simply having Jesus on earth to teach a few followers.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit; Crucify (Crucifixion); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Why did Jesus speak about the "Comforter"?

[16:7, 16:8]

Jesus spoke about the Holy Spirit when he spoke about the "Comforter" (παράκλητος #g3875). The Holy Spirit comforts, protects, and helps people who believe in Jesus.

Advice to translators: Use the word in your language that is in the Bible text. The Greek word παράκλητος can also be translated into English as "Helper" or "Advocate." It is the word for a person who comes alongside someone else to help him.

See: Holy Spirit

Why did Jesus say "the world"?

[16:8]

Jesus wanted to speak about all people and all the things people do that do not honor God when he said "the world."

See: World

Why did Jesus say the Holy Spirit will "prove the world to be wrong"?

[16:8]

Jesus wanted people to think about how sinning is wrong when he said the Holy Spirit will "prove the world to be wrong." That is, people who sin do wrong. The Holy Spirit will make them know how they dishonor God when they sin. He will make them know how they need God to forgive their sins.

He will also make them know that they do not know how to be at peace with God. They can only be at peace with God by believing in Jesus.

He will also make them know that God will judge them for sinning, unless they repent. God will judge them for sinning the same way he judges Satan. Jesus wanted his disciples to think about Satan when he spoke about the "ruler of this world" in 16:11.

See: Holy Spirit; World; Sin; Satan (The Devil); Judge (Judgment); Repent (Repentance); Disciple

Who is the "ruler of this world"?

[16:11]

Jesus wanted his disciples to think about Satan when he spoke about the "ruler of this world." God gives Satan permission to rule the world in some way, but this will only happen for a short time (see: John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, Ephesians 2:2, 6:12).

See: Disciple; Satan (The Devil)

Who is the "Spirit of Truth"?

[16:13]

Jesus was speaking about the Holy Spirit when he spoke about the "Spirit of Truth." The Holy Spirit speaks to people. He tells them only what is true. Therefore, he is called the "Spirit of Truth."

See: Holy Spirit

Why did Jesus say "he will not speak from himself" and "he will say whatever he hears"?

[16:13]

Jesus said "he will not speak from himself" and "he will say whatever he hears." He wanted to say that the Holy Spirit will tell people what God the Father wants people to know. The Holy Spirit is God, but he is not God the Father. So Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit speaks to someone, he speaks what the Father wants the person to know.

See: Holy Spirit; God the Father; Trinity

Why did Jesus say "he will take from what is mine"?

[16:14]

Jesus wanted to speak about the things only God knows when he said "he will take from what is mine." Jesus knows these things because he is God. The Holy Spirit also knows these things because he is also God. The Holy Spirit helps Christians to know God when he tells them these things. He helps them to know what they need to know to do the things that honor God.

See: Trinity; Holy Spirit

16:16-24

Why did Jesus tell the disciples "in a short amount of time, you will no longer see me"?

[16:16]

Jesus wanted to tell the disciples that he would die when he said "you will no longer see me," He wanted them to know this would happen soon when he said "in a short amount of time." Jesus was crucified the next day.

See: Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion) Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus say "after another short amount of time, you will see me"?

[16:16]

Jesus wanted to speak about when he would come back to life when he said "you will see me." He wanted them to know this would happen soon after he died when he said "after another short amount of time." Jesus was resurrected three days later.

Jesus knew the disciples would not know what he meant. Therefore, he repeated it three times (16:16, 17, 19).

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Disciple

Why did Jesus say "the world will be glad"?

[16:20]

When Jesus said "the world will be glad." He wanted his disciples to know that people who did not believe in him would be happy when he was killed. His disciples would be sad. But people who did not like what he taught would be glad because he was dead. They thought other people would stop believing in him.

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus speak about a woman giving birth in 16:21-22?

[16:21]

Jesus spoke about a woman giving birth in 16:21-22. This was a metaphor. He used this to tell the disciples about the different way they would think about Jesus dying after he was crucified. They would have pain when he was crucified in the same way a woman giving birth will have pain. Jesus knew that he would be made alive again. So in the same way a woman is happy and forgets her pain after the baby is born, they would be happy and forget their pain when Jesus was made alive again.

See: Metaphor; Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say "I will see you again"?

[16:22]

Jesus wanted to say he would return to the disciples when he said "I will see you again." This happened after he was resurrected. The disciples and many other people saw Jesus many times for 40 days. Then he returned to heaven.

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Heaven

What is "joy"?

[16:22]

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

Why did Jesus say "no one will be able to take away your joy from you"?

[16:22]

Jesus wanted the disciples to know that things would change after he was resurrected when he said "no one will be able to take away your joy from you." The disciples were happy because they were with him while he was alive. They would have joy even though he would stop being on earth (see: Acts 13:52). Nobody could do anything to make this joy be gone (see: 1 Peter 1:8).

See: Disciple; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say "you will not ask me anything" and "if you ask anything of the Father in my name"?

[16:23]

Jesus wanted to say that the disciples would not need to ask him for any more information when he said, "you will not ask me anything." This is because they would understand what he told them. Also he wanted them to know that they could pray directly to God the Father when he said "if you ask anything of the Father in my name." They could pray in Jesus' name, and God would answer.

Some scholars think Jesus spoke about prayer when he said both things. They think he wanted to say that while he was on earth, the disciples prayed to Jesus. But he wanted them to know that after he was resurrected they could pray directly to God the Father.

See: 16:26-27

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; God the Father

16:25-33

Who is the "Father"?

[16:25]

See: God the Father

What is a "figure of speech"?

[16:25, 16:29]

Here the words "figure of speech" refer to the proverbs and parables Jesus used to teach his disciples. That is, Jesus sometimes said things in a way that made it difficult to understand exactly what he meant. Jesus said he had spoken to the disciples in a way that was hard for them to understand. However, soon he would talk to them in a way that they could understand.

See: Proverb; Parable

Why did Jesus say "the hour is coming"?

[16:25]

Jesus wanted to speak about the time after he was resurrected when he said "the hour is coming" in 16:25. He used the metaphor of "hour" to talk about a time in the future.

See: Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus say "the hour is coming"?

[16:32]

Jesus wanted to speak about the time when he was crucified when he said "the hour is coming" in 16:32. He used the metaphor of "hour" to talk about a time in the future. He did not mean a literal time on the clock. This was not the same "hour" as in 16:25.

See: Metaphor; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus say "you will have peace in me"?

[16:33]

Jesus wanted his disciples to remember what he told them when he said "you will have peace in me." They would not have to fear what might happen after he was crucified. The things Jesus said to them would give them peace and courage.

See: Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus say "I have conquered the world"?

[16:33]

Jesus said "I have conquered the world." He used two metaphors. He wanted to speak about everyone and everything that does not honor God when he said "the world." (see: 16:8). When he said he "conquered," this was not a military victory. Instead, he died and was resurrected so that God could forgive people's sins. He wanted to say he saved people from the power of sin. In this way, he "conquered" the "world."

See: World; Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Sin; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

John 16:1

Connecting Statement:

The story that began in the previous chapter continues.

Jesus reclines at the table with his disciples and continues to speak to them.

you will not fall away

The phrase "fall away" means "stop trusting" or "stop believing." You may need to specify the the trusting or believing is "in me" or the reason for which the hearers might "fall away." Alternate translation: "you will not stop trusting" or "you will not stop believing in me because of the difficulties you must face"

John 16:2

the hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think that he is offering a service to God

"it will someday happen that people who kill you will think they are doing something good for God."

John 16:3

They will do these things because they have not known the Father nor me

They will kill some believers because they do not know God the Father or Jesus.

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 16:4

when their hour comes

Here "hour" is a metonym that refers to the time when people will persecute Jesus's followers. Alternate translation: "when they cause you to suffer"

in the beginning

This is a metonym that refers to the first days of Jesus's ministry. Alternate translation: "when you first started following me"

John 16:5

General Information:

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John 16:6

sorrow has filled your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being.

Alternate translation: "you are now very sad"

John 16:7

if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you

You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate

translation: "the Comforter will come to you only if I go

away"

Comforter

This is a title for the Holy Spirit, who will be with the disciples after Jesus goes away. See how you translated this in John 14:26.

John 16:8

the Comforter will prove the world to be wrong about sin

When the Holy Spirit came, he began to show people that they were sinners.

Comforter

This refers to the Holy Spirit. See how you translated this in John 14:16.

world

This is a metonym that refers to the people in the world.

John 16:9

about sin, because they do not believe in me

"they are guilty of sin because they do not trust in me"

John 16:10

about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, and you will no longer see me

"when I return to God, and they see me no more, they will know that I did the right things"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 16:11

about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged

"God will hold them accountable and will punish them for their sins, just as he will punish Satan, the one who rules this world"

because the ruler of this world has

Here "ruler" refers to Satan. See how you translated this in John 12:31. Alternate translation: "because Satan, who rules this world, has"

John 16:12

things to say to you

"messages for you" or "words for you"

you cannot bear them

The word "bear" or carry here is a metaphor. Possible meanings are 1) being able to understand the words. Alternate translation: "you cannot understand them" Or 2) being able to obey the words. Alternate translation: "you cannot obey them"

John 16:13

the Spirit of truth

This is the Holy Spirit, who will tell the people the truth about God.

he will guide you into all the truth

The "truth" refers to spiritual truth. Alternate translation: "he will teach you all the spiritual truth you need to know"

he will say whatever he hears

Jesus implies that God the Father will speak to the Spirit.

Alternate translation: "he will say whatever God tells him to say"

John 16:14

he will take from what is mine and he will tell it to you

Here "things of mine" refers to Jesus's teaching and mighty works. Alternate translation: "he will reveal to you that what I have said and done are indeed true"

John 16:15

Father

This is an important title for God.

the Spirit will take from what is mine and he will tell it to you

The Holy Spirit will tell people that the words and works of Jesus are true. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit will tell everyone that my words and works are true"

John 16:16

In a short amount of time

"Soon" or "Before much time passes"

after another short amount of time

"again, before much time passes"

John 16:17

General Information:

There is a break in Jesus's speaking as his disciples ask each other about what Jesus meant.

A short amount of time you will no longer see me

The disciples did not understand that this refers to Jesus's death on the cross.

after another short amount of time you will see me

Possible meanings are 1) This could refer to Jesus's resurrection or 2) This could refer to Jesus's coming at the end of time.

the Father

This is an important title for God.

John 16:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 16:19

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.

Is this what you are asking each other, what I meant by saying, ... see me?"

Jesus uses this question so his disciples will focus on what he has just told them, so he can explain further. Alternate translation: "You are asking each other what I meant when I said, ... see me."

John 16:20

Truly, truly, I say to you

Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated this in John 1:51.

but the world will be glad

Here the "world" is a metonym for the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "but the people who oppose God will be glad"

but your sorrow will be turned into joy

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but your sadness will become joy" or "but afterwards instead of being sad you will be very happy"

John 16:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 16:22

your heart will be glad

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's inner being.

Alternate translation: "you will be very happy" or "you will be very joyful"

John 16:23

Truly, truly, I say to you

Translate this the way your language emphasizes that what follows is important and true. See how you translated this in John 1:51.

if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you
Here the word "name" is a metonym that refers to the person and authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you because you belong to me"

Father

This is an important title for God.

in my name

Here "name" is a metonym that refers to the person and authority of Jesus. The Father will honor the requests of the believers because of their relationship with Jesus. Alternate translation: "because you are my followers" or "on my authority"

John 16:24

your joy will be fulfilled

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "you will become very joyful"

John 16:25

in figures of speech

"in language that is not clear"

the hour is coming

"it will soon happen"

tell you plainly about the Father

"tell you about the Father in a way that you will clearly understand"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 16:26

you will ask in my name

Here "name" is a metonym for the person and authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "you will ask because you belong to me"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 16:27

the Father himself loves you because you have loved me

When a person loves Jesus, the Son, they also love the Father, because the Father and the Son are one.

John 16:28

I came from the Father ... I am leaving the world and I am going to the Father

After his death and resurrection, Jesus would return to God the Father.

I came from the Father ... going to the Father

Here "Father" is an important title for God.
world

The "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who live in the world.

John 16:29

Connecting Statement:

The disciples respond to Jesus.

John 16:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 16:31

Do you believe now?

This remarks appears in the form of a question to show that Jesus is puzzled that his disciples are only now ready to trust him. Alternate translation: "So, now you finally place your trust in me!"

John 16:32

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues speaking to his disciples.

you will be scattered

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "others will scatter you"

the Father is with me

This is an important title for God.

John 16:33

so that you will have peace in me

Here "peace" refers to inner peace. Alternate translation: "so that you may have inner peace because of your relationship with me"

I have conquered the world

Here "the world" refers to the troubles and persecution that believers will endure from those who oppose God.

Alternate translation: "I have conquered the troubles of this world"

Chapter 17

John 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter forms one long prayer.

Special concepts in this chapter

Glory

Scripture often speaks of God's glory as a great, brilliant light. When people see this light, they are afraid. In this chapter Jesus asks God to show his followers his true glory ([John 17:1](#)).

Jesus is eternal

Jesus existed before God created the world ([John 17:5](#)). John wrote about this in [John 1:1](#).

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Prayer

Jesus is God's one and only Son ([John 3:16](#)), so he could pray differently from the way other people pray. He used many words that sounded like commands. Your translation should make Jesus sound like a son speaking with love and respect to his father and telling him what the father needs to do so that the father will be happy.

Links:

[John 17:1 Notes](#)

John 17

Where are Jesus and his disciples in John 17?

Some scholars think Jesus and the disciples were at the Jerusalem temple in John 17. These scholars think they were also at this temple in John 15 and 16. Other scholars think the disciples continued to walk from the temple toward the Garden of Gethsemane. Still other scholars think they were still in the upstairs room where they were in John 14.

See Map: Jerusalem and Surrounding Area (during Jesus' lifetime) (including Temple, Kidron Valley, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Bethphage, Bethany)

See: Disciple; Temple

What did Jesus do during John 17?

Jesus prays to God the Father in John 17.

See: Trinity; God the Father

1:1-5

Why did Jesus "lift up his eyes to the heavens"?

[17:1]

John wrote that Jesus "lifted up his eyes to the heavens" because he wanted readers to know that Jesus began to pray. He wanted to say that Jesus prayed to God the Father.

When the Jews prayed, they looked up. They looked up to look toward God. They thought God was in heaven. They thought heaven was above the sky. So they looked up at the sky to pray to God.

See: Heaven; God the Father; Trinity

Why did Jesus say "the hour has come"?

[17:1]

Jesus said "the hour has come." That is, it was about the time for Jesus to die and be resurrected. He knew that he would die soon. Jesus knew that God would make Jesus alive again after Jesus died. He used the metaphor of "hour" to say that it was ready to happen. He did not mean an actual time on the clock. He wanted his disciples to know that he would die soon when he said "the hour."

See: Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Disciple

What did Jesus want his disciples to think about when he spoke about "glorifying"?

[17:1, 17:4, 17:5]

Jesus wanted his disciples to think about how to honor God when he spoke about "glorifying." He also wanted to say that God honors people when they honor Jesus. So Jesus asked God to honor him (17:1) because Jesus honored God.

Jesus also spoke about his being "glorified" in 13:31-32. He wanted his disciples to think about how God sent Jesus to earth. Jesus obeyed all God the Father told him to do. He also died to obey the Father.

Jesus wanted to return to God the Father in heaven. However, he knew he needed to die and be resurrected in order to do this. Then Jesus again had God the Father's honor and power completely.

Jesus made it possible for people to have peace with God the Father by his death and resurrection. God also greatly honored Jesus for this. Jesus spoke about this again in chapter 17.

Jesus said the words glorify and glory nine times in John 17. He really wanted his disciples to honor God.

See: John 13:31-32, 17:10,22,24

See: Disciple; Glory (Glorify); Heaven; God the Father; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Trinity

Why did Jesus say "your Son" and "the Son"?

[17:1]

Jesus said "your Son" and "the Son" to speak about himself. Jesus is the Son of God. That is, he is the person of God called "the Son."

See: Trinity; Son of God

Why did Jesus say "all flesh"?

[17:2]

Jesus used a metaphor to speak about all people when he said "all flesh." He wanted to say that God the Father gave him permission to rule over all people.

See: Metaphor; Flesh; God the Father

Why did Jesus say "eternal life"?

[17:3]

Jesus said "eternal life" because he wanted his disciples to think about two things.

Jesus said "eternal life" because he wanted his disciples to think about living forever. He wanted them to think about living with God forever. Jesus said eternal life comes from "knowing" God and Jesus.

See: Eternal Life; Disciple

How did Jesus have "glory" with God the Father before the world was created?

[17:5]

Jesus had "glory" with God the Father before the world was created because he is God. Because he is God, Jesus had the same power and honor as God the Father before the world was created. Jesus created the world with God the Father (see: John 1:1-3). Later, Jesus became a man. When he did this, he removed some of his power and honor (see: Philippians 2:5-11). Here, Jesus asked God the Father to return him to all of Jesus' power and honor. This happened when Jesus was resurrected.

See: 17:24

See: Trinity; Glory (Glorify); Incarnation; Resurrect (Resurrection); God the Father; Son of God

1:6-19

Why did Jesus say he "revealed" God's "name" to other people?

[17:6]

Jesus said he "revealed" God's "name" to other people because he wanted them to know that he is God. When Jesus lived, people thought that the name of a person was the person himself. That is, when you spoke about someone's name, you were speaking about that person. So, God's name in some way made people think about all that God is and the things he does. When Jesus said he "revealed" God's name, he wanted to say that in some way people who saw and heard him saw and heard God. He also wanted his disciples to know that when they believe in Jesus, they are believing in God too.

See: 17:26

See: Reveal (Revelation); Name; Disciple

Who were "the people whom you gave me"?

[17:6]

"The people whom you gave me" were Jesus' disciples. When he said that God the Father "gave" the disciples to him, he used a metaphor. He wanted to say that in some way God guided him when he chose his disciples. So, in some way God chose the disciples before Jesus did.

See: Disciple; God the Father; Metaphor

Why did Jesus say "I have given them all the words that you gave me"?

[17:8]

Jesus said "I have given them all the words that you gave me." That is, he told his disciples everything God wanted him to say. He wanted them to think about everything he taught them while he was alive. So, he said "all the words."

See: Disciple

Why did Jesus ask God the Father to "keep" his disciples?

[17:11, 17:15]

Jesus asked God the Father to protect his disciples when he asked God to "keep" them. Some scholars think he wanted them to keep believing in Jesus. He knew other people would try to get them to stop believing in Jesus. Those people would try to hurt them or kill them. So he asked God to protect them from this. Other scholars think Jesus wanted them to remain united with one another and not fight with one another.

This happened after Jesus was resurrected and returned to heaven (see: Acts 1). Jesus protected his disciples while he was alive (see: 17:12). That is, he stopped other people from hurting them. However, he knew he was going to die. So he could not do this for them anymore. So, he asked the Father to do this.

See: God the Father; Disciple; Heaven

Who was the "son of destruction"?

[17:12]

Jesus spoke about the "son of destruction." He was speaking about Judas Iscariot. Jesus called him this because Judas betrayed Jesus. That is, he told the people who wanted to kill him where he Jesus was located.

Jesus said this was "to fulfill Scripture" because he wanted his disciples to think about prophecies in the Old Testament. Scholars think he spoke about Psalm 41:4-9.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did Jesus speak about "the world"?

[17:13, 17:15, 17:16]

Jesus spoke about "the world" in 17:13 and 17:15 because he wanted his disciples to think about everyone on the earth.

Jesus spoke about "the world" in 17:14 and 17:16 because he wanted his disciples to think about people who do not believe in God. They do not worship or obey God. Instead, they do things that "the evil one" (17:15) wants. The "evil one" is Satan.

See: World; Disciple; Worship; Satan (The Devil)

Why did Jesus say he and his followers are not "of" the world?

[17:14, 17:16]

Jesus said he and his followers are not "of" the world because he wanted to say that they are "of" God. That is, they belong

to God. This is because they believe in God. They follow God. They do things to honor God. So they do not belong to "the world." That is, they do not do the evil things "the world" does.

Advice to translators: The word "of" in these verses means "to belong to" or "to be like or similar in some way." Jesus did not want to say his followers are God. But they belong to God.

See: World

Why did Jesus say "set apart"?

[17:17, 17:19]

Jesus said "set apart" to ask God to help Jesus' disciples. Some scholars think he wanted them to continue to believe in Jesus. When people believe in Jesus, this makes them different from other people. They are different because they worship and obey God. Jesus wanted to say that being different in this way is good. He also wanted to ask God to help his followers to keep believing in him. Other scholars think Jesus asked this because he wants them to continue to be different from people who do not believe in Jesus.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Disciple

17:20-26

Who did Jesus pray for in 17:20-26?

[17:20]

Jesus prayed for everyone who will believe in him in the future. In 17:13-20, Jesus prayed for the disciples who followed him while he was alive.

See: Pray (Prayer); Disciple

Why did Jesus say "in me", "in you", "in us", and "in them"?

[17:21, 17:23, 17:26]

Jesus said "in me" and "in you" because he wanted his followers to know that he is God.

Jesus said "in us" and "in them" because he also wanted his followers to know that he loved them. This is because they believe in him. He used "in" as a metaphor to speak about being loving friends. He did not want to say that his followers are literally "in" his body. He also did not want to say that his followers are God.

Advice to translators: Jesus used the word "in" for two different reasons in this verse.

When he said "in me" and "in you", he wanted to say "the same." That is, Jesus and God are the same. So Jesus is God. When he said "in us" and "in them," he wanted to speak of people believing in and following someone. This makes them almost like that person in some way. But they are not the same as the person in which they believe. If your language has different words for these ideas, use those words. If your language has one word that can mean both these things, use that word.

See: Metaphor

John 17:1

Connecting Statement:

The story that began in the previous chapter continues.

Jesus had been speaking to his disciples, but now he begins to pray to God.

he lifted up his eyes to the heavens

This is an idiom that means to look upward. Alternate translation: "he looked up to the sky"

heavens

This refers to the sky.

Father ... glorify your Son so that the Son will glorify you

Jesus asks God the Father to honor him so that he can give honor to God.

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

the hour has come

Here the word "hour" is a metonym that refers to the time for Jesus to suffer and die. Alternate translation: "it is time for me to suffer and die"

John 17:2

all flesh

This refers to all people.

John 17:3

This is eternal life ... know you, the only true God, and ... Jesus Christ
Eternal life is to know the only true God, God the Father,

and also God the Son.

John 17:4

the work that you have given me to do

Here "work" is a metonym that refers to Jesus's entire earthly ministry.

John 17:5

Father, glorify me along with yourself with the glory that I had with you before the world was made

Jesus had glory with God the Father "before the world was made" because Jesus is God the Son. Alternate translation: "Father, give me honor by bringing me into your presence as I was before we made the world"

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 17:6

Connecting Statement:

Jesus begins to pray for his disciples.

I revealed your name

Here "name" is a metonym that refers to the person of God. Alternate translation: "I taught who you really are and what you are like"

from the world

Here "world" is a metonym that refers to the people of the world that oppose God. This means that God has separated the believers spiritually from the people who do not believe in him.

kept your word

This is an idiom that means to obey. Alternate translation: "obeyed your teaching"

John 17:7

General Information:

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John 17:8

General Information:

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John 17:9

I do not pray for the world

Here the word "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "I am not praying for those who do not belong to you"

John 17:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 17:11

in the world

This is a metonym that refers to being on earth and being among the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "among the people who do not belong to you"

Holy Father, keep them ... that they will be one ... as we are one

Jesus asks the Father to keep those who trust in him so they can have a close relationship with God.

Father

This is an important title for God.

keep them in your name that you have given me

Here the word "name" is a metonym for God's power and authority. Alternate translation: "keep them safe by your power and authority, which you have given me"

John 17:12

I kept them safe in your name

Here "name" is a metonym that refers to the power and protection of God. Alternate translation: "I kept them safe with your protection"

not one of them was destroyed, except for the son of destruction

This double negative emphasizes that the son of destruction was the only one who was destroyed. Alternate translation: "the only one among them who was destroyed was the son of destruction"

the son of destruction

This refers to Judas, who betrayed Jesus. Alternate translation: "the one whom you long ago decided you would destroy"

so that the scriptures would be fulfilled

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "to fulfill the prophecy about him in the scriptures"

John 17:13

the world

These words are a metonym for the people who live in the world.

so that they will have my joy fulfilled in themselves

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that you might give them great joy"

John 17:14

I have given them your word

"I have spoken your message to them"

the world ... because they are not of the world ... I am not of the world
Here "the "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who oppose God. Alternate translation: "the people who oppose you ... because they do not belong to those who do not believe ... I do not belong to them"

John 17:15

the world

In this passage, "the world" is a metonym for the people who oppose God.

keep them safe from the evil one

This refers to Satan. Alternate translation: "protect them from Satan, the evil one"

John 17:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 17:17

Set them apart by the truth

The purpose for setting them apart can be stated clearly. The phrase "by the truth" here represents by teaching the truth. Alternate translation: "Make them your own people by teaching them the truth"

Your word is truth

"Your message is true" or "What you say is true"

John 17:18

into the world

Here into "the world" is a metonym that means to the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "to the people of the world"

John 17:19

so that they themselves may also be set apart in truth

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that they may also truly set themselves apart to you"

John 17:20

those who will believe in me through their word

"those who will believe in me because these teach about me"

John 17:21

they will all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us

Those who trust in Jesus become united with the Father and the Son when they believe.

Father

This is an important title for God.

the world

Here the "the world" is a metonym that refers to the people who do not yet know God. Alternate translation: "the people who do not know God"

John 17:22

The glory that you gave me, I have given to them

"I have honored my followers just as you have honored me"

so that they will be one, just as we are one

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that you can unite them just as you have united us"

John 17:23

that they may be brought to complete unity

"that they may be completely united"

that the world will know

Here "the world" is a metonym that refers to the people who do not know God. Alternate translation: "that all the people will know"

loved

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

John 17:24

Father

This is an important title for God.

where I am

Here "where I am" refers to heaven. Alternate translation: "with me in heaven"

to see my glory

"to see my greatness"

before the foundation of the world

Here Jesus refers to the time before creation. Alternate translation: "before the world was created" or "before you created the world"

John 17:25

Connecting Statement:

Jesus finishes his prayer.

Righteous Father

Here "Father" is an important title for God.

the world did not know you

The "world" is a metonym for the people who do not belong to God. Alternate translation: "those who do not belong to you do not know what you are like"

John 17:26

I made your name known to them, and I will make it known

The word "name" refers to God. Alternate translation: "I revealed to them what you are like, and I will continue to do that"

love ... loved

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

Chapter 18

John 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verse 14 says, "Now Caiaphas was the one who had given the advice to the Jews that it would be better that one man die for the people." The author says this to help the reader understand why it was to Caiaphas that they took Jesus. You might want to put these words in parentheses.

Special concepts in this chapter

"It is not lawful for us to put any man to death"

The Roman government did not allow the Jews to kill criminals, so the Jews needed to ask Pilate, the governor, to kill him ([John 18:31](#)).

Jesus's kingdom

No one knows for sure what Jesus meant when he told Pilate that his kingdom was not "of this world" ([John 18:36](#)). Some people think that Jesus means that his kingdom is only spiritual and that he has no visible kingdom on this earth. Other people think that Jesus meant that he would not build and rule his kingdom by force, the way other kings build theirs. It is possible to translate the words "is not of this world" as "is not from this place" or "comes from another place."

King of the Jews

Pilate asked Jesus if he were the King of the Jews

Links:

[John 18:1 Notes](#)

John 18

18:1-11

Where did Jesus and his disciples go at the beginning of John 18?

[18:1]

In John 18, Jesus and his disciples walked to the Garden of Gethsemane (see: Mark 14:32).

See: Disciple

See Map: Jerusalem and Surrounding Area (during Jesus' lifetime) (including Temple, Kidron Valley, Mount of Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Bethphage, Bethany)

Who is Jesus?

[18:5, 18:7]

Jesus said he is God. The soldiers said they looked for Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus did not disagree that he was Jesus of Nazareth. However, Jesus said "I am." He did not mean "I am Jesus." Instead, "I am" was the name God spoke to Moses (see: Exodus 3:14).

See: John 8:58

See: Jesus is God; Yahweh (I am)

See Map: Nazareth

Why did the soldiers go backward?

[18:6]

The soldiers went backward because of what Jesus said. The soldiers were forced backwards and fell down when Jesus told the soldiers who is he. John does not write why these soldiers fell backwards. Some scholars think the words Jesus said were so powerful that the soldiers were amazed and fell backwards. Other scholars think Jesus said "I am" very loudly, with great power. That is what knocked them down.

Why did Peter cut off the servant's ear?

[18:10]

Peter cut off the servant's ear because he wanted to protect Jesus. Peter fought to stop the soldiers arresting Jesus. Peter did not understand that God's plan was for Jesus to die on the cross for the sins of the world. Peter had a short sword with him. He drew his sword and cut off the right ear of Malchus. He was a servant of the high priest.

See: Cross; Crucify (Crucifixion); Sin; High Priest; Atone (Atonement)

What is "the cup" Jesus said he must drink?

[18:11]

The "cup" Jesus said he must drink was his crucifixion. Jesus used a metaphor to say that he must die on the cross for the sins of everyone (see: Matthew 26:36-46, Mark 14:32-42, and Luke 22:39-46). "Cup" is a metaphor here for something that must be done.

See: Metaphor; Crucify (Crucifixion); Cross; Sin; Atone (Atonement)

18:12-14

Why did the soldiers take Jesus to Annas after they arrested him?

[18:13]

The soldiers took Jesus to Annas because they needed someone to tell them what to do with Jesus. Jesus was a wise Jewish man. Many people followed him. They might be very angry if they thought Jesus was not being treated in the right way. So the soldiers needed a powerful Jewish person to tell them what to do with Jesus. Annas was old and experienced. However, Annas was not the actual high priest when Jesus was arrested. He was the father-in-law of the high priest, Caiaphas. Annas was high priest from when Jesus was young. After Annas was the high priest asked, the high priest after him asked him for advice. Therefore, the soldiers took Jesus to Annas so he could help Caiaphas know what to do with Jesus.

See: High Priest

18:15-24

Who was the other disciple?

[18:15]

John wrote about "another disciple," but he did not write this man's name. Scholars think John wrote about himself. In his gospel, John wrote about himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," instead of writing his own name (see: John 13:23, 19:26-27, 20:2, 21:7, and 21:20). So here, John used another name instead of his name. He called himself, "another disciple."

See: Disciple; Gospel

Why did the officer hit Jesus?

[18:22]

The officer hit Jesus because he thought Jesus had insulted Annas. The officer called Annas "the high priest" because Annas had been high priest. So the officer expected everyone to honor Annas. He thought Jesus did not do that. So he thought Jesus needed to be punished for that.

See: High Priest

18:25-32

Why did John write "immediately the rooster crowed"?

[18:27]

John wrote "immediately the rooster crowed" so people would think about what Jesus told Peter in 13:38. Jesus told Peter that Peter would say he did not know Jesus three times before the rooster crowed. That is to say, Peter would say that he did not know Jesus three times that night. Peter said he did not know Jesus in 18:17, 25, 27. When the rooster crowed, it confirmed that Jesus was right about this. Jesus knew what was going to happen.

Where did they take Jesus after they left Caiaphas' home?

[18:28]

The soldiers took Jesus from Caiaphas' home to the place where the Roman governor Pilate lived. John called this the "government headquarters." This is because this was where most government decisions were made.

See: Palace

Why did the soldiers not enter?

[18:28]

The soldiers would not enter Pilate's home because Pilate was not a Jew. These soldiers were Jews. If a Jew entered the home of a Gentile that Jew became unclean. He could not eat any of the special Passover meals until a month later (see: Numbers 9:6-13).

Pilate knew the Jews believed this. So Pilate came outside to speak to the Jews about Jesus.

See: Clean and Unclean; Gentile; Passover

Why did Pilate not want to judge Jesus?

[18:31]

Pilate did not want to judge Jesus because he did not think Jesus had done anything wrong. The Jews said Jesus did evil things.

Scholars think Pilate really did not want the Jews to be angry with him. He knew large crowds followed Jesus. He was afraid the crowds might become very angry and cause trouble for him if he judged Jesus. So, he told the Jewish people there to judge him according to the Jewish laws. That way Jesus' followers could not say Pilate had done anything wrong. Why did the Jewish people at Pilate's palace say they could not kill anyone?

[18:31]

The Jewish people at Pilate's palace said they could not kill anyone because only the Romans could legally kill a criminal. The Jews who were there wanted to kill Jesus. However, they could not kill anyone without permission from the Roman governor. The Romans often crucified criminals. However, they did give permission to do this to people they ruled.

See: Palace; Crucify (Crucifixion)

18:33-40

Why did Pilate speak to Jesus in private?

[18:33]

Pilate took Jesus into his palace to talk to him about why the Jews wanted to kill him. He wanted to do this without the Jews listening.

Some Jews accused Jesus of saying he was their king (see: Luke 23:2). In the Roman Empire, it was illegal for anyone except the leader of the Roman Empire to say they were a king. So if Jesus said this, he did something wrong and Pilate could judge him.

However, many other Jews wanted Jesus as their king (see: John 1:49, 6:15, 12:13, and 12:19). They might have started a rebellion against Rome. Because of this, Pilate needed to know if Jesus said he was a king.

See: Palace; Rebel (Rebellion)

Why did Jesus say what he said in 18:36?

[18:36]

Jesus said what he said in 18:36 to tell Pilate two things:

Jesus is a king. Jesus is not a king in the way the Roman emperor was a king. Jesus said "my kingdom is not of this world" because he wanted Pilate to think about God's kingdom. He wanted to say that his kingdom was not going to stop the Roman kingdom.

See: Kingdom of God

What was "the truth" Jesus spoke about?

[18:37]

Jesus called his teaching of forgiveness and eternal life "the truth." Jesus said that all those who belong to "the truth" listen to him. Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (18:38). Pilate said this to say that he did not believe in any certain "truth."

See: Eternal Life

What was the "custom" about which Pilate spoke?

[18:39]

The "custom" about which Pilate spoke was a special thing the Romans did for the Jews at Passover. The Roman governor would release one man from prison. It would be someone the Jews asked to be released.

Here, Pilate told them Jesus was not guilty of anything. Then Pilate offered to release Jesus. This was because he did not think Jesus needed to be killed.

See: Passover

Who was Barabbas?

[18:40]

Barabbas was a criminal who was in prison. John wrote that he was a "robber." Scholars think he was also a violent person who fought against the Roman empire. They think the Jewish people asked for Barabbas to be freed because Barabbas was a hero to some of them. He was a hero because he tried to free Israel from Roman rule.

John 18:1

General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information for the events that follow. Verse 1 tells where they took place, and verse 2 gives background information about Judas.

After Jesus spoke these words

The author uses these words to mark the beginning of a new event.

the Kidron Brook

This was a low place in Jerusalem separating the Temple

Mount from the Mount of Olives. It has a small stream in it only after heavy rains. Many modern English translations read, "the Kidron Valley"

where there was a garden

This was a grove of olive trees. Alternate translation: "where there was a grove of olive trees"

John 18:2

General Information:

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John 18:3

General Information:

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John 18:4

General Information:

Jesus begins to speak with the soldiers, officers, and Pharisees.

Then Jesus, who knew all the things that were happening to him

"Then Jesus, who knew everything that was about to happen to him"

John 18:5

Jesus of Nazareth

"Jesus, the man from Nazareth"

I am

The word "he" is implied in the text. Alternate translation: "I am he"

who betrayed him

"who handed him over"

John 18:6

I am

Here the word "he" is not present in the original text, but it is implied. Alternate translation: "I am he"

fell to the ground

The men fell to the ground because of Jesus's power.

Alternate translation: "fell down because of Jesus's power"

John 18:7

Jesus of Nazareth

"Jesus, the man from Nazareth"

John 18:8

I am

Here the word "he" is not present in the original text, but it is implied. Alternate translation: "I am he"

John 18:9

General Information:

In this verse there is a stop in the main story. Here John gives background information about Jesus fulfilling Scripture.

This was in order to fulfill the word that he said

Here "the word" refers to the words Jesus had prayed. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "This happened in order to fulfill the words that he had said when he was praying to his Father"

John 18:10

Malchus

a male servant of the high priest

John 18:11

sheath

the cover for a knife or sword that keeps the knife or sword from cutting the owner

Should I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to Jesus's statement. Alternate translation: "I must surely drink the cup that the Father has given to me!"

the cup

Here "cup" is a metaphor that refers to the suffering that Jesus must endure.

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 18:12

the Jews

Here "the Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders" seized Jesus and tied him up

The soldiers tied Jesus's hands to prevent him from escaping. Alternate translation: "captured Jesus and tied him up to prevent him from escaping"

John 18:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 18:14

General Information:

Verse 14 tells us background information about Caiaphas.

John 18:15

Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and he entered with Jesus

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Now the high priest knew that disciple so he was able to enter with Jesus"

John 18:16

So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "So the other disciple, whom the high priest knew"

the doorkeeper

The doorkeeper was a woman.

and he brought Peter in

The word "he" refers to the other disciple.

John 18:17

Are you not also one of the disciples of this man?

This appears in the form of a question to enable the servant to express her remark somewhat cautiously. Alternate translation: "You are also one of the arrested man's disciples! Are you not?"

John 18:18

Now the servants and the officers were standing there, and they had made a charcoal fire, for it was cold, and they were warming themselves

These were the high priest's servants and the temple guards. Alternate translation: "It was cold, so the high priest's servants and temple guards made a charcoal fire and were standing and warming themselves around it"

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here John adds information about the people who were warming themselves around the fire.

John 18:19

General Information:

Here the story is about Jesus again.

The high priest

This was Caiphas (John 18:13).

about his disciples and his teaching

Here "his teaching" refers to what Jesus had been teaching the people. Alternate translation: "about his disciples and what he had been teaching the people"

John 18:20

I have spoken openly to the world

You may need to make explicit that the word "world" is a metonym for those people who had heard Jesus teach. Here the exaggeration "the world" emphasizes that Jesus has spoken openly.

where all the Jews come together

Here "all the Jews" is an exaggeration that emphasizes that Jesus spoke where anyone who wanted to hear him could hear him.

John 18:21

Why did you ask me?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to what Jesus is saying. Alternate translation: "You should not be asking me these questions!"

John 18:22

Is that how you answer the high priest?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "That is not how you should answer the high priest!"

John 18:23

wrongly ... wrong

These words refer to moral wrong, like blasphemy, not to mere mistakes about facts.

testify about the wrong

"tell me what I said that was wrong"

if rightly, why do you hit me?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis to what Jesus is saying. Alternate translation: "if I said only what was right, you should not be hitting me!"

John 18:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 18:25

General Information:

Here the story is about Peter again.

Now

This word is used to mark a stop in the story. Here John tells more information about Peter.

Are you not also one of his disciples?

The speaker uses a questions to somewhat cautiously make a comment. Alternate translation: "You are also one of the arrested man's disciples, are you not?"

John 18:26

Did I not see you in the garden with him?

This appears in the form of a question to enable the servant to express his remark somewhat cautiously. Alternate translation: "I saw you in the garden with him, did I not?"

John 18:27

Then Peter denied it again

Peter again denied knowing and being with Jesus. Alternate translation: "Peter denied him again"

immediately the rooster crowed

Here the writer assumes that the reader will remember

that Jesus had said Peter would deny him before the rooster crowed. Alternate translation: "immediately the rooster crowed, just as Jesus had said would happen"

John 18:28

General Information:

Here the story is about Jesus again. The soldiers and Jesus's accusers bring him to Caiaphas. This verse gives background information about why they did not enter the Praetorium.

Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas

Here it is implied that they led Jesus from Caiaphas' house. Alternate translation: "Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas' house"

they did not enter the government headquarters so that they would not be defiled

Pilate was not a Jew, so if the Jewish leaders entered his headquarters, they would be defiled. This would have prevented them from celebrating the Passover. "they themselves remained outside Pilate's headquarters because Pilate was a Gentile. They did not want to become defiled"

John 18:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 18:30

If this man was not an evildoer, we would not have given him over to you

You can translate this double negative in a positive form.

Alternate translation: "This man is an evildoer, and we had to given him over to you"

given him over

This phrase here means to hand over to an enemy.

John 18:31

The Jews said to him

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus and arrested him. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders said to him"

It is not lawful for us to put any man to death

According to Roman law, the Jews could not put a man to death. Alternate translation: "According to Roman law, we cannot put a person to death"

John 18:32

General Information:

In this verse there is a stop in the main story. Here John tells how what was said in verse 31 fulfills Scripture about Jesus.

so that the word of Jesus would be fulfilled which he had spoken

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "in order to fulfill what Jesus had said earlier"

to indicate by what kind of death he would die

"regarding how he would die"

John 18:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 18:34

General Information:

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John 18:35

I am not a Jew, am I?

This remark appears in the form of a question so Pilate can

emphasize his complete lack of interest in the cultural affairs of the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "Well I am certainly not a Jew, and I have no interest in these matters!"

Your own people

"Your fellow Jews"

John 18:36

My kingdom is not of this world

Here "world" is a metonym for the people who oppose Jesus. Possible meanings are 1) "My kingdom is not part of this world" or 2) "I do not need this world's permission to rule as their king" or "It is not from this world that I have authority to be king."

so that I would not be given over to the Jews

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "and would prevent the Jewish leaders from arresting me"

the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche that refers to the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus.

John 18:37

Are you a king then?

"So, you are a king?" Pilate asked this question to confirm that Jesus is calling himself a king, since Jesus said in the previous verse that he has a kingdom. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "So, you are a king."

testify to the truth

Here "the truth" refers to the truth about God. Alternate

translation: "tell people the truth about God"

who belongs to the truth

This is an idiom that refers to anyone who loves the truth about God.

my voice

Here "voice" is a synecdoche that refers to words Jesus says.

Alternate translation: "the things I say" or "me"

John 18:38

What is truth?

This remark appears in the form of a question to reflect Pilate's belief that no one really knows what truth is.

Alternate translation: "No one can know what is true!"

the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche that refers to the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus.

John 18:39

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 18:40

Not this man, but Barabbas

This is an ellipsis. You can add the implied words. Alternate translation: "No! Do not release this man! Release Barabbas instead"

Now Barabbas was a revolutionary

Here John provides background information about Barabbas.

revolutionary

person who wants to take over the government

Chapter 19

John 19 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 19:24, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Purple garment"

Purple is a color like red or blue. The people were mocking Jesus, so they put him in a purple garment. This was because kings wore purple garments. They spoke and acted like they were giving honor to a king, but everyone knew that they were doing it because they hated Jesus.

"You are not Caesar's friend"

Pilate knew that Jesus was not a criminal, so he did not want to have his soldiers kill him. But the Jews told him that Jesus was claiming to be a king, and anyone who did that was breaking Caesar's laws ([John 19:12](#)).

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([John 19:41](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they placed the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they rolled a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Sarcasm

The soldiers were insulting Jesus when they said, "Hail, King of the Jews." Pilate was insulting the Jews when he asked, "Should I crucify your king?" He was probably also insulting both Jesus and the Jews when he wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Gabbatha, Golgotha

These are two Hebrew words. After translating the meanings of these words ("The Pavement" and "The Place of a Skull"), the author transliterates their sounds by writing them with Greek letters.

Links:

[John 19:1 Notes](#)

John 19

19:1-16

Why did John write Pilate whipped Jesus?

[19:1]

John wrote Pilate whipped Jesus because he wanted people to know that Pilate ordered it. Pilate did not do it himself. However, he ordered the Roman soldiers to do it. They had to obey Pilate.

Why did Pilate have Jesus whipped?

[19:1]

Pilate had Jesus whipped so the people would know that Pilate punished criminals. Pilate was the Roman governor in Judea. He wanted Judea to have peace. Therefore, he did not want people to think that criminals were not punished.

Although Jesus was not a criminal, people thought he was a criminal.

When Jesus was whipped, it was not as severe as when the soldiers flogged Jesus just before he was crucified (see: 19:16).

See Map: Roman provinces including Judea

Why did the Roman soldiers put a "crown of thorns" and a purple robe on Jesus?

[19:2, 19:5]

The soldiers put a "crown of thorns" and a purple robe on Jesus to hurt him and mock him. This was part of the way the Romans crucified him.

The crown he wore have very long thorns. It had sharp ends stuck out of it. So, these thorns went into Jesus' head and caused bleeding.

Purple was the color of clothes that kings wore. The soldiers dressed Jesus like this to say that they thought he was not a true king.

The soldiers did this because Pilate called Jesus "King of the Jews." However, they did not believe Jesus was the king of the Jews. They wanted to mock and humiliate Jesus. They wanted people to think that even if Jesus was a king, he was not very powerful.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Crown; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did Pilate tell the Jewish leaders again that Jesus was not guilty?

[19:4, 19:6]

Pilate did not agree with what the Jews said Jesus had done. Because of this, he again told the Jewish leaders that Jesus was not guilty. That is, he did not do anything wrong or break the law.

Why did Pilate go back inside the government headquarters?

[19:9]

Pilate went back inside the government headquarters to think about what to do. He was afraid (19:8) of what might happen. He was afraid that the Jews might begin to cause trouble for him if he did the wrong thing. The Roman emperor could have Pilate killed if the Jews began to make trouble for Rome.

The Jews said Jesus did something that was not to be done according to the Law of Moses (see: Leviticus 24:16). They said he needed to die because of this. However, Pilate was not a Jew. He did not have to follow the Law of Moses. However, he did have to keep anyone from causing trouble for the Roman empire. So he needed time to think about how to control the Jewish people.

See: Law of Moses; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did Jesus say, "You do not have any power over me except for what has been given to you from above"?

[19:11]

Jesus said, "You do not have any power over me except for what has been given to you from above" to make Pilate and other people think about God. Pilate thought he had power over Jesus. Pilate could release Jesus or have him crucified because he was the governor.

Jesus said that Pilate could only do these things because God allowed Pilate to do these things. He said Pilate was given his power "from above." That is, God gave Pilate permission to do these things.

Jesus said the person who sent Jesus to Pilate was more responsible for his death than Pilate. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the high priest Caiaphas. Caiaphas was responsible for the Jewish religious leaders' efforts to kill Jesus (see: John 11:45-53). Other scholars think Jesus spoke about Judas Iscariot. Judas gave Jesus to Caiaphas by telling the soldiers where they could find Jesus.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); High Priest

Who was "Caesar"?

[19:15]

"Caesar" was the Roman emperor. It was the title people used when they wanted to speak about the emperor.

19:17-27

Why did Jesus carry his own cross?

[19:17]

Jesus carried his own cross because the Romans made him do this. They made him do this so the crowds would see it. They wanted the people to be afraid of them. So they forced criminals to carry their crosses through the streets. Scholars think Jesus only carried part of the cross. The entire cross was too heavy for one person to carry, especially if that person had just been whipped. Because of this, Jesus only carried it a short distance. Then the soldiers forced someone else to carry the cross for Jesus. This person was Simon of Cyrene (see: Luke 23:26).

See: Cross

How was a person crucified?

[19:18]

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

Where was Jesus crucified?

[19:17, 19:18]

Jesus was crucified at a place called "the Place of a Skull." This was a small hill just outside of Jerusalem. The Romans often crucified criminals there. The Aramaic word for this place was "Golgotha." The English word for this place is "Calvary".

See: Languages in the New Testament

See Map: Golgotha

Why did Pilate put a sign on Jesus' cross in three languages?

[19:20]

Pilate put a sign on Jesus' cross in three languages. He wanted everyone who saw it to be able to read it. The Romans put signs on crosses to tell people the criminal's name and the crime they had done. The sign on Jesus' cross was written in the three languages spoken in Jerusalem. That is, the message was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. Pilate thought that most people could read one of these languages. Some translations use the word "Hebrew" instead of Aramaic. Aramaic was the language spoken by the Hebrew people, that is, the Jews. However, there was another language called Hebrew that only the priests could speak. It was the language the Jewish people spoke before the spoke Aramaic. Scholars think Pilate wrote "the King of the Jews" on Jesus' sign to mock the Jews. The Jewish religious leaders hated Jesus and wanted him crucified. However, Pilate hated the Jews. He wanted to release Jesus, but the Jews made Pilate crucify Jesus. So, Pilate mocked them because they hated Jesus. He did this by writing Jesus was the King of the Jews.

See: Cross; Crucify (Crucifixion); Languages in the New Testament

Why did the chief priests ask Pilate to change the sign?

[19:21]

The chief priests asked Pilate to change the sign because they did not want the people to read what Pilate wrote. They were afraid the people would think that Jesus really was their king. So they asked Pilate to change it to Jesus said that he was the king of the Jews.

See: Chief Priest

Why did Pilate say "what I have written, I have written"?

[19:22]

Pilate said, "what I have written, I have written" to tell the Jewish leaders he would not change the sign.

Why did the soldiers "cast lots" for Jesus' tunic?

[19:24]

The soldiers "cast lots" for Jesus' tunic to decide which of them would take it.

The Romans stripped criminals before they crucified them. That is, the criminals did not have any clothes on them when they were crucified. The soldiers got the clothes of the criminal. Jesus' tunic was worth more than the rest of his clothes. They decided to cast lots to determine which soldier would get Jesus' tunic.

Advice to Translators: A tunic was an outer robe that people wore over other clothes.

See: Cast Lots; Crucify (Crucifixion)

Who were the women John named?

[19:25]

John named four women who watched Jesus' crucifixion.

Jesus' mother, Mary. Jesus' mother's sister. Mary, the wife of Clopas. Mary Magdalene.

Some scholars think John wanted to say that Jesus' mother's sister was Mary wife of Clopas. That is, he only named three women.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus say "Woman, see your son!" and "See your mother"?

[19:26, 19:27]

Jesus said "Woman, see your son!" and "See your mother" because he wanted John to care for his mother Mary after he

died. That is, he told them to treat each other in the same way they treated their mother and their son. Some scholars think John was Jesus' cousin. They think he chose John to care for Mary because of this. That is, he said it because John and Mary were already family.

19:28-37

Why did John write "everything was now completed"?

[19:28]

John wrote that Jesus knew "everything was now completed" because he wanted his readers to think about how God the Father gave Jesus a great task to finish. He gave Jesus this task before he sent him to earth. Now, Jesus knew he completed everything this task needed to be done.

See: God the Father

Why did Jesus say "I am thirsty"?

[19:28]

Jesus said "I am thirsty" because he needed something to drink. He had not had anything to drink for many hours.

Scholars think Jesus also wanted his followers to think about Psalm 22:15.

Why did Jesus say "It is finished"?

[19:30]

Scholars disagree about why Jesus said, "It is finished."

Some scholars think Jesus said this because he finished his life as a human. Other scholars think Jesus was finished the work God the Father sent him to do on earth. Other scholars think Jesus finished dying for the sins of every person (see: 1 John 2:2). Other scholars think Jesus finished what was needed for God to save people from their sins (see: Ephesians 2:8-10).

Scholars often think Jesus wanted to say more than one of these things.

See: God the Father; Sin; Atonement; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did John write that Jesus "gave up his spirit"?

[19:30]

John wrote that Jesus "gave up his spirit" because he wanted his readers to know two things.

Jesus died at that time. John used a metaphor about people's bodies and spirits to write about when a person died. Jesus controlled when he died. That is, Jesus died at that moment because he wanted to die at that moment.

See: Metaphor; Spirit (Spiritual)

What is the "day of preparation"?

[19:31]

The "day of preparation" is the day before the Sabbath. According to the Law of Moses, Jews cannot work on the Sabbath. Therefore, they must do certain things the day before the Sabbath.

Also, this day of preparation was the day before Passover. So, the Jews had to do extra things to prepare for the Passover.

See: Law of Moses; Sabbath; Passover

Why did the Jews not want Jesus' body to remain on the cross during the Sabbath?

[19:31]

The Jews did not want Jesus' body to remain on the cross during the Sabbath because the Law of Moses required dead bodies to be buried before Sabbath began (see: Deuteronomy 21:23). For the Jews, each day begins at sunset. This meant that the Sabbath began that evening. Therefore, Jesus' body needed to be buried before sunset.

See: Cross; Sabbath; Law of Moses

Advice to translators: Sunset is the time at the end of the day when one can no longer see the sun. This is not because it is behind a cloud.

Why did John write "that Sabbath was especially important"?

[19:31]

John wrote "that Sabbath was especially important" because it was the Sabbath of Passover. Passover was a festival for Jewish people, but it was not always celebrated on the Sabbath. So having Passover on the Sabbath was special.

See: Sabbath; Passover

Why did the soldiers break the legs of the two criminals but not Jesus' legs?

[19:31, 19:32, 19:33]

The soldiers broke the legs of the two criminals to make them die more quickly. They did not break Jesus' legs because he was already dead.

Crucifixion was a form of execution. So, victims had to die. Victims normally died because the weight of their bodies on the cross stopped them from breathing. However, sometimes crucified men survived several days on crosses before they died. They could do this by using their legs to push their bodies up. Then they could keep breathing. So, if the Romans wanted someone to die faster, they would break the person's legs. This kept the person from pushing up to breathe. In this case, the Jews did not want dead bodies hanging on crosses on the Sabbath. Each new day for Jews began at sundown. The Jews had to remove the dead bodies off their crosses and bury them before sundown.

However, when the soldiers came to break Jesus' legs, Jesus was already dead. So the soldiers did not break Jesus' legs.
See: Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12; Psalm 34:20
See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Cross; Sabbath
Why did a soldier stab Jesus' side with a spear?

[19:34]

The soldier stabbed Jesus' side with a spear so he would know Jesus was dead. Blood and water came out, but Jesus did not react to the spear. So the soldiers knew he was dead. Scholars think the water was from the fluid that is near the heart. Therefore, they stabbed Jesus in the heart.

Who was "the one who saw this"?

[19:35]

John himself was "the one who saw this." So he was able to write that "his testimony is true."

See: Testify (Testimony)

19:38-42

Who was Joseph of Arimathea?

[19:38]

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin (see: Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50). Scholars think he was also a Pharisee. He was wealthy.

He was also a follower of Jesus. However, most people did not know this (see: Matthew 12:23-24). Joseph asked Pilate to let him remove Jesus' body from the cross. This was so he could bury it.

Most rich men had large tombs carved into rocky hillsides. These tombs had places carved out of the rock walls inside the tomb. They could place the bodies of their family members in those places. Jesus' body was the first body buried in Joseph's tomb because it was a new tomb.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Pharisees; Cross; Tomb

Who was Nicodemus?

[19:39]

Nicodemus was a Pharisee. He might have been a member of the Sanhedrin (see: John 3:1). Nicodemus respected Jesus. He defended Jesus against other Pharisees (see: John 7:46-52). Now Nicodemus helped Joseph of Arimathea to care for Jesus' body.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Pharisees

Why did Nicodemus bring myrrh and aloes?

[19:39]

Nicodemus brought myrrh and aloes to anoint Jesus' body. Myrrh and aloes were expensive spices. Ancient people used spices like these to prepare bodies for burial. So Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus wrapped these spices in linen burial cloths. Then they wrapped those around Jesus' body.

Scholars think Nicodemus paid for these large amounts of expensive burial spices himself. "One hundred litras" was about 35 kilograms.

See: Anoint (Anointing)

Why did John write what he wrote in 19:42?

[19:42]

John wrote what he wrote in 19:42 to tell his readers that Joseph and Nicodemus had to bury Jesus quickly.

John 19:1

Connecting Statement:

The story that began in the previous chapter continues. Jesus is standing before Pilate as he is being accused by the Jews.

Then Pilate took Jesus and whipped him

Pilate himself did not whip Jesus. Here "Pilate" is a metonym for the soldiers whom Pilate ordered to whip Jesus. Alternate translation: "Then Pilate's soldiers took Jesus out of the room and whipped him"

John 19:2

General Information:

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John 19:3

Hail, King of the Jews

The greeting "Hail" with a raised hand was only used to greet Caesar. As the soldiers use the crown of thorns and the purple robe to mock Jesus, it is ironic that they do not

recognize that he is indeed a king.

John 19:4

I find no guilt in him

Pilate states this twice to say he does not believe Jesus is guilty of any crime. He does not want to punish him.

Alternate translation: "I see no reason to punish him"

John 19:5

crown of thorns ... purple garment

The crown and the purple robe are things only kings wear. The soldiers dressed Jesus in this manner to mock him. See

John 19:2.

John 19:6

General Information:

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John 19:7

The Jews answered him

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "The Jewish leaders

answered Pilate"

he has to die because he claimed to be the Son of God

Jesus was condemned to death by crucifixion because he claimed he was "the Son of God."

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

John 19:8

General Information:

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John 19:9

General Information:

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John 19:10

Are you not speaking to me?

This remark appears in the form of a question. Here Pilate expresses his surprise that Jesus does not take the opportunity to defend himself. Alternate translation: "I cannot believe you are refusing to speak to me!" or "Answer me!"

Do you not know that I have authority to release you, and authority to crucify you?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "You should know that I have authority to release you or to order my soldiers to crucify you!"

John 19:11

You do not have any authority over me except for what has been given to you from above

This double negative emphasizes that what has been given from above is the only thing that allows Pilate to have power. Alternate translation: "The authority you have over me is only what has been given to you from above"

what has been given to you from above

The words "from above" are a euphemism for "by God. This can be stated in active form and the one who has given can be specified. Alternate translation: "what God has given you"

from above

This is a respectful way of referring to something coming from God.

gave me over

"handed me over"

John 19:12

At this answer

Here "this answer" refers to Jesus's answer. Alternate translation: "When Pilate heard Jesus's answer"

Pilate tried to release him

The form of "tried" in the original indicates that Pilate tried "hard" or "repeatedly" to release Jesus. Alternate translation: "he tried hard to release Jesus" or "he tried again and again to release Jesus"

but the Jews cried out

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche that refers to the Jewish leaders that opposed Jesus. In the original, the form of "cried out" indicates that they cried out or shouted repeatedly. Alternate translation: "but the Jewish leaders kept shouting"

you are not a friend of Caesar

"you are opposing Caesar" or "you are opposing the

emperor"

makes himself a king

"claims that he is a king"

John 19:13

he brought Jesus out

Here "he" refers to Pilate and is a metonym for the soldiers whom he ordered to bring Jesus out. Alternate translation: "Pilate ordered the soldiers to bring Jesus out"

sat down

Important people like Pilate sat down when they performed an official duty, while people who were not so important stood up.

in the judgment seat

This is the special chair that an important person like Pilate sat in when he was making an official judgment. If your language has a special way to describe this action, you can use it here.

in a place called "The Pavement," but

This is a special stone platform where only the important people were allowed to go. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "in a place the people called The Pavement, but"

Aramaic

This was the language that the Jews in Judea spoke among themselves. Some translations say "Hebrew," following the form of the Greek word.

John 19:14

Connecting Statement:

Some time has passed and it is now the sixth hour, as Pilate orders his soldiers to crucify Jesus.

Now

This word marks a stop in the story. Here John provides information about the upcoming Passover and the time of day.

the sixth hour

"noontime"

Pilate said to the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche that refers to the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "Pilate said to the Jewish leaders"

John 19:15

Should I crucify your King?

Here "I" is a synecdoche that refers to Pilate's soldiers who will actually perform the crucifixion. Alternate translation: "Do you really want me to tell my soldiers to nail your king to a cross?"

John 19:16

Then Pilate gave Jesus over to them to be crucified

Though it was Roman soldiers who actually crucified Jesus, word "them" here refers to "the Jews" [John 19:14]

John 19:17

to the place called "The Place of a Skull,"

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "to the place that the people called 'The Place of a Skull,'"

which in the Aramaic language is called "Golgotha."

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "which in the Aramaic language they call 'Golgotha.'"

Aramaic

This was the language that the Jews in Judea spoke among themselves. Some translations say "Hebrew," following the form of the Greek word.

John 19:18

with him two other men

This is an ellipsis. You can translate this, adding the implied words. Alternate translation: "they also nailed two other criminals to their crosses"

John 19:19

Pilate also wrote a sign and put it on the cross

Here "Pilate" is a synecdoche for the person who wrote on the sign. Here "on the cross" refers to Jesus's cross.

Alternate translation: "Pilate also commanded someone to write on a sign and to attach it to Jesus's cross"

There it was written: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "The sign said, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'"

John 19:20

the place where Jesus was crucified

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the place where the soldiers crucified Jesus"

The sign was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "The one who prepared the sign wrote the words in 3 languages: Aramaic, Latin, and Greek"

Aramaic

This was the language that the Jews in Judea spoke among themselves. Some translations say "Hebrew," following the form of the Greek word.

Latin

This was the language of the Roman government.

John 19:21

Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate

The chief priests had to go back to Pilate's headquarters to protest to him about the words on the sign. Alternate translation: "The chief priests went back to Pilate and said"

John 19:22

What I have written I have written

Pilate implies that he will not change the words on the sign.

Alternate translation: "I have written what I wanted to write, and I will not change it"

John 19:23

also the tunic

"and they also took his tunic." The soldiers kept the tunic separate and did not divide it. Alternate translation: "they kept his tunic separate"

John 19:24

General Information:

At the end of this verse there is a break stop in the main story. John tells the reader how this event fulfills Scripture.

let us cast lots for it to decide whose it will be

The soldiers will gamble and the winner will receive the shirt. Alternate translation: "let us gamble for the tunic and the winner will get to keep it"

This happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled which said

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "This fulfilled the scripture that said" or "This

happened to make the scripture come true which said"

cast lots

This was how the soldiers divided Jesus's clothing among themselves. Alternate translation: "gamble"

John 19:25

General Information:

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John 19:26

the disciple whom he loved

This is John, the writer of this Gospel.

Woman, see, your son

Here the word "son" is a metaphor. Jesus wants his disciple, John, to be like a son to his mother. Alternate translation:

"Woman, here is the man who will act like a son to you"

John 19:27

See, your mother

Here the word "mother" is a metaphor. Jesus wants his mother to be like a mother to his disciple, John. Alternate translation: "Think of this woman as if she were your own mother"

From that hour

"From that very moment"

John 19:28

knowing that everything was now accomplished

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "knowing that he had completed everything" or "he knew that he had done everything that God had sent him to do"

John 19:29

A container full of sour wine was placed there

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "Someone had placed there a full container of sour wine"

sour wine

"bitter wine"

they put

Here "they" refers to the Roman guards.

a sponge

a small object that can soak up and hold much liquid

on a hyssop staff

"on a branch of a plant called hyssop"

John 19:30

He bowed his head and gave up his spirit

John implies here that Jesus gave his spirit back to God.

Alternate translation: "He bowed his head and gave God his spirit" or "He bowed his head and died"

John 19:31

the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

day of preparation

This is the time before the Passover when people prepared food for the Passover.

to break their legs and to remove them

Breaking the victims' legs caused them to die almost immediately so that the soldiers could take the dead bodies off the crosses. You may need to add this information.

Alternate translation: "to break their legs so they would die and to have the soldiers remove them"

John 19:32

who had been crucified with Jesus

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom they had crucified near Jesus"

John 19:33

General Information:

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John 19:34

General Information:

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John 19:35

The one who saw this

This sentence gives background information to the story. John is telling readers that he was there and that we can trust what he has written.

has testified, and his testimony is true

To "testify" means to tell about something that one has seen. Alternate translation: "has told the truth about what he has seen"

so that you would also believe

Here "believe" means to put one's trust in Jesus. Alternate translation: "so that you will also put your trust in Jesus"

John 19:36

General Information:

In this verse and the next there is a stop in the main story. John tells us about how these events fulfill what was said in Scripture.

in order to fulfill scripture

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "to fulfill the words that someone wrote in the scripture"

Not one of his bones will be broken

This is a quotation from Psalm 34. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "No one will break any of his bones"

John 19:37

They will look at him whom they pierced

This is a quotation from Zechariah 12.

John 19:38

Joseph of Arimathea

Arimathea was a small town. Alternate translation: "Joseph from the town of Arimathea"

for fear of the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. Alternate translation: "for fear of the Jewish leaders"

if he could take away the body of Jesus

John implies that Joseph of Arimathea wanted to bury the body of Jesus. Alternate translation: "for permission to take the body of Jesus down from the cross for burial"

John 19:39

Nicodemus

Nicodemus was one of the Pharisees who believed in Jesus.

See how you translated this name in John 3:1.

myrrh and aloes

These are plant substances that smell nice and that people used to prepare a body for burial.

about one hundred litras

You may convert this to a the measure system used in your area. The word "litra" was used for measures of about 300 grams of solids or about 300 milliliters of liquids. Because myrrh and aloes were more like solids than liquids, the measurement here is probably of weight, about 30 kilograms, rather than of volume, about 30 liters.

John 19:40

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 19:41

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden ... had yet been buried

Here John marks a pause in the story. Here he provides background information about the location of the tomb where they would bury Jesus.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Now in the place where they crucified Jesus, there was a garden"

in which no person had yet been buried

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "in which people had buried no one"

John 19:42

Because it was the day of preparation for the Jews

According to Jewish law, no one could work after sundown on Friday. It was the beginning of the Sabbath and

Passover. Alternate translation: "Because the Passover was about to begin that evening"

Chapter 20

John 20 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The tomb

The tomb in which Jesus was buried ([John 20:1](#)) was the kind of tomb in which wealthy Jewish families buried their dead. It was an actual room cut into a rock. It had a flat place on one side where they could place the body after they had put oil and spices on it and wrapped it in cloth. Then they would roll a large rock in front of the tomb so no one could see inside or enter.

"Receive the Holy Spirit"

If your language uses the same word for "breath" and "spirit," be sure that the reader understands that Jesus was performing a symbolic action by breathing, and that what the disciples received was the Holy Spirit, not Jesus's breath. (See: and holyspirit)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Rabboni

John used Greek letters to describe the sound of the word, and then he explained that it means "Teacher." You should do the same, using the letters of your language.

Jesus's resurrection body

No one is sure what Jesus's body looked like after he became alive again. His disciples knew it was Jesus because they could see his face and touch the places where the soldiers had put the nails through his hands and feet, But he could also walk through solid walls and doors. It is best not to try to say more than what the ULB says.

Two angels in white

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all wrote about angels in white clothing with the women at Jesus's tomb. Two of the authors called them men, but that is only because the angels were in human form. Two of the authors wrote about two angels, but the other two authors wrote about only one of them. It is best to translate each of these passages as it appears in the ULB without trying to make the passages all say exactly the same thing. (See: [Matthew 28:1-2](#) and [Mark 16:5](#) and [Luke 24:4](#) and [John 20:12](#))

Links:

[John 20:1 Notes](#)

John 20

20:1-10

What was the "first day of the week"?

[20:1]

The "first day of the week" was Sunday. The Jews said that the Sabbath was the last day of the week. The Sabbath was on Saturday.

See: Sabbath

Who was Mary Magdalene?

[20:1]

Mary Magdalene was a woman named Mary who came from Magdala. Magdala was a town on the Sea of Galilee six kilometers north of Tiberias (see: Matthew 15:39). She followed and served Jesus and his disciples in Galilee. Several other women also did this. She was there when Jesus was crucified and saw him die (see: Mark 15:37-41; Matthew 27:55-61). Mary was one of the first people to see Jesus after he was resurrected (see: 20:1-18, Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:1-8, and Luke 24:1-12).

See: Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection)

See Map: Galilee; Magdala; Tiberias

Who did Mary speak about when she said "they"?

[20:2]

When Mary spoke about "they," she spoke about someone she thought moved Jesus' body. She thought Pilate or the Sanhedrin may have sent soldiers to roll away the stone and move Jesus' body. Mary continued to think this until Jesus spoke to her (see: John 20:16).

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

Who was the "other disciple" John wrote about?

[20:3]

When John wrote about the "other disciple," he wanted his readers to think about himself. John often wrote about himself by writing "other disciple" or "disciple whom Jesus loved" (See: John 13:23, John 18:15-16, John 21:7, 20, 23). Scholars think John wrote this because he wanted to be humble.

See: Disciple

Why did John have to bend down to look into the tomb?

[20:5]

John had to bend down to look into the tomb because the tomb's entrance was lower than where he stood. Scholars think Jesus' tomb had a stairway that went down into the ground. These tombs were often carved out of the rock in the side of a hill. The entrance could go down a few steps into a room. So to see inside the tomb without entering it, John had to bend down to see under the top of the entrance.

See: Tomb

Why did John not go inside the tomb?

[20:5]

Scholars disagree about why John did not go inside the tomb. Some scholars think he wanted to allow Peter to enter first. Other scholars think John may have been afraid to go in.

See: Tomb

What did the disciples see in the tomb?

[20:5, 20:6, 20:7]

The two disciples saw Jesus' linen burial cloths lying inside the tomb. Linen was expensive. In ancient times, people used linen to wrap dead bodies before they buried them. The linen cloths protected the air from the decaying body. The spices Nicodemus brought (see: 19:39-40) were wrapped inside the layers of linen to reduce the odor of the decaying body. Because the linen cloths lay on the ground, the disciples knew someone had unwrapped the cloths from Jesus' body. They understood that Jesus had come back to life, unwrapped himself, and left the linen cloths in the tomb.

Advice to translators: When someone died, their body decayed. That is, it broke down and was destroyed.

See: Disciple; Tomb; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What did John believe after he entered the tomb?

[20:8]

After John entered the tomb and did not see Jesus' body, John believed that Jesus was resurrected. He believed that Jesus had come back to life in the cloth he was buried in. However, Jesus unwrapped himself. He left the burial wrappings in the tomb, and he left the tomb. According to the other gospels, an angel rolled the stone away (see: Matthew 28:2).

See: Tomb; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Gospel; Angel

20:11-18

Why did John write that the angels were "in white"?

[20:12]

When John wrote that the angels were "in white", he wanted his readers to think that the angels wore white clothes. These clothes were very bright.

See: Angel; White (symbol)

Why did Mary "not know that it was Jesus"?

[20:14]

Mary did "not know that it was Jesus" because it was dark (see: 20:1). It was too dark for her to see him clearly. Also, she was surprised. She did not expect to see Jesus again after he died and was buried. So she thought the man she saw was the gardener. Mary did not recognize Jesus until he spoke to her. Then she recognized his voice.

Why did Mary say "Rabboni"?

[20:16]

Mary said "Rabboni" because she recognized the man in the garden with her was Jesus. Jesus' followers called him "Rabboni" (the Hebrew word for "teacher"). So now Mary said "Rabboni" to say that she knew it was Jesus.

Why did Jesus say "my brothers"?

[20:17]

Jesus said "my brothers" to speak about his disciples. He wanted to say that he felt that they were close friends.

See: Disciple; Family of God

Why did Jesus say "my Father and your Father, and my God and your God"?

[20:17]

When Jesus said "my Father and your Father, and my God and your God," he wanted to speak about God. That is, "my Father", "your Father", "my God", and "your God" all are ways to speak about the same God. Jesus spoke this way to get Mary to think that in some way God the Father was her "Father" and her "God."

See: God the Father; Children of God

20:19-23

Why were Jesus' disciples hiding "for fear of the Jews"?

[20:19]

Jesus' disciples were hiding because they were afraid the Jews or Romans might arrest and kill them, like they had done to Jesus. Many times the Romans did this with people who followed leaders the Romans executed. Many people knew who followed Jesus. It would be easy for Jewish leaders to tell the Romans about them. So, the disciples hid to keep this from happening.

See: Disciple; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

How did Jesus "come" and "stand in the middle of them" when the doors were locked?

[20:19]

Scholars do not know exactly how Jesus "came" and "stood in the middle of them" when the doors were locked. In some way, after he was resurrected, he could move differently than when he was alive. He was able to come into the room without opening the door.

See: 20:26

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Jesus show the disciples his hands and side?

[20:20]

Jesus showed the disciples his hands and side to prove he was alive. They knew he was crucified. They knew that this left holes in his hands where he was nailed to the cross. They knew a soldier stabbed him with a spear in his side. So Jesus showed them the scars to show it was really him and he was really alive again.

See: Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion); Cross; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What did Jesus give to the disciples?

[20:21, 20:22]

Jesus gave the disciples three things:

Jesus gave them peace. He gave them his peace and helped them when people opposed them and persecuted them. The first time Jesus said "peace to you" (20:19), this was a way the Jews greeted one another. But the second time (20:21), he said it to speak about this power. Jesus wanted them to do something. God the Father sent Jesus into the world to serve him a certain way. He wanted Jesus to die so people could have their sins forgiven. It was also to teach people how to worship and serve God. Now, Jesus told his disciples to people how to worship and serve God. Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit. After this, the Spirit of God lived in Christians in some way.

See: Disciple; Persecute (Persecution) ; God the Father; Atonement (Atonement); Sin; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
How could Jesus' disciples forgive sins and not forgive sins?

[20:23]

Jesus' disciples could forgive sins because they served Jesus and Jesus gave them permission to do this. However, they did not have the power to do this. Only Jesus could forgive sins. However, Jesus gave them permission to tell people whether their sins were forgiven.

See: Disciple; Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

20:24-29

Who were "the twelve"?

[20:24]

John wrote about "the twelve" to make his readers think about Jesus' closest disciples. Jesus chose twelve men to follow him closely (see: Luke 6:13). Now, because Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus and killed himself (see: 13:21-30; Acts 1:18), only eleven of them were left. However, John still used the words "the twelve" to write about the ones who were left.

See: Disciple

Why did Thomas say what he said when the other disciples told him Jesus appeared to them?

[20:25]

When the other disciples told Thomas that Jesus appeared to them, Thomas said what he did to tell them that he did not believe what they told him. Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus appeared and showed them the scars on his body. So it was difficult for him to believe them. So, he said he would have to see the scars himself before he would believe Jesus was resurrected.

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection)

How did Jesus "come" and "stand among them" when the doors were closed?

[20:26]

See: John 20:19

Why did Jesus tell Thomas to touch his hands and side?

[20:27]

Jesus told Thomas to touch the scars on his hands and side, to help Thomas believe that he was really alive again.

Why did Thomas say "my Lord and my God"?

[20:28] Thomas said "my Lord and my God" because now he believed Jesus was resurrected. He also believed that Jesus is God. When Thomas said "my Lord", he used the same word that the Old Testament uses to speak about God.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Jesus is God

Who are "those who have not seen, and believed"?

[20:29]

When Jesus said "those who have not seen, and believed," he spoke about all Christians. That is to say, he knew the disciples who saw him after he was resurrected believed in him because they saw him again. However, he also knew that many people would believe in him without seeing him. Jesus told Thomas that God blesses people who believe in him, even when they do not see him with their eyes.

See: Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Bless (Blessing)

20:30-31

What are "signs"?

[20:30]

"Signs" are special things that Jesus did. He did these signs to show he is God. He did them to get people to believe in him. John wrote that in his gospel, he wrote down some of the signs Jesus did, but not all of them. This is because Jesus did so many signs.

See: Sign; Jesus is God; Gospel

Why did John write "so that you would believe"?

[20:31]

John wrote that he wrote down some of the signs Jesus did so that his readers would believe in Jesus.

Some scholars think John wanted to help people who do not yet believe in Jesus, to believe in him. Fewer scholars think John wanted to help Christians to trust in Jesus more.
See: Sign

John 20:1

General Information:

This is the third day after Jesus was buried.

first day of the week

"Sunday"

she saw the stone rolled away

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "she saw that someone had rolled away the stone"

John 20:2

disciple whom Jesus loved

This phrase appears to be the way that John refers to himself throughout his book. Here the word "love" refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member.

They took away

The author uses the word "they" here to show that Mary Magdalene did not know who took the Lord away. She was probably thinking of the Jews or Romans, but it would be best to translate using your language's way of leaving the actor or actors unknown.

the Lord ... laid him

These words are metonyms for Jesus's dead body. Alternate translation: "the Lord's dead body ... laid it"

John 20:3

the other disciple

John apparently shows his humility by referring to himself here as "the other disciple," rather than including his name.

John 20:4

General Information:

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John 20:5

linen cloths

These were the burial cloths that people had used to wrap the body of Jesus.

John 20:6

linen cloths

These were the burial cloths that people had used to wrap the body of Jesus. See how you translated this in John 20:5.

John 20:7

cloth that had been on his head

Here "his head" refers to "Jesus's head." You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "cloth that someone had used to cover Jesus's face"

but was folded up in a place by itself

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but someone had folded it and put it aside, separate from the linen cloths"

John 20:8

the other disciple

John apparently expresses his humility by referring to himself as "the other disciple," rather than including his name in this book.

he saw and believed

Until he saw that the tomb was empty, he did not believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, but when he saw that

the tomb was empty, he did believe. Alternate translation: "he saw these things and now believed that Jesus had risen from the dead"

John 20:9

they still did not know the scripture

These words refer to the disciples. Possible meanings are 1) they did not know that that scripture exists or 2) they did not understand that that scripture said that Jesus would come alive again.

rise

become alive again

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld.

John 20:10

went back home again

The disciples continued to stay in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "went back to where they were staying in Jerusalem"

John 20:11

General Information:

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John 20:12

She saw two angels in white

The angels were wearing white clothing. Alternate translation: "She saw two angels dressed in white clothing"

John 20:13

They said to her

"They asked her"

Because they took away my Lord, and I do not know where they have put him

The words "my Lord" here are a metonym for the Lord's body. Alternate translation: "Because they took away the body of my Lord, and I do not know where they have put it"

John 20:14

General Information:

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John 20:15

Jesus said to her

"Jesus asked her"

if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will take him away

Here the word "him" is a metonym that refers to Jesus's dead body. Alternate translation: "if you have taken his dead body away, tell me where you have put it, and I will take it away"

John 20:16

Rabboni

The word "Rabboni" means "teacher" in Aramaic.

Aramaic

This was the language that the Jews in Judea spoke among themselves. Some translations say "Hebrew," following the form of the Greek word.

John 20:17

brothers

Jesus used the word "brothers" to refer to his disciples.
I will go up to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God
Jesus rose from the dead and then predicted he would go up into heaven, back to his Father, who is God. Alternate translation: "I am about to return to heaven to be with my Father and your Father, to the one who is my God and your God"

my Father and your Father

These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God, and between believers and God.

John 20:18

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples

Mary Magdalene went to where the disciples were staying and told them what she had seen and heard. Alternate translation: "Mary Magdalene went to where the disciples were and told them"

John 20:19

General Information:

It is now evening and Jesus appears to the disciples.

that day, the first day of the week

This refers to Sunday.

the doors being locked where the disciples were

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the disciples had locked the doors where they were"

for fear of the Jews

Here "Jews" is a synecdoche for the Jewish leaders who might arrest the disciples. Alternate translation: "because they were afraid that the Jewish leaders might arrest them"

Peace to you

This is a common greeting that means "May God give you peace" .

John 20:20

he showed them his hands and his side

Jesus showed the disciples his wounds. Alternate translation: "he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side"

John 20:21

Peace to you

This is a common greeting that means "May God give you peace."

Father

This is an important title for God.

John 20:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 20:23

they are forgiven

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will forgive them"

whoever's sins you keep back

"If you do not forgive another's sins"

they are kept back

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will not forgive them"

John 20:24

Didymus

This is a male name that means "twin." See how this name is translated in [John 11:15]

John 20:25

disciples later said to him

The word "him" refers to Thomas.

Unless I see ... his side, I will not believe

You can translate this double negative in a positive form.

Alternate translation: "I will believe only if I see ... his side" in his hands ... into his side

The word "his" refers to Jesus.

John 20:26

his disciples

The word "his" refers to Jesus.

while the doors were closed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "when they had locked the doors"

Peace to you

This is a common greeting that means "May God give you peace" .

John 20:27

Do not be unbelieving, but believe

Jesus uses the double negative "Do not be unbelieving" to emphasize the words that follow, "but believe." If your language does not allow double negatives or the reader would not understand that Jesus is emphasizing the words that follow, you can leave these words untranslated.

Alternate translation: "This is what is most important for you to do: you must believe"

believe

Here "believe" means to trust in Jesus. Alternate translation: "put your trust in me"

John 20:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 20:29

you have believed

Thomas believes that Jesus is alive because he has seen him. Alternate translation: "you have believed that I am alive"

Blessed are those

This means "God gives great happiness to those."

who have not seen

This means those who have not seen Jesus. Alternate translation: "who have not seen me alive"

John 20:30

General Information:

As the story is nearing the end, the author comments about the many things Jesus did.

signs

The word "signs" refers to miracles that show that God is the all-powerful one who has complete authority over the universe.

signs that have not been written in this book

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "signs that the author did not write about in this book"

John 20:31

but these have been written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but the author wrote about these signs"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.
life in his name
Here "life" is a metonym that means Jesus gives life.

Alternate translation: "you may have life because of Jesus"
life
This refers to spiritual life.

Chapter 21

John 21 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

The metaphor of sheep

Before Jesus died, he spoke of himself taking care of his people as if he were a good shepherd taking care of sheep

Links:

[John 21:1 Notes](#)

John 21

21:1-14

Where is the "Sea of Tiberias"?

[21:1]

The Sea of Tiberias is another name for the Sea of Galilee. Some people called it this to honor the Roman Emperor Tiberius.

See Map: Sea of Galilee

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Who were the disciples to whom Jesus appeared?

[21:2]

Jesus appeared to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee:

Simon, who Jesus named Peter (see: Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-18, Luke 5:1-11, and John 1:35-51). Thomas, who was also called Didymus (see: John 11:16, John 14:5, and John 20:24-21:1). Nathaniel from Cana in Galilee, who was also named Bartholomew (see: John 1:43-51). The sons of Zebedee, James and John (see: Matthew 20:20-28, Mark 1:19-20, and Mark 3:17). Two disciples whose names John did not write.

See: Disciple

Why did Peter and some other disciples go fishing?

[21:3]

Scholars disagree about why Peter and the other disciples went fishing.

Some scholars believe Peter and these disciples returned to their old job of fishing. Jesus had appeared a few times, but most of the time people could not see him. So these scholars think the disciples did not believe Jesus was going to do anything more.

Other scholars think these disciples were fishing because they needed food. They also needed to earn some money by selling fish. They were waiting for Jesus to tell them what he wanted them to do.

See: Disciple

Why did the disciples "not know it was Jesus"?

[21:4]

The disciples "did not know it was Jesus" because they were too far away. Also, it was early morning. So they could not see who it was.

Who is "the disciple whom Jesus loved"?

[21:7]

When John wrote about the "disciple whom Jesus loved", he wanted his readers to think about himself. John often wrote about himself by writing "other disciple" or "disciple whom Jesus loved" (See: John 13:23, John 18:15-16, John 20:3-8).

Scholars think John wrote this way because he wanted to be humble.

Why did the disciple whom Jesus loved call Jesus "the Lord"?

[21:7]

The disciple whom Jesus loved called Jesus "the Lord" to honor him. This disciple was John. He first recognized the man was Jesus. He said to Peter the man was "the Lord." John that understood Jesus is God. So he used a word that many people used to honor God.

The Greek word that is translated as "the Lord" is the same word that the Jews used when speaking about God. Therefore, whenever Jesus is called this, the Jews would have thought about God. They would have thought that people were saying that Jesus is God.

See: Lord; Jesus is God; Disciple

Was Peter naked while he fished?

[21:7]

Peter was not naked while he fished. But he wore only a robe as an outer garment. So, Peter tied his robe around him before he jumped into the water.

Why did Peter "throw himself into the sea"?

[21:7]

Peter "threw himself into the sea" to swim to shore to see Jesus. He was excited that Jesus had come. So he wanted to get to shore as fast as he could. He also needed to go to the shore to pull the net full of fish onto the shore (see: 21:11). To throw oneself into the sea is to jump out of the boat and into the water.

How far is "two hundred cubits"?

[21:8]

Two hundred cubits is about 90 metres.

How did John know there were 153 fish?

[21:11]

John does not say how he knew there were 153 fish. Some scholars think God wanted to say something special about the number of fish. But most scholars think John knew they caught exactly 153 fish. Fishermen like to count their fish.

Why did John write that this was "the third time Jesus showed himself to the disciples after he had risen from the dead"?

[21:14]

John wrote that this was "the third time Jesus showed himself to the disciples after he had risen from the dead" so his readers would think about the first two times that John wrote about when Jesus appeared to the disciples. The first appearance was when Jesus appeared to all of the disciples except Thomas. This happened on Sunday after the crucifixion (see: John 20:19-23). He appeared again to all the disciples a week later (see: John 20:24-29). This is the third time he appeared to seven disciples that Jesus was writing about.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Disciple; Crucify (Crucifixion)

21:15-25

Why did Jesus call Peter "Simon Peter" and "Simon son of John"?

[21:15]

When Jesus called Peter "Simon Peter" and "Simon son of John", he used different names for Peter. Simon was the name his parents gave him when he was born. Jesus had named him Peter, so he was often called Simon Peter after that (see: Matthew 16:16, Luke 22:31-34, and John 18:10). Peter was also called the son of John because his father's name was John (see: Matthew 16:17).

Who did Jesus speak about when he said "more than these"?

[21:15]

When Jesus said "more than these", he wanted Peter to think about the other disciples. Jesus asked Peter if Peter loved him more than the other disciples loved him.

See: Disciple

Who are the "lambs" and "sheep" that Jesus spoke about?

[21:15, 21:16, 21:17]

When Jesus spoke about "lambs" and "sheep", he used a metaphor for new Christians. He wanted to say that they had a lot to learn about God and Jesus. Peter had to teach them these things. So Jesus used a metaphor about feeding sheep to speak about this teaching.

See: Metaphor; Shepherd

Why did Peter say that Jesus "knew all things"?

[21:17]

Peter said that Jesus "knew all things" because he had followed Jesus long enough to know that Jesus was very wise. In fact, he knew that Jesus is God. So, because God knows all things, Jesus must know all things. Jesus knows all things (see: Matthew 12:25, Matthew 22:18, Mark 2:8, Luke 6:8, Luke 11:17, Luke 16:15, and John 2:25).

See: Jesus is God

What did Jesus want Peter to think when he spoke what he spoke in 21:18?

[21:18]

When Jesus spoke what he spoke in 21:18, he wanted Peter to think about how Peter would die. He wanted to say that Peter would be crucified. In the Roman world, speaking about "stretching out" the hands was a way to speak about crucifixion.

Nobody wanted to die by being crucified. So Jesus said Peter would have to go where he would not want to go.

Scholars think Peter was crucified in Rome during the rule of the Roman Emperor Nero. This was about 30 years after Jesus said these words.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

Why did Jesus tell Peter to "follow me"?

[21:19]

Jesus told Peter to "follow" him because he knew Peter was not certain if Jesus still wanted Peter as a disciple. Peter had

denied Jesus three times before Jesus was crucified (see: John 18:17-27). So Peter did not know if Jesus still wanted him. Peter did not know what he should do now. Jesus answered this question Peter thought about but did not ask. Jesus made it very clear to Peter what he should do. Peter should continue to follow Jesus.

See: Disciple

Who was the other disciple Peter asked about?

[21:20]

The other disciple Peter asked about was John. Peter wanted to know about John's life and death. Jesus told Peter to focus on his own life and death, not John's. Peter needed to obey what God wanted him to do, and John needed to obey what God wanted him to do. Each Christian must follow Jesus by obeying him and doing the things he wants them to do.

See: Disciple

Why did John write 21:23?

[21:23]

John wrote 21:23 to make clear what Jesus said. Some people thought Jesus told Peter that John would not die until Jesus returns to earth. However, Jesus did not want Peter to think about this. Peter must follow Jesus, and John must follow Jesus. They should not compare themselves to each other. Each disciple must obey Jesus and do the things he wants them to do.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

Who is the disciple who wrote this book?

[21:24]

John is the disciple who wrote this book. John never called himself by his name in this gospel. He did not want to take any attention away from Jesus. John wanted the readers of this gospel to remember Jesus, not John.

See: Disciple; Gospel; Savior; Messiah (Christ)

Why did John write?

[21:25]

John explained in 21:25 that Jesus did many other things. John did not write all these things in his gospel. These other things were amazing things. They were amazing because Jesus did them. But there were so many of them that John could not write all of them down.

See: Gospel

John 21:1

General Information:

Jesus shows himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. Verses 2 and 3 tell us what happens in the story before Jesus appears.

After these things

"Some time later"

John 21:2

with Thomas called Didymus

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "with Thomas whom we called Didymus"

Didymus

This is a male name that means "twin." See how this name is translated in [John 11:15]

John 21:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 21:4

General Information:

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John 21:5

Young men

This is a term of endearment that means "My dear friends."

John 21:6

you will find some

Here "some" refers to fish. Alternate translation: "you will catch some fish in your net"

draw it in

"pull the net in"

John 21:7

loved

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.

he tied up his outer garment

"he secured his outer garment around him" or "he put on his tunic"

for he was undressed

This is background information. Peter had taken off some of his clothes to make it easier to work, but now that he was about to greet the Lord, he wanted to wear more clothing. Alternate translation: "for he had taken off some of his clothes"

threw himself into the sea

Peter jumped into the water and swam to shore. Alternate translation: "jumped into the sea and swam to shore"

threw himself

This is a idiom that means Peter jumped into the water very quickly.

John 21:8

for they were not far from the land, about two hundred cubits off

This is background information.

two hundred cubits

"90 meters." A cubit was a little less than half a meter.

John 21:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 21:10

General Information:

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John 21:11

Simon Peter then went up

Here "went up" means Simon Peter had to go back to the boat. Alternate translation: "So Simon Peter went back to the boat"

drew the net to land

"pulled the net to the shore"

the net was not torn

You can translate this as an active form. Alternate translation: "the net did not break"

full of large fish, 153

"full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three." There were 153 large fish.

John 21:12

breakfast

the morning meal

John 21:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

John 21:14

the third time

You can translate this ordinal term as "time number 3."

John 21:15

General Information:

Jesus begins to have a conversation with Simon Peter.

do you love me

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

you know that I love you

When Peter answers, he uses the word for "love" that refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member.

Feed my lambs

Here "lambs" is a metaphor for those persons who love Jesus and follow him. Alternate translation: "Feed the people I care for"

John 21:16

do you love me

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

Shepherd my sheep

"Take care of my sheep." Here "sheep" is a metaphor for those who love and follow Jesus. Alternate translation: "Care for the people I care for"

John 21:17

He said to him a third time

The pronoun "he" refers to Jesus. Here "a third time" means "time number 3." Alternate translation: "Jesus said to him a third time"

do you love me

This time when Jesus asks this question he uses the word for "love" that refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member.

Feed my sheep

Here "sheep" is a metaphor that represents those who belong to Jesus and follow him. Alternate translation: "Care for the people I care for"

John 21:18

Truly, truly

See how you translated this in John 1:51.

you used to gird yourself ... someone else will gird you

Here girding is a metonym for dressing and being ready for action. Alternate translation: "you used to dress yourself ... someone else will dress you"

John 21:19

Now

John uses this word to show he is giving background information before he continues the story.

to indicate with what kind of death Peter would glorify God

Here John implies that Peter would die on a cross. Alternate translation: "to indicate that Peter would die on a cross to honor God"

Follow me

Here the word "follow" means "to be a disciple." Alternate translation: "Keep on being my disciple"

John 21:20

the disciple whom Jesus loved

John refers to himself in this way throughout the book, rather than mentioning his name.

loved

This is the kind of love that comes from God and always desires the good of others, even when it does not benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do.

at the dinner

This is a reference to the Last Supper (John 13).

John 21:21

Peter saw him

Here "him" refers to "the disciple whom Jesus loved."

Lord, what will this man do?

Peter wants to know what will happen to John. Alternate translation: "Lord, what will happen to this man?"

John 21:22

Jesus said to him

"Jesus said to Peter"

If I want him to stay

Here "him" refers to the "disciple whom Jesus loved" in John 21:20.

I come

This refers to Jesus's second coming, his return to earth from heaven.

what is that to you?

This remark appears in the form of a question to express a mild rebuke. Alternate translation: "that is not your concern." or "you should not be concerned about that."

John 21:23

among the brothers

Here "the brothers" refers to all the followers of Jesus.

John 21:24

General Information:

This is the end of the Gospel of John. Here the author, the Apostle John, gives a closing comment about himself and what he has written in this book.

the disciple

"the disciple John"

who testifies about these things

Here "testifies" means that he personally sees something.

Alternate translation: "who has seen all these things"

we know

Here "we" refers to those who trust in Jesus. Alternate

translation: "we who trust in Jesus know"

John 21:25

If each one were written down

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "If someone wrote down all of them"

even the world itself could not contain the books

John exaggerates to emphasize that Jesus did many more miracles than what people could write about in many books.

the books that would be written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "the books that people could write about what he did"

Introduction to Acts

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Acts

The beginning of the church and its mission (1:1–2:41) The early church in Jerusalem (2:42–6:7) Increasing opposition and the martyrdom of Steven (6:8–7:60) The persecution of the church and Philip's ministry (8:1–40) Paul becomes an apostle (9:1–31) The ministry of Peter and the first Gentile converts (9:32–12:24) The ministry of Paul and Barnabas to the Gentiles (12:25–14:28) The debate about the Jewish law and the council of church leaders at Jerusalem (15:1–35) The ministry of Paul and Silas to the Gentiles (15:36–16:5) The expansion of the church into the middle Mediterranean area and Asia Minor (16:6–19:20) Paul travels to Jerusalem and becomes a prisoner in Rome (19:21–28:31)

What is the Book of Acts about?

The Book of Acts tells the story of the early church as more and more people became believers. It shows the power of the Holy Spirit helping the early Christians. The events in this book began when Jesus went back to heaven and ended about thirty years later.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "The Acts of the Apostles." Or translators may choose a title that may be clearer, for example, "The Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles."

Who wrote the Book of Acts?

This book does not give the name of the author. However, it is addressed to Theophilus, the same person to whom the Gospel of Luke is addressed. Also, in parts of the book, the author uses the word "we." This indicates that the author traveled with Paul. Most scholars think that Luke was this person traveling with Paul. Therefore, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought Luke is the author of the Book of Acts as well as the Gospel of Luke.

Luke was a medical doctor. His way of writing shows that he was an educated man. He was probably a Gentile. He saw many of the events described in the Book of Acts.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the Church?

The Church is the group of people who believe in Christ. The Church includes both Jewish and Gentile believers. The events in this book show God helping the Church. He empowered believers to live righteous lives through his Holy Spirit.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Acts?

These are the most significant textual issues in Acts:

The following verses are found in older versions of the Bible, but they are not in the best ancient copies of the Bible. Some modern versions put the verses in square brackets ([]). The ULB puts them in footnotes.

"Philip said, 'If you believe with all your heart, you may be baptized.' The Ethiopian answered, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God'" (Acts 8:37). "But it seemed good to Silas to remain there." (Acts 15:34) "And we wanted to judge him according to our law. But Lysias, the officer, came and forcibly took him out of our hands, sending him to you." (Acts 24:6b-8a) "When he had said these things, the Jews departed, having a great dispute among themselves." (Acts 28:29) In the following verses, it is uncertain what the original text said. Translators will need to choose which reading to translate. The ULB has the first readings but includes the second readings in footnotes.

"They returned from Jerusalem" (Acts 12:25). Some translations read, "They returned to Jerusalem (or to there)." "he put up with them" (Acts 13:18). Some translations read, "he cared for them." "This is what the Lord says, who has done these things that have been known from ancient times." (Acts 15:17-18). Some older translations read, "This is what the Lord says, to whom are known all his deeds from ancient times."

Chapter 1

Acts 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter records an event, commonly known as the "Ascension," when Jesus returned to heaven after he became alive again. He will not come back until he returns at his "second coming." (See: heaven and resurrection)

The UDB has set the words "Dear Theophilus" apart from the other words. This is because English speakers often start letters this way. You might want to start this book the way people start letters in your culture.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the two quotes from Psalms in 1:20.

Special concepts in this chapter

Baptize

The word "baptize" has two meanings in this chapter. It refers to the water baptism of John and to the baptism of the Holy Spirit ([Acts 1:5](#)). (See: baptize)

"He spoke about the kingdom of God"

Some scholars believe that when Jesus "spoke about the kingdom of God," he explained to the disciples why the kingdom of God did not come before he died. Others believe that the kingdom of God did begin while Jesus was alive and that here Jesus was explaining that it was beginning in a new form.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The twelve disciples

The following are the lists of the twelve disciples:

In Matthew:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James son of Zebedee, John son of Zebedee, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot.

In Mark:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James the son of Zebedee and John the son of Zebedee (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder), Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot.

In Luke:

Simon (Peter), Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon (who was called the Zealot), Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot.

Thaddaeus is probably the same person as Jude, the son of James.

Akeldama

This is a phrase in Hebrew or Aramaic. Luke used Greek letters so his readers would know how it sounded, and then he told what it means. You should probably spell it the way it sounds in your language and then explain the meaning.

Links:

[Acts 1:1 Notes](#) [Acts intro](#)

Acts 1 Commentary

1:1-11

What does the kingdom of God mean in this passage?

[1:3]

In this passage, the "kingdom of God" means two different things.

God rules over everything. However, some scholars think that Christians agree for him to rule over themselves now in this life. This is why they obey him and trust in him. When Luke says that God rules over his kingdom, he means that these Christians agree to trust in him and obey him. But this is not the same as God ruling over the whole world, because most people still reject Jesus.

God rules over everything, but other scholars believe that he will also rule over the earth when Jesus comes back to earth and stays here. These scholars think that this is what Jesus was talking about in 1:3.

Most Jews thought that the Messiah would free Israel from the Gentiles ruling them. Some scholars believe that this meant that the nation of Israel would be free once again. They believe that Jesus will do this for Israel in the future and it will last forever.

Other scholars think that Jesus was talking about a new kind of kingdom. In this kingdom, Christians agree for God to rule over themselves, and they will obey him. While Jesus has always ruled over everything, he now rules over Christians in a special way. They also believe that Christians are the new "people of God" and therefore can also be called Israel.

See: Kingdom of God; People of God; Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth; Gospel; Glory (Glorify)

Why did the disciples wait for the Holy Spirit?

[1:4, 1:5]

What the disciples waited for was for the Holy Spirit to do something new and different. They waited for him to give them his power in a new way. This new way would begin a new time when God would do new things for mankind.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Disciple
How is a person baptized with the Holy Spirit?
[1:5]

To baptize something means to dip it into water or to cover it with water. The Jews dipped things in water to make them pure, that is, so they could use them as the Law of Moses instructed them. They also bathed themselves in order to make themselves pure or clean, that is, so that God would continue to accept them as his people.

In the same way, some scholars think that God baptizes people with the Holy Spirit when they begin to believe in Jesus. When God does that, he joins that person to himself. That person then becomes part of the Church, which is also called the “body of Christ.”

However, other scholars think that when God baptizes a person with the Spirit, he makes that person able to do miracles, such as speaking in unknown languages. However, only some Christians experience this.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
How does one receive the Holy Spirit?
[1:8]

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
Why did Jesus talk about how the church would grow?
[1:8]

In 1:8 Jesus told his disciples how the Church will grow, that is, how more people would believe in him. Jesus said, “In Jerusalem, in all of Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” In the book of Acts, Luke tells how the Christians announced the gospel to people in these places, first in Jerusalem, next in Judea and Samaria, and finally much farther away, in Greece and in Rome.

See: Gospel; Israel; Samaria
What is the purpose of the church?
[1:8]

Christians are to tell people about God. They are also to share the gospel with everyone, no matter where they come from. They are to continue doing this until the whole world hears the gospel. This is the work that the church must do.

The church is able to do this by the power of the Holy Spirit, who is always with the church. The nation of Israel did not always have the Holy Spirit with it. But in the church, the Holy Spirit lives in all Christians. Because of this, Christians have become the primary means by which God draws people to himself.

See: Church; Gospel; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Israel
See Map: Jerusalem and Judea

1:12-26

Who were the apostles?
[1:13]

Eleven apostles were mentioned in 1:13. They are not always called by the same name in Scripture. However, they were the same eleven men.

Jewish people often had Greek names in addition to their Hebrew names. For example, Simon Peter had a Hebrew name (Simon) and a Greek name (Peter). He is sometimes called by one name, sometimes by the other, and sometimes by both. Judas, son of James, is also called Thaddeus. Simon the zealot is also called Simon the Canaanite. Thomas is also called Didymus (“twin” in Greek). James is identified as a son of Zebedee (see: Matthew 4:21)

See: Mark 6:7-13, Matthew 10, and Luke 9:1-6
See: Apostle

Who were the “zealous people”?
[1:13]

The “zealous people” were a group of Jews who wanted to stop the Romans from ruling their own nation. The zealous people were often willing to fight with violent force in order to stop the Romans. They may have even murdered leaders in the government.

In 1:13 Luke shows that Simon was a member of this group. Scripture probably referred to Simon as a zealous person in order to tell him apart from Simon Peter. Scholars think that Simon did not continue to act as a zealous person after he started following Jesus.

See: Matthew 10:4

See: Zeal (Zealous, Zealot)

Who were Jesus’ “brothers”?
[1:14]

“Brothers” usually referred to brothers born from the same mother. However, it also refers to Christians together. They are brothers because they believe in Jesus. Most scholars believe 1:14 referred to Jesus’ brothers who were born from Mary, his mother. But perhaps “brothers” in 1:14 referred to Christians.

See: Family of God; Family of Jesus

Why were Jesus' brothers praying?

[1:14]

If brothers referred to other Christians, then they were obeying Jesus' command to pray.

Brothers might have also referred to Jesus' brothers who were also born from Mary. However, these brothers did not believe in Jesus before he died on the cross. It would have been surprising for them to obey the commands of Jesus if they did not believe in him. Therefore, they probably came to believe in Jesus after he died and rose again.

See: Matthew 12:46-50, Galatians 1:18-19, 1 Corinthians 15:7, and Mark 6:3

See: Family of God; Family of Jesus

How did Judas Iscariot die?

[1:18]

Matthew said that Judas hanged himself (see: Matthew 27:5). In the book of Acts, Luke perhaps told what happened to Judas' body after he died. If no one found his body, it would have decomposed and, after some time, have fallen down to the ground. The rotten corpse could easily have burst open.

Was the role of apostle possible only in the very early Church?

[1:20, 1:21, 1:22]

Some scholars think that only the first Christians could be "apostles." They think this, because in 1:21-22 Luke says who could be an apostle. To be an apostle, a man had to be someone who had followed Jesus while Jesus lived on earth. He also had to have seen Jesus after he rose from the dead. This is why only people who lived in the time of Jesus could be apostles.

However, some scholars think that God still makes certain people able to be apostles. These people are of course different from the twelve apostles in the time of the first Christians.

Still other scholars think that the apostles sinned in selecting Matthias as the twelfth apostles. They do not think that God wanted Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot; they think that God wanted Paul instead.

These scholars say that the disciples sinned when they cast lots in order to find out what God wanted. It is true that Israelites cast lots in order to know what God wanted (see: Leviticus 16:8-10 and Numbers 26:55-56. Also, the book of Proverbs appears to permit the casting of lots (see: Proverbs 16:33.

However, most scholars do not think that Christians should cast lots. Few Christians cast lots today. Some scholars say that people who cast lots do sorcery. Others scholars say that Christians do not need to cast lots, because the Holy Spirit now lives in them and guides them.

See: Acts 6:2

See: Apostle; Cast Lots; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Will of God

Why were there twelve apostles?

[1:26]

In Matthew 19:28, Jesus prophesied that the twelve apostles would judge the twelve tribes of Israel. This is probably the reason that the apostles appointed another disciple to replace Judas Iscariot.

In addition to this, some scholars believe that the Church has replaced Israel as the people of God. They think that the twelve apostles represent this new Israel. However, other scholars believe that the church and Israel remain distinct groups.

See: Luke 22:30

See: Apostle; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Church; Israel

Acts 1:1

The former account I wrote

The "former account" is the Gospel of Luke.

Theophilus

Luke wrote this book to a man named Theophilus. Some translations follow their own culture's way of addressing a letter and write "Dear Theophilus" at the beginning of the sentence. Theophilus means "friend of God"

Acts 1:2

until the day that he was taken up

This refers to Jesus's ascension into heaven. Alternate translation: "until the day on which God took him up to heaven" or "until the day that he ascended into heaven"

he had given commands through the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit had led Jesus to instruct his apostles on certain things.

Acts 1:3

After his suffering

This refers to Jesus's suffering and death on the cross.

he presented himself alive to them

Jesus appeared to his apostles and to many other disciples.

Acts 1:4

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Jesus. Except where otherwise noted, the word "you" in the book of Acts is plural.

Connecting Statement:

This event happened during the 40 days that Jesus appeared to his followers after he had risen from the dead.

When he was meeting together with them

"When Jesus was meeting together with his apostles"

the promise of the Father, about which he said

This is a reference to the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation:

"the Holy Spirit, whom the Father promised to send, about whom Jesus said"

Acts 1:5

John indeed baptized with water ... baptized with the Holy Spirit

Jesus contrasts how John baptized people in water with how God would baptize believers in the Holy Spirit.

John indeed baptized with water

"John indeed baptized people with water"

you will be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will baptize you"

Acts 1:6

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the apostles.

is this the time you will restore the kingdom to Israel

"will you now make Israel a great kingdom again"

Acts 1:7

the times or the seasons

Possible meanings are 1) the words "times" and "seasons" refer to different kinds of time. Alternate translation: "the general period of time or the specific date" or 2) the two words are basically synonymous. Alternate translation: "the exact time"

Acts 1:8

you will receive power ... and you will be my witnesses

The apostles will receive power that will enable them to be witnesses for Jesus. Alternate translation: "God will empower you ... to be my witnesses"

to the ends of the earth

Possible meanings are 1) "all over the world" or 2) "to the places on earth that are farthest away"

Acts 1:9

as they were looking up

"as they watched." The apostles "were looking" at Jesus because Jesus rose into the sky. Alternate translation: "as they were looking up at the sky"

he was raised up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he rose up into the sky" or "God raised him up into the sky"

a cloud hid him from their eyes

"a cloud blocked their view so that they could no longer see him"

Acts 1:10

looking intently to heaven

"staring at the sky" or "gazing at the sky"

Acts 1:11

of Galilee

"from Galilee"

will return in the same manner

Jesus ascended into the sky, through the clouds, and the clouds hid him [Acts 1:9](#). He will return from the sky, through (or on) the clouds, and people will be able to see him.

Acts 1:12

Then they returned

"The apostles returned"

a Sabbath day's journey

This refers to the distance which, according to Rabbinical tradition, a person was allowed to walk on a Sabbath day. Alternate translation: "about one kilometer away"

Acts 1:13

When they arrived

"When they reached their destination." Verse 12 says they

were returning to Jerusalem.

the upper chamber

"the room on the upper level of the house"

Acts 1:14

They all were devoted ... to prayer

They all spent much time ... praying

with one purpose

The phrase "with one purpose" translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 1:15

Connecting Statement:

This event happened during the time that Peter and the other believers were staying together in the upper room.

In those days

These words mark the beginning of a new part of the story.

They refer to the period of time after Jesus ascended. On many days after Jesus ascended, the disciples met in the upper chamber. Alternate translation: "During that time"

120 names

"one hundred and twenty names"

names

The word "names" is a metonym for the people whose names they were. Alternate translation: "people"

in the midst of the brothers

Here the word "brothers" refers to fellow believers and includes both men and women.

Acts 1:16

it was necessary that the scripture should be fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that we read about in scripture had to take place"

by the mouth of David

The word "mouth" refers to the words that David wrote.

Alternate translation: "through the words of David"

Acts 1:17

General Information:

Although Peter is addressing the entire group of people, here the word "us" refers only to the apostles.

Connecting Statement:

In verse 17 Peter continues his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

Acts 1:18

General Information:

The author begins to tell the reader background information about how Judas died and what people called the field where he died. This is not part of Peter's speech.

Now this man

The words "this man" refers to Judas Iscariot.

the earnings he received for his wickedness

"the money that he earned from the evil thing that he did."

The words "his wickedness" refer to Judas Iscariot's

betraying Jesus to the people who killed him.

there he fell headfirst, and his body burst open, and all his intestines poured out

This suggests that Judas fell from a high place, rather than just falling down. The fall was severe enough to cause his body to burst open. Other passages of scripture mention that he hanged himself.

Acts 1:19

General Information:

The author finishes telling the reader background information about how Judas died and what people called the field where he died. This is not part of Peter's speech.

Field of Blood

When the people living in Jerusalem heard of the way in which Judas died, they renamed the field.

Acts 1:20

General Information:

Based on the situation with Judas that Peter just recounted, he recalls two Psalms of David that relate to the incident. The quote ends at the end of this verse.

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

For it is written in the Book of Psalms

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For David wrote in the Book of Psalms"

Let his field be made desolate, and do not let even one person live there
These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words.

Let his field be made desolate

Possible meanings are 1) that the word "field" refers to the field where Judas died or 2) that the word "field" refers to Judas's dwelling place and is a metaphor for his family line.
be made desolate
"become empty"

Acts 1:21

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the apostles and does not include the audience to whom Peter is speaking.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the believers that he began in Acts 1:16.

It is necessary, therefore

Based on the scriptures that he quoted and on what Judas had done, Peter tells the group what they must do.

the Lord Jesus went in and out among us

Going in and out among a group of people is a metaphor for openly being part of that group. Alternate translation: "the Lord Jesus lived among us"

Acts 1:22

beginning from the baptism of John ... become a witness with us of his resurrection

The qualification for the new apostle that began with the words "It is necessary ... that one of the men who accompanied us" in verse 21 ends here. The subject of the verb "become" is thus "one of the men." Here is a reduced form of the sentence: "It is necessary ... that one of the men who accompanied us ... beginning from the baptism of John ... must become a witness with us."

beginning from the baptism of John

The noun "baptism" can be translated as a verb. Possible meanings: 1) "beginning from when John baptized Jesus" or 2) "beginning from when John baptized people"

to the day that he was taken up from us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"until the day when Jesus left us and rose up to heaven" or "until the day that God took him up from us"

become a witness with us of his resurrection

"must begin to testify with us about his resurrection"

Acts 1:23

They put forward two men

Here the word "They" refers to all of the believers who were present. Alternate translation: "They proposed two men who fulfilled the requirements that Peter listed"

Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus

This can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "Joseph, whom people also called Barsabbas and Justus"

Acts 1:24

They prayed and said

Here the word "They" refers to all of the believers, but it was probably one of the apostles who spoke these words. Alternate translation: "The believers prayed together and one of the apostles said"

You, Lord, know the hearts of all people

Here the word "hearts" refers to the thoughts and motives. Alternate translation: "You, Lord, know the thoughts and motives of everyone"

Acts 1:25

to take the place in this ministry and apostleship

Here the word "apostleship" defines what kind of "ministry" this is. Alternate translation: "to take Judas's place in this apostolic ministry" or "to take Judas's place in serving as an apostle"

from which Judas turned away

Here the expression "turned away" means that Judas stopped performing this ministry. Alternate translation: "which Judas stopped fulfilling"

to go to his own place

This phrase refers to Judas's death and likely to his judgment after death. Alternate translation: "to go where he belongs"

Acts 1:26

They cast lots for them

The apostles cast lots to decide between Joseph and Matthias.

the lot fell to Matthias

The lot indicated that Matthias was the one to replace Judas.

he was numbered with the eleven apostles

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the believers considered him to be an apostle with the other eleven"

Chapter 2

Acts 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with

the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 2:17-21, 25-28, and 34-35.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 2:31.

The events described in this chapter are commonly called "Pentecost." Many people believe that the church began to exist when the Holy Spirit came to live inside believers at Pentecost.

Special concepts in this chapter

Tongues

The word "tongues" has two meanings in this chapter. Luke describes what came down from heaven (Acts 2:3)(../act/02/03.md) as tongues that looked like fire. This is different from "a tongue of flame," which is a fire that looks like a tongue. Luke also uses the word "tongues" to describe the languages that the people spoke after the Holy Spirit filled them (Acts 2:4).

Last days

No one knows for sure when the "last days" ([Acts 2:17](#)) began. Your translation should not say more than the ULB does about this. (See: lastday)

Baptize

The word "baptize" in this chapter refers to Christian baptism (Acts 2:38-41). Though the event described in [Acts 2:1-11](#) is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised in [Acts 1:5](#), the word "baptize" here does not refer to that event. (See: baptize)

The prophecy of Joel

Many of the things that Joel said would happen did happen on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:17-18), but some things Joel spoke of have not happened yet (Acts 2:19-20). (See: prophet)

Wonders and signs

These words refer to things that only God could do, things that showed that Jesus was who the disciples said he was.

Links:

[Acts 2:1 Notes](#)

Acts 2

2:1-4

What was the day of Pentecost?

[2:1]

Pentecost was a Jewish festival. This festival came 50 days after the Passover week ended. It was one of the three most important festivals in the Jewish faith. For these three festivals, the Law of Moses made all Jewish men come to Jerusalem to "appear before the Lord" (see: Deuteronomy 16:16). These men brought offerings of the grain from the summer wheat harvest. These offerings gave thanks to God for helping the harvest. Pentecost was also called "The Feast of Weeks." It was celebrated seven weeks after the Passover week ended (see: Leviticus 23:15).

The Feast of Pentecost brought the most visitors of Jews and Gentiles who believed in God to Jerusalem. It was the best time of year to travel. Some scholars think this is why God chose the Pentecost festival to baptize the followers of Jesus with the Holy Spirit. That is, the most people possible were there to see it.

See: Passover; Pentecost; Law of Moses; Baptize (Baptism)

Who was there when the Holy Spirit came?

[2:1]

Scholars disagree on how many people were there when the Holy Spirit came. They do not know if it was only the twelve apostles or if Jesus' relatives and the 120 disciples were also there (see: 1:14-15). The house or upper room was big enough for the twelve apostles (see: 1:13). If 120 disciples were there, then the "house" where they met was thought to be a large house with many rooms. Or some scholars think they met in part of the outer courts of the temple.

See: Holy Spirit; Apostle; Disciple; Temple Courts

How did Luke describe the coming of the Holy Spirit?

[2:2]

The Holy Spirit came with the sound of a strong "rushing" (φέρω/g5342) "wind" (πνοή/g4466). Luke said all the people in the house heard this sound. The word wind, or "breath" (πνοή/g4466), is used other places in the Bible to talk about the Holy Spirit (see: 17:25; Ezekiel 37:9-10). In those places, it is the Spirit who gives life. The Holy Spirit is also a part of giving Christians a new life after they believe in Jesus (see: Titus 3:5).

Luke also talked about the Holy Spirit coming in little flames in the shape of tongues. These tongues laid on top of all those in the house. Some scholars think Luke was talking about the Holy Spirit's coming in the same way John the Baptist spoke of it (see: Luke 3:16-17).

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

What did it mean that the disciples spoke in other tongues?

[2:4]

When the disciples spoke in other “tongues”(γλῶσσα/g1100) on the day of Pentecost, it meant they spoke in commonly known languages. But, the disciples did not know these languages. That is, they did not learn these languages by studying them or learning them. The Holy Spirit caused the disciples to speak in other languages. In this way, the Jews from many language groups heard the disciples speaking in their own languages.

See: Speak in Tongues

2:5-13

What places did Luke speak about?

[2:5, 2:9, 2:10, 2:11]

See Map: Ancient Middle East

Why did many in the crowd think the disciples were drunk?

[2:13]

Many in the crowd thought the disciples were drunk because they did not know what the disciples said. Because they spoke in languages that the people did not know, they thought they just spoke from drunkenness. Others became confused and amazed when they heard the disciples speaking in their own language. This confusion and amazement allowed Peter to tell them about what really happened.

2:14-21

What was the third hour of the day?

[2:15]

The Jews counted time each day beginning with the sunrise. The third hour of the day was about nine o'clock in the morning. Three hours after the sun rose where they lived. When are the “the last days”?

Some scholars think the “last days” began when Jesus first came to earth. That is, they began at his birth. These scholars think the last days continue until Jesus comes back to earth. Other scholars think the last days began after Jesus came back from the dead and the Holy Spirit came to the disciples. These scholars also think the last days will end when Jesus comes back to earth.

See: Last Days

Who are “all flesh”?

[2:17]

Some scholars think Luke said “all flesh” to say all kinds of Jewish people. In the past, God only spoke to certain people, that is, prophets, kings, or priests with messages from the Holy Spirit. Other scholars think the words “all flesh” meant the Gentile nations of the world along with the Jews.

See: Prophet; Priest (Priesthood) ; Gentile

When did the people think Joel’s prophecy was going to happen?

[2:17]

Peter knew the signs of flames of fire and the speaking of foreign languages to be the “signs on the earth below.” Some scholars think the prophecy of the “wonders in the heavens” happened on the day when Jesus died (see: Luke 23:44-45). Other scholars think the signs of blood, fire, smoke, the sun changing to darkness, and the moon changing to blood all speak about when Jesus is going to come back to earth.

See: Sign; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Jesus’ Return to Earth

What is the “great and glorious day of the Lord”?

[2:20]

The ‘great and glorious day of the Lord’ is the day of judgment. It is the time when Jesus comes back to earth and judges the whole human race (see: Matthew 24:30-31 and 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4) Scholars think the word glorious also meant fearful or dreadful.

See: Day of the Lord; Glory (Glorify); Day of Judgment

2:22-36

What does it mean that God “accredited” Jesus to the men of Israel?

[2:22]

When Peter said God “accredited” Jesus to the men of Israel, he said that through the many miracles he did, God helped people to know that Jesus was the promised messiah.

See: Miracle; Messiah (Christ)

What was meant by “God’s predetermined plan and foreknowledge”?

[2:23]

God’s predetermined(ᾠρίζω/g3724) plan spoke about God’s specific and unchangeable will. That is, God knew what would happen before it happen because he wanted it to happen or allowed it to happen. God planned Jesus’ death on the cross before he created the world (see: 2 Timothy 1:9; Revelation 13:8). God’s foreknowledge(πρόγνωσις/g4268) spoke about God setting the time for Jesus to be crucified by “lawless”(ἄνομος/g0459) men. Some scholars think “lawless men” spoke

about the Romans who beat Jesus and nailed him to the cross. Other scholars think both the Jewish leaders and the Romans were guilty of having Jesus killed.

See: Predestine (Predestination); Foreknow (Foreknowledge); Will of God

Why was death not able to keep Jesus?

[2:24]

In the same way that God planned Jesus dying on the cross, he also planned to make Jesus live again. God controls living and dying. Dying could not stop Jesus because he is God.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

What is "Hades"?

[2:27]

Here, Hades means the general place where the dead people go. Peter said David was a prophet because he spoke about Jesus dying and that his body would not decay or rot.

See: Hades (Sheol); Prophet

What did the people see and hear that showed the Holy Spirit came to them?

[2:33]

The people saw and heard the disciples speaking in languages that the disciples did not know how to speak (see: 2:6-8). This showed the fulfillment of the promise Jesus made. Also, it showed that the Holy Spirit came to the disciples. The Holy Spirit came with power in the same way Jesus said the Holy Spirit was going to come.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit

What do the words, "The Lord said to my Lord" mean?

[2:34]

Scholars think the words, "The Lord said to my Lord" spoke about God saying that Jesus is also the Lord. That is, Jesus is God. Only God could be a master of God.

See: Psalm 110:1

See: Lord; Jesus is God; Trinity

How is Jesus at the right hand of the Father?

[2:34]

Some scholars think the words meant "having been exalted by the right hand of God" instead of "to the right hand of God." That is, Jesus was given back the honor he had in heaven before he came to earth. By coming to earth, he humbled himself and was not honored as much while he was on the earth. When someone sat at the right hand of a king, he was honored greatly. They were given power and permission to rule.

When someone sat down, it meant that they were finished working. The writer of Hebrews talks about the difference between Jesus finishing the things he wanted to do and the Jewish priests who continuously stand because they never finish the things they need to do (see: Hebrews 10:11-12). Jesus was given the highest place of honor and permission to rule in heaven.

See Psalm 110

See: Right Hand; Disciple; Heaven

How do Jesus' enemies become a stool for his feet?

[2:35]

This is a prophecy from Psalm 110:1. God placed the enemies of Jesus under Jesus, who was given permission to rule them. That is, Jesus holds complete rule over his enemies.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)

2:36-41

Who was "the whole house of Israel"?

[2:36]

The whole house of Israel was all the Jewish people who rejected Jesus (see: Mark 14:61-65).

What did Peter mean when he called Jesus both Lord and Christ?

[2:36]

Peter called Jesus lord and christ. He meant that Jesus completed the prophecy David wrote in Psalm 110:1. Jesus is "lord" (κύριος/g29362) because God placed him at his right hand after he rose from the dead (see: Psalm 16:8). Jesus is ruler over everything.

Jesus is the "christ." That is, he is the messiah, the one to complete God's plan for saving people from their sins. Paul also spoke of Jesus as the Christ. Jesus showed that he was the Christ because he did not stay dead (see: Romans 1:4).

See: Lord; Messiah (Christ); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What does it mean to be pierced to the heart?

[2:37]

Scholars think to be "pierced to the heart" spoke of when a person would know something quickly and very strongly. They think the people knew quick and strong sorrow and felt guilty. They understood they killed their messiah. Their

words of “what shall we do” were desperate words.

See: Messiah (Christ)

What was meant by the word “repent”?

[2:38]

See: Repent (Repentance)

Why did Peter command the Jews to be baptized in the name of Jesus?

[2:38]

Scholars think several things happened when baptism “in the name of Jesus” happened:

By calling on the name of Jesus, the Jews acknowledged that Jesus is Israel’s messiah and savior. They knew that Jesus did not stay dead and is sitting at God’s right hand. By calling on the name of Jesus, the Jews accepted that forgiveness for sins was only possible by believing in Jesus. By calling on the name of Jesus, the Jews publicly said that only Jesus can cleanse them from their sin and impurity.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Name; Messiah (Christ); Savior; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Clean and Unclean

What was the “gift of the Holy Spirit”?

[2:38]

The gift of the Holy Spirit was the comforter that Jesus promised (see: John 14:16). The Holy Spirit comes to live inside those who believe in Jesus (see: Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 1:13-14). Scholars agree that the gift of the Holy Spirit is different from the gifts of the Holy Spirit. All Christians are given the gift of the Holy Spirit. But the gifts the Holy Spirit gives each Christian are different. He chooses to give different people different gifts to help the church (see: 1 Corinthians 12:11).

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Why does Peter say this promise is “for you, your children and to all those who are far off”?

[2:39]

This promise of the Holy Spirit is for all Christians of all ages everywhere. The promise of the Holy Spirit was not only for the first Christians but also for all who will become Christians. Luke also wrote that the promise of the Holy Spirit was for the Jews and the Gentiles (see Acts 10:45; 11:16,17). Peter did not fully know that the Holy Spirit was also for the Gentiles when he spoke. But the Holy Spirit spoke this through him.

See: Gentile

What did it mean when Peter said, “to as many as the Lord our God will call”?

[2:39]

Peter again quoted from the prophet Joel when he said, “to as many as the Lord our God will call.” The prophecy spoke of both those who call on the name of the Lord, and of those whom the Lord will call.

See: Romans 1:6; 9:1-33, John 3:16

See: Call (Calling)

Why did Peter say “save yourselves from this wicked generation”?

[2:40]

Scholars think Peter told the Jews to “save themselves”(σῶζω/g4982) because he told the Jews to allow themselves to be saved by Jesus. The book of Acts speaks about God being the one who saves (see: 2:21, 39; 4:11-12). These scholars think that God’s call offers salvation. The people who are called must respond to the gospel with faith and by repenting (see: 2:38; 16:14-15, 30-34).

A “wicked generation” spoke about people who continually reject God and the things he says. Moses wrote about a wicked generation in the Old Testament (see: Deuteronomy 32:5), and Paul wrote about a wicked generation in the New Testament (see: Philippians 2:15).

See: Generation; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gospel; Repent (Repentance)

2:42-47

What was the “apostles’ teaching”?

[2:42]

The apostles taught about the things Jesus said and did. The apostles saw the power of Jesus in the miracles he did while they were with him. The teaching also talked about God’s plans and promises. God planned to save people from their sins even before he created the world. That is, he planned for Jesus to die on the cross, be buried, and be brought back to life even before he created the world. The apostles strongly taught that Jesus is the messiah whom God promised to come.

They taught that it was through Jesus alone that someone could be at peace with God (see: 2:36-39; 3:17-23).

See: Apostle; Miracle; Messiah (Christ); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What was meant by “the fellowship”?

[2:42]

The word “fellowship” meant to share or be a part of something. Here, it meant sharing in each other’s lives. That is, in the same way they shared life in Jesus, they also shared life together. To share life with each other meant to know others, care for others, and allow them to care for you and to help one another in times of suffering (see: Romans 12:10-13; 1

Peter 4:8-10).

See: Fellowship

What was meant by “the breaking of bread”?

[2:42]

Some scholars think the “breaking of bread” took place at any ordinary meal time where people gathered together to eat. They think Jesus gave this command when he celebrated his last Passover meal with the disciples (see: Luke 22:14-19). That is, they took the loaves of bread they ate, broke them into small pieces, and shared them with one another. Other scholars think the “breaking of bread” was for Christians to regularly be a part of, so that they specifically remembered Jesus’ death on the cross, the forgiveness of sins, and the new covenant made by God with Christians (see: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

See: Passover; Disciple; New Covenant

What were the prayers about which Luke wrote?

[2a:42]

Scholars think the prayers were Jewish prayers and possibly the Jewish times of prayer as well (see: 3:1). Certainly, the Christians prayed together. They also went to the prayer times in the temple together (see: 2:46).

See: Pray (Prayer)

Why did those gathered experience “awe”?

[2:43]

Because the apostles did signs and wonders similar to the miracles done by Jesus, the people felt great “awe”(φόβος/g5401) about God. This means the people felt great respect and reverence for God.

See: Awe (Awesome); Sign; Miracle

What did it mean to have all things in common?

[2:44]

Some scholars think “to have all things in common” meant the Christians wanted to share the things they owned. Though they kept the things they owned, they willingly sold them to help people with needs near them (see: 4:32). When someone needed something, the Christians sold some of their things, land, or other things they owned. Then they brought the money to the leaders or apostles to give to all with needs (See: Acts 4:32-37).

See: Apostle

Why did the early Christians worship at the Temple?

[2:46]

The Christians went to the temple daily for prayers because the first Christians were Jewish. This was before they were not allowed to go to the temple because they believed in Jesus. They went there to pray Jewish prayers and to praise God who sent the messiah into the world (see: John 17:18).

See: Temple; Pray (Prayer; Messiah (Christ))

What did Luke mean when he wrote “the Lord added to their number”?

[2:47]

Scholars think Luke wrote “the Lord added to their number” because it was God’s church. He is the one who adds people to his church (see: 11:21).

See: Lord; Church

Acts 2:1

General Information:

This is a new event; it is now the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after Passover. Here the word “they” refers to the apostles and the other 120 believers that Luke mentions in Acts 1:15.

Acts 2:2

Suddenly

This word explains that no one expected to hear the sound or to have it fill the house.

a sound like the rush of a violent wind came from heaven

Possible meanings are 1) “heaven” refers to the place where God lives. Alternate translation: “a sound came from heaven” or 2) “heaven” refers to the sky. Alternate translation: “a sound came from the sky”

the whole house

This may have been a house or a larger building.

Acts 2:3

There appeared to them tongues like fire

These might have been something that looked like tongues

or like fire, not actual tongues or fire. Possible meanings are 1) tongues that looked like they were made of fire or 2) small flames of fire that looked like tongues. When fire burns in a small space, such as on a lamp, the flame can be shaped like a tongue.

that were distributed, and they sat upon each one of them

This means that the “tongues like fire” spread out so that there was one on each person.

Acts 2:4

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

“The Holy Spirit filled all of those who were there and they” speak in other tongues

They were speaking in languages that they did not already know.

as the Spirit gave them the ability

The Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak; they were dependent on the Spirit to speak in different languages.

Acts 2:5

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the believers; the word "his" refers to each person in the multitude. Verse 5 gives background information about the large number of Jews who were living in Jerusalem, many of whom were present during this event.

godly men

Here "godly men" refers to people who were devout in their worship of God and tried to obey all of the Jewish laws.

every nation under heaven

"every nation in the world." The word "every" is an exaggeration that emphasizes that the people came from many different nations. Alternate translation: "many different nations"

Acts 2:6

When this sound was heard

This refers to the sound that was similar to a strong wind.

Alternate translation: "When they heard this sound"

the multitude

"the large crowd of people"

Acts 2:7

They were amazed and marveled

These two words share similar meanings. Together they emphasize the intensity of amazement. Alternate translation: "They were greatly amazed"

Really, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?

The people ask this question to express their amazement.

The question could be changed to an exclamation.

Alternate translation: "All of these Galileans could not possibly know our languages!"

Acts 2:8

Why is it that we are hearing them, each in our own language in which we were born?

Possible meanings are 1) this is a rhetorical question that expresses how amazed they were or 2) this is a real question for which the people wanted an answer.

in our own language in which we were born

"in our own languages that we have learned from birth"

Acts 2:9

Parthians ... Medes ... Elamites

These are names of people groups.

Mesopotamia ... Judea ... Cappadocia ... Pontus ... Asia

These are names of large areas of land.

Acts 2:10

Phrygia ... Pamphylia ... Egypt ... Libya ... Cyrene

These are names of large areas of land.

Acts 2:11

Cretans ... Arabians

These are names of people groups.

proselytes

converts to the Jewish religion

Acts 2:12

amazed and perplexed

These two words share similar meanings. Together they emphasize that the people could not understand what was happening. Alternate translation: "surprised and confused"

Acts 2:13

They are full of new wine

Some people accuse the believers of having drunk too

much wine. Alternate translation: "They are drunk"

new wine

This refers to wine that is in the process of fermentation.

Acts 2:14

Connecting Statement:

Peter begins his speech to the Jews who were there on the Day of Pentecost.

stood with the eleven

All the apostles stood up in support of Peter's statement.

raised his voice

This is an idiom for "spoke loudly."

declared to them

Made a formal, important speech to them. See how you translated "make declarations" in Acts 2:4.

let this be known to you

This means that Peter is about to explain the meaning of what the people had witnessed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "know this" or "let me explain this to you"

pay attention to my words

Peter was referring to what he was saying. Alternate translation: "listen carefully to what I am saying"

Acts 2:15

it is only the third hour of the day

"It is only nine o'clock in the morning." Peter expected his audience to know that people do not get drunk that early in the day.

Acts 2:16

General Information:

Here Peter tells them a passage about which the prophet Joel wrote in the Old Testament that relates to what is happening with the languages in which the believers spoke. This is written in the form of poetry as well as being a quotation.

this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"this is what God told the prophet Joel to write" or "this is that which the prophet Joel spoke"

Acts 2:17

It will be

"This is what will happen" or "This is what I will do"

I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh

Here the words "pour out" mean to give generously and abundantly. Alternate translation: "I will give my Spirit abundantly to all flesh"

all flesh

This is a hyperbolic metonym that refers to all people by speaking of them as all living creatures, who have flesh.

Alternate translation: "all people"

Acts 2:18

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to quote the prophet Joel.

my servants and my female servants

"both my male and my female servants." These words emphasize that God will pour out his Spirit on all of his servants, both men and women.

I will pour out my Spirit

Here the words "pour out" mean to give generously and abundantly. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:17]

Acts 2:19

vapor of smoke

"thick smoke" or "clouds of smoke"

Acts 2:20

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes quoting the prophet Joel.

The sun will be turned to darkness

This means that the sun will appear to be dark instead of light. Alternate translation: "The sun will become dark"

the moon to blood

This means that the moon will appear to be red like blood. Alternate translation: "the moon will be turned to blood" or "the moon will appear to be red"

the great and remarkable day

The words "great" and "remarkable" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of greatness.

Alternate translation: "the very great day"

remarkable

great and beautiful

Acts 2:21

everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord will save everyone who calls on him"

Acts 2:22

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 1:16.

hear these words

"listen to what I am about to say"

accredited to you by God with the mighty deeds and wonders and signs

This means that God proved that he had appointed Jesus for his mission, and proved who he was by his many miracles.

Acts 2:23

by God's predetermined plan and foreknowledge

The nouns "plan" and "foreknowledge" can be translated as verbs. This means that God planned out and knew beforehand what would happen to Jesus. Alternate translation: "because God planned out and knew beforehand everything that would happen"

This man was handed over

Possible meanings: 1) "you handed Jesus over into the hands of his enemies" or 2) "Judas betrayed Jesus to you." you, by the hand of lawless men, put him to death by nailing him to a cross

Although "lawless men" actually crucified Jesus, Peter accuses the crowd of having killed him because they demanded his death.

by the hand of lawless men

Here "hand" refers to the actions of the lawless men.

Alternate translation: "through the actions of lawless men" or "by what lawless men did"

lawless men

Possible meanings are 1) the unbelieving Jews who accused Jesus of crimes or 2) the Roman soldiers who performed the execution of Jesus.

Acts 2:24

But God raised him up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "But God

caused him to live again"

freeing him from the agonies of death

He speaks of the agonies of dying as if God were freeing Christ from ropes that were binding Jesus. Alternate translation: "ending the pains of death"

for him to be held by it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for death to hold him"

for him to be held by it

Peter speaks of Christ remaining dead as if death were a person who held him captive. Alternate translation: "for him to remain dead"

Acts 2:25

General Information:

Here Peter quotes a passage that David wrote in a Psalm which relates to Jesus's crucifixion and resurrection. Since Peter says that David said these words about Jesus, the words "I" and "my" refer to Jesus and the words "Lord" and "he" refer to God.

For David says about him, 'I saw

The context makes it plain that this is an elliptical way of saying that David was speaking as if David were the Messiah. Alternate translation: "For David spoke these words as if he were the Christ: 'I saw"

before my face

"in front of me." Alternate translation: "in my presence" or "with me"

beside my right hand

To be at someone's "right hand" often means to be in a position to help and sustain. Alternate translation: "right beside me" or "with me to help me"

I should not be moved

Here the word "moved" means to be troubled. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people will not be able to cause me trouble" or "nothing will trouble me"

Acts 2:26

my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced

People consider the "heart" the center of emotions and the "tongue" voices those emotions. Alternate translation: "I was glad and rejoiced"

my flesh will live in hope

Possible meanings of the phrase "my flesh" are 1) it indicates that the writer is a mortal who will die. Alternate translation: "even though I am only mortal, I will live in hope" or 2) it is a synecdoche for the writer's entire person. Alternate translation: "I will live in hope"

will live in hope

Here the word "hope" refers to a person's confidence that what he desires will happen. Since the speaker hoped that God would rescue him, "in hope" could be translated as "in confidence in God." The phrase "live in hope" can also be translated with the phrases "confidently expect,"

"confidently wait," or "trust." Alternate translation: "will live with confidence in God" or "will confidently wait for God to rescue me"

Acts 2:27

General Information:

Since Peter says that David said these words about Jesus, the words "my," "Holy One," and "me" refer to Jesus and the

words "you" and "your" refer to God.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes quoting David.

neither will you allow your Holy One to see decay

The Messiah, Jesus, refers to himself with the words "your Holy One." Alternate translation: "neither will you allow me, your Holy One, to see decay"

to see decay

Here the word "see" means to experience something. The word "decay" refers to the decomposition of his body after death. Alternate translation: "to decay"

Acts 2:28

the ways of life

"the ways that lead to life"

full of gladness with your face

Here the word "face" refers to the presence of God.

Alternate translation: "very glad when I see you" or "very glad when I am in your presence"

gladness

joy, happiness

Acts 2:29

General Information:

The words "he" and "his" refer to David.

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues the speech to the Jews that surround him and the other believers in Jerusalem, which he began in Acts 1:16.

Brothers, it

"My fellow Jews, it"

it is proper for me to speak

Or "it is possible." He is able to speak because it is proper for him to do so.

he both died and was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he died and people buried him"

Acts 2:30

he would set one of the fruit of his loins on his throne

"God would set one of David's fruit upon David's throne."

Alternate translation: "God would appoint one of David's fruit to be king in David's place"

one of the fruit of his loins

This is a metaphor for a child or other descendant.

Alternate translation: "one of his children" or "one of his descendants"

Acts 2:31

he was neither abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see decay

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Neither did God abandon him to Hades nor did his flesh see decay" or "God did not abandon him to Hades, and his flesh did not see decay"

did his flesh see decay

Here the word "see" means to experience something. The word "decay" refers to the decomposition of his body after death. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:27]

Acts 2:32

This Jesus—God raised him up

Peter talks again about Jesus. Alternate Translation: "It is this Jesus whom God raised up" or "God raised up this Jesus"

God raised him up

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "God caused him to live again"

Acts 2:33

having been exalted to the right hand of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"because God has exalted Jesus up to his right hand"

having been exalted to the right hand of God

"Right hand of God" here is an idiom that means that Christ will rule as God, with God's authority. Alternate translation:

"Christ is in the position of God"

he has poured out what

Here the words "poured out" mean that Jesus, who is God, made these events to happen. It is implicit that he did this

by giving the Holy Spirit to the believers. Alternate

translation: "he has caused to happen these things that"

has poured out

"has given generously and abundantly." See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 2:17. Alternate

translation: "given abundantly"

Acts 2:34

General Information:

Peter again quotes one of David's Psalms. David is not speaking of himself in this Psalm. "The Lord" and "my" refer to God; "my Lord" and "your" refer to Jesus the Messiah.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 1:16.

Sit at my right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

Acts 2:35

until I make your enemies the footstool for your feet

This means that God will completely defeat the Messiah's enemies and make them subject to him. Alternate translation: "until I make you victorious over all of your enemies"

Acts 2:36

all the house of Israel

This refers to the entire nation of Israel. Alternate

translation: "every Israelite"

Acts 2:37

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the people in the crowd to whom Peter spoke.

Connecting Statement:

The Jews respond to Peter's speech and Peter answers them.

when they heard this

"when the people heard what Peter had said"

they were pierced in their hearts, and said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said"

pierced in their hearts

This means that the people felt guilty and became very sad.

Alternate translation: "deeply troubled"

Acts 2:38

be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "allow us to baptize you"

in the name of Jesus Christ

"In the name of" here is a metonym for "by the authority of" Alternate translation: "by the authority of Jesus Christ"

Acts 2:39

all who are far off

This means either 1) "all people who live far away" or 2) "all people who are far from God."

Acts 2:40

he testified and exhorted them

"he seriously told them." Here the word "testified" and "begged" share similar meanings and emphasize that Peter urged them strongly to respond to what he was saying.

Alternate translation: "he strongly urged them"

exhorted

or "pleaded with"

Be saved from this perverse generation

The implication is that God will punish "this perverse generation." Alternate translation: "Be saved from the punishment that these wicked people will suffer"

Be saved

Possible meanings are 1) Peter was urging people to let God save them. Alternate translation: "Let God save you," or 2) Peter was simply urging them in a general way to avoid being punished. Alternate translation: "Save yourselves" or "Flee" or "Escape"

Acts 2:41

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story that happened on the Day of Pentecost.

they received his word

Here the word "received" means that they accepted what Peter said to be true. Alternate translation: "they believed what Peter said"

were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people baptized them"

there were added in that day about three thousand souls

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "about three thousand souls joined the believers on that day"

about three thousand souls

Here the word "souls" refers to people. Alternate translation: "about 3,000 people"

Acts 2:42

Connecting Statement:

This section explains how the believers continued to live after the Day of Pentecost.

the breaking of bread

Bread was part of their meals. These words could refer to 1) any meals they might eat together. Alternate translation: "eating meals together" or 2) meals they would eat together

in order to remember Christ's death and resurrection.

Alternate translation: "eating the Lord's Supper together"

Acts 2:43

Fear came upon every soul

Here the word "Fear" refers to deep respect and awe for God. The word "soul" refers to the entire person. Alternate translation: "Each person felt a deep respect and awe for God"

many wonders and signs were done through the apostles

Possible meanings are 1) "the apostles performed many wonders and signs" or 2) "God performed many wonders and signs through the apostles"

wonders and signs

"miraculous deeds and supernatural events." See how you translated this in Acts 2:22.

Acts 2:44

All who believed were together

Possible meanings are 1) "All of them believed the same thing" or 2) "All who believed were together in the same place."

had all things in common

"shared their belongings with one another"

Acts 2:45

property and possessions

"land and things they owned"

distributed them to all

Here the word "them" refers to the profit that they made from selling their property and possessions. Alternate translation: "distributed the proceeds to all"

according to the needs anyone had

They distributed the proceeds that they earned from selling their property and possessions to any believer who had a need.

Acts 2:46

they devoted themselves with one purpose in the temple

You may need to supply the words that have been omitted in this ellipse. What they devoted themselves to doing is stated in verse 42. Alternate translation: "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching with one purpose in the temple"

with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

They also broke bread in homes

Bread was part of their meals. Alternate translation: "They also ate meals together in their homes"

Acts 2:47

praising God and having favor with all the people

"praising God. All the people approved of them"

those who were being saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom the Lord saved"

Chapter 3

Acts 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The covenant God made with Abraham

This chapter explains that Jesus came to the Jews because God was fulfilling part of the covenant he had made with Abraham. Peter thought that the Jews were the ones who were truly guilty of killing Jesus, but he wanted them to understand that Jesus, by living and dying, had fulfilled God's promise to Abraham and that if they repented, God would forgive them.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You delivered up"

The Romans were the ones who killed Jesus, but they killed him because the Jews captured him, brought him to the Romans, and told the Romans to kill him. For this reason Peter thought that they were the ones who were truly guilty of killing Jesus. But he tells them that they are also the first ones to whom God has sent Jesus's followers to invite them to repent ([Acts 3:26](#)). (See: repent)

Links:

[Acts 3:1 Notes](#)

Acts 3

3:1-10

What was the "hour of prayer"?

[3:1]

The Jewish people went to the temple three times a day to pray. The "ninth hour" was in the middle of the afternoon. Jews also prayed in the middle of the morning at the middle of the day (see: Psalm 55:16-19). Peter and John were Christians. But they were also Jews. So they continued to pray at the temple three times a day after they became Christians.

Why did Luke write that the man was "lame from birth"?

[3:2]

Some scholars think Luke wrote that the man was "lame from birth" because it showed how powerful Jesus was because he healed this man. Scholars think "lame" (χωλός/g5560) meant a man with legs, ankles and feet not formed correctly.

That made this man not strong enough to walk or stand (see: 3:7). What was the "Beautiful Gate"?

The "Beautiful Gate" was one of many gates that went into the Jewish temple. Scholars think the greatest number of people entered into the temple through this gate. Perhaps they carried the lame man to this gate so that they could ask people for gifts of money.

See: Temple

Why did Peter "fasten his eyes" on the lame man?

[3:4]

The phrase "fastening his eyes" (ἀτενίζω/g0816) meant that Peter looked specifically and closely at the lame beggar. Also, Peter commanded the man saying, "Look at us." Scholars think the lame man looked at Peter and this man had expected a great gift.

Advice to Translators: A beggar was someone who asked people for money because they were poor or because they could not do anything.

Why did Peter tell the man to stand and walk, "in the name of Jesus"?

[3:6]

The lame man did not stand up and walk before Peter spoke the name of Jesus. The phrase "in the name of Jesus" meant that Jesus gave him permission to heal this man and the power to do so. People knew Jesus' power because of what Peter did (see: 3:16). Some scholars say the power that caused the lame man to stand up and "walk" (περιπατέω/g4043) and he was strong enough to walk for the rest of his life (see: 3:16).

See: Name

3:11-16

Where was Solomon's porch?

[3:11]

Solomon's porch was on the east side of the temple courts. Scholars think the court of the Gentiles was near this area.

Jesus taught on this porch to many people (see: John 10:23).

See: Temple; Gentile

See Map: Show map of Jewish temple with its various gates, and porches

Why did Peter speak about the "God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob"?

[3:13]

Peter spoke about God in a way that the Jewish people would understand. Scholars think Peter wanted the Jews to think about God promised to do certain things. God not only healed a lame man, but he made it so that people would know that Jesus is the promised messiah. The things Peter said also helped people to know he and the apostles served the God of

Israel. They did not worship another god.

See: Messiah (Christ); Apostle

Why did Peter say that Jesus was God's servant?

[3:13]

Scholars think Peter said the same thing the prophet Isaiah said to show that Jesus is the messiah. Jesus is the servant who brings the justice of God, he brings people back to God, and he is the servant who suffers for the people of God (see: Isaiah 42:1; 49:5-6; 52:13-15). The Jewish people knew what Isaiah said and expected a suffering servant to come.

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Justice (Just, Unjust); Serve (Servant, Slave)

Who is the "Holy and Righteous One"?

[3:14]

Jesus is the holy and righteous one.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Righteous (Righteousness)

How is Jesus the "Founder of Life"?

[3:15]

Peter spoke about Jesus as the "founder of life" (ἀρχηγός/g0747). This meant that Jesus created the universe and created everything on earth. It also meant that Jesus was the leader of the whole world. Jesus also made it so that Christians would live together with God in heaven forever.

See: Create (Creation, Creature)

3:17-21

What was meant by the words, "you acted in ignorance"?

[3:17]

Peter knew the people and the religious leaders did not fully understand the plan of God for Jesus. God made this plan before the beginning of the world (see: Ephesians 1:4). The prophets spoke how the messiah must suffer and die (see: Isaiah 53:1-12; Zechariah 12:10). Some scholars think Jesus spoke about how those who crucified him did not really know what they were doing (see: Luke 23:34).

See: Messiah (Christ); Prophet

Why did Peter command the people to "repent and turn back"?

[3:19]

Peter told the Jewish people and leaders they must "repent." This meant they must believe that Jesus is the messiah. It also meant they must think differently about what the Scriptures teach about the messiah (see: 2 Corinthians 3:12-16). The people refused to believe that Jesus was God's servant. They did not think that Jesus was the "holy one." They refused to believe that Jesus was the one who created everything and was the messiah. Peter's told the people that they needed to repent and believe in Jesus. In this way, their sins were to be "blotted out," that is, the penalty for their sins was removed because Jesus served the penalty for their sins. They were made clean.

See: Repent (Repentance); Messiah (Christ); Serve (Servant, Slave); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Sin; Clean and Unclean

What were "periods of refreshing"?

[3:19]

Some scholars think "refreshing" meant to experience a relief from trouble or to have a time of peace before Jesus returns. They think that Scripture teaches that there will be a time of peace and forgiveness when God would not judge people. Other scholars think the "periods of refreshing" spoke about the time when Peter lived. They think that Luke was speaking about God given them peace from different things. Still other scholars think the periods of refreshing came when the people repented and trusted in God. That is, the Holy Spirit brings refreshing in the life of a person who repents (see: Acts 2:38; John 14:15-21).

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Repent (Repentance); Holy Spirit

What does "the final restoration of all things" mean?

[3:21]

Some scholars think when Luke spoke about "restoration," he wanted to say that God will bring Israel back to their land (see: 1:6). That is, he will bring back the kingdom of Israel. These scholars also think this is a time when God will fulfill his promises made through the prophet Malachi (see: Malachi 4:2-6). This is when the messiah returns to the world to judge the world for its sin. Other scholars think Peter spoke about the world being restored. That is, the world will be returned to be perfect in the same way it was perfect before Adam and Eve sinned (see: Genesis 3). These scholars think Peter spoke about something still to have that the prophets spoke about (see: Isaiah 65:17; 66:22).

However, God began the restoring people making it possible for them to be at peace with him because Jesus died. In Scripture, there is a metaphor about people who reject God are far away from him. People who were far away from God because of sin, were brought near to God because of the sacrifice for sin made by Jesus on the cross. That is, But, most scholars think there will still be a future time in which all of creation will be brought back to God.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophet; Metaphor

3:22-26

Who was the prophet that was like Moses?

[3:22]

The Old Testament spoke of a prophet coming in the future (see: Deuteronomy 18:15-18). The Jews thought of Moses as the first and greatest of all prophets. They thought Moses said that the prophet coming in the future was the messiah. Peter said clearly that the people needed to “listen” to the prophet, that is, to obey the prophet God sent, the messiah. This meant they needed to listen and obey the words of the messiah. That is, they needed to do what Jesus told them to do. Peter said that the people who did not listen to the prophet from God were going to be punished. God raised this prophet up to a high position in the same way he raised up Moses to a high position (see: Deuteronomy 18:19). Scholars think the punishment which Peter spoke was the removing of the people from being in the family of God.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Peter mention the prophet Samuel?

[3:24]

God told him to anoint King David (see: 1 Samuel 16:11-13). God gave David promises from the prophet Nathan that spoke of someone to come. This person was to reign forever. This person to come was the messiah (see: 2 Samuel 7:8-17).

See: Anoint (Anointing); Prophet; Messiah (Christ)

What was meant by the words, “these days”?

[3:24]

Scholars think the words “these days” spoke about the times when Peter and the other apostles lived. They think it was the beginning of the days of the promised New Covenant (see: Jeremiah 31:31-34). Scholars think the phrase “these days” also meant the beginning of the last days spoken of by the prophet Joel (see: 2:17-21).

See: Apostle; New Covenant; Last Days

What was the covenant that God made with Abraham?

[3:25]

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all the nations of the world through Abraham (see: Genesis 22:15-18). One promise was that one of Abraham’s descendants would bring about a certain blessing. That is, the messiah was going to be a descendant of Abraham (see: Galatians 16-18).

See: Covenant with Abraham; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Bless (Blessing); Messiah (Christ)

Why did Peter say that God sent his servant, Jesus, to the Jewish people first?

[3:26]

The Old Testament spoke about God’s covenant with the nation of Israel as the people. He made Israel his people. The Jewish people thought about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as their fathers. They thought about Moses as their greatest prophet. Keeping his covenant with Abraham and Israel, God sent the promised messiah to the Jews (see: Genesis 22:18; Jeremiah 31:31-34). God’s plan from the beginning of the world was to give his favor to all the nations of the world. Jesus was how God gave his favor to the world. Paul also spoke about God’s plan to save people from all of the nations. God gave the gospel first to the Jews and then to the rest of the world (see: Romans 1:16).

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Prophet; Covenant with Abraham; Messiah (Christ); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gospel

Acts 3:1

Connecting Statement:

One day Peter and John go to the temple.

into the temple

They did not go into the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "to the temple courtyard" or "into the temple area"

Acts 3:2

a man who was lame from his mother's womb was being carried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"people were carrying a man who was lame from from his mother's womb"

from his mother's womb

"ever since he was born"

the temple gate called Beautiful

This was one of the gates in the high, strong wall that surrounded the temple. People sometimes gathered near the gate.

lame

unable to walk

Acts 3:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 3:4

Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said

Both Peter and John looked at the man, but only Peter spoke.

fastening his eyes upon him

Possible meanings are 1) "looking directly at him" or 2) "looking intently at him"

Acts 3:5

The lame man looked at them

Here the word "looked" means to pay attention to something. Alternate translation: "The lame man paid close attention to them"

Acts 3:6

Silver and gold I do not have

"I do not own any silver or gold"

Silver and gold

These words refer to money.

what I do have

It is understood that Peter has the ability to heal the man.

In the name of Jesus Christ

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority.

Alternate translation: "With the authority of Jesus Christ"

Acts 3:7

Peter raised him up

"Peter caused him to stand"

Acts 3:8

he entered ... into the temple

He did not go inside the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "he entered ... the temple area" or "he entered ... into the temple courtyard"

Acts 3:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 3:10

noticed that it was the man

"realized that it was the man" or "recognized him as the man"

the Beautiful Gate

This was the name of one of the entrances to the temple area. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 3:2. they were filled with wonder and amazement

Here the words "wonder" and "amazement" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of the people's amazement. Alternate translation: "they were extremely amazed"

Acts 3:11

General Information:

The phrase "in the porch that is called Solomon's" makes it clear that they were not inside the temple where only the priests were allowed to enter. Here the words "us" and "we" refer to Peter and John but not to the crowd to whom Peter is talking.

Connecting Statement:

After healing the man who could not walk, Peter talks to the people.

the porch that is called Solomon's

"Solomon's Porch." This was a covered walkway that consisted of rows of pillars that supported a roof, and which people named after king Solomon. It was in the temple courtyard.

greatly marveling

"extremely surprised"

Acts 3:12

When Peter saw this

Here the word "this" refers to the amazement of the people.

You Israelite men

"Fellow Israelites." Peter was addressing the crowd.

why do you marvel?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that they should not be surprised by what had happened. Alternate translation: "you should not be surprised."

Why do you fix your eyes on us, as if we made him walk by our own power or godliness?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that the people should not think that he and John had healed the man by

their own abilities. This could be written as two statements.

Alternate translation: "Do not fix your eyes on us. We did not make him walk by our own power or godliness."

fix your eyes on us

This means that they looked intently at them without stopping. Alternate translation: "stare at us" or "look at us"

Acts 3:13

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 3:12.

rejected before the face of Pilate

Here the phrase "before the face of" means "in the presence of." Alternate translation: "rejected in Pilate's presence"

when he had decided to release him

"when Pilate had decided to release Jesus"

Acts 3:14

for a murderer to be given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for Pilate to release a murderer to you"

Acts 3:15

General Information:

Here the word "we" includes just Peter and John.

the Founder of life

This refers to Jesus. Possible meanings are 1) "the one who gives people eternal life" or 2) "the ruler of life" or 3) "the one who leads people to life"

Acts 3:16

On the basis of faith in his name

Possible meanings are 1) this is the reason the man was made strong. Alternate translation: "Because of faith in his name" or 2) this is how the man was made strong. Alternate translation: "By faith in his name"

On the basis of faith in his name

The word "his" refers to the Founder of life, Jesus. The abstract noun "faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Possible meanings are 1) the lame man had faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because he believed in Jesus name" or 2) Peter and John, and perhaps the lame man, had faith in Jesus. Alternate translation: "Because we believed in Jesus's name"

his name

The phrase "his name" is a metonym either for Jesus or for Jesus's power.

made this man ... strong

"made this man ... well"

The faith that is through Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) this is the faith that Jesus enables people to have. Alternate translation: "The faith that comes from Jesus" or 2) this is faith in Jesus.

Acts 3:17

Now

Here Peter shifts the audience's attention from the lame man and continues to talk to them directly.

you acted in ignorance

Possible meanings are 1) that the people did not know that Jesus was the Messiah or 2) that the people did not understand the significance of what they were doing.

Acts 3:18

God foretold by the mouth of all the prophets

When the prophets spoke, it was as though God himself was speaking because he told them what to say. Alternate translation: "God foretold by telling all of the prophets what to speak"

God foretold

"God spoke about ahead of time" or "God told about before they happened"

the mouth of all the prophets

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that the prophets spoke and wrote down. Alternate translation: "the words of all the prophets"

Acts 3:19

and turn

"and turn to the Lord." Here "turn" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "and start obeying the Lord"

so that your sins may be blotted out

Here "blotted out" is a metaphor for forgiving. Sins are spoken of as if they are written in a book and God erases them from the book when he forgives them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God will forgive you for sinning against him"

Acts 3:20

times of refreshing

Possible meanings are 1) "times when God will strengthen your spirits" or 2) "times when God will revive you"

from the presence of the Lord

Here the words "presence of the Lord" is a metonym for the Lord himself. Alternate translation: "from the Lord"

that he may send the Christ

"that he may again send the Christ." This refers to Christ's coming again.

who has been appointed for you

This may be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom he has appointed for you"

Acts 3:21

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues the speech that he began in Acts 3:12 to the Jews who stood in the temple area.

He is the One heaven must receive

"He is the One heaven must welcome." Peter speaks of heaven as if it were a person who welcomes Jesus into his home.

heaven must receive until

This means that it is necessary for Jesus to remain in heaven because that is what God has planned.

until the time of the restoration of all things

Possible meanings are 1) "until the time when God will restore all things" or 2) "until the time when God will fulfill everything that he foretold."

about which God spoke from ancient times by the mouth of his holy prophets

When the prophets spoke long ago, it was as if God himself was speaking because he told them what to say. Alternate

translation: "about which things God spoke long ago by telling his holy prophets to speak about them"

the mouth of his holy prophets

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that the prophets spoke and wrote down. Alternate translation: "the words of his holy prophets"

Acts 3:22

General Information:

Peter begins to quote something Moses told the Israelites before the Messiah came.

will raise up a prophet like me from among your brothers

"will cause one of your brothers to become a true prophet, and everyone will know about him"

your brothers

"your nation"

Acts 3:23

that prophet will be completely destroyed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that prophet, God will completely destroy"

Acts 3:24

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to the Jews that he began in Acts 3:12.

Yes, and all the prophets

"In fact, all the prophets." Here the word "Yes" adds emphasis to what follows.

from Samuel and those who came after him

"beginning with Samuel and continuing with the prophets who lived after he did"

these days

"these times" or "the things that are happening now"

Acts 3:25

You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant

Here the word "sons" refers to heirs who will receive what the prophets and the covenant promised. Alternate translation: "You are the heirs of the prophets and heirs of the covenant"

In your seed

"Because of your offspring"

all the families of the earth will be blessed

Here the word "families" refers to people groups or nations.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will bless all the people groups in the world"

Acts 3:26

After God raised up his servant

"After God caused Jesus to become his servant and made him famous"

his servant

This refers to the Messiah, Jesus.

turning every one of you from your wickedness

Here "turning ... from" is a metaphor for causing someone stop doing something. Alternate translation: "causing every one of you to stop doing wicked things" or "causing every one of you to repent from your wickedness"

Chapter 4

Acts 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 4:25-26.

Special concepts in this chapter

Unity

The first Christians wanted very much to be united. They wanted to believe the same things and share everything they owned and help those who needed help.

"Signs and wonders"

This phrase refers to things that only God can do. The Christians wanted God to do what only he can do so that people would believe that what they said about Jesus was true.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Cornerstone

The cornerstone was the first piece of stone that people put down when they were building a building. This is a metaphor for the most important part of something, the part on which everything depends. To say that Jesus is the cornerstone of the church is to say that nothing in the church is more important than Jesus and that everything about the church depends on Jesus. (See: and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Name

"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" ([Acts 4:12](#)). With these words Peter was saying that no other person who has ever been on the earth or will ever be on earth can save people.

Links:

[Acts 4:1 Notes](#)

Acts 4

4:1-7

Who were the captains of the temple and the priests?

[4:1]

The captain of the temple controlled soldiers. These soldiers protected the temple area. This made the temple a peaceful area to worship. The priests offered sacrifices and worshiped in the temple (see Exodus 28).

See: Temple; Priest (Priesthood)

Who were the Sadducees?

[4:1]

See: Sadducees

Why did the Sadducees question Peter and John?

[4:2]

Some scholars think the priests and Sadducees questioned Peter and John because they taught that after people died, they would be resurrected. That is, their bodies will be made alive again. The Sadducees did not believe anyone would be made alive again (see: 4:2; 5:17). Peter and John taught that some people will be made alive again to live in heaven, and other people will be made alive again to live in hell. They taught that by believing in Jesus, people will be made alive again to live in heaven. That is, they will live together with God in heaven forever. Those who do not believe in Jesus will live separated from God forever and be punished for their sins. Other scholars think the priest and Sadducees questioned Peter and John because Peter and John taught in the temple area without permission from the Sadducees.

See: Sadducees

Why did the Sanhedrin arrest the apostles, Peter and John?

[4:3]

The Sanhedrin arrested the apostles because it was evening. The Sanhedrin, a group of Jewish leaders, could not gather together until the morning. They did not want the apostles to leave without questioning them. They wanted to know how the lame man was healed.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Apostle

How did people respond to the apostles' preaching after the healing miracle?

[4:4]

People responded to the apostles' preaching that day in two different ways. First, the religious leaders opposed the apostles. Second, Luke wrote that about 5,000 men who came to believe the apostles' teaching about Jesus. Some scholars think this number is the total number of men and women who believed in Jesus at that time. Other scholars think the number is simply the men who believe in Jesus that day. Fewer scholars think Luke wrote the total number of Christians from the entire area, including Galilee.

See: Apostle; Preach (Preacher)

See Map: Galilee

Who came together to discuss the actions of Peter and John?

[4:5, 4:6]

Verse 5 talks about three types of people: the rulers, the elders, and the teachers of religious laws. Scholars think these three groups combined to make the Sanhedrin. At that time, Rome allowed the Sanhedrin to make many decisions for the nation. The elders were the ordinary people. They were leaders of the community and the leaders of powerful families. They were mostly Sadducees. The teachers of the law were scribes. They were also the lawyers. They were mostly Pharisees. The rulers were mostly priests, including the chief priests and the high priest.

The ruling High Priest, Caiaphas, was the Chief (or High) Priest. He was the High Priest when Jesus was killed (see Matthew 26:3; John 18:28). The former High Priest, Annas, was the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Therefore, though the verse says Annas was the High Priest, he was the former High Priest. Many still called Annas High Priest to honor him. So, it was Caiaphas who was the High Priest at the time.

See: Elder; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Sadducees; Pharisees; Scribe; Chief Priest; High Priest

Why did the leaders ask the apostles who gave them permission to heal the crippled man?

[4:7]

The Jews at that time believed that the power to heal a lame man came either from God or from Satan. So the Sanhedrin wanted to know if God or Satan gave him permission to heal this man (see: Luke 11:15; Matthew 9:34).

See: Satan (The Devil); Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

4:8-12

Why did Luke write, “Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit”?

[4:8]

Scholars think God gave Peter special power to speak what God needed him to say to the Jewish leaders. This fulfilled the promise Jesus made to his followers (see: Luke 12:11; 21:14-15).

See: Holy Spirit

What did Peter say to the people listening?

[4:8, 4:9, 4:10]

Some scholars think the things Peter said confronted the Jewish leaders for arresting them. People normally gave thanks when a sick person was healed. Instead, they arrested Peter and John. Other scholars think Peter wanted to know why the Sanhedrin arrested him and John. Peter said clearly that Jesus has the power and permission to heal the man.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

What was a cornerstone?

[4:11]

Builders used a cornerstone to make buildings. This was the first stone used when building. They used this stone to know the direction the building needed to go and where the building needed to be placed. They did not bury this stone, but they always made it so that people could see it. The prophet Isaiah spoke of this cornerstone. He said that God placed this cornerstone in Jerusalem. It was firm, tested, precious, and it prevented people from needing to be afraid (see: Isaiah 28:16). Finally, Jesus used this metaphor when speaking about himself (see: Mark 12:1-12).

Peter quoted the well-known passage about the messiah from Psalm 118:22: “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.” However, Peter added the words, “by you.” He used the words “by you” to say that the religious leaders rejected God’s cornerstone, Jesus the messiah.

See: Prophet; Metaphor; Messiah (Christ)

How is Jesus the only way to be saved?

[4:12]

Peter said there “is no other name... by which we must be saved.” He was talking about Jesus. He wanted to say that people could only be at peace with God by believing in Jesus.

See: John 14:6; 1 Timothy 2:5

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Name

4:13-22

How were Peter and John “ordinary, uneducated men”?

[4:13]

Luke wrote that Peter and John were ordinary, uneducated men. That is, they did not have any formal training in the Old Testament from certain teachers. The Jewish teachers did not teach them about the Old Testament in the synagogues.

See: Synagogue; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did the Sanhedrin not know what to do with the apostles?

[4:16]

The Sanhedrin did not know what to do to stop the apostles from talking about Jesus. Everyone knew about the miracle they did in Jesus’ name.

Advice to Translators: To do something in Jesus’ name means that they did something to honor Jesus and that Jesus gave

permission to them to do these things.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Apostle

Why did the Sanhedrin tell the apostles not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus?

[4:18]

The Sanhedrin didn't want the apostles to speak or teach in the name of Jesus because they did not think Jesus was the messiah. They did not think Jesus was the reason the crippled man was healed (see: 4:10). They thought Jesus was dead. Therefore, they did not think that Jesus was the messiah.

Advice to Translators: To do something in Jesus' name means that they did something to honor Jesus and that Jesus gave permission to them to do these things.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Apostle; Name: Messiah (Christ)

What did it mean for Peter to obey God rather than man?

[4:19]

Obedying God meant not doing what people said to do if what they said to do was something God said not to do. Jesus said to tell the whole world about him and to feed his sheep (see: Matthew 28: 18-20; John 21:15-20; Acts 1:8) The apostles had to obey Jesus (See: Acts 5:29).

See: Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 15:22

See: Apostle; Shepherd

Why did Luke say the crippled man was over 40 years old?

[4:22]

Luke said the crippled man was over 40 years old to say that a great healing occurred. Everyone knew this man. He lived in that area all of his life.

4:23-31

How did the other Christians pray and praise God together?

[4:24]

Some scholars think one person led the group by praying aloud. The others repeated what he said or agreed with him by saying "Amen." Other scholars think the Christians prayed one at a time. That is, one prayed and then another prayed until all the people prayed.

See: Pray (Prayer)

Why did the disciples of Jesus call God Lord?

[4:24]

The disciples of Jesus called God "Lord" (δεσπότης/g1203). This is how the Jewish people began their prayers.

See: Isaiah 37:16-20

See: Disciple; Lord; Pray (Prayer)

Why did Peter say, "You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David?"

[4:25]

Peter said, "You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David." God spoke through King David. God fulfilled the prophecy he gave to David (see: Psalm 2:1-3). Some scholars think this makes known that God spoke to the prophets and apostles. He inspired them to write the words of the Bible.

See: 2 Timothy 3:16; Ephesians 3:5; 2 Peter 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 1:5

See: Holy Spirit; Serve (Servant, Slave); Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophet; Apostle; Inspired

What does Psalm 2 say about Jesus?

[4:25, 4:26]

The Jewish religious teachers taught that Psalm 2 was about the messiah. The words "his anointed," "my king," and "my son" were ways of talking about the messiah. The apostles knew the "holy servant Jesus" was the "Son of God" in Psalm 2. The "raging gentiles" were the Roman soldiers who killed Jesus. The "peoples" were the Jewish leaders. The "kings of the earth" was Herod Antipas (ruler of Galilee; see Luke 23:7-12). And the "rulers" was Pontius Pilate (v. 27).

See: Messiah (Christ); Anoint (Anointing); Son of God; King Herod; King Herod

Why did Luke say, "your hand and your plan"?

[4:28]

The Christians knew Jesus suffered because God wanted him to and because he made a plan for him. The words "your hand" means God used the gentiles, rulers, and king to kill Jesus (see Exodus 3:20, 13:3, 15:6).

See: Acts 2:23; 3:18; Ephesians 1:4,5; Exodus 3:20, 13:3, 15:6)

See: King Herod

How did they "speak the word with all boldness"?

[4:29]

Jesus' disciples prayed for God "boldness" (παρρησία/g3954). They wanted boldness to "speak the word." That is, they wanted boldness to speak of the gospel to other people clearly and without fear. They wanted God's word to be proven true. That is, they wanted more great things through the name of Jesus. This would make people know that Jesus was the

messiah.

Advice to Translators: To do something in Jesus' name means that they did something to honor Jesus and that Jesus gave permission to them to do these things.

See: Disciple; Gospel; Messiah (Christ)

What was meant by the words, "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit"?

[4:31]

God filled the Christians with the Holy Spirit. This made them speak boldly about Jesus. This same power gave Peter the boldness to speak about Jesus to the Jewish leaders.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

4:32-37

How were the Christians "of one heart and soul"?

[4:32]

The Christians were "of one heart and soul." First, the Christians did not say they owned anything. They knew God owned everything. That is, their property was not truly theirs. Knowing this made them want to share. Second, the apostles spoke powerfully about Jesus being made alive again (v.33). Third, Luke said, "there was no person among them who lacked anything." That is, all the Christians had everything they needed to live. The Christians gave generously after selling their fields, properties, and houses.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Soul; Apostle

How did they place the money "at the apostles' feet"?

[4:35]

The Christians brought the money to the apostles. The apostles decided who received the money. It was given to other Christians when they needed it to live.

See: Apostle

Barnabas was a Levite. Why did he own a field?

[4:37]

God did not give the Levites any land in the Old Testament (see: Numbers 18:20; Deuteronomy 10:9). Some scholars think the Old Testament laws of inheritance were not being followed during the time of the New Testament. Other scholars think Barnabas's wife owned the land that he sold.

See: Tribes of Israel; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

Acts 4:1

Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders arrest Peter and John after Peter's having healed the man who was born lame.

came upon them

"approached them" or "came to them"

Acts 4:2

They were deeply troubled

"They were very angry." The Sadducees, in particular, would have been angry about what Peter and John were saying because they did not believe in resurrection.

proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead

Peter and John were saying that God would raise people from the dead in the same way as he had raised Jesus from among the dead. Translate this in a way that allows "the resurrection" to refer to both Jesus's resurrection and the general resurrection of other people.

from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

Acts 4:3

They laid hands on them

"The priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees arrested Peter and John"

since it was now evening

It was common practice not to question people at night.

Acts 4:4

the number of the men who believed

This refers only to men and does not include how many women or children believed.

was about five thousand

"grew to about five thousand"

Acts 4:5

General Information:

Here the word "their" refers to the Jewish people as a whole.

Connecting Statement:

The rulers question Peter and John, who answer without fear.

It came about ... that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

their rulers, elders, and scribes

This is a reference to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling court, which consisted of these three groups of people.

Acts 4:6

John, and Alexander

These two men were members of the high priest's family.

This is not the same John as the apostle.

Acts 4:7

By what power

"Who gave you power"

in what name

Here the word "name" refers to authority. Alternate translation: "by whose authority"

Acts 4:8

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in [Acts 2:4]

Acts 4:9

we are on trial today

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are questioning us today"

by what means this man was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by what means we have made this man well"

Acts 4:10

let it be known to you all and to all the people of Israel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May all of you and all of the people of Israel know this"

to you all and to all the people of Israel

"to you who are questioning us and to all the other people of Israel"

in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority. Alternate translation: "by the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth"

whom God raised from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "whom God caused to live again"

Acts 4:11

Connecting Statement:

Peter completes his speech to the Jewish religious rulers that he began in Acts 4:8.

Jesus Christ is the stone ... which has been made the cornerstone

Peter is quoting from the Psalms. This is a metaphor that means the religious leaders, like builders, rejected Jesus, but God will make him the most important in his kingdom, as a cornerstone in a building is important.

you builders rejected

"you builders thought was worth nothing"

Acts 4:12

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Peter as well as those to whom he is speaking.

There is no salvation in any other person

The noun "salvation" can be translated as a verb. This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "He is the only person who is able to save"

no other name under heaven given among men

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no other name under heaven that God has given among men"

no other name ... given among men by which

The phrase "name ... given among men" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "no other person under heaven, who is given among men, by whom"

under heaven

This is a way of referring to everywhere in the world.

Alternate translation: "in the world"

by which we must be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which can save us" or "who can save us"

Acts 4:13

General Information:

Here the second instance of "they" refers to Peter and John. All other occurrences of the word "they" in this section refer to the Jewish leaders.

the boldness of Peter and John

Here the abstract noun "boldness" refers to the way in which Peter and John responded to the Jewish leaders, and can be translated with an adverb or an adjective. Alternate translation: "how boldly Peter and John had spoken" or "how bold Peter and John were"

boldness

bravery, courage, lack of fear. A person with boldness is not afraid.

realized that they were ordinary, uneducated men

The Jewish leaders "realized" this because of the way Peter and John spoke.

and realized

"and understood"

ordinary, uneducated men

The words "ordinary" and "uneducated" share similar meanings. They emphasize that Peter and John had received no formal training in Jewish law.

Acts 4:14

the man who was healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the man whom Peter and John had healed"

nothing to say against this

"nothing to say against Peter and John's healing of the man." Here the word "this" refers to what Peter and John had done.

Acts 4:15

the apostles

This refers to Peter and John.

Acts 4:16

What should we do with these men?

The Jewish leaders ask this question out of frustration because they could not think of what to do with Peter and John. Alternate translation: "There is nothing that we can do with these men!"

For a remarkable sign has been done through them, and this is evident to everyone who lives in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God has done a remarkable sign through them, and everyone who lives in Jerusalem has seen it" or "For everyone who lives in Jerusalem knows that they have done a remarkable sign"

sign

The miracle of healing was a sign that Peter and John were obeying God, who did the healing.

everyone who lives in Jerusalem

This is a generalization. It may also be an exaggeration to show that the leaders think that this is a very big problem. Alternate translation: "many of the people who live in Jerusalem" or "people who live throughout Jerusalem"

Acts 4:17

in order that it spreads no further

Here the word "it" refers to any miracles or teaching Peter and John might continue to do. Alternate translation: "in order that news of this miracle spreads no further" or "in

order that no more people hear about this miracle"

not to speak anymore to anyone in this name

Here the word "name" refers to the person of Jesus.

Alternate translation: "not to speak anymore to anyone about this person, Jesus"

Acts 4:18

General Information:

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Acts 4:19

Whether it is proper in the sight of God

Here the phrase "in the sight of God" refers to God's opinion. Alternate translation: "Whether God thinks it is right"

Acts 4:20

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Peter and John but not to those whom they are addressing.

Acts 4:21

After further warning

The Jewish leaders again threatened to punish Peter and John.

They were unable to find any excuse to punish them

Although the Jewish leaders threatened Peter and John, they could not find a reason to punish them without causing the people to riot.

for what had been done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for what Peter and John had done"

Acts 4:22

General Information:

This verse gives background information about the age of the lame man who was healed.

The man who had experienced this sign of healing

"The man whom Peter and John had miraculously healed" this sign

The miracle of healing was a sign that Peter and John were obeying God, who did the healing.

Acts 4:23

came to their own people

The phrase "their own people" refers to the rest of the believers. Alternate translation: "went to the other believers"

Acts 4:24

General Information:

Speaking together, the people quote a Psalm of David from the Old Testament. Here the word "they" refers to the rest of the believers, but not to Peter and John.

they raised their voices with one purpose to God

To raise the voice is an idiom for speaking. "they began speaking with one purpose to God"

with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 4:25

You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David

This means that the Holy Spirit caused David to speak or write down what God said.

through the mouth of your servant, our father David

Here the word "mouth" refers to the words that David spoke or wrote down. Alternate translation: "by the words of your servant, our father David"

our father David

Here the word "father" refers to an ancestor.

Why did the Gentile nations rage, and the peoples imagine useless things?

This is a rhetorical question that emphasizes the futility of opposing God. Alternate translation: "The Gentile nations should not have raged, and the peoples should not have imagined useless things."

the peoples imagine useless things

These "useless things" consist of plans to oppose God.

Alternate translation: "the peoples imagine useless things against God"

peoples

people groups

Acts 4:26

Connecting Statement:

The believers complete their quotation from King David in the Psalms that they began in Acts 4:25.

The kings of the earth set themselves together, and the rulers gathered together against the Lord

These two lines mean basically the same thing. The two lines emphasize the combined effort of the earth's rulers to oppose God.

set themselves together ... gathered together

These two phrases mean that they joined their armies together to fight a battle. Alternate translation: "set their armies together ... gathered their troops together"

against the Lord, and against his Christ

Here the word "Lord" refers to God. In the Psalms, the word "Christ" refers to the Messiah or God's anointed one.

Acts 4:27

Connecting Statement:

The believers continue praying.

in this city

"this city" refers to Jerusalem.

your holy servant Jesus

"Jesus, who serves you faithfully"

Acts 4:28

to do all that your hand and your plan had decided

Here the word "hand" is used to mean God's power.

Additionally, the phrase "your hand and your desire decided" shows God's power and plan. Alternate translation: "to do all that you in your power had decided and planned they would do"

Acts 4:29

look upon their warnings

Here the words "look upon" are a request for God to take notice of the way in which the Jewish leaders threatened the believers. Alternate translation: "notice how they threaten to punish us"

speak your word with all boldness

The word "word" here is a metonym for God's message. The abstract noun "boldness" can be translated as an adverb.

Alternate translation: "speak your message boldly" or "be bold when we speak your message"

Acts 4:30

Connecting Statement:

The believers complete the prayer that they began in Acts 4:24.

Stretch out your hand to heal and to give

Here the word "hand" refers to God's power. This is a request for God to show how powerful he is. Alternate translation: "Show your power by healing people and by giving"

through the name of your holy servant Jesus

Here the word "name" refers to power and authority.

Alternate translation: "through the power of your holy servant Jesus"

your holy servant Jesus

"Jesus, who serves you faithfully." See how you translated this in Acts 4:27.

Acts 4:31

the place ... was shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place ... shook"

they were all filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. See how you translated this in Acts 2:4. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit had filled them all" or "God had filled them all with the Holy Spirit"

Acts 4:32

were of one heart and soul

Here the word "heart" refers to the thoughts and the word "soul" refers to the emotions. Together they refer to the total person. Alternate translation: "thought the same way and wanted the same things"

they had everything in common

"they shared their belongings with one another." See how you translated this in Acts 2:44.

Acts 4:33

great grace was upon them all

Possible meanings are: 1) that God was greatly blessing the believers or 2) that the people in Jerusalem held the believers in very high esteem.

Acts 4:34

all who owned title to lands or houses

The word "all" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many people who owned title to lands or houses" or "People who owned title to lands or houses"

owned title to lands or houses

"owned land or houses"

the money from the things that were sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the money that they received from the things that they sold"

Acts 4:35

laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented the money to the apostles.

Alternate translation: "presented it to the apostles" or "gave it to the apostles"

it was distributed to each one according to their need

The noun "need" can be translated with a verb. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they distributed the money to each believer who needed it"

Acts 4:36

General Information:

Luke introduces Barnabas into the story.

Son of Encouragement

The apostles used this name to show that Joseph was a person who encouraged others. "Son of" is an idiom used to describe a person's behavior or character. Alternate translation: "Encourager" or "one who encourages"

Acts 4:37

laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented to money to the apostles.

See how you translated this in [Acts 4:35]

Chapter 5

Acts 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit"

No one knows for sure if Ananias and Sapphira were truly Christians when they decided to lie about the land that they sold (Acts 5:1-10), because Luke does not say. However, Peter knew that they lied to the believers, and he knew that they had listened to and obeyed Satan.

When they lied to the believers, they also lied to the Holy Spirit. This is because the Holy Spirit lives inside believers.

Links:

[Acts 5:1 Notes](#)

Acts 5

5:1-11

What did it mean to keep back part of the price of the land?

[5:2]

Luke wrote that Annanias and Sapphira kept back part of the price of the land. They sold a piece of land and gave the money to the apostles. However, they did not give all of the money to the apostles. It was not wrong for them to do this. However, they made the apostles think they gave all of the money to them. They wanted to be honored for doing this. This was wrong.

What did Peter mean about Satan filling Ananias' heart?

[5:3]

Peter said that Satan filled Annaias' heart. Peter said that Satan wanted Ananias to lie to the apostles. Satan put the idea for doing the wrong thing into the heart of Ananias. He made Annanias think about doing the wrong thing.

See: Satan (The Devil); Heart (Metaphor); Apostle

How did Ananias lie to the Holy Spirit?

[5:3]

Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit. Some scholars think that when Ananias lied to the apostles, this was the same as lying to the Holy Spirit. This was because the Holy Spirit had created Christians. Other scholars think Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit because he lied to the apostles who have the Holy Spirit in them.

See: Hebrews 4:12-13

See: Holy Spirit; Apostle; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How did Peter know that Ananias lied?

[5:3]

Luke wrote that Peter knew Annanias lied to the apostles. Luke does not write how Peter knew this. Some scholars thought there was someone told Peter. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit told Peter in some way.

See: Apostle; Holy Spirit

Why did Peter write, "You have not lied to men but to God?"

[5:4]

Scholars think when Peter said, "you have not lied to men but to God," he wanted people to know that Annanias lied to the apostles and to God. This was because Ananias gave an offering to God when he gave money to the apostles.

See: Apostle; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice

How did someone test the Spirit of the Lord?

[5:4]

How did someone test the Spirit of the Lord. Annanias and Sapphira tested the Holy Spirit when they lied to the apostles. When they did this it also tested the Holy Spirit. This is because they did not think the Holy Spirit knew what they were doing.

See: Holy Spirit; Test; Apostle

When speaking to Sapphira, why did Peter say, "they will carry you out"?

[5:9]

When speaking to Sapphira, Paul said, "they will carry you out." Some scholars think that because Peter watched Ananias die for lying to the Holy Spirit, he also thought Sapphira was also going to die. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit helped Peter to know that Sapphira was going to die for deceiving the Holy Spirit. Peter was not judging them. God judged Ananias and Sapphira.

See: Holy Spirit; Judge (Judgment)

How did great fear come upon the whole church?

[5:11]

Great fear came upon the whole church. He was speaking about a certain group of Christians. Scholars think the Christians suddenly became afraid because God quickly judged Anania and Sapphira.

See: Church

5:12-16

What were "signs and wonders"?

[5:12]

See: Sign

Why were the people afraid of joining the apostles in the Temple area?

[5:12]

People were afraid of joining the apostles in the Temple area. Scholars think the people were afraid of what happened to Ananias and Sapphira or that they feared the Jewish leaders. The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus and they arrested the apostles.

See: Apostle; Temple

Why did people hope that Peter's shadow might fall on some of them?

[5:15]

People hoped that Peter's shadow would fall on them. This is a metaphor. Scholars think that because many signs and wonders were being done through the apostles, the people hoped that Peter would heal them. They think the people believed that if the crowds were too large, that even if Peter's shadow crossed over a sick person, they would be healed. Luke wanted people to know that the people who were brought before the apostles were all healed.

See: Metaphor; Sign; Apostle

5:17-21

Why did the high priest and Sadducees arrest the apostles?

[5:18]

The high priest and Sadducees arrested the apostles. Some scholars think the high priest and the Sadducees were filled with “jealousy” (ζήλος/g2205) because many people believed the things the apostles taught about Jesus (see 13:45). The Jewish leaders believed the apostles taught the wrong things so they arrested the apostles. Other scholars think that the Jewish leaders really wanted to protect the Temple, the Law of Moses, and what they believed about God. The Sadducees zealously protected the things they taught would honor God.

What is an angel?

[5:19]

See: Angel

What were “all the words of this life”?

[5:20]

The angel of the Lord told the apostles to speak “all the words of this life.” He wanted them to preach the gospel and help people to know how to be at peace with God by believing in Jesus.

See: Angel; Apostle; Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Who were “all the elders” and “the council”?

[5:21]

Scholars think the assembly, which was the council and all the elders was made up of the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and even Gamaliel, an honorable teacher of the Law of Moses (see: Acts 5:34).

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Sadducees; Pharisees; Law of Moses

5:22-26

Why did the Captain of the Temple guard and the guards fear that the people might stone them when they arrested the apostles?

[5:24]

The people thought the apostles were great because of the things they did. They did many miracles and healed many people (see: Acts 5:12-16). The guards thought the people would begin to throw stones at them if they were to hurt the apostles in any way. For this reason the guards feared the people.

See: Apostle; Miracle

5:27-32

What was meant by the words, “to bring this man’s blood upon us”?

[5:28]

The words, “to bring this man’s blood upon us” meant to make someone responsible for a death. They were willing to be the reason people died. Perhaps the Jewish leaders were willing to have people blame them for Jesus dying.

Why did God exalt Jesus to his right hand?

[5:31]

In ancient times, a person on the right hand side of the king was greatly honored. The king gave this permission to do things for the king. Some scholars think Luke wrote this so that people would know that God gave Jesus permission to do all things and power to do anything. Other scholars think Luke wrote this so people would know that Jesus should be honored.

See: Psalm 110:1-8

See: Exalt; Right Hand

How was the Holy Spirit a witness to these things?

[5:32]

The Holy Spirit was a witness to things. Some scholars think the Holy Spirit was causing people to understand the things the apostles taught. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to perform miracles to prove to people that they were saying true things about Jesus.

See: Holy Spirit; Witness (Martyr); Apostle; Miracle

5:33-42

What kind of beating did the apostles receive from the Sanhedrin?

[5:40]

The apostles were beaten because of the Sanhedrin. Scholars think the apostles were beaten with whips. A whip is made from leather strips. Other scholars think the apostles were beaten with rods. In ancient Israel, they would not hit someone 40 times because of something taught in the Law of Moses (see: Deuteronomy 25:3). Instead, they hit someone 39 times.

See: Apostle; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Law of Moses

Why did the apostles rejoice to be counted worthy to suffer dishonor for Jesus?

[5:41]

The apostles left the Sanhedrin rejoicing because they believed they were suffering to honor Jesus.

See: Apostle; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

Acts 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Continuing the story of how the new Christians shared their belongings with other believers, Luke tells about two believers, Ananias and Sapphira.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story to tell a new part of the story.

Acts 5:2

his wife also knew it

"his wife also knew that he kept back part of the sale money"

laid it at the apostles' feet

This means that they presented to money to the apostles. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:35]

Acts 5:3

General Information:

If your language does not use rhetorical questions, you may reword these as statements.

why has Satan filled your heart to lie ... land?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "you should not have let Satan fill your heart to lie ... land."

Satan filled your heart

Here the word "heart" is a metonym for the will and emotions. The phrase "Satan filled your heart" is a metaphor. Possible meanings of the metaphor are 1) "Satan completely controlled you" or 2) "Satan convinced you" to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price

This implies that Ananias had told the apostles that he was giving the entire amount that he had received from selling his land.

Acts 5:4

While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own ... authority?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "While it remained unsold, it was your own ... authority."

While it remained unsold

"Before you sold it"

after it was sold, was it not under your authority?

Peter uses this question to rebuke Ananias. Alternate translation: "after it was sold, you had control over the money that you received."

after it was sold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after you sold it"

Why did you put it in your heart to do this?

Peter used this question to rebuke Ananias. Here the word "heart" refers to the will and emotions. Alternate translation: "You should not have thought of doing this thing," or "It is Satan who has put this activity in your heart."

Acts 5:5

fell down and breathed his last

Here "breathed his last" means "breathed his final breath" and is a polite way of saying that he died. Ananias fell down because he died; he did not die because he fell down.

Alternate translation: "died and fell to the ground"

Acts 5:6

The young men arose

This means that they began to act. This does not necessarily mean that they had been sitting or that Peter and Ananias had been at the front of the room or a meeting hall. If your language has a phrase that speaks of people responding to something by beginning to act, you may use it.

Acts 5:7

his wife came in

"Ananias' wife came in" or "Sapphira came in"

what had happened

"that her husband had died"

Acts 5:8

for so much

"for this much money." This refers to the amount of money that Ananias had given to the apostles.

Acts 5:9

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to both Ananias and Sapphira.

How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?

Peter asks this question to rebuke Sapphira. Alternate translation: "You should not have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord!"

you have agreed together

"the two of you have agreed together"

to test the Spirit of the Lord

Here the word "test" means to challenge or to prove. They were trying to see if they could get away with lying to God without receiving punishment.

Look, the feet of the men

The word "Look" is an idiom for "Pay attention!" Peter is probably telling Sapphira to pay attention to the sound of the men's footsteps, which indicate that they are about to enter the building, not to look at their feet. Here the phrase "the feet" can be either a synecdoche for the men whose feet they are or a metonym for the sound that they make. Alternate translation: "Pay attention! The men" or "Listen! The footsteps of the men"

they will carry

"the men will carry"

Acts 5:10

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Ananias and Sapphira.

fell down at his feet

This means that when she died, she fell on the floor in front of Peter. This expression should not be confused with falling down at a person's feet as a sign of humility.

breathed her last

Here "breathed his last" means "breathed her final breath" and is a polite way of saying "she died." See how you translated a similar phrase in [Acts 5:5]

Acts 5:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 5:12

General Information:

It is not clear whether here the word "They" refers to the believers or only to the apostles.

Connecting Statement:

Luke continues to tell what happens in the early days of the church.

Many signs and wonders were taking place among the people through the hands of the apostles

"Many signs and wonders took place among the people through the hands of the apostles." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people"

signs and wonders

"supernatural events and miraculous deeds." See how you translated these terms in Acts 2:22

through the hands of the apostles

Here the word "hands" refers to the apostles. Alternate translation: "through the apostles"

all together

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose. The people were more than just in the same place at the same time.

Solomon's Porch

This was a covered walkway that consisted of rows of pillars that supported a roof, and which people named after king Solomon. See how you translated "the porch that is called Solomon's" in Acts 3:11.

Acts 5:13

General Information:

The words "them" and "they" refer to the apostles.

none of the rest

Possible meanings are 1) the apostles were in Solomon's Porch, but the rest of the believers were afraid to join them there, or 2) all the believers were in Solomon's Porch, and the word "none" is a hyperbole that means that most of the people who were not believers were afraid to join them.

they were held in high esteem by the people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the people held the believers in high esteem"

Acts 5:14

more believers were being added to the Lord

This could be stated in active form. See how you translated "were added" in [Acts 2:41]

Acts 5:15

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the people who lived in Jerusalem.

his shadow might fall on some of them

It is implied that God would heal them if Peter's shadow touched them.

Acts 5:16

those afflicted with unclean spirits

"those whom unclean spirits had afflicted"

they were all healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God healed them all" or "the apostles healed them all"

Acts 5:17

Connecting Statement:

The religious leaders began to persecute the believers.

But

This begins a contrasting story. You may translate this in

the way that your language introduces a contrasting narrative.

the high priest rose up

Here the phrase "rose up" means that the high priest decided to take action, not that he stood up from a seated position. Alternate translation: "the high priest took action" they were filled with jealousy

The abstract noun "jealousy" can be translated as an adjective. This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they became very jealous"

Acts 5:18

laid hands on

This means they had the believers arrested. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:3]

Acts 5:19

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the apostles.

Acts 5:20

in the temple

This phrase here refers to the temple courtyard, not to the temple building, where only the priests were allowed.

Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

all the words of this life

The word "words" here is a metonym for the message that the apostles had already proclaimed. Possible meanings are 1) "all this message of eternal life" or 2) "the whole message of this new way of living"

Acts 5:21

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the apostles.

into the temple

They went into the temple courtyard, not into the temple building, where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation: "into the temple courtyard"

about daybreak

"as it began to be light." Although the angel led them out of the jail during the night, the sun was rising by the time the apostles reached the temple courtyard.

sent to the prison to have the apostles brought

This implies someone went to the jail. Alternate translation: "sent someone to the jail to bring the apostles"

Acts 5:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 5:23

we found no one inside

Possible meanings are 1) they found no one inside the apostles' cell Alternate translation: "we did not find them inside" or 2) the apostles had been the only prisoners and now there were no prisoners at all in the jail.

Acts 5:24

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the captain of the temple and the chief priests.

they were much perplexed

"they were very puzzled" or "they were very confused"

concerning them

"concerning the words they had just heard" or "concerning these things"

as to what would come of it

"and what would happen as a result" or "what would happen next"

Acts 5:25

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the captain of the temple and the chief priests.

standing in the temple

They did not go into the part of the temple building where only the priests were allowed. Alternate translation:

"standing in the temple courtyard"

Acts 5:26

Connecting Statement:

The captain and the officers bring the apostles before the Jewish religious council.

brought them back

"brought the apostles back"

they feared the people, that they might be stoned

This can be expressed with an active form. Alternate

translation: "they feared that the people might stone them"

Acts 5:27

they had brought them, they set them ... interrogated them

"the captain and officers had brought the apostles, the captain and the officers set the apostles ... interrogated the apostles"

interrogated

questioned to find out what was true

Acts 5:28

We ... us

The speakers were referring to themselves, but not to the apostles, so these words are exclusive.

you ... your

These words refer to the apostles and so are plural.

in this name

Here the word "name" refers to the person of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:17]

you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching

Teaching many people in a city is spoken of as if they were filling the city with a teaching. Alternate translation: "you have taught many people in Jerusalem about him" or "you have taught about him throughout the Jerusalem"

desire to bring this man's blood upon us

Here the word "blood" is a metonym for death, and to bring someone's blood on people is a metaphor for saying that they are guilty of that person's death. Alternate translation: "desire to make us responsible for this man's death"

Acts 5:29

General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the apostles, and not to the audience.

Peter and the apostles answered

Peter spoke on behalf of all of the apostles when he said the following words.

Acts 5:30

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus

Here "raised up" is an idiom. Alternate translation: "The God of our fathers caused Jesus to live again"

by hanging him on a tree

Here Peter uses the word "tree" to refer to the cross, which

was made of wood. Alternate translation: "by hanging him on a cross"

Acts 5:31

God exalted him to his right hand

To be at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "God exalted him to the place of honor beside him"

give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins

The words "repentance" and "forgiveness" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "give the people of Israel an opportunity to repent and have God forgive their sins"

Israel

The word "Israel" refers to the Jewish people.

Acts 5:32

those who obey him

"those who submit to God's authority"

Acts 5:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 5:34

Connecting Statement:

Gamaliel addresses the council members.

Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was honored by all the people Luke introduces Gamaliel and provides background information about him.

who was honored by all the people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom all the people honored"

to take the men outside

The words "the men" refers to the apostles.

Acts 5:35

pay close attention to

"think carefully about" or "be cautious about." Gamaliel was warning them not to do something that they would later regret.

Acts 5:36

Theudas rose up

Possible meanings are 1) "Theudas rebelled" or 2) "Theudas appeared."

claiming to be somebody

"claiming to be somebody important"

He was killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"People killed him"

all who had been obeying him were scattered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all the people scattered who had been obeying him" or "all who had been obeying him went in different directions"

came to nothing

This means that they did not do what they had planned to do.

Acts 5:37

After this man

"After Theudas"

in the days of the census

"during the time of the census"

drew away some people after him

This means that he persuaded some people to rebel with him against the Roman government. Alternate translation: "caused many people to follow him" or "caused many people to join him in rebellion"

Acts 5:38

keep away from these men and let them alone

Gamaliel is telling the Jewish leaders not to punish the apostles any more and not to put them back in jail.

if this plan or work is of men

"if men have devised this plan or are doing this work"

it will be overthrown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"someone will overthrow it"

Acts 5:39

Connecting Statement:

Gamaliel finishes addressing the council members.

if it is of God

Here the word "it" refers to "this plan or work." Alternate translation: "if God has devised this plan or commanded these men to do this work"

So they were persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So Gamaliel persuaded them"

Acts 5:40

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the council members and all instances of "them" refer to the apostles.

they called the apostles in and beat them

The council members would have ordered the temple guards to do these things.

to speak in the name of Jesus

Here "name" refers to the authority of Jesus. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 4:18. Alternate translation:

"to speak anymore in the authority of Jesus"

Acts 5:41

General Information:

All instances of "they" refer to the apostles.

they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name

The apostles rejoiced because God had honored them by letting the Jewish leaders dishonor them. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God had counted them worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name"

for the Name

Here "the Name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "for Jesus"

Acts 5:42

General Information:

The word "they" refers to the apostles.

Thereafter every day

"After that day, every day." This phrase marks what the apostles did every day through the following days.

in the temple and from house to house

They did not go into the temple building where only the priests went. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard and in different people's houses"

Chapter 6

Acts 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The distribution to the widows

The believers in Jerusalem gave help—probably money but possibly food—every day to women whose husbands had died. All of these widows had been raised as Jews, but some of them had lived in Judea and spoke Hebrew. Others had lived in Gentile areas and spoke Greek. Those who gave out the money or food gave it to the Hebrew-speaking widows but not to the Greek-speaking widows. To please God, the church leaders appointed Greek-speaking men to make sure the Greek-speaking widows received their share of help. One of these Greek-speaking men was Stephen.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"His face was like the face of an angel"

No one knows for sure what it was about Stephen's face that was like the face of an angel, because Luke does not tell us. It is best for the translation to say only what the ULB says about this.

Links:

[Acts 6:1 Notes](#)

Acts 6

6:1-7

What was a disciple?

[6:1]

See: Disciple

Who were the "Grecian" Jews and the Hebrews?

[6:1]

Scholars think the "Grecian Jews" were to Greek-speaking Jewish Christians. They think these were Jews who were raised in other countries and only spoke Greek. The Hebrews referred to Jewish Christians who spoke Hebrew or Aramaic.

What did it mean that the "widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food"?

[6:1]

The widows that were among the Grecian Jews were being “overlooked”(παράθεωρέω/g3865) when the daily food was distributed. That is, they were not given food regularly. Instead, the Hebrew widows were given food instead. What did Luke mean by saying, “give up the word of God in order to serve tables”?

[6:2]

Luke wrote about giving up the Word of God. He did not want the apostles to stop telling people about Jesus in order to do something else. The apostles did not think that it was right for them to stop teaching so they could make sure people were given food. Some scholars think this was because Jesus specifically commanded the apostles to preach and teach the message of the gospel. The apostles were not too great to serve people by giving them food.

See: Word of God; Apostle; Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Who were men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom?

[6:3]

A man of “good reputation” was a man who other people spoke well about. People trusted this type of man to do the right things. It was the Holy Spirit who gave these men the wisdom they needed to serve other people.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Why did Luke write, we will always continue in prayer and in the ministry of the word?

[6:4]

Scholars think the apostles wanted to “devote”(προσκαρτερέω/G4674) themselves completely to prayer and teaching people about Jesus. They wanted to pray for people. They also wanted to preach and teach about Jesus and the things he taught.

See: Apostle; Pray (Prayer)

Why did the apostles place their hands upon the men chosen to the community?

[6:6]

When someone laid their hands on someone, they gave this permission to do something. The apostles then prayed for them while they laid their hands on these men.

See 13:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:14

See: Laying on of Hands ; Apostle

How did the priests become obedient to the faith?

[6:7]

When the priests became “obedient”(ὕπακούω/G5219) to the faith, they accepted that Jesus was the messiah God promised to Israel.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Messiah (Christ); Faith (Believe in)

6:8-14

How was Stephen full of grace and power?

[6:8]

How was Stephen full of grace and power. Because of God’s favor toward Stephen, God gave Stephen power in the Holy Spirit. Some scholars think the power God gave him was the power to do amazing miracles. Other scholars think that God gave Stephen great wisdom and courage to speak the truth about Jesus in a bold way.

See: Grace; Holy Spirit; Miracle

What was the “Synagogue of the Freedmen”?

[6:9]

The synagogue of freedom was a place where certain people went to worship God. These people were once slaves or prisoners of war who now lived in Jerusalem as free people.

See: Synagogue

How were the freedmen not able to stand against Stephen?

[6:10]

Stephen was wise and full of the Spirit. Because of this, some scholars think that when Luke said the freedmen “were not able to stand against” Stephen, he wanted to say that they could not prove that what Stephen was saying was wrong.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How did someone blaspheme Moses and God?

[6:11]

The people from the synagogue charged Stephen with blaspheming against Moses and against God. When he wrote about Moses, he was writing about the Law of Moses. These people accused Stephen of saying things that were untrue about the Law of Moses and God.

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Synagogue; Law of Moses

What were the “holy place” and the “law” about which Luke wrote?

[6:13]

The “holy place” was the temple and the “law” referred to the rules for the running of the temple.

See: Temple; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

Were the witnesses right about what Stephen said about Jesus?

[6:13]

The witnesses misunderstood what Jesus taught about the temple and the Law of Moses. Jesus did say he would destroy the temple and in three days he would rebuild it again (see: John 2:19, 20). However, Jesus was using a metaphor. He was speaking about dying and being resurrected.

They said the same thing Stephen said. Stephen taught about what Jesus said, but people did not understand what Jesus meant about dying and resurrecting on the third day (see: Matthew 12:40). Jesus body was a temple of the Holy Spirit. Jesus also prophesied about the destruction of the Jewish Temple (see Luke 21:6). This happened about 40 years after Jesus died. So Stephen knew the current temple was temporary and the Law of Moses had been replaced after Jesus' resurrection.

See: Witness (Martyr); Temple; Metaphor; Law of Moses; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Atonement (Atonement)
What did Luke mean when he said Stephen's face was "like the face of an angel"?

[6:15]

Luke wrote that Stephen's face was like the face of an angel. Some scholars think Stephen's face was shining in the same way that Moses' face shone after God had talked with Moses (see: Exodus 34:29-35). Other scholars think Stephen's face was shining because the Holy Spirit was completely controlling Stephen.

See: Angel; Holy Spirit

Acts 6:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story. Luke gives important background information to understand the story.

Now in these days

Consider how new parts of a story are introduced in your language.

was multiplying

"was greatly increasing"

Grecian Jews ... Hebrews

These were both groups of Jews who had become believers. The writer assumes that the reader understands that these people were all believers because at this point all believers had grown up as Jews.

Grecian Jews

These were believers who had grown up as Jews or become converts living somewhere in the Roman Empire outside of Israel and speaking Greek. Their language and culture were somewhat different from those who had grown up in Israel.

the Hebrews

These were believers who had grown up as Jews or become converts in Israel speaking Hebrew or Aramaic.

widows

A widow is a woman who has not remarried since her husband died.

their widows were being overlooked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Hebrew believers were overlooking the Grecian widows" being overlooked

"being ignored" or "being forgotten." There were so many who needed help that some were missed.

daily distribution of help

The disciples were able to help the widows because believers were giving money to the apostles Acts 4:34-35.

Possible meanings are 1) the disciples used the money to buy food, which they would give to the widows, or 2) the disciples gave the money directly to the widows.

Acts 6:2

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the 12 apostles and not to their hearers, so it is exclusive.

The twelve

This refers to the eleven apostles plus Matthias, who was selected in Acts 1:26.

the multitude of the disciples

"all of the disciples" or "all the believers"

give up the word of God

This is an exaggeration in order to emphasize the importance of their task of teaching the word of God.

Alternate translation: "stop preaching and teaching the word of God"

serve tables

This is a phrase meaning to serve food to the people.

Acts 6:3

General Information:

Here the word "you" refers to the believers and so is plural. men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom

Possible meanings are 1) the men have three qualities—a good reputation, being full of the Spirit, and being full of wisdom or 2) the men have a reputation for two qualities—being full of the Spirit, and being full of wisdom .

men of good reputation

"men that people know are good" or "men whom people trust"

over this business

"to be responsible to do this task"

Acts 6:4

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the 12 apostles and not to their hearers, so it is exclusive.

the ministry of the word

"the ministry of teaching and preaching the message"

Acts 6:5

Their speech pleased the whole multitude

"All the disciples liked their suggestion"

Stephen ... Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus

These are Greek names, so it seems that all of the men elected were from the Grecian Jewish group of believers.

proselyte

a Gentile who converted to the Jewish religion

Acts 6:6

placed their hands upon them

This represented giving a blessing and imparting responsibility and authority for the work to the seven.
Acts 6:7

General Information:

This verse gives an update on the church's growth. the word of God continued to spread

The writer speaks of the growing number of people who believed the word as if the word of God itself were covering a larger area. Alternate translation: "the number of people who believed the word of God increased" or "the number of people who believed the message from God increased" became obedient to the faith
"followed the teaching of the new belief"

the faith

Possible meanings are 1) the gospel message of trust in Jesus or 2) the teaching of the church or 3) the Christian teaching.

Acts 6:8

General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of a new part of the story.

Now Stephen

This introduces Stephen as the main character in this part of the story.

Stephen, full of grace and power, was doing

The words "grace" and "power" here refer to power from God. This could be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "God was giving Stephen power to do"

Acts 6:9

General Information:

The writer continues giving background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

there arose some people ... Asia. These people were debating with Stephen

The word "arose" is an idiom that represents beginning to act. These people did not begin to rise into the air, nor did they necessarily get up from a sitting position. Alternate translation: "some people ... Asia, began to debate against Stephen"

the synagogue of the Freedmen, of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia

Possible meanings are 1) the Cyrenians, the Alexandrians and those from Cilicia and Asia were all members of the synagogue of the Freedmen; 2) the Cyrenians and the Alexandrians were members of the synagogue of the Freedmen, but those from Cilicia and Asia were not; or 3) there were three separate groups of people: those from the synagogue, those from Cyrene and Alexandria, and those from Cilicia and Asia.

synagogue of the Freedmen

"Freedmen" were probably ex-slaves from these different locations. It is unclear if the other people listed were part of the synagogue or just participated in the debate with Stephen.

the Cyrenians and Alexandrians

"people from Cyrene and Alexandria." Cyrene and Alexandria were cities in Northern Africa. They were south of the Mediterranean Sea.

some from Cilicia and Asia

Cilicia was a city and Asia was a Roman province, both north of the Mediterranean Sea.

debating with Stephen

"arguing with Stephen"

Acts 6:10

Connecting Statement:

The writer finishes giving background information about Stephen and other people that is important to understanding the story.

not able to stand against

This phrase means they could not prove false what he said.

Alternate translation: "could not argue against"

Spirit

this refers to the Holy Spirit

Acts 6:11

General Information:

Here the word "We" refers only to the men they persuaded to lie. The word "they" refers back to the people from the synagogue of the freedmen

some men to say

They were given money to give false testimony. Alternate translation: "some men to lie and say"

blasphemous words against

"bad things about"

Acts 6:12

General Information:

The word "they" most likely refers back to the people from the synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9). They were responsible for the false witnesses and for inciting the council, the elders, the scribes, and the other people.

stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes

"caused the people, the elders, and the scribes to be very angry at Stephen"

seized him

"grabbed him and held him so he could not get away"

Acts 6:13

General Information:

The word "they" most likely refers back to the people from the synagogue of the Freedmen (Acts 6:9).

does not stop speaking

"continually speaks"

Acts 6:14

General Information:

The words "we" and "us" refer only to the speakers, not to the hearers, and so is exclusive.

handed down to us

The phrase "handed down" means "passed on." Alternate translation: "taught our ancestors"

Acts 6:15

fixed their eyes on him

This is an idiom that means they looked intently at him.

Here "eyes" is a metonym for sight. Alternate translation: "looked intently at him" or "stared at him"

was like the face of an angel

This phrase compares his face to that of an angel but does

not say specifically what they have in common.

Chapter 7

Acts 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 7:42-43 and 49-50.

It appears that 8:1 is part of the narrative of this chapter.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Stephen said"

Stephen told the history of Israel very briefly. He paid special attention to the times that the Israelites had rejected the people God had chosen to lead them. At the end of the story, he said that the Jewish leaders he was talking to had rejected Jesus just as the evil Israelites had always rejected the leaders God had appointed for them.

"Full of the Holy Spirit"

The Holy Spirit completely controlled Stephen so that he said only and all of what God wanted him to say.

Foreshadowing

When an author speaks of something that is not important at that time but will be important later in the story, this is called foreshadowing. Luke mentions Saul, also known as Paul, here, even though he is not an important person in this part of the story. This is because Paul is an important person in the rest of the Book of Acts.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Implied information

Stephen was talking to Jews who knew the law of Moses well, so he did not explain things that his hearers already knew. But you may need to explain some of these things so that your readers will be able to understand what Stephen was saying. For example, you may need to make explicit that when Joseph's brothers "sold him into Egypt"

Metonymy

Stephen spoke of Joseph ruling "over Egypt" and over all of Pharaoh's household. By this he meant that Joseph ruled over the people of Egypt and of the people and possessions in Pharaoh's household.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Background knowledge

The Jewish leaders to whom Stephen spoke already knew much about the events he was telling them about. They knew what Moses had written in the Book of Genesis. If the Book of Genesis has not been translated into your language, it may be difficult for your readers to understand what Stephen said.

Links:

[Acts 7:1 Notes](#)

Acts 7

7:1-8

Why did Stephen call the council members his "brothers" and his "fathers"?

[7:2]

Stephen called these members of the council his "brothers" because they were all Jews. He called them "fathers" because they were older so he wanted to honor them when he spoke.

What did Stephen mean by calling their God "the God of glory?"

[7:2]

Scholars think the words "God of glory" referred to God's glory. Though Stephen did not write how God showed himself to Abraham, scholars think it was in a way that Abraham knew that it was God.

See: Glory (Glorify)

Where were Mesopotamia and Haran?

[7:4]

See Map: Mesopotamia; Haran

Why did Stephen say God gave none of the land as an inheritance to Abraham?

[7:5]

Stephen said that God did not give any of the land as an inheritance to Abraham. Abraham did not possess the land that was promised to him. Instead, his descendants inherited the land promised to Abraham.

See: Canaan (Promised Land); Covenant with Abraham; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Where was the land where the descendants of Abraham went and became slaves?

[7:6]

The descendants of Abraham first went to the land of Egypt when Abraham's great-grandson, Joseph, was sold into slavery there (see: Genesis 39:1-4; 46:3-4). They were slaves in Egypt for 400 years.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Serve (Servant, Slave)

See Map: Egypt

Where was the place where God said Abraham's descendants will worship him?

[7:7]

God said that Abraham's descendants will worship him in Canaan.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Worship

See Map: Canaan

What was the covenant of circumcision that God made with Abraham?

[7:8]

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Covenant with Abraham

What was a Patriarch?

[7:8]

The Patriarchs are the 12 sons of Jacob. The twelve tribes of Israel are named for each of the sons of Jacob.

See: Tribes of Israel; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

7:9-19

Why were Joseph's brothers jealous of Joseph?

[7:9]

Scholars think Joseph's brothers were "jealous" (ζηλόω/g2206) of him because their father, Jacob, showed more favor to Joseph than he did to the other brothers (see: Genesis 37:3-4).

What did Stephen mean by saying "our fathers"?

[7:11]

When Stephen spoke the words, "our fathers" he was referring to the twelve sons of Jacob.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Why did Joseph have to reveal himself to his brothers?

[7:13]

Scholars think that because Joseph lived in Egypt for thirteen years after his brothers sold him, Joseph acted and spoke in the same way the Egyptians did. Because of this, his brothers did not know him immediately. Joseph also spoke to his brothers through a translator to cause them to think he was an Egyptian (see: Genesis 42:23).

See Map: Egypt

Where was Shechem?

[7:16]

See Map: Shechem

Who was buried in Shechem?

[7:16]

Scholars think that Stephen was speaking about the twelve sons of Jacob when he spoke of those buried in Shechem.

What was "the time of the promise"?

[7:17]

Stephen spoke about the time of promise. Some scholars think Stephen was speaking about two different parts of the same promise. That is, God promised Abraham that he would give the land of Canaan to his descendants. The second part of the promise was that Abraham's descendants would first be enslaved in Egypt for 400 years (see: Genesis 15:13).

See: Covenant with Abraham; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Serve (Servant, Slave)

See Map: Canaan

What is important about the new king not knowing Joseph?

[7:18]

While Joseph was in Egypt, he became one of their most recognized leaders under Pharaoh. That is, everyone in Egypt knew Joseph. However, sixty years after Joseph died, a new king began to rule in Egypt. The new king hated and was very afraid of the people of Israel.

See Map: Egypt; Israel

7:20-36

How was something "beautiful before God"?

[7:20]

Scholars disagree about how something was beautiful before God. Some scholars think it meant that God was very pleased with Moses. Other scholars think this was something the Israelites said when they wanted to say that someone was a very beautiful child.

How was Moses placed outside?

[7:21]

Moses' parents hid Moses for three months without Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, knowing. Some scholars think that after three months, Moses' parents could no longer keep him hidden, so they placed him in a basket that was then placed in the river. This basket floated. They think this was done so that the king's daughter would find him (see: Exodus 2:3-10) How had the daughter of Pharaoh adopted Moses and raised him as her own son?"

[7:21]

Pharaoh was the king of Egypt. Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses. Stephen meant that Pharaoh's daughter took Moses and cared for him, raising him up in her family as if Moses was her own son. She made him part of her own family. How did Moses avenge an Israelite by "striking the Egyptian"?

[7:24]

When Stephen said that Moses avenged an Israelite by "striking the Egyptian," he wanted people to know that Moses killed the Egyptian. The Old Testament does not say how Moses killed the Egyptian (see: Exodus 2:12).

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did the people ask, "Who made you a ruler and a judge over us"?

[7:27]

The people asked Moses, "who made you a ruler and a judge over us." These people wanted to say that Moses was not a ruler over them and could not judge them.

See: Judge (Judgment)

Where was the land of Midian?

[7:29]

See Map: Midian

Where is the wilderness of Mt. Sinai?

[7:30]

See Map: Mt. Sinai

See: Sinai

Who was the "angel" who appeared to Moses?

[7:30]

The "angel" who appeared in a flame of fire to Moses was the angel of God. That is, God showed himself to Moses in the form of a flame (see: Exodus 3:2).

See: Angel

Why did God say that he was the God of Moses' fathers--Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?

[7:32]

God revealed himself to Moses as the God of his fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Scholars think God wanted Moses to know that God kept his promises. That is, Moses experienced part of the covenant promise God made with Abraham.

See: Covenant; Covenant with Abraham; Reveal (Revelation)

Why did God command Moses to remove his sandals?

[7:33]

God commanded Moses to remove his sandals because God declared the place where he was standing was holy. When he did this, it was a sign of great respect and honor for God.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Sign

How did God "come down" to rescue His people from their sufferings in Egypt?

[7:34]

God came down in the form of an angel to speak to Moses and to send Moses to rescue the Israelites. God was going with Moses to be with him to tell him what to say and do.

See: Angel

Where did God send Moses to deliver God's people?

[7:35]

God sent Moses back to Egypt to deliver his people from the suffering and slavery.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); People of God

See Map: Egypt

Why did Stephen speak about the people of Israel rejecting Moses?

[7:35]

Stephen spoke about the people of Israel rejecting Moses. Scholars think Stephen spoke about Israel rejecting Moses to show that Israel rejected many of the prophets God sent to them. Ultimately, the people of Israel rejected Jesus, the one Moses declared would come after him (see: 1 Corinthians 7:37, 51-52).

See: Prophet

How did Moses lead Israel out of Egypt?

[7:36]

Moses did many miracles so the king of Egypt would let the Israelites leave Egypt. However, he did not let them leave.

Then God used Moses to punish Egypt and help the Israelites leave Egypt.

See: Exodus 7-14

See: Miracle; Exodus

Where was the Red Sea and the wilderness of Mt. Sinai?

[7:36]

See Map: Red Sea; Mt. Sinai

7:37-43

What did Stephen mean by saying, “God will raise up a prophet”?

[7:37]

The words, “God will raise up a prophet” meant that God was going to appoint and send a prophet to the people of Israel. Scholars think Moses was speaking about the Messiah. Just as Moses was the mediator between the people of Israel and God, so the Messiah is the greatest mediator who mediates between all the peoples of the world and God.

See: Prophet; Appoint; Messiah (Christ); Mediator

What were the “living words” Moses received to give to the Israelites?

[7:38]

Scholars think the “living words” about which Stephen spoke were the messages from God that told people how to live in a way that honored God. They think these “living words” were also seen in the laws given to Moses (see: Deuteronomy 30:15-20).

See: Law of Moses

What did Stephen mean when he said, “in their hearts they turned back to Egypt?”

[7:39]

Some scholars think that when Stephen spoke about the fathers who “in their hearts they turned back to Egypt,” he was speaking about the Israelites who wanted to return to Egypt where they had plenty to eat and drink. Fewer scholars think the fathers wanted to return to Egypt to reject God and worship the idols of Egypt.

See: Exodus 16:3; Numbers 11:4-6

See: Heart (Metaphor); Idolatry (Idol)

Where was Moses when the Israelites asked Aaron to make other gods to lead them?

[7:40]

Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the laws from God when the Israelites asked Aaron to make other gods. The Israelites were impatient, and wanted instead the kind of gods they worshipped in Egypt.

See: Exodus 32:1-6

See: Law of Moses; False gods; Idolatry (Idol)

See Map: Mount Sinai

Why did Aaron and the people make a calf as their idol?

[7:41]

Scholars think Aaron and the people made a calf as an idol because it was like the bull worship of the Egyptians.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

How did God give them up?

[7:42]

The words “God gave them up” meant that God let the Israelites go and follow their own desires. That is, God let the Israelites do the sins they wanted to do. Some scholars think that the Israelites sinned more and more, so God let them suffer the consequences of sinning.

See: Sin

What was the “book of the prophets”?

[7:42]

The “book of the prophets” referred to the last twelve books of the Old Testament. These books were also known as the books of the minor prophets. Stephen quoted from one of the minor prophets (see: Amos 5:25-27).

See: Prophet; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What was the “tabernacle of Molech” and the “star of the god Rephan?”

[7:43]

Scholars think the Israelites misused the tabernacle to worship false gods, Molech and the star of Rephan. Scholars think Molech represented the planet Venus, while the star of the god Rephan was the planet Saturn.

See: False gods; Tabernacle

What and where was Babylon?

[7:43] Babylon was in modern day Iraq and it represented a far away place from home and captivity as slaves. Stephen quoted the passage from Amos where God threatened to send the Israelites there as slaves because they worshipped idols.

See: Babylon; Serve (Servant, Slave); Idolatry (Idol)

See Map: Babylon

7:44-53

What was the tabernacle of the testimony?

[7:44]

See: Tabernacle; Testify (Testimony)

How did Israel gain possession of the promised land?

[7:45]

God gave the Israelites the land by driving out the people who were there. He did this by giving the Israelites good leaders like Joshua and by doing miracles (see: Joshua 6).

See: Canaan (Promised Land); Miracle

What did it mean that David “found favor in the sight of God”?

[7:46]

David “found favor in the sight of God.” That is he lived in a way that honored God.

What was a dwelling place for the God of Jacob?

[7:46]

David wanted to build a beautiful temple for God and for the Ark of the Covenant that represented God’s presence with the people. Jacob was the father of the 12 tribes of Israel.

See: Temple; Ark of the Covenant; Presence of God; Tribes of Israel

Who was Solomon?

[7:47]

Solomon was David’s son from his wife Bathsheba. He ruled Israel.

See: 1 Kings 6

What was the house that Solomon built?

[7:47]

Solomon built a house, which is the temple. This was a place where Israel could go to worship God. It was a house because it was where God’s presence was on the earth at that time.

See: Temple; Tribes of Israel; Presence of God

Did the Most High live in houses made with hands?

[7:48]

Stephen said the same thing that Isaiah wrote (see: Isaiah 66:1-2). He wanted to show that God is far greater than any house that can be made with human hands.

How did Stephen say the people of Israel acted?

[7:51] Stephen spoke about four different ways in which the people of Israel acted:

Stephen said the people were “stiff-necked.” This was a way of saying the people were very stubborn in doing wrong.

Scholars think the people did not want to obey God. Stephen said the Israelites were “uncircumcised in heart and ears.”

This meant that though the Israelites has the outward signs of belonging to God, they did not obey God, or even listen to him. That is, they acted like the people who did not believe in God. Stephen said to the Israelites “you always resist the Holy Spirit.” This meant the Israelites had a history of rejecting or fighting against the Holy Spirit (see Isaiah 63:10).

Stephen said to the Israelites “you act just as your fathers acted.” This meant the Israelites were doing the same thing as their ancestors who resisted the Holy Spirit by rejecting the messages of the prophets.

See: 1 Kings 19:14; Nehemiah 9:26; Luke 6:22-23; 11:49; 13:34

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Heart (Metaphor); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Prophet

Did the people of Israel persecute every prophet?

[7:52]

Stephen asked a rhetorical question. That is, he did not expect any answer from the Israelites. The Israelites persecuted most of the prophets. They repeatedly rejected Moses, even though they said that Moses was their greatest teacher.

See: Matthew 23:29-36

See: Persecute (Persecution); Prophet

[7:52]### Who was the righteous one?

The righteous one was the Messiah. People knew that Stephen was talking about Jesus.

See: Isaiah 53:11; Jeremiah 23:5; 33:15

See: Messiah (Christ); Righteous (Righteousness)

What was Stephen accusing these members of the Jewish council of doing?

[7:52, 7:53]

Stephen accused the members of the Jewish council of being traitors (προδοται /g4273) and killing Jesus because they helped the Romans to kill Jesus (see John 19:11).

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

What was the law the “angels had established”?

[7:53]

Scholars think that God used angels to give the Law of Moses to the Israelites. That is, God created the Law of Moses and then sent his angels to deliver the Law of Moses (see: Deuteronomy 33:2; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2).

See: Angel; Law of Moses

7:54-60

Who were the council members?

[7:54]

The Council members were the religious leaders of the people, that is, the Sanhedrin.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

What was meant by the words, “cut to the heart”?

[7:54]

When Luke wrote that the council members were “cut to the heart,” it was a metaphor. It meant that the council members were extremely angry.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Metaphor; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

What did Luke mean when he said the council “ground their teeth at Stephen”?

[7:54]

When Luke wrote the words “ground their teeth at Stephen” he meant the council members were so angry they closed their mouths tightly. Perhaps they did this to not do some bad because they were angry.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

How was Stephen “full of the Holy Spirit”?

[7:55]

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Why was Jesus “standing at the right hand of God”?

[7:56]

Scholars think that Jesus being at the “right hand of God” was to show that Jesus had all the power of God and God gave him permission to rule everything. Some scholars think Jesus was “standing” to welcome Stephen into heaven. Stephen also called Jesus the “Son of Man.” Those who heard Stephen understood that Stephen was claiming that Jesus was God.

See: Heaven; Son of Man; Jesus is God

See: Mark 14:62; Daniel 7:13-14

How were the heavens opened?

[7:56]

The words that the heavens were opened was a way to say that God revealed things about heaven. God did this to honor Jesus. At the baptism of Jesus, the heavens were also opened and the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus.

See Matthew 3:16; Ezekiel 1:1

See: Heaven; Reveal (Revelation); Baptize (Baptism); Holy Spirit

Why did the council members stone Stephen?

[7:58]

Scholars think the Jewish council stoned Stephen to death because they believed he blasphemed God. They think he did this when he said that Jesus is God. However, this is not blasphemy because Jesus is God.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Jesus is God

Why did the witnesses lay their clothing at Saul’s feet?

[7:58]

Scholars think the witnesses laid their clothing at Saul’s feet simply so that he would guard the clothes while they cast stones at Stephen. Some scholars do not know if Saul was leading this stoning. Other scholars think he was just watching Stephen being stoned.

Who was Saul?

[7:58]

Saul was the same one who had the name Paul (see: Acts 13:9) He became an apostle.

See: Apostle

What did Stephen mean when he cried out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”?

[7:59]

Scholars think that when Stephen cried out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” he was asking Jesus to welcome him into heaven, that he might be with Jesus. This prayer is very similar to that which Jesus himself prayed (see: Luke 23:6).

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Heaven

What did Stephen mean when he asked God to “not hold this sin against them”?

[7:59]

Scholars think Stephen prayed that Jesus would forgive the people who were stoning him. This prayer is very similar to the prayer Jesus prayed (see: Luke 23:34).

See: Sin

How did Stephen fall asleep?

[7:59]

When Luke wrote that Stephen "fell asleep," he wanted to write that Stephen died.

Acts 7:1

Connecting Statement:

The part of the story about Stephen, which began in Acts 6:8, continues. Stephen begins his response to the high priest and the council by talking about things that happened in Israel's history. Most of this history comes from Moses's writings.

Acts 7:2

General Information:

The word "our" includes both Steven, the Jewish council to whom he spoke, and the entire audience.

Brothers and fathers, listen to me

Stephen was being very respectful to the council in greeting them as extended family.

Acts 7:3

General Information:

The word "your" refers to Abraham and so is singular.

Acts 7:4

General Information:

In verse 4 the words "he," "his," and "him" refer to Abraham. In verse 5 the words "He" and "he" refer to God, but the word "him" refers to Abraham. Here the word "you" refers to the Jewish council and audience.

Acts 7:5

He gave none of it

"He did not give any of it"

enough to set a foot on

Possible meanings for this phrase are 1) enough ground to stand on or 2) enough ground to take a step. Alternate translation: "a very tiny piece of ground"

as a possession to him and to his descendants after him

"for Abraham to own and to give to his descendants"

Acts 7:6

God was speaking to him like this

It may be helpful to state that this occurred later than the statement in the previous verse. Alternate translation:

"Later God told Abraham"

four hundred years

"400 years"

Acts 7:7

I will judge the nation

"nation" refers to the people in it. Alternate translation: "I will judge the people of the nation"

the nation that they serve

"the nation that they will serve"

Acts 7:8

gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision

The Jews would have understood that this covenant required Abraham to circumcise the males of his family. Alternate translation: "made a covenant with Abraham to circumcise the males of his family"

so Abraham became the father of Isaac

The story transitions to Abraham's descendants.

Jacob the father

"Jacob became the father." Stephen shortened this.

Acts 7:9

the patriarchs

"the founders of our tribes" or "our ancestors." A patriarch is a man who rules a family.

sold him into Egypt

The Jews knew their ancestors sold Joseph to be a slave in Egypt. Alternate translation: "sold him as a slave in Egypt" was with him

This is an idiom for helping someone. Alternate translation: "helped him"

Acts 7:10

over Egypt

This refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "over all the people of Egypt"

all his household

This refers to all his possessions. Alternate translation: "everything he owned"

Acts 7:11

Now a famine and great tribulation came

"a famine came." The ground stopped producing food and this caused a terrible suffering.

our fathers

This refers Jacob and his sons, who were the ancestors of the Jewish people.

Acts 7:12

grain

Grain was the most common food at that time.

our fathers

Here this phrase refers to Joseph's older brothers, who were Jacob's sons.

Acts 7:13

On their second trip

"On their next trip"

made himself known

Joseph revealed to his brothers his identity as their brother.

Joseph's family became known to Pharaoh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Pharaoh learned that they were Joseph's family"

Acts 7:14

sent his brothers back

"sent his brothers back to Canaan" or "sent his brothers back home"

Acts 7:15

he died

Make sure it does not sound as though he died as soon as he arrived in Egypt. Alternate translation: "eventually Jacob died"

he and our fathers

"Jacob and his sons, who became our ancestors"

Acts 7:16

They were carried over ... and laid

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Jacob's descendants carried Jacob's body and his son's

bodies over ... and buried them"

for a price in silver

"with money"

Acts 7:17

As the time of the promise ... the people grew and multiplied

In some languages it may be helpful to say that the people increased in number before saying that the time of the promise arrived.

time of the promise approached

It was close to the time that God would fulfill his promise to Abraham.

Acts 7:18

there arose another king

"another king began to rule"

over Egypt

"Egypt" refers to the people of Egypt. Alternate translation: "over the people of Egypt"

who did not know about Joseph

"Joseph" refers to the reputation of Joseph. Alternate translation: "who did not know that Joseph had helped Egypt"

Acts 7:19

General Information:

The word "our" includes Stephen and his audience.

Acts 7:20

At that time Moses was born

This introduces Moses into the story.

very beautiful before God

This phrase is an idiom that means Moses was very beautiful.

was nourished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his parents nourished him" or "his parents cared for him"

Acts 7:21

When he was placed outside

Moses was "placed outside" because of Pharaoh's command. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When his parents placed him outside" or "When they abandoned him"

Pharaoh's daughter ... raised him as her own son

She did for him every good thing a mother would do for her own son. Use your language's normal word for what a mother does to make sure her son becomes a healthy adult. adopted him

If your language has a word for an informal procedure, not a formal legal procedure, in which one family takes a child in and raises him, you may want to use that here. Pharaoh's daughter did do for Moses what any mother would do for her child, but this involved no formal legal procedure.

as her own son

"as if he were her own son"

Acts 7:22

Moses was educated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The Egyptians educated Moses"

all the wisdom of the Egyptians

This is an exaggeration to emphasize that he was trained in the best schools in Egypt.

mighty in his words and works

"effective in his speech and actions" or "influential in what he said and did"

Acts 7:23

it came into his heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for "mind." The phrase "it came into his heart" is an idiom that means to decide something. Alternate translation: "it came into his mind" or "he decided"

visit his brothers, the descendants of Israel

This refers to his people, and not just to his family.

Alternate translation: "see how his own people, the children of Israel, were doing"

Acts 7:24

Seeing an Israelite being mistreated ... the Egyptian

This can be stated in active form by rearranging the order.

Alternate translation: "Seeing an Egyptian mistreating an Israelite, Moses defended and avenged the Israelite by striking the Egyptian who was oppressing him"

striking the Egyptian

Moses hit the Egyptian so hard that he died.

Acts 7:25

he thought

"he imagined"

by his hand, was giving them salvation

Here "hand" refers to the actions of Moses. Alternate translation: "was giving them salvation through what he, Moses, was doing"

was giving them salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated using the verb "save." Alternate translation: "was saving them" or "was rescuing them"

Acts 7:26

when they were fighting

Some translations make it clear that two men were fighting.

Alternate translation: "when two men of Israel were fighting"

make peace between them

"make them stop fighting"

Men, you are brothers

Moses was addressing the Israelites who were fighting.

why are you wronging one another?

Moses asked this question to encourage them to stop fighting. Alternate translation: "you should not do wrong to each other!"

Acts 7:27

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the Israelites but does not include Moses.

Who appointed you a ruler and a judge over us?

The man used this question to rebuke Moses. Alternate translation: "No one appointed you ruler or judge over us." or "You have no authority over us!"

Acts 7:28

Would you like to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?

The man used this question to warn Moses that he and probably others knew Moses had killed the Egyptian.

Acts 7:29

General Information:

Stephen's audience already knew that Moses had married a

Midianite woman when he fled Egypt.

after hearing this

The implied information is that Moses understood that the Israelites knew that he had killed an Egyptian the day before (Acts 7:28).

Acts 7:30

When forty years were past

"After 40 years passed." This was the amount of time Moses had been in Midian. Alternate translation: "Forty years after Moses fled from Egypt"

an angel appeared

Stephen's audience knew that God spoke through the angel. Acts 7:31

he marveled at the sight

Moses was surprised that the bush was not burning up in the fire. This was previously known by Stephen's audience. Alternate translation: "because the bush was not burning up"

as he approached to look at it

This may mean Moses initially drew close to the bush to investigate.

Acts 7:32

I am the God of your fathers

"I am the God whom your ancestors worshiped"

Moses trembled and did not dare to look

This may mean Moses drew back in fear when he heard the voice.

Moses trembled

Moses shook from fear. This can be made clear. Alternate translation: "Moses trembled with fear"

Acts 7:33

Take off the sandals

God told Moses this so he would honor God.

for the place where you are standing is holy ground

The implied information is that where God is present, the immediate area around God is considered holy or is made holy by God.

Acts 7:34

certainly seen

"seen for sure." The word "certainly" adds emphasis to "seen."

the oppression of my people

The abstract noun "oppression" can be translated using the verb "oppress." Alternate translation: "the way the Egyptians are oppressing my people"

my people

The word "my" emphasizes that these people belonged to God. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"

I have come down to rescue them

"will personally cause their release"

now come

"get ready." God uses an order here.

Acts 7:35

General Information:

Verses 35-38 contain a series of connected phrases referring to Moses. Each phrase begins with statements such as "This Moses" or "This same Moses" or "This is the man" or "It is the same Moses." If possible, use similar statements to

emphasize Moses. After the Israelites left Egypt, they spent 40 years wandering around the wilderness before God led them into the land he had promised them.

This Moses whom they rejected

This refers back to the events recorded in Acts 7:27-28.

deliverer

"rescuer"

by the hand of the angel ... bush

The hand is a metonym for the action performed by the person. In this case, the angel had commanded Moses to return to Egypt. Stephen speaks as if the angel had a physical hand. You may need to make explicit what action the angel did. Alternate translation: "by the action of the angel" or "by having the angel ... bush command him to return to Egypt"

Acts 7:36

during forty years

Stephen's audience knew about the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "during the 40 years that the Israelite people lived in the wilderness"

Acts 7:37

raise up a prophet

"cause a man to be a prophet"

from among your brothers

"from among your own people"

Acts 7:38

This is the man who was in the assembly

"This is the man Moses who was among the Israelites"

This is the man

The phrase "This is the man" throughout this passage refers to Moses.

who received living words to give to us

God was the one who gave those words. Alternate

translation: "to whom God spoke living words to give to us"

living words

Possible meanings are 1) "a message that endures" or 2)

"words that give life."

Acts 7:39

pushed him away from themselves

This metaphor emphasizes their rejection of Moses.

Alternate translation: "they rejected him as their leader"

in their hearts they turned back

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's thoughts. To do something in the heart means to desire to do something.

Alternate translation: "they desired to turn back"

Acts 7:40

General Information:

The quotation in this verse is from the writings of Moses.

At that time

"When they decided to return to Egypt"

Acts 7:41

they made a calf

Stephen's audience knew the calf they made was a statue.

Alternate translation: "they made a statue that looked like a calf"

a calf ... the idol ... the work of their hands

These phrases all refer to the same statue of the calf.

Acts 7:42

General Information:

Stephen's quotation here is from the prophet Amos.

God turned

"God turned away." This action expresses that God was not pleased with the people and no longer helped them.

Alternate translation: "God stopped correcting them"

gave them up

"abandoned them"

the stars in the sky

Possible meanings for the original phrase are 1) the stars only or 2) the sun, moon, and stars.

the book of the prophets

This was apparently a collection of the writings of several of the Old Testament prophets into one scroll. It would also have included the writings of Amos.

Did you bring me offerings and sacrifices ... Israel?

God asked this question to show Israel they did not worship him with their sacrifices. Alternate translation: "You did not honor me when brought offerings and sacrifices ... Israel."

house of Israel

This refers to the whole nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "all you Israelites"

Acts 7:43

General Information:

The quotation from the prophet Amos continues here.

Connecting Statement:

Stephen continues his response to the high priest and the council which he began in Acts 7:2.

You accepted

It is implied that they took these idols with them as they traveled in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "you carried with you from place to place"

tabernacle of Molech

the tent that housed the false god Molech

the star of the god Rephan

the star that is identified with the false god Rephan

the images that you made

They made statues or images of the gods Molech and Rephan in order to worship them.

I will carry you away beyond Babylon

"I will remove you to places even farther than Babylon."

This would be God's act of judgment.

Acts 7:44

the tabernacle of the testimony

The tent that housed the ark (a box) with the 10 commandments carved in stone inside it

Acts 7:45

our fathers, under Joshua, received the tabernacle and brought it with them

The phrase "under Joshua" means that their ancestors did these things in obedience to Joshua's direction. Alternate translation: "our fathers, in accordance with Joshua's instructions, received the tabernacle and brought it with them"

God took the land from the nations and drove them out before the face of our fathers

This sentence tells why the ancestors were able to take possession of the land. Alternate translation: "God forced the nations to leave the land before the face of our fathers"

God ... drove them out before the face of our fathers

Here "the face of our fathers" refers to the presence of their ancestors. Possible meanings are 1) "As our ancestors watched, God ... drove them out" or 2) "When our ancestors came, God ... drove them out"

the nations

This refers to the people who lived in the land before Israel. Alternate translation: "the people who previously lived here"

drove them out

"forced them to leave the land"

Acts 7:46

he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob

Here "house" is probably a metonym for the ark of the covenant. David wanted to build a place for the ark, which represented God's presence, so people could go there to worship God. Alternate translation: "he might build a place where people could worship the God of Jacob"

the house of Jacob

Many versions read, "the God of Jacob."

Acts 7:47

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 7:48

made with hands

The hand is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "made by people"

Acts 7:49

General Information:

In verses 49 and 50, Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah. In the quotation, God is speaking about himself.

Heaven is my throne ... the earth is the footstool for my feet

The prophet is comparing the greatness of God's presence to how impossible it is for man to build a place for God to rest on earth since the whole earth is nothing but a place for God to rest his feet.

What kind of house can you build for me?

God asks this question to show how useless man's efforts are to take care of God. Alternate translation: "You can not build a house adequate enough for me!"

what is the place for my rest?

God asks this question to show man that he cannot provide God any rest. Alternate translation: "There is no place of rest good enough for me!"

Acts 7:50

General Information:

In verses 49 and 50, Stephen quotes from the prophet Isaiah. In the quotation, God is speaking about himself.

Did my hand not make all these things?

God asks this question to show that man did not create anything. Alternate translation: "My hand made all these things!"

Acts 7:51

Connecting Statement:

With a sharp rebuke, Stephen finishes his response to the high priest and the council, which he began in Acts 7:2.

You stiff-necked people

Stephen shifts from identifying with the Jewish leaders to rebuking them.

uncircumcised in heart and ears

The Jews regarded uncircumcised people as disobedient to God. Stephen uses "hearts and ears" to represent to the Jewish leaders who acted the way Gentiles act when they do not obey or listen to God. Alternate translation: "you refuse to obey and hear"

Acts 7:52

Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute?

Stephen asked this question to show them that they learned nothing from the errors of their forefathers. Alternate translation: "Your forefathers persecuted every prophet!"

Righteous One

This refers to the Christ, the Messiah.

you have now become the betrayers and murderers of him also

"you have also betrayed and murdered him"

murderers of him

"murderers of the Righteous One" or "murderers of the Christ"

Acts 7:53

the law that angels had ordained

"the laws that God caused angels to give to our ancestors"

Acts 7:54

Connecting Statement:

The council reacts to Stephen's words.

Now when the council members heard these things

This is the turning point; the sermon ends and the council members react.

they were furious in their hearts

This means that they were extremely angry.

ground their teeth at Stephen

This action expressed their strong anger at Stephen or hatred of Stephen. Alternate translation: "they became so angry that they ground their teeth together" or "moved their teeth back and forth as they looked at Stephen"

Acts 7:55

looked up intently into heaven

"stared up into heaven." It appears that only Stephen saw this vision and not anyone else in the crowd.

saw the glory of God

People normally experienced the glory of God as a bright light. Alternate translation: "saw a bright light from God"

and he saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God

To stand at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of

receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "and he saw Jesus standing in the place of honor and authority beside God"

Acts 7:56

Son of Man

Stephen refers to Jesus by the title "Son of Man."

Acts 7:57

covered their ears

"put their hands on their ears." They did this to show that they did not want to hear any more of what Stephen said.

with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 7:58

They forced him out of the city

"They seized Stephen and forcefully took him out of the city"

outer clothing

These are cloaks or robes they would wear outside to stay warm, similar in function to a jacket or coat.

at the feet

"in front of." They were placed there so Saul could watch them.

a young man

Saul was probably around 30 years old at the time.

Acts 7:59

receive my spirit

"take my spirit." It may be helpful to add "please" to show that this was a request. Alternate translation: "please receive my spirit"

Acts 7:60

Connecting Statement:

This ends the story of Stephen.

He knelt down

This is an act of submission to God.

do not hold this sin against them

This can be stated in a positive way. Alternate translation: "forgive them for this sin"

fell asleep

Here to fall asleep is a euphemism for dying. Alternate translation: "died"

Chapter 8

Acts 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 8:32-33.

The first sentence of verse 1 ends the description of the events in chapter 7. Luke begins a new part of his history with the words "So there began."

Special concepts in this chapter

Receiving the Holy Spirit

In this chapter for the first time Luke speaks of people receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15-19). The Holy Spirit had already enabled the believers to speak in tongues, to heal the sick, and to live as a community, and he had filled Stephen. But when the Jews started putting believers in prison, those believers who could leave Jerusalem did leave, and as they went, they told people about Jesus. When the people who heard about Jesus received the Holy Spirit, the church leaders knew that those people had truly become believers.

Proclaimed

This chapter more than any other in the Book of Acts speaks of the believers proclaiming the word, proclaiming the good news, and proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ. The word "proclaim" translates a Greek word that means to tell good news about something.

Links:

[Acts 8:1 Notes](#)

Acts 8

8:1-3

How was Saul "in agreement" with Stephen's death?

[8:1]

Saul thought that Stephen should die. When the angry people threw stones at Stephen, Saul guarded their clothes they took off themselves (see: Acts 7:58). Scholars think Saul later changed his name to Paul after he became a Christian.

See Acts 22:20

What was a "great persecution"?

[8:1]

A "strong and violent persecution" began when the angry people killed Stephen. The people from a certain synagogue organized attacks in Jerusalem. They put many Christians in prison. Saul went from house to house and put Christians in prison (see: Acts 8:3). The Christians who were not in prison quickly left Jerusalem and went to Samaria and other places in Judea to escape persecution. Only the apostles stayed in Jerusalem at that time.

Some scholars think those who left Jerusalem were the Greek-speaking Jewish Christians and not the Hebrew and Aramaic speaking Jewish Christians. The Hebrew and Aramaic speaking Jewish Christians were more loyal to Jerusalem. Other scholars think the persecution was stronger against the Greek-speaking Jewish Christians. Thus, the apostles, who were Hebrew and Aramaic speaking Jewish Christians, were able to stay in Jerusalem.

See: 1 Thessalonians 2:14

See: Persecute (Persecution); Synagogue; Apostle

See Map: Jerusalem; Samaria; Judea

Who were the "devout men" who buried Stephen?

[8:2]

The "devout men" were men who feared God and lived in a way that honored God. These men took Stephen's body to bury it in the way the Law of Moses required. Scholars think these men believed in Jesus.

See: Fear of God; Law of Moses

8:4-8

What was "preaching the word"?

[8:4]

See: Galatians 2:19-20

See: Preach (Preacher); Word of God; Gospel

What was "proclaimed to them the Christ"?

[8:5]

Philip told those in Samaria the important story about the messiah. He told them that Jesus was the messiah of the Jewish and Samaritan people, and that he lived a perfect life. Jesus did many miracles and taught them about God. Jesus suffered, died, and became alive again on the third day.

See: Messiah (Christ); Miracle; Atonement (Atonement); Resurrect (Resurrection)

See Map: Samaria

Who was Philip?

[8:5]

Philip was one of the seven brothers the Christians chose to help widows (see: Acts 6:5).

How did people give "close attention"?

[8:6]

The crowds listened together with complete attention. All of the people watched and listened to what Philip said because he did miracles and he spoke strongly.

See: Miracle

What was a sign?

[8:6]

A sign was a miracle that God did and people were able to see it (see: Acts 8:7).

See: Miracle; Sign

What is an unclean spirit?

[8:7]

An unclean spirit is an evil spirit. It is also called a demon. Unclean spirits and demons obey Satan.

See: Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Demon; Satan (The Devil)

What was a paralyzed person? A lame person?

[8:7]

A paralyzed person was someone who was partially or completely unable to move.

A lame person was someone who was injured or had an illness and were not able to walk well or they were not able to walk at all.

8:9-13

Why did the people think God gave power to the man who did sorcery?

[8:9]

The people believed God gave power to the man who did sorcery because he did amazing things for a long time and he claimed to be someone great (see: Acts 8:9,11).

See: Sorcery

What was the gospel of the kingdom of God?

[8:12]

See: Gospel; Kingdom of God

What did the people do after they believed the good news about Jesus and the kingdom of God?

[8:12]

The people, both men and women, were baptized immediately after they believed the good news about Jesus and the kingdom of God.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Gospel; Kingdom of God

Why did Simon, who had great power of God, believe and be baptized?

[8:13]

Simon believed and was baptized because he was surprised when he saw the signs and mighty works Philip did with God's power. That is, the Samaritans thought Simon had great power of God, but Simon himself was amazed when he saw God's power through Philip. Simon knew about power from God and he knew something more powerful than his power worked through Philip. His trust in miracles and power was not enough for him to believe for very long. He soon became more interested in power than in believing (see: Acts 8:18-19). Jesus knew Simon was thinking in the wrong way (see: John 2:23-24).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Sign

8:14-25

What did the apostles in Jerusalem think about the Samaritans believing in Jesus, the Messiah?

[8:14]

The apostles in Jerusalem were glad the Samaritans believed in Jesus and they were not surprised. They did, however, feel it was their duty to inspect the new work to make sure it was true and good (see: Acts 11:22). Before, John went to Samaria because before that he wanted Jesus to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans for rejecting Jesus since Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem (see: Luke 9:52-55). Now, John went to see for himself if the Samaritans believed in Jesus. Then, John told other Samaritan villages about Jesus and the gospel (see: Acts 8:25).

See: Apostle; Samaria; Fire; Heaven; Gospel

See Map: Jerusalem

How did Samaria receive the "word" of God?

[8:14]

Samaria received the "word" (λόγος/g3056) of God when they believed Jesus is the messiah, the Son of God, and the power of salvation (see: Romans 1:2-5). It was a way to say they believed the things Philip said about Jesus, who is the "Word" of God (see: John 1:1).

See: Word of God; Messiah (Christ); Son of God; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did the apostles send Peter and John to Samaria?

[8:14]

Scholars give several reasons why the apostles sent Peter and John to Samaria.

The Jewish Christians in Jerusalem needed evidence that God accepted the Samaritans. The Jews in general did not accept the Samaritans because the Samaritans were a mixed race of Jews who married Gentiles (see: 2 Kings 17:26). So the apostles sent Peter and John to see the new work of God in Samaria.

It was necessary for the apostles from Jerusalem to welcome the Samaritan Christians. Then the Christians in Jerusalem would be able to fully include Samaritan Christians into the Christian community. The Christian community was only Jewish people until that time.

It was not necessary for the apostles from the Jerusalem church to welcome the Samaritan Christians. Luke did not write it was necessary. Later, Paul wrote that other Christians who were not apostles baptized people (see: 1 Corinthians

1:14-17).

God wanted to use the apostles when the first Gentiles received the Holy Spirit.

See: Apostle; Samaria; Gentile; Baptize (Baptism); Holy Spirit

See Map: Samaria

Why did Luke write “to come down” to Samaria?

[8:15]

Samaria was lower in elevation from Jerusalem. Jerusalem is high in elevation. So they came down to Samaria from Jerusalem.

See: Samaria

What happened when the apostles Peter and John prayed and laid hands on the Samaritans for them to receive the Holy Spirit?

[8:15, 8:16, 8:17]

Luke did not write what happened when the apostles Peter and John prayed and laid hands on the Samaritans for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Some scholars think they spoke in tongues because that happened at other times when the Holy Spirit filled people in Acts (see: Acts 2:4; 10:44-46; 19:6). Other scholars think there were other gifts of the Spirit or signs because Luke did not write the Samaritans spoke in tongues.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Pray (Prayer; Laying on of Hands); Samaria; Speaking in Tongues; Sign

Why did Simon want to give the apostles money to give the Holy Spirit to people?

[8:18]

Simon wanted to do the same things an apostle did. Then he will have the power to give people the Holy Spirit when he laid his hands on people. He liked having power and this was another way for him to have power over people and bring glory to himself.

See: Apostle; Holy Spirit; Laying on of Hands ; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Glory (Glorify)

Why did Peter rebuke Simon for wanting to buy the power of God from the apostles?

[8:20, 8:21]

Peter rebuked Simon for wanting to buy the free gift of God with money. The Holy Spirit was not for sale. People did not need money to have the gifts of God (see: Acts 8:20). Instead, a person repented and believed in Jesus. God's gift of the Holy Spirit to live in everyone was a free gift for all who believed in him.

See: Acts 3:6

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Repent (Repentance); Redeem (Redemption)

What did Peter wish will perish?

[8:20]

Peter wanted Simon to not have money. Peter did not wish for Simon to die.

What was the “part or allotted portion” for which Simon did not have the right heart?

[8:21]

Peter and John knew Simon did not have the right heart. That is, he did not think the right things and they did not think Simon should be a leader.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

When was a person's heart not right with God?

[8:21]

A person's heart was not right with God when a person did not live in a way that honors God or does not want to live in a way that honors God.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

Why did Peter say God “might perhaps forgive”?

[8:22]

Peter did not question if God was able to forgive Simon. He said these words because he did not know if God will forgive Simon. His sin of offering money for the gift of God was a serious sin. God will not allow man to control God (see: 2 Samuel 6:1-7).

See: Joshua 7:1

How did a person repent?

[8:22]

See: Repent (Repentance)

How was Simon “in the poison of bitterness and in the bonds of unrighteousness”?

[8:23]

Some scholars think Simon was still controlled by his old self. That is he sinfully wanted power and glory. Simon was a Christian. He believed the message from Philip and he was baptized, but he still wanted to do evil (see: Romans 7:8,19). Other scholars think Simon was not a Christian. He was not part of the kingdom of God (see: John 8:31,44-47). Simon

really wanted to have power over others by having the permission to give the Holy Spirit to others. If he repented and asked God's forgiveness, then God would forgive and heal him. Then, God would give him the Holy Spirit to help him to stop sinning and wanting to sin

See: Deuteronomy 29:17-18

See: Faith (Believe in); Baptize (Baptism); Old and New Self; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Repent (Repentance); Sin

How did Simon respond to Peter?

[8:24]

Simon did not respond according to what Peter said. Peter told Simon to pray and repent. Instead Simon asked Peter to pray for him.

See: Pray (Prayer; Repent (Repentance)

8:26-31

What is an angel?

[8:26]

See: Angel

Where was Gaza?

[8:26]

See Map: Gaza

Where was Ethiopia?

[8:27]

Ethiopia, or Cush, was where the ancient kingdom of Nubia was located. It was in the southern part of Egypt in what today includes part of Sudan.

See Map: Ethiopia; Sudan; Cush.

What was a eunuch?

[8:27]

A eunuch was a man whose testicles were cut off. This was usually done for a certain purpose. Sometimes this was done so the man could guard the women in a royal palace. This eunuch was the treasurer for the queen of the Ethiopians. He had great power. In Israel, a eunuch was not allowed in the military and could not worship God with other people. God did not want the people of Israel to make their boys eunuchs (see: Genesis 1:27-28).

See: Worship

Why did the eunuch go to Jerusalem to worship?

[8:27]

The eunuch went to Jerusalem to worship God because he feared the God of Israel. However, because this man was an eunuch and a gentile, he was not allowed to go into the temple area. He was reading the book of Isaiah. Some scholars say he wanted to see the memorial for eunuchs inside the temple (see Isaiah 56:3-5). Other scholars say the prophecy of Isaiah became complete when this eunuch believed in Jesus and was baptized (see: Isaiah 56:3-7). There was also another Ethiopian eunuch who went to Jerusalem (see Jeremiah 38:7-13).

See: Leviticus 23

See: Worship; Fear of God; Gentile; Temple; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Baptize (Baptism)

What was a chariot?

[8:28]

A chariot was a two-wheel vehicle pulled by horses or a horse. It was often used for war or racing. Certain leaders travelled in chariots to go from one place to another place. Since this eunuch was the treasurer of the queen of the Ethiopians, this was a larger chariot.

See: Chariot

How was the man reading?

[8:28]

The man was reading aloud from the book of Isaiah and Philip heard him reading. In ancient times, people did not often read silently.

See: Isaiah 53:7-8

Why did the man not understand the things Isaiah wrote about?

[8:30, 8:31]

The man did not understand the things Isaiah wrote about because he did not have anyone to explain this prophecy. He asked Philip to sit beside him and tell him about what Isaiah wrote (see: Isaiah 53).

Whom did the prophet Isaiah write about in Isaiah 53?

[8:32, 8:33, 8:34, 8:35]

The prophet Isaiah wrote about Jesus in Isaiah 53. It was a prophecy about a servant of God who was persecuted. Isaiah wrote about Jesus. The servant of God suffered and was rejected for other people. That is, God forgave others because

Jesus died. However, the suffering servant prophesied about Jesus' resurrection when Isaiah spoke about Jesus seeing the light of life again (see: Isaiah 53:11).

See: Atonement (Atonement); Prophecy (Prophecy); Persecute (Persecution); Resurrect (Resurrection)

What things did the eunuch read from Isaiah 53 about the death of Jesus?

[8:32, 8:33, 8:34, 8:35]

The eunuch read several things read from Isaiah 53 about the death of Jesus.

Jesus was led like sheep to the slaughter. This is a metaphor. Jesus died in the same way sheep died. Sheep follow and go where they are led, even if they will die. Jesus died to obey God and was willing to die to obey God.

Jesus was silent like a lamb before his shearer. This is a metaphor. Jesus did not argue with God to try to keep living. He did not try to stop people from killing him. He did not open his mouth (see: Matthew 26:62, 63).

In his humiliation, justice was taken away from Jesus. That is, Jesus was humble and did not speak and try to defend himself. People said he was guilty and punished him even though he was innocent.

No can give a full account of all of Jesus' descendants. That is, Jesus has more children than anyone can count. Jesus did not have any children and never had sex. However, all Christians are part of Jesus' family and are children of God.

See: Prophet; Prophecy (Prophecy); Crucify (Crucifixion); Metaphor; Lamb of God; Punish (Punishment); Family of God; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Why did the eunuch ask to be baptized?

[8:36]

The eunuch asked to be baptized because Philip explained the prophet Isaiah's words about Jesus. That is, if someone believed in Jesus, then they should be baptized. The eunuch believed in Jesus so he asked to be baptized. There was much more about "the gospel about Jesus" Philip told the eunuch that Luke did not write. This was why Luke wrote, "Beginning with this Scripture." Philip began with the Scripture from Isaiah that the eunuch was reading, but Philip explained more than just those few verses.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Prophet

Did Luke write verse 37?

[8:37]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have verse 37. More and older copies of the Greek New Testament do not have verse 37. Scholars do not think Luke wrote the words in verse 37.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible)

How did the Spirit of the Lord take Phillip away?

[8:39]

The Spirit of the Lord took Philip away miraculously. That is, Philip vanished quickly and then he appeared somewhere else. The Spirit of the Lord is also called the Holy Spirit.

See: 1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16; Ezekiel 3:14; 8:3

See: Holy Spirit; Lord

Why did the eunuch go on his way with rejoicing?

[8:39]

The eunuch experienced the same joy the Samaritans did when they believed in Jesus (see: Acts 8:8). The eunuch continued on the road home "rejoicing" (χαίρω/G5463) or "being glad." It did not matter to him that God took away Philip.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Samaria

Where were Azotus and Caesarea?

[8:40]

Azotus was the Greek name of the city of Ashdod in the Old Testament.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

See Map: Azotus

Acts 8:1

General Information:

It may be helpful to your audience to move these parts of the story about Stephen together by using a verse bridge as the UDB does.

Connecting Statement:

The story shifts from Stephen to Saul in these verses.

So there began ... except the apostles

This part of verse 1 is background information about the persecution that began after Stephen's death. This explains why Saul was persecuting the believers in verse 3.

that day

This refers to the day that Stephen died (Acts 7:59-60). the believers were all scattered

The word "all" is a generalization to express that a large number of the believers left Jerusalem because of the persecution.

except the apostles

This statement implies that the apostles remained in Jerusalem even though they also experienced this great persecution.

Acts 8:2

Devout men

"God-fearing men" or "Men who feared God"

made great lamentation over him
"greatly mourned his death"

Acts 8:3

house after house

"houses one by one"

drag off both men and women

"took away both men and women by force." Saul forcefully took Jewish believers out of their homes and put them into prison.

men and women

This refers to men and women who believed in Jesus.

Acts 8:4

who had been scattered

The cause for the scattering, the persecution, was stated previously. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who had fled the great persecution"

the word

This is a metonym for "the message." You may need to make explicit that the message was about Jesus. Alternate translation: "the message about Jesus"

Acts 8:5

Connecting Statement:

This begins the story of Philip, whom the people had chosen as a deacon.

went down to the city of Samaria

The phrase "went down" is used here because Samaria is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

the city of Samaria

Possible meanings are 1) Luke expected the readers to know which city he was writing about. Alternate translation: "the main city in Samaria" or 2) Luke did not expect his readers to know which city he was writing about. Alternate translation: "a city in Samaria"

proclaimed to them the Christ

The title "Christ" refers to Jesus, the Messiah. Alternate translation: "told them about Jesus Christ" or "told them about Jesus the Messiah"

Acts 8:6

Crowds of people

"Many people in the city of Samaria." The location was specified in Acts 8:5.

were giving close attention

The reason people paid attention was because of all the healing Philip did.

with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Acts 8:7

who were possessed

"who had them" or "who were controlled by them"

Acts 8:8

So there was much joy in that city

The phrase "that city" refers to the people who were rejoicing. Alternate translation: "So the people of the city were rejoicing"

Acts 8:9

General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse gives

the beginning of the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

But there was a certain man ... named Simon

This is a way of introducing a new person into the story. Your language may use different wording to introduce a new person into the story.

the city

"the city in Samaria" (Acts 8:5)

Acts 8:10

General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse continues to give the beginning of the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

All the Samaritans

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Many of the Samaritans" or "The Samaritans in the city"

from the least to the greatest

These two phrases refer to everyone from one extreme to the other. Alternate translation: "no matter how important they were"

This man is that power of God which is called Great

People were saying that Simon was the divine power known as "The Great Power."

that power of God which is called Great

Possible meanings are 1) the powerful representative of God or 2) God or 3) the most powerful man or 4) an angel. Since the term is unclear, it may be best to simply translate it as "the Great power of God."

Acts 8:11

General Information:

Simon is introduced to the story of Philip. This verse ends the background information about Simon and who he was among the Samaritans.

Acts 8:12

Connecting Statement:

Verses 12 and 13 give more information about Simon and some of the Samaritans coming to believe in Jesus.

they were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip baptized them" or "Philip baptized the new believers"

Acts 8:13

Connecting Statement:

Verses 12 and 13 give more information about Simon and some of the Samaritans coming to believe in Jesus.

Simon himself believed

The word "himself" is here used to emphasize that Simon believed. Alternate translation: "Simon was also one of those who believed"

he was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Philip baptized Simon"

Acts 8:14

Connecting Statement:

Luke continues the news of what was happening in Samaria.

Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard

This marks the beginning of a new part of the story of the

Samaritans.

Samaria

This refers to the many people who had become believers throughout the district of Samaria.

had received

"had believed" or "had accepted"

Acts 8:15

When they had come down

"when Peter and John had come down"

come down

This phrase is used here because Samaria is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

they prayed for them

"Peter and John prayed for the Samaritan believers"

that they might receive the Holy Spirit

"that the Samaritan believers might receive the Holy Spirit"

Acts 8:16

they had only been baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Philip had only baptized the Samaritan believers"

they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" represents authority, and being baptized into his name represents being baptized in order to be under his authority. Alternate translation: "they had only been baptized to become disciples of the Lord Jesus"

Acts 8:17

Peter and John placed their hands on them

The word "them" refers to the Samaritan people who believed Stephen's message of the gospel.

placed their hands on them

This symbolic action shows that Peter and John wanted God to give the Holy Spirit to the believers.

Acts 8:18

the Holy Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the apostles gave the Holy Spirit by laying their hands on people"

Acts 8:19

that whoever I place my hands on might receive the Holy Spirit

"that I can give the Holy Spirit to anyone on whom I place my hands"

Acts 8:20

General Information:

Here the words him, your, you, and yours all refer to Simon.

May your silver perish along with you

"May you and your money be destroyed"

the gift of God

Here this refers to the ability of a person to give the Holy Spirit by laying his hands on someone.

Acts 8:21

You have no part or allotted portion in this matter

The words "part" and "allotted portion" mean the same thing and are used for emphasis. Alternate translation:

"You may not participate in this work"

your heart is not right

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or motives. Alternate translation: "you are not right in your heart" or "the motives of your mind are not right"

Acts 8:22

this wickedness

"these evil thoughts"

he might perhaps forgive

"he may be willing to forgive"

for the intention of your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts.

Alternate translation: "for what you intended to do" or "for what you were thinking of doing"

Acts 8:23

in the poison of bitterness

Here "in the poison of bitterness" is a metaphor for being very envious. It speaks of envy as if it tastes bitter and poisons the person who is envious. Alternate translation: "very envious"

in the bonds of unrighteousness

The phrase "bonds of unrighteousness" is spoken as if unrighteousness could make Simon a prisoner. It is a metaphor that means Simon is not able to stop himself from sinning. Alternate translation: "because you continue sinning you are like a prisoner" or "sin has made you its prisoner"

Acts 8:24

General Information:

Here the word "you" refers to Peter and John.

so that nothing you have said may happen to me

This refers to Peter's rebuke about Simon's silver perishing along with him.

nothing you have said may happen to me

This can be stated another way. Alternate translation: "the things you have said may not happen to me"

Acts 8:25

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the part of the story about Simon and the Samaritans.

testified

Peter and John told what they personally knew about Jesus to the Samaritans.

spoken the word of the Lord

Here "word" is a metonym for "message." Peter and John explained the message about Jesus to the Samaritans.

to many villages of the Samaritans

Here "villages" refers to the people in them. Alternate translation: "to the people in many Samaritan villages"

Acts 8:26

Connecting Statement:

This begins the part of the story about Philip and the man from Ethiopia.

Now

This marks a transition in the story.

Arise and go

These verbs work together to emphasize that he should get ready to start a long journey that will take some time.

Alternate translation: "Get ready to travel"

goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza

The phrase "goes down" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Gaza.

This road is in a desert

Most scholars believe Luke added this comment to describe

the area through which Philip would travel.

Acts 8:27

General Information:

This verse gives background information about the man from Ethiopia.

Behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

eunuch

The emphasis of "eunuch" here is about the Ethiopian's being a high government official, not so much his physical state of being castrated.

Candace

This was a title for the queens of Ethiopia. It is similar to the way the word Pharaoh was used for the kings of Egypt.

He had come to Jerusalem to worship

This implies that he was a Gentile who believed in God and had come to worship at the Jewish temple. Alternate translation: "He had come to worship God at the temple in Jerusalem"

Acts 8:28

chariot

Possibly "wagon" or "carriage" is more fitting in this context. Chariots are normally mentioned as a vehicle for war, not as a vehicle for long-distance travel. Also, people stood to ride in chariots.

reading the prophet Isaiah

This is the Old Testament book Isaiah. Alternate translation: "reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah"

Acts 8:29

stay close to this chariot

Philip understood that this meant he was to stay close to the person riding in the chariot. Alternate translation: "accompany the man in this chariot"

Acts 8:30

reading Isaiah the prophet

This is the Old Testament book Isaiah. Alternate translation: "reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah"

Do you understand what you are reading?

The Ethiopian was intelligent and could read, but he lacked spiritual discernment. Alternate translation: "Do you understand the meaning of what you are reading?"

Acts 8:31

How can I, unless someone guides me?

This question was asked to state emphatically that he could not understand without help. Alternate translation: "I cannot understand unless someone guides me."

He invited Philip to ... sit with him

It is implied here that Philip agreed to travel down the road with him to explain the scriptures.

He invited

Possible meanings are that 1) he offered a sincere invitation or 2) he made a sincere request.

Acts 8:32

General Information:

This is a passage from the book of Isaiah. Here the word "he" refers to the Messiah.

like a lamb before his shearer is silent

A shearer is a person who cuts the wool off the sheep so

that it may be used.

Acts 8:33

General Information:

This verse continues quoting a passage from the book of Isaiah. Here the words "his" and "him" refer to the Messiah.

In his humiliation justice was taken away from him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He was humiliated and they did not judge him fairly" or "He allowed himself to be humbled before his accusers and he suffered injustice"

Who can give a full account of his descendants?

This question was used to emphasize that he will not have descendants. Alternate translation: "No one will be able to speak about his descendants, for there will not be any."

his life was taken from the earth

This referred to his death. It can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "men killed him" or "men took his life from the earth"

Acts 8:34

I beg you

"Please tell me"

Acts 8:35

this scripture

This refers to Isaiah's writings in the Old Testament.

Alternate translation: "the writings of Isaiah"

Acts 8:36

they went on the road

"they continued to travel along the road"

What prevents me from being baptized?

The eunuch uses this question as a way of asking Philip for permission to be baptized. Alternate translation: "Please allow me to be baptized."

Acts 8:37

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 8:38

commanded the chariot to stop

"told the driver of the chariot to stop"

Acts 8:39

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Philip and the man from Ethiopia. The story of Philip ends at Caesarea.

the Spirit of the Lord took Philip away

The words "took Philip away" imply that the Spirit took forceful, physical action, perhaps a miracle that moved Philip in an instant. The angel probably did not just suggest or even command that Philip leave the eunuch and go elsewhere.

the eunuch saw him no more

"the eunuch did not see Philip again"

Acts 8:40

Philip appeared at Azotus

There was no indication of Philip's traveling between where he baptized the Ethiopian and Azotus. He just suddenly disappeared along the road to Gaza and reappeared at the town of Azotus.

that region

This refers to the area around the town of Azotus.

to all the cities

"to all the cities in that region"

Chapter 9

Acts 9 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The Way"

No one knows for sure who first started calling believers "followers of the Way." This is probably what the believers called themselves, because the Bible often speaks of a person living his life as if that person were walking on a path or "way." If this is true, the believers were "following the way of the Lord" by living in a way that pleased God.

"Letters for the synagogues in Damascus"

The "letters" Paul asked for were probably legal papers that permitted him to put Christians in prison. The synagogue leaders in Damascus would have obeyed the letter because it was written by the high priest. If the Romans had seen the letter, they also would have allowed Saul to persecute the Christians, because they permitted the Jews to do as they desired to people who broke their religious laws.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

What Saul saw when he met Jesus

It is clear that Saul saw a light and that it was because of this light that he "fell upon the ground." Some people think that Saul knew that it was the Lord speaking to him without seeing a human form, because the Bible often speaks of God as being light and living in light. Other people think that later in his life he was able to say, "I have seen the Lord Jesus" because it was a human form that he saw here.

Links:

[Acts 9:1 Notes](#)

Acts 9

9:1-9

What was a high priest?

[9:1]

See: High Priest

How was the high priest in Jerusalem able to approve Saul's request to bring people back to Jerusalem?

[9:2]

At that time the high priest in Jerusalem had permission to bring back a prisoner to Jerusalem from other areas under Roman control. Saul looked for Christians who left Jerusalem when the people persecuted Christians (see: Acts 8:1).

See: Persecute (Persecution)

See Map: Jerusalem

What was a synagogue?

[9:2]

See: Synagogue

Where was Damascus?

[9:2]

See Map: Damascus

What was "the way"?

[9:2]

"The way" was a name for Christians (see: Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

See: John 14:6

What did Saul want to do when he found Christians in Damascus?

[9:2]

Saul wanted to bring Christians back to Jerusalem in ropes or chains to punish them (see Acts 22:5). The high priest and the Jewish council in Jerusalem gave permission to Paul to bring Christians back to Jerusalem. He also planned to kill Christians and destroy the church (see: Acts 8:3; 9:1; 22:4-5).

See: Persecute (Persecution); Punish (Punishment); Church

Why did Saul fall to the ground?

[9:4]

Saul fell to the ground because he was blinded by the very bright light from heaven. It was mid-day so the light shone even more than the sun. He was not able to see any more. Luke used the same word for a lightning flash. Thus, Saul saw a light bigger than a lightning flash around him that blinded him. However, it did not make the men with him blind.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Heaven

Why did Saul call the person speaking “Lord”?

[9:5]

Some scholars think Saul did not know who spoke, so he used the word “sir” or “master” out of respect or fear. Other scholars think he said “Lord”(κύριος/g2962) to talk to God because the voice he heard seemed to be God. However, Saul did not know at first who it was because he had to ask who spoke to him (see: Acts 9:17,27; 1 Corinthians 15:8). The voice replied to Saul’s question and told Saul it was Jesus who spoke.

See: Lord

Why were the men with Saul speechless?

[9:7]

The flash of light from above and then heard Saul speak but could not see to whom he was speaking. This made the men afraid so that they were not able to speak. They heard the voice but the words of the voice came only to Saul. They saw the bright light shining all around but it did not blind them and they did not see anyone.

See Acts 22:9

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why did Saul not eat or drink for three days?

[9:9]

Saul was not able to see for three days. Some scholars think he was still in shock so he did not want to eat. Other scholars think he was praying and fasting to repent (see: Acts 9:11). He felt terrible about killing and persecuting Christians because Jesus told him when he persecuted Christians, Saul actually persecuted Jesus.

See: Fasting; Repent (Repentance); Pray (prayer); Persecute (Persecution)

9:10-19

How did Ananias become a disciple?

[9:10]

Luke did not write how Ananias became a disciple of Jesus. Some scholars think he came from Jerusalem after people began persecuting Christians. Other scholars think he lived in Damascus and heard the gospel.

See: Discipline (To Disciple); Persecute (Persecution); Gospel

See Map: Jerusalem; Damascus

What was a vision?

[9:10]

See: Vision

Why did the Lord tell Ananias the name of the street?

[9:11]

Jesus told Ananias the name of the street so he was able to find the right house where Saul was staying. Straight Street was the long street that ran east to west through Damascus.

See Map: Damascus

Who was Judas?

[9:11]

Judas was a Jew and the host of Saul when Saul came to Damascus. He was not the same person as Judas Iscariot.

See Map: Damascus

Where was Tarsus?

[9:11]

Paul was from Tarsus, but he moved from Tarsus to Jerusalem to study Judaism (see: Acts 22:3). He came to Damascus directly from Jerusalem.

See Map: Tarsus

Why did the Lord want Ananias to lay hands on Saul?

[9:12]

Some scholars think Jesus wanted Ananias to lay hands on Saul so Saul will see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit. That is, the laying on of hands made Saul receive the Holy Spirit in the same way Peter and John prayed and laid hands on the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit (see: Acts 8:14-17). Other scholars think Jesus called Saul to serve him and then Saul was filled with the Holy Spirit after his baptism (see: Acts 9:18). In ancient Israel, the Israelites laid on hands so people were able to know God wanted someone to do something (See Numbers 8:10; 27:18).

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Laying on of Hands ; Pray (prayer); Samaria; Baptize (Baptism)

Who were the Lord’s holy people?

[9:13]

The Lord’s holy people or holy ones were Christians. The New Testament wrote Christians were holy people because God forgave them (see Ephesian 1:1,4,7).

See: Holy Ones; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); People of God

What was a chief priest?

[9:14]

See: Chief Priest

Why did people call upon the Lord's name?"

[9:14]

People called upon the Lord's name to ask Jesus to save them. That is, anyone who believed in Jesus became a Christian (See Acts 4:12; 26:16-18). Saul was coming to get any Christians and bring them to Jerusalem in chains.

See: Lord

How was Saul a chosen instrument for God?

[9:15]

God chose Saul to be an apostle to bring the gospel to people. Saul was going to tell kings and rulers of the Gentiles and the Jews about Jesus. He told them he has seen and heard Jesus after Jesus died (see: Acts 22:15).

See: Apostle; Gospel; Gentile; Resurrect (Resurrection)

How did Saul "suffer for the cause of my name"?

[9:16]

Saul will suffer to serve Jesus. He was persecuted because he told many people about Jesus. Saul was often put in prison for telling people about Jesus.

See: Acts 16:16-40; 17:9; 21:30-36; 22:21-29; 27:27-28:6; 2 Corinthians 6:4-5; 11:23-27

How was someone filled with the Holy Spirit?

[9:17]

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Why was Ananias able to call Saul "brother"?

[9:17]

Ananias was able to call Saul "brother" (ἀδελφός/g0080) because Jesus told Ananias that Saul was a different man. The word "brother" (ἀδελφός/g0080) was a gentle term to tell Saul he was no longer an enemy of Christians. Saul was now part of the family of God.

See: Family of God

Why was Saul baptized?

[9:18]

Saul was baptized to obey Jesus (see: Matthew 28:18-20). Saul was also able to receive the promise of the Holy Spirit (see: Matthew 3:16; Acts 19:5-6).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Why did Saul stay with the disciples in Damascus for several days?

[9:19]

Some scholars think Saul stayed with the disciples in Damascus to learn from them about Jesus. Other scholars think Jesus revealed to Saul everything he needed to know about Jesus (see: Galatians 1:11-12).

The Christians in Damascus wanted to give Saul a safe place to stay. The Jews wanted to harm him (see: Acts 9:23).

See: Discipline (To Disciple); Reveal (Revelation)

See Map: Damascus

9:20-25

How did Saul right away proclaim "Jesus in the synagogues"?

[9:20]

Some scholars think the high priest and Jewish council in Jerusalem gave permission to Saul to teach people about Jesus. Other scholars think Jesus gave Saul permission to do this. Saul told the Jews Jesus is the Son of God and he proved Jesus is the messiah. He told the Jews about what he saw and heard on the road to Damascus (see: Acts 9:20). He wanted them to know Jesus was resurrected and Jesus spoke to him.

See: Synagogue; Son of God; Messiah (Christ); Heresy; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Resurrect (Resurrection)

See Map: Damascus

Why did Luke write, "But Saul became more and more powerful?"

[9:22]

Luke wrote, "But Saul became more and more powerful," because Saul became more effective in proving that Jesus is the Son of God and the promised messiah. It did not mean Saul was getting stronger physically.

See: Son of God; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Saul distress the Jews in Damascus?

[9:22]

Saul distressed the Jews in Damascus because they thought Saul went there to bring Christians back to Jerusalem. Instead, he became a Christian and persuaded other Jews to also believe in Jesus.

See Map: Damascus

Why did the Jews in Damascus want to kill Saul?

[9:23]

The Jews in Damascus wanted to kill Saul because they thought he tried to make Jews worship other gods (see: Deuteronomy 13:6-11). The Jews were wrong to think that. They did not believe Jesus is the Son of God and the messiah. See: Son of God; Messiah (Christ); Worship; False gods

Who were Saul's disciples?

[9:25]

Scholars think Saul's disciples were people in Damascus who Saul helped to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the messiah.

See: Disciple; Son of God; Messiah (Christ)

9:26-30

Why were the disciples in Jerusalem afraid of Saul?

[9:26]

The disciples in Jerusalem remembered how Saul helped people to stone Stephen and other Christians. They had not heard that Saul became a Christian.

Who were the Grecian Jews?

[9:29]

The Grecian Jews were the ones who made trouble for Stephen and who stoned him when Saul looked upon this. Where was Caesarea?

[9:30]

See Map: Caesarea

9:31-35

Where were Judea, Galilee, and Samaria?

[9:31]

See Map: Judea; Galilee; Samaria

How was the church one?

[9:31]

The church was one. That is, they all served Jesus together.

How was the church built up?

[9:31]

The church in Jerusalem was built up. That is, more people became Christians.

See: Church

How did the church "walk in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit"?

[9:31]

The church walked in fear of the Lord. They honored God and did the things God wanted them to do. They knew God has power and is very holy. Yet, they did not fear people because the Holy Spirit comforted them.

See: Walk; Fear of God; Holy Spirit

Who were God's holy people?

[9:32]

See: Holy Ones; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); People of God

Where was Lydda?

[9:32]

See Map: Lydda

How did God completely heal Aeneas?

[9:33, 9:34]

God completely healed Aeneas when he was no longer paralyzed after eight years. That is, there was nothing to make him paralyzed. It was the same as if he was not paralyzed for eight years. Also, God healed him right away. Peter told him to make his bed because he was not going to need it there anymore. He was healed.

How did everyone in Lydda and Sharon turn to the Lord?

[9:35]

Everyone in Lydda and Sharon saw the healed man and they heard how he was healed, so they believed in Jesus. That is, they turned away from the things God did not want them to do and believed in Jesus.

See: Repent (Repentance)

See Map: Sharon; Lydda

9:36-43

Where was Joppa?

[9:36]

See Map: Joppa

Why did Luke write Tabitha was translated to Dorcas?

[9:36]

Luke wrote Tabitha was translated to Dorcas because Tabitha was the woman's name in the Aramaic language. Dorcas was her name in the Greek language. Peter and others called her Tabitha.

Why did they wash the dead woman and place her in the upper room?

[9:37]

In ancient times, some people washed a body before they buried it. These people heard Peter healed the paralyzed man in Lydda. So they put her body in the upper room and asked Peter to come there. They were Christians, and because Tabitha helped the poor, they hoped God will make her alive again.

According to the Law of Moses, these people needed to bury Tabitha before sundown so they sent two men to ask Peter to come right away. Even though Lydda was near Joppa, it took three or four hours for him to walk from Lydda to Joppa.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Law of Moses

See Map: Lydda; Joppa

Why did the widows show Peter the tunics and garments Tabitha made?

[9:39]

The widows showed Peter the clothes Tabitha made. They wanted Peter to know how generous and kind Tabitha was to them. It was a way for Peter to know who she really was and convince him to ask God to make her alive again.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Peter ask everyone to leave the room?

[9:40]

Peter asked everyone to leave the upper room so he was able to pray for her without anyone doing or saying anything against him praying to God. He prayed a similar prayer that Jesus prayed when Jesus made Jairus's daughter alive again (see: Mark 5:41).

See: Matthew 10:8

See: Pray (prayer)

Why did Peter stay in Joppa?

[9:43]

Luke did not write why Peter stayed in Joppa. Scholars think he stayed to teach the many Christians there because of the miracle God did for Tabitha (see Acts 9:42).

Acts 9:1

General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information telling us what Saul has been doing since the stoning of Stephen.

Connecting Statement:

The story shifts back to Saul and his salvation.

still speaking threats even of murder against the disciples

The noun "murder" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "still speaking threats, even to murder the disciples"

Acts 9:2

General Information:

Verses 1-2 give background information telling us what Saul has been doing since the stoning of Stephen. Here the word "him" refers to the high priest and "he" refers to Saul. for the synagogues

This refers to the people in the synagogues. Alternate translation: "for the people in the synagogues" or "for the leaders in the synagogues"

if he found any

"when he found people" or "if he found people"

who belonged to the Way

"who followed the teachings of Jesus Christ"

the Way

This term appears to have been a title for Christianity at that time.

he might bring them bound to Jerusalem

"he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem." Paul's purpose can be made clear by adding "so that the Jewish

leaders could judge and punish them"

Acts 9:3

Connecting Statement:

After the high priest gave Saul the letters, Saul left for Damascus.

As he was traveling

Saul left Jerusalem and now travels to Damascus.

it happened that

This is an expression that marks a change in the story to show something different is about to happen.

there shone all around him a light out of heaven

"a light from heaven shone all around him"

out of heaven

Possible meanings are 1) out of heaven, where God lives or 2) out of the sky. The first meaning is preferable. Use that meaning if your language has a separate word for it.

Acts 9:4

he fell upon the ground and heard

Possible meanings are that 1) "Saul threw himself to the ground and heard" or 2) "the light caused Saul to fall to the ground, and he heard" or 3) "Saul fell to the ground the way one who faints falls, and he heard"

why are you persecuting me?

This rhetorical question communicates a rebuke to Saul.

Alternate translation: "You are persecuting me!" or "Stop persecuting me!"

Acts 9:5

General Information:

Every occurrence of the word "you" here is singular.

Who are you, Lord?

Saul was not acknowledging that Jesus is the Lord. He uses that title because he understood that he spoke to someone of supernatural power.

Acts 9:6

but rise, enter into the city

"get up and go into the city Damascus"

it will be told you

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation: "someone will tell you"

Acts 9:7

stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "stood speechless. They heard the voice, but they did not see anyone"

but seeing no one

"but they saw no one" or "but they did not see anyone."

Apparently only Saul experienced the light.

Acts 9:8

when he opened his eyes

This implies that he had closed his eyes because the light was too bright.

he could see nothing

"he could not see anything." Saul was blind.

Acts 9:9

was without sight

"was blind" or "could not see anything"

he neither ate nor drank

It is not stated whether he chose not to eat or drink as a form of worship, or if he had no appetite because he was too distressed from his situation. It is preferable not to specify the reason.

Acts 9:10

General Information:

The story of Saul continues, and Luke introduces another man named Ananias. This is not the same Ananias who died earlier in Acts [Acts 5:3]

Now there was

This introduces Ananias as a new character.

He said

"Ananias said"

Acts 9:11

go to the street which is called Straight

"go to Straight Street"

house of Judas

This Judas was not the disciple who had betrayed Jesus.

This Judas was owner of a house in Damascus where Saul was staying.

a man from Tarsus named Saul

"a man from the city of Tarsus named Saul" or "Saul of Tarsus"

Acts 9:12

laying his hands on him

This was a symbol of giving a spiritual blessing to Saul.

he might see again

"he might regain his ability to see"

Acts 9:13

your holy people in Jerusalem

Here "holy people" refers to Christians. Alternate

translation: "the people in Jerusalem who believe in you"

Acts 9:14

authority ... to put in bonds everyone here

It is implied that the extent of the power and authority granted Saul was limited to the Jewish people at this point in time.

put in bonds

Putting someone in bonds is a metonym for arresting that person. Alternate translation: "arrest"

calls upon your name

Here "your name" refers to Jesus.

Acts 9:15

he is a chosen instrument of mine

"chosen instrument" refers to something that is set apart for service. Alternate translation: "I have chosen him to serve me"

to carry my name

This is an expression for identifying or speaking out for Jesus. Alternate translation: "in order that he might speak about me"

Acts 9:16

for the cause of my name

This is an expression meaning "for telling people about me."

Acts 9:17

General Information:

The word "you" here is singular and refers to Saul.

Connecting Statement:

Ananias goes to the house where Saul is staying. After Saul is healed, the story shifts from Ananias back to Saul.

So Ananias departed, and entered into the house

It may be helpful to state that Ananias went to the house before he entered into it. Alternate translation: "So Ananias went, and after he found the house where Saul was, he entered it"

Laying his hands on him

Ananias put his hands on Saul. This was a symbol of giving a blessing to Saul.

so that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that you might see again and that the Holy Spirit might fill you"

Acts 9:18

something like scales fell

"something that appeared like fish scales fell"

he received his sight

"he was able to see again"

he arose and was baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he got up and Ananias baptized him"

Acts 9:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 9:20

General Information:

Here the first "he" refers to Saul. The second "he" refers to Jesus, the Son of God.

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

Acts 9:21

General Information:

Here "him" and "He" refer to Saul.

All who heard him

The word "All" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "Those who heard him" or "Many who heard him"

Is not this the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name?

This is a rhetorical and negative question that emphasizes that Saul was indeed the man who had persecuted the believers. Alternate translation: "This is the man who destroyed those in Jerusalem who called on this name Jesus!"

this name

Here "name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "the name of Jesus"

Acts 9:22

causing distress among the Jews

They were distressed in the sense that they could not find a way to refute Saul's arguments that Jesus was the Christ.

Acts 9:23

General Information:

The word "him" in this section refers to Saul.

the Jews

This refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

Acts 9:24

But their plan became known to Saul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But someone told their plan to Saul" or "But Saul learned about their plan"

They watched the gates

This city had a wall surrounding it. People could normally only enter and exit the city through the gates.

Acts 9:25

his disciples

people who believed Saul's message about Jesus and were following his teaching

let him down through the wall, lowering him in a basket

"used ropes to lower him in a large basket through an opening in the wall"

Acts 9:26

General Information:

Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Saul.

but they were all afraid of him

Here "they were all" is a generalization, but it is possible that it refers to every person. Alternate translation: "but they were afraid of him"

Acts 9:27

General Information:

Here "him" refers to Saul and "he" refers to Barnabas.

had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus

This is a way of saying he preached or taught the gospel message of Jesus Christ without fear. Alternate translation: "had openly preached the message about Jesus"

Acts 9:28

He was with them, going in and out around Jerusalem

Here the word "He" refers to Saul, and the word "them" probably refers to the apostles and other disciples in

Jerusalem. This is an idiom meaning that Paul was able to associate freely with the believers in Jerusalem.

in the name of the Lord Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) this simply refers to the Lord Jesus and tells who Paul spoke about. Alternate translation: "about the Lord Jesus" or 2) "name" is a metonym for authority. Alternate translation: "under the authority of the Lord Jesus" or "with the authority that the Lord Jesus gave him"

Acts 9:29

debated with the Grecian Jews

Saul tried to reason with the Jews who spoke Greek.

Acts 9:30

the brothers

Here the words "the brothers" refer to the believers in Jerusalem.

brought him down to Caesarea

The phrase "brought him down" is used here because Caesarea is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

sent him away to Tarsus

Caesarea was a seaport. They brothers probably sent Saul to Tarsus by ship.

Acts 9:31

General Information:

Verse 31 is a statement that gives an update on the church's growth.

the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria

This is the first use of the singular "church" to refer to more than one local congregation. Here it refers to all the believers in all the groups throughout Israel.

had peace

"lived peacefully." This means the persecution that started with the murder of Stephen was finished.

was built up

The agent was either God or the Holy Spirit. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God helped them grow" or "the Holy Spirit built them up"

walking in the fear of the Lord

"Walking" here is a metaphor for "living." Alternate translation: "living in obedience to the Lord" or "continuing to honor the Lord"

in the comfort of the Holy Spirit

"with the Holy Spirit strengthening and encouraging them"

Acts 9:32

Connecting Statement:

Here the story shifts from Saul to a new part of the story about Peter.

Now it came about

This phrase is used to mark a new part of the story.

throughout the whole region

This is an generalization for Peter's visiting the believers in many places in the region of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

he came down

The phrase "came down" is used here because Lydda is lower in elevation than the other places where he was traveling.

Lydda

Lydda is a city located about 18 kilometers southeast of Joppa. This city is called Lod in the Old Testament and in

modern Israel.
Acts 9:33
There he found a certain man
Peter was not intentionally searching for a paralyzed person, but happened upon him. Alternate translation: "There Peter met a man"
a certain man named Aeneas
This introduces Aeneas as a new character in the story.
who had been in his bed ... was paralyzed
This is background information about Aeneas.
paralyzed
This means he was unable to walk. He probably was unable to move any part of his body below his waist.
Acts 9:34
make your bed
"roll up your mat"
Acts 9:35
everyone who lived in Lydda and in Sharon
This is a generalization referring to many of the people there. Alternate translation: "those who lived in Lydda and in Sharon" or "many people who lived in Lydda and Sharon"
in Lydda and in Sharon
The city of Lydda was located in the Plain of Sharon.
saw the man
It may be helpful to state that they saw that he was healed. Alternate translation: "saw the man whom Peter had healed"
and they turned to the Lord
Here "turned to the Lord" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "and they repented of their sins and started obeying the Lord"
Acts 9:36
General Information:
Verses 36 and 37 give background information about the woman named Tabitha.
Connecting Statement:
Luke continues the story with a new event about Peter.
Now there was
This introduces a new part in the story.
Tabitha (which is translated "Dorcas"). This woman
Tabitha is her name in the Aramaic language, and Dorcas is her name in the Greek language. Both names mean "gazelle." Alternate translation: "Tabitha, which in the Greek language was Dorcas. This woman"
was full of good works and merciful deeds
"doing many good things and performed merciful deeds"
Acts 9:37
General Information:
Verses 36 and 37 give background information about the woman named Tabitha.
It came about in those days

This refers to the time when Peter was in Joppa. This can be stated. Alternate translation: "It came about while Peter was nearby"
washed her
This was washing to prepare for her burial.
they laid her in an upper room
This was a temporary display of the body during the funeral process.
Acts 9:38
they sent two men to him
"the disciples sent two men to Peter"
Acts 9:39
to the upper room
"to the upstairs room where Dorcas' body was lying"
all the widows
It is possible that all the widows of the town were there since it was not a large town.
widows
women whose husbands had died and therefore needed help
while she had been with them
"while she was still alive with the disciples"
Acts 9:40
put them all out of the room
"told them all to leave the room." Peter had everyone leave so he could be alone to pray for Tabitha.
Acts 9:41
gave her his hand and raised her up
Peter took hold of her hand and helped her to sit up in the bed and then stand up on the floor.
God's holy people and the widows
The widows were possibly also believers but are mentioned specifically because Tabitha was so important to them.
Acts 9:42
Connecting Statement:
The story of Tabitha ends in verse 42. Verse 43 tells us what happens to Peter after the story ends.
This matter became known throughout all Joppa
This refers to the miracle of Peter's raising Tabitha from the dead. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People throughout all Joppa heard about this matter"
believed on the Lord
"believed in the gospel of the Lord Jesus"
Acts 9:43
Connecting Statement:
The story of Tabitha ends in verse 42. Verse 43 tells us what happens to Peter after the story ends.
It happened that
"It came about that." This introduces the beginning of the next event in the story.
Simon, a tanner
"a man named Simon who made leather from animal skins"

Chapter 10

Acts 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Unclean

The Jews believed that they could become unclean in God's sight if they visited or ate food with a Gentile. This was

because the Pharisees had made a law against it because they wanted to keep people from eating foods that the law of Moses said were unclean. The law of Moses did say that some foods were unclean, but it did not say that God's people could not visit or eat with Gentiles. (See: clean and lawofmoses)

Baptism and the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit "fell on" those who were listening to Peter. This showed the Jewish believers that Gentiles could receive the word of God and receive the Holy Spirit just as the Jewish believers had. After that, the Gentiles were baptized.

Links:

[Acts 10:1 Notes](#)

Acts 10

10: 1-8

Where was Caesarea?

[10:1]

See Map: Caesarea

What was a centurion in the "Italian Regiment"?

[10:1]

A centurion in the "Italian Regiment" was an officer in the Roman army. He lead about eighty soldiers. The Roman army recruited these soldiers in Italy.

See Map: Italy

Why was Cornelius a devout man?

[10:2]

Cornelius was a devout man because he worshipped God, but he was not a Jew. He was not circumcised. He helped the poor and he often prayed (see: Acts 10:4).

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Pray (Prayer)

Who was included in Cornelius' household?

[10:2]

The household of Cornelius included his wife, children, and all relatives living in his home. It also included his servants and their children.

See: Serve

What time was "the ninth hour of the day"?

[10:3]

"The ninth hour of the day" was about 3 PM. It was during the hot part of the day. What was a vision?

See: Vision

Why was Cornelius "very afraid" of the angel?

[10:4]

Cornelius was "very afraid" of the angel because the angel knew him. Cornelius was not dreaming (see: Acts 10:10). Instead, Cornelius was fully awake.

See: Luke 2:9

See: Angel

What was a "memorial offering"?

[10:5]

The angel spoke about the prayers of Cornelius and his gifts to the poor as if they were a sacrifice that God had commanded the Israelites to give. Here the angel called what Cornelius had done a "memorial offering." A "memorial" is something that reminds someone about a person or about something that happened. A memorial offering was an offering that was burned. The aroma of the burnt offering was said to smell good to God. That is, God was pleased with the offering and accepted it. The memorial offering shows the person that God remembers them and hears their prayers. In this situation, God had heard the prayers of Cornelius and had seen what Cornelius had done.

See: Pray (Prayer); Sacrifice; Offer (Offering); Fragrant Offering (Aroma)

Where was Joppa?

[10:5]

See Map: Joppa

Why did the angel tell Cornelius to send for Peter?

[10:5]

The angel told Cornelius to send for Peter because he was the apostle Jesus called the rock (see: Matthew 16:18-19). Peter's name was Simon, but Jesus called him Peter. Peter was the name for "rock." Jesus was going to build his church upon Peter, the rock.

See: Angel; Apostle; Church

Where was Peter?

[10:6]

Peter was visiting with a tanner named Simon. A tanner worked with leather skin.

What was a house servant?

[10:7]

A house servant was a person who helped with housework by preparing food and cleaning. Sometimes they helped a leader of an army and did not do the cleaning. They were trusted servants. Scholars think they took horses since it was fifty kilometers away, and they brought an extra horse for Peter to ride on the way back to Joppa.

See: Serve

See Map: Joppa

How was this man a devout soldier?

[10:7]

Scholars think this soldier worshipped God since Cornelius told them everything about his vision (see: Acts 10:8). For the servants and this soldier to talk with Peter about the vision, they needed to believe and worship God in the way Cornelius did. They also needed to listen to and follow the Holy Spirit.

See: Worship; Vision; Holy Spirit

10:9-16

What time was the “sixth hour”?

[10:9]

The “sixth hour” was midday, about noon.

Why did Peter go up to the housetop to pray?

[10:9]

Peter went to the housetop to pray because he was able to pray to God alone there. The roofs were flat. People used an outer stairway to go up and down from the housetop. Often there was a cover to give people shade.

See: Pray (Prayer)

What was a “trance”?

[10:10]

A “trance” (ἐκστασις/g1611) was something that happened to a person. Sometimes it was a dream. Peter’s trance was stronger than the vision God gave to Cornelius. Often, a person focused on what God showed him and he was no longer aware of anything near him.

See: Vision

Why were there different animals in this large sheet?

[10:12]

The four-footed animals, things that crawled on the earth, and birds of the sky were the three groups of living things God created and delivered in Noah’s ark (see: Genesis 6:20). God was saying all of creation was open to Peter. The news about Jesus was going to all of creation. This includes Gentiles, Jews, slaves, free people, women, and men (see: Galatians 3:28).

See: Clean and Unclean; Gentile; Serve

Why did the voice tell Peter to rise, kill, and eat?

[10:13]

God told Peter to rise, kill, and eat the unclean animals because he wanted people to know that it was not evil to eat these things. God did not want people to follow the Law of Moses anymore. God also wanted the Jews to know that the Gentiles could become Christians.

See: Clean and Unclean; Fellowship

Why did Peter not want to eat unclean food?

[10:14]

Peter did not want to eat unclean food because he always obeyed the law of Moses (see: Ezekiel 4:14). However, Peter did not know God’s new and bigger plan. The new and bigger plan was that both Jews and Gentiles were joined together in some way and could both become Christians.

10:17-23

How many men looked for Peter?

[10:17]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that three men looked for Peter. Some scholars note it was the same number Luke wrote in verse seven. Fewer ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that two men looked for Peter. Some scholars say two men spoke to Peter and the third man was a guard. Some ancient copies did not say how many men looked for Peter. Some scholars say Luke did not write how many men there were in the same way he wrote verse seventeen. Scholars think Luke wrote that three men looked for Peter.

What nationality was Cornelius?

[10:22]

Cornelius was a Gentile from Italy (see: Acts 10:1).

See: Gentile

See Map: Italy

Who were the brothers from Joppa?

[10:23]

The brothers were Jewish Christian men from Joppa.

See: Family of God

See Map: Joppa

10:24-33

Why did Cornelius fall down at the feet of Peter?

[10:25]

Cornelius fell down at Peter's feet and honored him because God sent Peter. Cornelius did not want to worship Peter but Peter wanted to be sure of this so he told Cornelius to get up. Peter was only a man in the same way Cornelius was a man (see: Acts 10:26).

See: Worship

To whom was Peter talking?

[10:26]

Peter was talking with Cornelius when they entered into the house. Then Peter addressed the crowd of relatives and close friends of Cornelius. They were Gentiles so Peter wanted to let them know he was not permitted to come inside a Gentile home. However, God changed this and Peter went into the house of a Gentile (see: Acts 10:28).

See: Gentile

How did Peter know God did not want him to call any person unclean or impure?

[10:28]

Peter knew God did not want him to call any person unclean because Peter believed the vision God gave him. The vision was a sheet with all kinds of animals, both pure and impure, that he saw coming from heaven. It was a sign of God accepting all people if they believed in Jesus (see: Acts 10:35).

See: Clean and Unclean; Offer (Offering); Heaven; Sign

Whom did Cornelius see "in bright clothing"?

[10:30]

Cornelius saw an angel of God "in bright clothing" (see: Acts 10:3).

See: Angel; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

What was a tanner?

[10:32]

A tanner was someone who worked with leather to make it certain colors and thicknesses.

What did Luke write in verse 32?

[10:32]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words about Peter coming and speaking at the end of verse 32. Older and more copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. Scholars do not think Luke wrote these words.

10:34-43

Why did Peter say "God is not partial"?

[10:34]

Peter said "God is not partial" because God is just. God knows what a person thinks. Peter thought about how God equally judges and loves the Jews and the Gentiles.

See: People of God; Gentile

Why did Peter say Jesus will be the "Judge of the living and the dead"?

[10:42]

Peter said Jesus will be the "Judge of the living and the dead." One day, Jesus will judge all people.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment

10:44-48

How did the Holy Spirit fall on the Gentiles?

[10:44]

The Holy Spirit "fell" (ἐπιπ(πτω/g1968) (see: Acts 10:44) on the Gentiles in the same way the Holy Spirit was "poured out" (ἐκχέω/g1632) (see: Acts 10:45) on the Gentiles to work in them. Some scholars think Peter was thinking about how the Holy Spirit came from heaven. Other scholars think this meant that people began to speak in tongues and began to praise God (see: Acts 2:4,11).

See: Gentile; Filling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Speaking in Tongues

What was the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out on the Gentiles?

[10:44]

Some scholars think the gift of the Holy Spirit was the power of God to help people live in a way that honors God (see: John 14:15-18; 16:5-15). Other scholars think it was the power of God to tell other people in the world about Jesus (see: Acts 1:8). In this story, the power caused the Gentile listeners to speak in tongues and to praise God(see: Acts 10:46,43). See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Gentile; Speaking in Tongues

When did God save Cornelius and his household?

[10:44]

God saved Cornelius and his household when Peter they each believed in Jesus (see: Acts 11:14; 10:39-40,43). Before they were able to say they believed in Jesus, God gave them the Holy Spirit. That is, Peter did not even finish speaking. They believed in Jesus while Peter was still speaking.

See: Acts 11:17

See: Faith (Believe in); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Angel

Who were the people who belong to the "circumcision group"?

[10:45]

The people who belonged to the "circumcision group" were the Jewish Christians who went with Peter from Joppa to the house of Cornelius. They were amazed God gave the Holy Spirit to the uncircumcised Gentiles in the same way God filled Jews with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (see: Acts 2:4).

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Gentile; Filling of the Holy Spirit; Pentecost

See Map: Joppa

Why did Peter talk about baptizing Cornelius and his household?

[10:47]

Peter talked about baptizing Cornelius and his household because he saw the Holy Spirit work in these Gentiles. That is, they spoke in tongues in the same way the disciples did at Pentecost (see: Acts 2:4). Because of this, he knew they believed in Jesus in the same way Jewish disciples believed in Jesus (see Acts 11:16-17). Peter knew they must be baptized in the same way other Christians were baptized (see: Acts 2:37-41). They should be baptized because God accepted them (see: Acts 10: 35,46; 15:8).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Holy Spirit; Gentile; Speaking in Tongues; Disciple; Pentecost

Why did these people ask Peter to stay with them for several days?

[10:48]

These people asked Peter to stay with them for several days because they wanted to learn and ask questions. They had much to learn about Jesus and how to live in a way that honors God.

Acts 10:1

General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Cornelius.

Connecting Statement:

This is the beginning of the part of the story about Cornelius.

Now there was a certain man

This was a way of introducing a new person to this part of the historical account.

in the city of Caesarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of what was called the Italian Company of Soldiers

"from Caesarea whose name was Cornelius. He was an officer in charge of 60 soldiers from the Italian Company of Soldiers, in the Roman army"

Acts 10:2

General Information:

The writer finishes giving background information about Cornelius.

a devout man

a man who wanted to do what God expected of him

feared God

worshiped God with deep respect and awe

prayed to God constantly

The word "constantly" is a generalization. Alternate

translation: "prayed to God often" or "he prayed to God

regularly"

Acts 10:3

the ninth hour

"three o'clock in the afternoon." This was the normal afternoon prayer time for Jews.

he clearly saw

"Cornelius clearly saw"

Acts 10:4

Your prayers and your alms have gone up ... into God's presence

It is implied that his gifts and prayers had been accepted by God. Alternate translation: "God is pleased by your prayers and alms. They have gone up ... to him"

Acts 10:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 10:6

a tanner

a person who makes leather from animal skins

Acts 10:7

When the angel who spoke to him had left

"When Cornelius' vision of the angel had ended."

a devout soldier

a soldier who wanted to do what God expected of him. See how you translated "devout" in [Acts 10:2](#).

Acts 10:8

told them all that had happened

Cornelius explained his vision to his two servants and to one of his soldiers.
sent them to Joppa
"sent two of his two servants and the one soldier to Joppa."
Acts 10:9
General Information:
Here the word "they" refers to Cornelius' two servants and the soldier under Cornelius' command (Acts 10:7).
Connecting Statement:
The story shifts away from Cornelius to tell us what God is doing with to Peter.
about the sixth hour
"around noon"
up upon the housetop
The roofs of the houses were flat, and people often did many different activities on them.
Acts 10:10
while the people were cooking some food
"before the people finished cooking the food"
a trance came on him
This metaphor means that Peter went into the trance without expecting it or desiring it. Alternate translation: "he went into a trance"
trance
Peter saw things in his mind, not with his physical eyes.
Acts 10:11
he saw the sky open
This was the beginning of Peter's vision. It can be a new sentence.
something like a large sheet ... four corners
The container holding the animals had the appearance of a large square piece of cloth.
let down by its four corners
"with its four corners suspended" or "with its four corners higher than the rest of it"
Acts 10:12
things that crawled on the earth
snakes and insects, as opposed to "four-footed animals"
Acts 10:13
a voice spoke to him
The person speaking is not specified. The "voice" was probably God, although it could possibly have been an angel from God.
Acts 10:14
Not so
"I will not do that"
I have never eaten anything that was defiled and unclean
It is implied that some of the "four-footed animals and things that crawled on the earth, and birds of the sky"
Acts 10:15
What God has made clean, you must not call defiled
This refers to the animals in the sheet.
What God has made clean
If God is the speaker, he is referring to himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "What I, God, have made clean"
Acts 10:16
This happened three times
Possible meanings are 1) Peter heard the words "What God

has made clean, you must not call defiled" three times or 2) a total of three times the sheet came down from heaven and Peter heard and responded to the voice. It would be best to translate without adding information here.
Acts 10:17
Peter was very confused
This means that Peter was having difficulty understanding what the vision meant.
behold
The word "behold" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows, in this case, the two men standing at the gate.
stood before the gate
"stood before the gate to the house." It is implied that this house had a wall with a gate one would use to enter the property.
after they had asked their way to the house
This happened before they arrived at the house. This could be stated earlier in the verse, as the UDB does.
Acts 10:18
They called out
Cornelius' men remained outside the gate while asking about Peter.
Acts 10:19
thinking about the vision
"wondering about the meaning of the vision"
the Spirit
"the Holy Spirit"
Behold, three
"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: three"
three men are looking for you
Some ancient texts have a different number of men.
Acts 10:20
go down
"go down from the roof of the house"
Do not hesitate to go with them
It would be natural for Peter not to want to go with them, because they were strangers and they were Gentiles.
Acts 10:21
I am he whom you are seeking
"I am the man you are looking for"
Acts 10:22
General Information:
The word "They" here refer to the two servants and the soldier from Cornelius (Acts 10:7).
A centurion named Cornelius ... listen to a message from you
This can be divided into several sentences and stated in active form as the UDB does.
fears God
worships God with deep respect and awe
all the nation of the Jews
This number of people is exaggerated with the word "all" to emphasize how widely this was known among the Jews.
Acts 10:23
General Information:
The word "them" here refer to the two servants and the soldier from Cornelius (Acts 10:7).
So Peter invited them to come in and stay with him

The journey to Caesarea was too long for them to begin that afternoon.

stay with him

"be his guests"

some of the brothers from Joppa

This refers to believers who lived in Joppa.

Acts 10:24

On the following day

This was the next day after they left Joppa. The journey to Caesarea took longer than one day.

Cornelius was waiting for them

"Cornelius expected them"

Acts 10:25

when Peter entered

"when Peter entered the house"

fell down at his feet to worship him

"he knelt down and put his face close to Peter's feet." He did this to honor Peter.

fell down

He purposely did this to show that he was worshipping.

Acts 10:26

Stand up! I too am a man

Peter was rebuking Cornelius mildly for worshipping Peter.

Alternate translation: "Do not worship me! I am only a man, as you are"

Acts 10:27

General Information:

The word "him" here refers to Cornelius, and "he" refers to Peter.

Connecting Statement:

Peter addresses the people who are gathered in Cornelius' house.

many people gathered together

"many Gentile people gathered together." It is implied that these people Cornelius had invited were Gentiles.

Acts 10:28

General Information:

Here the words "You" and "yourselves" include Cornelius as well as the Gentiles who were present and so are plural.

it is not lawful for a Jewish man

"it is forbidden for a Jewish man." This refers to the Jewish religious law.

a foreigner

people who are not Jews

Acts 10:29

General Information:

Here both instances of "you" include Cornelius as well as the Gentiles who were present and so are plural.

Acts 10:30

General Information:

In verses 31 and 32 Cornelius quotes what the angel had said to him when he appeared to him at the ninth hour. The words "you" and "your" are all singular. The word "we" here does not include Peter.

Connecting Statement:

Cornelius responds to Peter's question.

Four days ago

Cornelius is referring to the day before the third night before he is speaking to Peter. Biblical culture counts the

current day, so the day before three nights ago is "four days ago." Current Western culture does not count the current day, so many Western translations read, "three days ago." praying

Some ancient authorities say "fasting and praying" instead of simply "praying."

at the ninth hour

The normal afternoon time that the Jews pray to God.

Acts 10:31

your prayer has been heard by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has heard your prayer"

reminded God about you

"brought you to God's attention." This does not imply that God had forgotten.

Acts 10:32

call to you a man named Simon who is called Peter

"tell Simon who is also called Peter to come to you"

Acts 10:33

at once

"right away"

You are kind to have come

This expression is a polite way of thanking Peter for coming. Alternate translation: "I certainly thank you for coming"

we are all here

This refers to Cornelius and his family but not to Peter, so this is exclusive.

present in the sight of God

"present with God"

that you have been instructed by the Lord to say

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that the Lord has told you to say"

Acts 10:34

Connecting Statement:

Peter begins speaking to everyone in the house of Cornelius.

opened his mouth

"began to speak"

Truly

This means that what he is about to say is especially important to know.

God is not partial

"God does not favor certain people"

Acts 10:35

anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him

"he accepts anyone who fears him and does what is right" to him

to God

fears

worships with deep respect and awe

Acts 10:36

General Information:

All instances of "he" here refers to God.

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to talk to Cornelius and his guests.

who is Lord of all

Here "all" means "all people."

Acts 10:37

throughout all Judea

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "throughout Judea" or "in many places in Judea"

after the baptism that John announced

"after John preached to the people to repent and then baptized them"

Acts 10:38

the events ... and with power

This long sentence, which begins in verse 36, can be shortened into several sentences as in the UDB.

God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power

The Holy Spirit and God's power are spoken of as if they are something that can be poured out onto a person.

all who were oppressed by the devil

The word "all" is a generalization. Alternate translation:

"those who were oppressed by the devil" or "many people who were oppressed by the devil"

God was with him

The idiom "was with him" means "was helping him."

Acts 10:39

General Information:

The word "We" refer to Peter and the apostles and believers who were with Jesus when he was on earth, not to his hearers. The word "him" here refers to Jesus.

in the country of the Jews

This refers mainly to Judea at that time.

hanging him on a tree

This is another expression that refers to crucifixion.

Alternate translation: "nailing him to a wooden cross"

Acts 10:40

General Information:

Both instances of "him" refer to Jesus.

God raised him up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "God caused him to live again"

the third day

"the third day after he died"

caused him to be seen

"permitted many people to see him after he was raised from the dead"

Acts 10:41

General Information:

The word "us" refers to Peter and the apostles and believers who were with Jesus when he was on earth, not to his hearers. The words "him" and "he" here refers to Jesus. from the dead

From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld.

Acts 10:42

General Information:

Here the word "us" includes Peter and believers. It excludes his audience.

that this is the one who has been chosen by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God chose this Jesus"

the living and the dead

This refers to people who are still living and people who have died. Alternate translation: "the people who are alive

and the people who are dead"

Acts 10:43

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech to everyone in the house of Cornelius, which he began in [Acts 10:34](#).

About him all the prophets testify

"All the prophets testify about Jesus"

everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins

This could be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will forgive the sins of everyone who believes in Jesus because of what Jesus has done"

through his name

Here "his name" refers to the actions of Jesus. His name means God who saves. Alternate translation: "through what Jesus has done for them"

Acts 10:44

the Holy Spirit fell

Here the word "fell" indicates that the event happened suddenly. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit suddenly came"

all of those who were listening

Here "all" refers to all the Gentiles at the house who were listening to Peter.

Acts 10:45

the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out also

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God also poured out the Holy Spirit"

the gift of the Holy Spirit

That is, the Holy Spirit himself was the gift.

poured out

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as if he were something that could be poured out upon people. It implies a generous amount. Alternate translation: "generously given"

the gift

"the free gift"

also on the Gentiles

Here "also" refers to the fact that the Holy Spirit had already been given to the Jewish believers.

Acts 10:46

Gentiles speaking in tongues and exalting God

These were known spoken languages that caused the Jews to acknowledge that the Gentiles were indeed praising God.

speaking in tongues

Here "tongues" is a metonym for languages. Alternate translation: "speaking in other languages"

Acts 10:47

Can anyone keep water from these people so they should not be baptized, these people who have received ... we?

Peter uses this question to convince the Jewish Christians that the Gentile believers should be baptized. Alternate translation: "No one should keep water from these people!"

We should baptize them because they have received ... we!"

Acts 10:48

General Information:

The words "he" and "him" refer to Peter.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Cornelius.

he commanded them to be baptized

It is implied that the Jewish Christians were the ones who

would baptize them. Alternate translation: "Peter commanded the Gentile believers to allow the Jewish Christians to baptize them" or "Peter commanded the Jewish Christians to baptize them"

be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ
Here "in the name of Jesus Christ" expresses that the reason for their baptism was that they believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "be baptized as believers in Jesus Christ"

Chapter 11

Acts 11 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The Gentiles also had received the word of God"

Almost all of the first believers were Jewish. Luke writes in this chapter that many Gentiles started to believe in Jesus. They believed that the message about Jesus was true and so began to "receive the word of God." Some of the believers in Jerusalem did not believe that Gentiles could truly follow Jesus, so Peter went to them and told them what had happened to him and how he had seen the Gentiles receive the Word of God and receive the Holy Spirit.

Links:

[Acts 11:1 Notes](#)

Acts 11

11:1-10

Who were the "brothers"?

[11:1]

The "brothers" were men and women who believed in Jesus.

See: Family of God

Where was Judea?

[11:1]

See Map: Judea

How did the Gentiles receive "the word of God"?

[11:1]

The Gentiles "received the word of God" when they believed God's word about Jesus. That is, they believed Jesus is the messiah.

See: Gentile; Word of God; Messiah (Christ)

Who was "the circumcision group"?

[11:2]

"The circumcision group" was Jewish Christians.

See: Acts 10:45

See: Circumcise (Circumcision)

Why did the Jewish Christians think it was wrong to be with uncircumcised people and eat with them?

[11:3]

See: Acts 10:34.

What was a "trance" and what was a "vision"?

[11:5, 11:6]

See: Acts 10:10

Why did Peter add "wild beasts" to the animals Luke wrote about in Acts 10:12? Peter added "wild beasts" to the animals Luke wrote about in Acts 10:12 because Peter was thinking about how God created the animals (see: Genesis 1:25) when he said this. Elsewhere, Luke was thinking about the animals God delivered in Noah's ark (see: Genesis 6:20; Acts 10:12).

Why did the voice tell Peter to get up, kill and eat?

[11:7]

See: Acts 10:13

Why did Peter refuse to kill and eat?

[11:8]

See: Acts 10:13.

See: Clean and Unclean

Why did God say defiled food was clean?

[11:9]

God said defiled food was clean. That is, God said that unclean foods were now clean. God made a way for Jewish Christians to worship God with Gentile Christians and visit Gentile houses. That is, since Jews were able to eat the food Gentiles ate, they were able to do other things with Gentiles.

See: Clean and Unclean; Worship; Gentile

11:11-18

Where was Caesarea?

[11:11]

See Map: Caesarea

Why did the Holy Spirit tell Peter to “make no distinction” about the men who came to him?

[11:12]

The Holy Spirit told Peter to “make no distinction” about the men who came to him. God wanted Peter to tell the Gentiles at Cornelius’ house about Jesus. God wanted him to do this even though they were Gentiles. He brought other Jewish Christians with him. Six of those Jewish Christians also went with him to Jerusalem. They were also able to say what happened at Cornelius’ house.

See: Holy Spirit; Gentile

Who were the six brothers who went with Peter into the house of Cornelius?

[11:12]

The six brothers were Jewish Christians from Joppa. They went with Peter into the house of Cornelius and saw what happened when the Holy Spirit came upon everyone and everyone spoke in tongues and praised God. They were able to say the good news about Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit were available to Gentiles.

See: Family of God; Holy Spirit; Speaking in Tongues; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Gentile

Where was Joppa?

[11:13]

See Map: Joppa

What was the message Peter spoke to the people in the house of Cornelius?

[11:14]

Peter spoke about Jesus to the people in the house of Cornelius. That is, Peter told them about how Jesus healed people, but people killed Jesus and God made him alive again (see: Acts 10:38-40). Then Peter told them that Jesus is the one who all the prophets spoke about.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Prophet

How did the Holy Spirit come upon these people?

[11:15]

See: Acts 10:44-46.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

Who is “the Lord” in verse sixteen?

“The Lord” in verse sixteen is Jesus. Jesus is Lord and he is the one who rules from heaven.

See: Lord; Heaven

Why did Peter change his mind about salvation for the Gentiles?

[11:17]

Peter changed his mind about salvation for the Gentiles because he saw God give the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles. Peter knew that if God did that, then Peter knew this is what God wanted.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gentile; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How did God give “repentance for life to the Gentiles also”?

[11:18]

God gave “repentance for life to the Gentiles also.” That is, God gave them repentance through the Holy Spirit. If the Gentiles repented of their sins, then they were at peace with God and God gave them eternal life and a new life. God also did this for the Jews. God helped them to repent, believe in Jesus, and be at peace with God.

See: Repent (Repentance); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Gentile; Holy Spirit; Eternal Life; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

11:19-30

Where were Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch?

[11:19]

See Map: Phoenicia; Cyprus; Antioch

Why did the Christian Jews speak only to Jews in the areas where they went?

[11:19]

The Christian Jews from Jerusalem spoke only to the Jews in the areas where they went because they did not think the gospel was for the Gentiles. However, other Christian Jews from Cyprus and Cyrene went and told the Gentiles about Jesus and the gospel.

See: Gospel; Gentile

See Map: Cyprus; Cyrene

Who were “some of them” in verse 20?

[11:20]

“Some of them” in verse twenty were Greek-speaking Jews who believed in Jesus. They were not from Jerusalem but were from Cyprus and Cyrene.

See Map: Cyprus; Cyrene

Where is Cyrene?

[11:20]

See Map: Cyrene

Whom did the men from Cyprus and Cyrene speak to?

[11:20]

The men from Cyprus and Cyrene spoke about Jesus to both Jews and Gentiles. Luke wrote the word “also” because they treated the Jews and Gentiles the same. The gospel was for everyone.

See: Gentile

See Map: Cyprus; Cyrene

How was “the hand of the Lord was with them”?

[11:21]

Luke wrote that “the hand of the Lord was with them.” That is, when they taught people about Jesus, they had God’s power with them. God helped them. Because of this, many people believed and turned to the Lord Jesus.

How did people “turn to the Lord”?

[11:21]

See: Repent (Repentance)

Who was Barnabas?

[11:22]

Barnabas was a Christian leader named Joseph. He was from the Levite and he came from Cyprus. The apostles called him Barnabas, “son of encouragement” (see: Acts 4:36). He was a prophet and teacher (see: Acts 13:1). He was also an apostle but not one of the twelve apostles (see: Acts 14:14).

See: Prophet; Apostle; Tribes of Israel

Where was Antioch?

[11:22]

See Map: Antioch

How did Barnabus tell the people to “remain with the Lord with purpose of heart”?

[11:23]

Barnabus told the people to “remain with the Lord with purpose of heart.” That is, they completely served Jesus.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

How was Barnabas “full of the Holy Spirit and of faith”?

[11:24]

See: Galatians 3:2

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit; Faith (Believe in)

Where was Tarsus?

[11:25]

See Map: Tarsus

Why did Barnabus bring Saul to Antioch?

[11:26]

Barnabus brought Saul to Antioch because he wanted Paul to serve in Antioch. Many people there believed in Jesus. Later the Christians in Antioch sent out people to tell others about Jesus.

See Map: Antioch

Why did people at Antioch first call the disciples “Christians”?

[11:26]

People at Antioch first called the disciples “Christians”(Χριστιανός/g5546) because the people at Antioch knew they followed Jesus, who is the “Christ”(Χριστός/g5547). Scholars think the people at Antioch mocked the disciples of Jesus or were persecuting them when they called these people Christians (see: Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). In ancient times, Christians did not call themselves Christians. Instead, they called themselves disciples, holy ones, or brothers. They started calling themselves Christians about 100 years after Jesus died.

See: Messiah (Christ); Disciple; Holy Ones; Family of God

How did some prophets “came down” from Jerusalem?

[11:27]

Jerusalem was higher in elevation than Antioch. Some prophets went down the hill from Jerusalem rather than traveled south to get to Antioch.

See Map: Jerusalem; Antioch

Who were the prophets?

[11:27]

The prophets were Christians who had the gift of prophecy.

See: Prophet; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Who was Agabus?

[11:28]

Agabus was a Christian prophet from Jerusalem. God revealed to him bad things that will happen in the future.

See: Prophet; Reveal (Revelation)

See: Acts 21:10

How did Agabus indicate "by the Spirit" a great famine?

[11:28]

Agabus indicated "by the Spirit" when the Holy Spirit helped Agabus to know to give a prophecy about the coming famine. This famine happened about 15 years after Jesus died.

See: Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Famine

What was "all the world"?

[11:28]

"All the world" was Rome, Greece, and Egypt, and Judaea. That is, it was the whole Roman empire. It was not the entire world.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

What were the "days of Claudius"?

[11:28]

Claudius ruled the Roman Empire. He did this starting about 10 years after Jesus died and stopped about 20 years after Jesus died. There were several famines during this time.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Famine

Where was Judea?

[11:29]

See Map: Judea

Why did God give Agabus a prophecy about the famine?

[11:29]

God gave Agabus a prophecy about the famine so the Christians in Antioch had time to prepare to help the Christians in Judea. The time allowed the Christians in Antioch to help them more than if they had not known the famine was going to happen.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Famine

See Map: Judea

Acts 11:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new event in the story.

Now

This marks a new part of the story.

the brothers

The phrase "brothers" here refers to the believers in Judea.

who were in Judea

"who were in the province of Judea"

had received the word of God

This expression refers to the fact that the Gentiles believed the gospel message about Jesus. Alternate translation:

"believed the message of God about Jesus"

Acts 11:2

Connecting Statement:

Peter arrives in Jerusalem and begins talking to the Jews there.

had come up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of coming up to Jerusalem and going down from it.

they who belonged to the circumcision group

This is a reference to some of the Jews who believed that every believer must be circumcised. Alternate translation:

"some Jewish believers in Jerusalem who wanted all

followers of Christ to be circumcised"

Acts 11:3

uncircumcised men

The phrase "uncircumcised men" refers to Gentiles.

ate with them

It was against Jewish tradition for Jews to eat with Gentiles.

Acts 11:4

Connecting Statement:

Peter responds to the Jews by telling them about his vision and about what had happened at Cornelius' house.

Peter started to explain

Peter did not criticize the Jewish believers but reacted in a friendly, explanatory manner.

in detail

"exactly what happened"

Acts 11:5

in a trance I saw

Peter saw something that was only in his mind. It was not physical. His mind was not working in its usual way. See how you translated similar words in Acts 10:10.

like a large sheet

The container holding the animals had the appearance of a large square piece of cloth. See how you translated this in Acts 10:11.

by its four corners

"with its four corners suspended" or "with its four corners higher than the rest of it." See how you translated this in Acts 10:11.

Acts 11:6

four-legged animals of earth

From Peter's response, it can be implied that the law of Moses commanded the Jews not to eat some of them. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Acts 10:12]

wild beasts

This probably refer to the animals people do not or cannot tame or control.

things that crawled

snakes and insects, as opposed to "four-footed animals." See how you translated this in Acts 10:12.

Acts 11:7

I heard a voice

The person speaking is not specified. The "voice" was probably God, although it could possibly have been an angel from God. See how you translated "a voice" in [Acts 10:13]

Acts 11:8

Not so

"I will not do that." See how you translated this in Acts 10:14.

nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered into my mouth

Apparently the animals in the sheet were animals which the Jewish law in the Old Testament forbade the Jews to eat. This can be said in a positive way. Alternate translation: "I have eaten only meat from holy and clean animals"

unclean

In the Old Testament Jewish law, a person became ritually "unclean" in various ways, such as eating certain forbidden animals.

Acts 11:9

What God has made clean, you must not call defiled

This refers to the animals in the sheet.

Acts 11:10

This happened three times

Possible meanings are 1) Peter heard the words "What God has made clean, you must not call defiled" three times or 2) a total of three times the sheet came down from heaven and Peter heard and responded to the voice. It would be best to translate without adding information here. See how you translated "This happened three times" in Acts 10:16.

Acts 11:11

General Information:

Here "we" refers to Peter and the believers in Joppa. It does not include his current audience in Jerusalem.

Behold

This word alerts us to the new people in the story. Your language may have a way of doing this.

right away

"immediately" or "at that exact moment"

they had been sent

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had sent them"

Acts 11:12

that I should make no distinction regarding them

"that I should not be concerned that they were Gentiles"

These six brothers went with me

"These six brothers went with me to Caesarea"

These six brothers

"These six Jewish believers"

into the man's house

This refers to the house of Cornelius.

Acts 11:13

Simon who is called Peter

"Simon who is also called Peter." See how you translated the same phrase in Acts 10:32.

Acts 11:14

all your household

This refers to all the people in the household. Alternate translation: "everyone who lives in your house"

Acts 11:15

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Peter, the other apostles, and all of the Jewish believers who had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

As I began to speak to them, the Holy Spirit came on them

This implies that Peter had not finished speaking but had intended to say more.

the Holy Spirit came on them, just as on us in the beginning

Peter leaves out some things to keep the story short.

Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit came on the Gentile believers, just as he came on the Jewish believers at Pentecost"

in the beginning

Peter is referring to the day of Pentecost.

Acts 11:16

you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will baptize you with the Holy Spirit"

Acts 11:17

General Information:

The word "them" refers to Cornelius and his Gentile guests and household. The word "us" refers to the speaker and his hearers and so is inclusive.

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes his speech (which he began in Acts 11:4) to the Jews about his vision and about what had happened at the house of Cornelius.

Then if God gave to them ... who was I, that I could oppose God?

Peter uses this question to emphasize that he was only obeying God. Alternate translation: "Since God gave to them ... I decided that I could not oppose God!"

the same gift

Peter refers to the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 11:18

General Information:

The word "they" refers to the Jewish believers to whom Peter spoke.

they said nothing in response

"they did not argue with Peter"

God has given repentance for life to the Gentiles also

"God has given repentance that leads to life to the Gentiles also." Here "life" refers to eternal life. The abstract nouns "repentance" and "life" can be translated as the verbs "repent" and "live." Alternate translation: "God has also

given the Gentiles the ability to repent and then live eternally" or "God has allowed the Gentiles also to repent and live eternally"

Acts 11:19

Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about what happened to the believers who fled after the stoning of Stephen.

Now

This introduces the new part of the story.

those who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread

The Jews began persecuting Jesus's followers because Stephen had said and done things that the Jews did not like. Because of this persecution, many of Jesus's followers left Jerusalem and went to many different places.

spread

"went in many different directions"

who had been scattered by the persecution that arose over Stephen spread

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Jews had been persecuting because of Stephen, and so had left Jerusalem, spread"

the persecution that arose over Stephen

the persecution that happened because of what Stephen had said and done

only to Jews

The believers thought God's message was for the Jewish people, and not for the Gentiles.

Acts 11:20

spoke also to Greeks

These Greek-speaking people were Gentiles, not Jews.

Alternate translation: "also spoke to Gentiles who spoke Greek"

Acts 11:21

The hand of the Lord was with them

God's hand signifies his powerful help. Alternate translation: "God was powerfully enabling those believers to preach effectively"

turned to the Lord

Here "turned to the Lord" is a metaphor for starting to obey the Lord. Alternate translation: "they repented of their sins and began to obey the Lord"

Acts 11:22

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas. The word "they" refers to the believers of the church at Jerusalem.

ears of the church

Here "ears" refers to the believers' hearing about the event. Alternate translation: "the believers in the church"

Acts 11:23

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas. The word "them" refers to the believers he met on his way to Antioch.

saw the grace of God

"saw how God acted kindly toward the believers"

he encouraged them

"he kept on encouraging them"

to remain with the Lord

"to remain faithful to the Lord" or "to continue to trust in

the Lord"

with purpose of heart

Here the "heart" refers to a person's will and desire.

Alternate translation: "with all their will" or "with complete commitment"

Acts 11:24

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas.

full of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit controlled Barnabas as he obeyed the Holy Spirit.

many people were added to the Lord

Here "added" means they came to believe the same thing as the others. Alternate translation: "many more people also believed in the Lord"

Acts 11:25

out to Tarsus

"out to the city of Tarsus"

Acts 11:26

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Barnabas and "him" to Saul.

When he found him

It probably took some time and effort for Barnabas to locate Saul.

It came about

This begins a new event in the story.

they gathered together with the church

"Barnabas and Saul gathered together with the church"

The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch

This implies that it was other people who called the believers Christians. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "People in Antioch were the first to call the disciples Christians"

Acts 11:27

General Information:

Here Luke tells background information about a prophecy in Antioch.

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main story-line.

came down from Jerusalem to Antioch

Jerusalem was higher in elevation than Antioch, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem or going down from it.

Acts 11:28

Agabus by name

"whose name was Agabus"

indicated by the Spirit

"the Holy Spirit enabled him to prophesy"

a great famine would occur

"a great shortage of food would happen"

over all the world

This was a generalization referring to the part of the world that they were interested in. Alternate translation: "all over the inhabited world" or "throughout the Roman Empire"

in the days of Claudius

Luke's audience would know that Claudius was the emperor of Rome at that time. Alternate translation: "when Claudius was the Roman emperor"

Acts 11:29

So

This word means marks an event that happened because of something else that happened first. In this case, they sent money because of Agabus' prophesy or the famine.

as each one was able

The richer people sent more; the poorer people sent less.

the brothers in Judea

"the believers in Judea"

Acts 11:30

General Information:

The words "They" and "they" refer to the believers in the church in Antioch (Acts 11:27).

by the hand of Barnabas and Saul

The hand is a synecdoche for the action of the whole person. Alternate translation: "by having Barnabas and Saul take it to them"

Chapter 12

Acts 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapter 12 tells what happened to King Herod while Barnabas was bringing Saul back from Tarsus and they were delivering money from Antioch Jerusalem (11:25-30). He killed many of the leaders of the church, and he put Peter in prison. After God helped Peter escape the prison, Herod killed the prison guards, and then God killed Herod. In the last verse of the chapter, Luke tells how Barnabas and Saul return to Antioch.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Personification

The "word of God" is spoken of as if it were a living thing that could grow and become many.

Links:

[Acts 12:1 Notes](#)

Acts 12

12:1-4

Who was king Herod?

[12:1]

This King Herod was Herod Agrippa. The Jewish people liked this Herod. He wanted them to like him. Because of this, he began to persecute the Christian leaders (see: Acts 12:3).

See: King Herod; Persecute (Persecution)

How did king Herod "lay hands on" some of the church?

[12:1]

Herod laid hands on people. That is, he persecuted Christians

See: Persecute (Persecution); Laying on of Hands ; King Herod

Who were "those in the church"?

[12:1]

"Those in the church" were people who believed in Jesus.

See: Church

What did Herod plan to do to Peter?

[11:3]

Herod planned to kill Peter. He planned to bring Peter before the people and kill him in the way he killed James. Herod wanted people to see Peter being killed.

See: King Herod

What were the "days of unleavened bread"?

[12:3]

The "days of unleavened bread" were seven days during the festival of Passover. Scholars say the seven days were after the night of Passover.

See: Festival of Unleavened Bread; Passover

How many soldiers were in a squad?

[12:4]

There were four soldiers in a squad. There were a total of sixteen soldiers who guarded Peter.

What was the Passover?

[12:4]

See: Passover

12:5-11

How did God answer the prayers of the church for Peter?

[12:5]

Some scholars think Luke did not write how God answered the prayers of the church for Peter. Other scholars think the prayers for Peter made God want to send an angel to rescue Peter.

See: Acts 16:25-26

See: Pray (Prayer); Angel

What was an angel?

[12:7]

See: Angel

How did a light come into the prison cell?

[12:7]

Luke did not write how a light came into the prison cell. Scholars think different things.

The light was part of the glory of God (see: Luke 2:9).

The light was from the glory of God that shone through the angel.

The light was from the angel.

See: Glory (Glorify); Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Angel

How did the light help Peter?

[12:7]

The light helped Peter find his clothes and sandals and put them on before they left the prison cell. It was very dark in the night of the prison and the angel wanted Peter to get up quickly before the guards woke up.

See: Angel

What was an outer garment?

[12:8]

An outer garment was worn for going outside a house or building. It is a type of coat.

What was a vision?

See: Vision

What was an iron gate?

[12:10]

An iron gate was a heavy, metal gate that allowed people to go in and out of a city.

How did Peter come to himself?

[12:11]

Peter “came to himself” when he knew his release from prison was real. That is, he knew he was not dreaming and he was thinking clearly. He was not confused. Peter knew God sent an angel.

See: Angel

12:12-19

Why did Luke write both names of Mary’s son?

[12:12]

Luke wrote both names of Mary’s son because he had both a Jewish name, John, and a Roman name, Mark. There were other people in Acts who had two names. Saul was also Paul (see: Acts 13:9). Scholars think this John Mark was the same Mark in other places in the Bible (see: Colossians 4:10; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:11; 1 Peter 5:13). Scholars also think Mark wrote the gospel of Mark.

See: Gospel

How did the servant girl know Peter’s voice?

[12:14]

The servant knew Peter’s voice because Peter was from Galilee. People in Galilee spoke in the same way and this was different than how other people spoke (see: Matthew 26:73). She also knew the sound of Peter’s voice because she heard him speak before this.

See Map: Galilee

Why did the people not think it was Peter who was at the door?

[12:15]

Some scholars think the people did not think it was Peter who was at the door because they did not know Peter escaped from prison even though they prayed for him. They prayed for James but Herod killed him. Other scholars think they did not believe what a woman said about Peter in the same way the disciples did not believe the women who told them that Jesus was alive again (see: Luke 24:9-11).

See: Pray (Prayer); King Herod; Disciple; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did the disciples say, “it is his angel”?

[12:15]

Some scholars think the disciples believed it was Peter's spirit that was outside the house. They thought Peter became an angel. In ancient times, some Jewish people wrongly thought that certain people become angels after they die. Other scholars think the disciples thought the angel was an angel who protected Peter. They believed there were angels guarding people (see: Psalm 91:11; Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:4; Acts 12:7-10).

See: Angel; Spirit (Spiritual); Disciple

Why did Peter want the people to be silent?

[12:17]

Peter wanted the people to be silent so they will not wake the neighbors or attract attention for any guards trying to find him. Perhaps the Jewish leaders lived near this house. Peter did not want to go back to prison and be killed. Also, Peter needed them to listen to him. The people were very excited to see Peter alive and free, and to know God rescued Peter.

Why did Peter want them to tell James and the brothers what happened to him?

[12:17]

Peter wanted James and others to know that he escaped prison. This is because they were Christian leaders in this area (see Acts: 15:13; 21:18).

See: Family of God

Why did Peter leave so soon?

[12:17]

Luke did not write why Peter left so soon. Scholars give several reasons.

Peter thought it was not safe for him to stay at the house very long.

He left for Antioch and told people in Antioch about Jesus (see: Galatians 2:11-14).

He went to Lydda and Joppa (see: Acts 10:9-48).

He was out of the area for a while but he came back to Jerusalem to meet with other Christian leaders (see: Acts 15:1-7).

See Map: Antioch; Lydda; Joppa

Why did Herod kill the guards?

[12:19]

Herod killed the guards because Roman law allowed the same penalty for the guards the prisoner was going to have if the guards let the prisoner escape. They failed to keep Peter in prison and Peter was going to be executed. Therefore, Herod carried out Peter's penalty on the guards. The guards were killed.

See: King Herod

Why did Herod go to Caesarea?

[12:19]

Herod went to Caesarea for two reasons.

He went to make celebrations in honor of Caesar. This was why many important officials from the region were there.

He went to help settle a trade disagreement between his country and the cities of Tyre and Sidon. The people of those cities persuaded King Herod's assistant, Blastus, to help them settle the dispute because their food came from the place Herod Agrippa ruled. The food was mostly wheat from Galilee. During the festival, Herod spoke so that people would know that there was peace between himself and the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

See: King Herod

See: Map: Judea; Caesarea; Tyre; Sidon; Galilee

12:20-25

Why did the people think Herod was a god and not a man?

[12:22]

The people thought Herod was a god and not a man because his royal clothing was made from silver that shone brightly and beautifully. It made the people afraid. Also, the people from Tyre and Sidon praised him in the same way they praised a god.

See: King Herod; False gods; Praise

See Map: Tyre; Sidon

What did the angel do to Herod?

[12:23]

The angel made Herod become sick and die. Herod accepted the praise of being a god and did not give God the glory for being God. Another ancient Jewish writer wrote that Herod did not tell the people to stop praising him.

See: Angel; King Herod; Praise; False gods; Glory (Glorify)

What were the "worms"?

[12:23]

The "worms" (σκωληκόβρωτος/g4662) were crawling insects. Some ate plants (see: Exodus 16:20) but others ate meat (see: Job 7:5). Sometimes they were inside a person's body and made the person ill. Some scholars think they were a metaphor.

Luke wrote that Herod died from a disease. Other scholars think Luke wanted to say God judged Herod (see: Isaiah 66:24).
 See: Metaphor; King Herod; Judge (Judgment)
 How did Herod die?
 [12:23]
 Herod died from the angel's blow to him. The angel either hit him or made him sick. Another ancient Jewish writer wrote that it took five days for Herod to die. Luke did not write how long it took for Herod to die but he wrote about how Herod died. When Luke wrote about Herod eating worms, he wanted people to know that Herod died in a terrible way. It was very painful for Herod to die in this way.
 See: Deuteronomy 32:39; Luke 1:20; 19:44; Acts 5:1-11; 8:10,20-23
 See: King Herod; Angel
 How did the word of God increase and multiple?
 [12:24]
 The word of God increased and multiplied. This is a metaphor. More and more people believed in Jesus (see: Acts 6:7).
 See: Word of God
 What was the mission of Barnabas and Saul?
 [12:25]
 Paul and Silas served God in a certain way. The Christians in Antioch gave Barnabas and Saul money to bring to the poor Christians in Judea (see: Acts 11:29-30) to help them because they were about to have a famine.
 See: Famine
 See Map: Antioch; Judea
 Did Luke write that Barnabas and Saul returned from or to Jerusalem?
 [12:25]
 Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that Barnabas returned from Jerusalem. Older and more ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem. Scholars think Luke wrote that Barnabas and Saul returned to Jerusalem.
 See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Acts 12:1

General Information:

This is background information about Herod's killing James.

Connecting Statement:

This begins the new persecution, first of James's death and then of Peter's imprisonment and then release.

Now

This begins a new part of the story.

about that time

This refers to the time of the famine.

laid hands on

This means Herod had the believers arrested. See how you translated this in [Acts 4:3]

some who belonged to the church

Only James and Peter are specified, which implies that these were leaders of the church in Jerusalem.

so that he might mistreat them

"in order to cause the believers to suffer"

Acts 12:2

He killed James ... with the sword

This tells the manner in which James was killed.

He killed James

Possible meanings are 1) Herod himself killed James or 2)

Herod ordered someone to kill James. Alternate translation:

"Herod gave the order and they killed James"

Acts 12:3

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Herod (Acts 12:1).

After he saw that this pleased the Jews

"When Herod realized that putting James to death pleased the Jewish leaders"

pleased the Jews

"made the Jewish leaders happy"

That was

"Herod did this" or "This happened"

the days of unleavened bread

This refers to the Jewish religious feast time during the Passover season. Alternate translation: "the festival when the Jewish people ate bread without yeast"

Acts 12:4

four squads of soldiers

"four groups of soldiers." Each squad had four soldiers that guarded Peter, one group at a time. The groups divided the 24 hour day into four shifts. Each time two soldiers would have been at his side and the other two soldiers by the entrance.

he was intending to bring him to the people

"Herod planned to judge Peter in the presence of the people" or "Herod planned to judge Peter before the Jewish people"

Acts 12:5

So Peter was kept in the prison

This implies that the soldiers continually guarded Peter in prison. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "So the soldiers guarded Peter in the prison"

prayer was made earnestly to God for him by those in the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the group of believers in Jerusalem earnestly prayed to God for him"

earnestly

continuously and with dedication

Acts 12:6

On the night before Herod was going to bring him out for trial

That Herod planned to execute him can be clarified.
Alternate translation: "The happened on the day before
Herod was going to bring Peter out from prison to put him
on trial and then to execute him"

bound with two chains

"tied with two chains" or "fastened with two chains." Each
chain would have been attached to one of the two guards
who stayed beside Peter.

were keeping watch over the prison

"were guarding the prison doors"

Acts 12:7

General Information:

The words "him" and "his" refer to Peter.

Behold

This word alerts us to pay attention to the surprising
information that follows.

by him

"next to him" or "beside him"

in the prison cell

"in the prison room"

He struck Peter

"The angel tapped Peter" or "The angel poked Peter." Peter
was evidently sleeping deeply enough that this was
required to wake him.

his chains fell off his hands

The angel caused the chains to fall from Peter without
touching them.

Acts 12:8

Gird yourself and put on your sandals

Peter had probably loosened his belt and taken off his
sandals so he could go to sleep. The angel was telling Peter
to get ready to leave the cell.

Peter did so

"Peter did what the angel told him to do" or "Peter obeyed"

Acts 12:9

General Information:

Here the word "He" refers to Peter. The words "they" and
"They" refer to Peter and the angel.

He did not know

"He did not understand"

what was done by the angel was real

This could be changed to active form. Alternate translation:
"the actions of the angel were real" or "what the angel did
truly happened"

Acts 12:10

After they had passed by the first guard and the second

It is implied that the soldiers were not able to see Peter and
the angel as they walked by. Alternate translation: "The first
and second guards did not see them as they passed by, and
then"

had passed by

"had walked by"

and the second

The word "guard" is understood from the previous phrase.
Alternate translation: "and the second guard"

they came to the iron gate

"Peter and the angel arrived at the iron gate"

that led into the city

"that opened to the city" or "that went from the prison to

the city"

it opened for them by itself

Here "by itself" means neither Peter nor the angel opened
it. Alternate translation: "the gate swung open for them" or
"the gate opened itself for them"

went down a street

"walked along a street"

left him right away

"left Peter suddenly" or "suddenly disappeared"

Acts 12:11

When Peter came to himself

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "When Peter
became fully awake and alert" or "When Peter became
aware that what had happened was real"

delivered me out of the hand of Herod

Here "the hand of Herod" refers to "Herod's hold" or
"Herod's plans." Alternate translation: "brought me from
the harm Herod had planned for me"

delivered me

"rescued me"

everything the Jewish people were expecting

Here "the people of the Jews" probably referred mainly to
the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "all that the
Jewish leaders thought would happen to me"

Acts 12:12

realized this

He became aware that God had rescued him.

John, also called Mark

John was also called Mark. This can be stated in active
form. Alternate translation: "John, whom people also called
Mark"

Acts 12:13

he knocked

"Peter knocked." Tapping on the door was a normal Jewish
custom to let others know you wish to visit them. You may
need to change this to fit your culture.

at the door of the gate

"at the outer door" or "at the door of the entrance from the
street to the courtyard"

came to answer

"came to the gate to ask who was knocking"

Acts 12:14

General Information:

Here all instances of "she" refer to the servant girl Rhoda
([Acts 12:13](#)).

out of joy

"because she was so joyful" or "being overly excited"

failed to open the gate

"did not open the gate" or "forgot to open the gate"

came running into the room

You may prefer to say "went running into the room in the
house"

she reported

"she told them" or "she said"

Acts 12:15

General Information:

Here the words "she" and "her" both refer to the servant
girl Rhoda ([Acts 10:13](#)), and the words "they" and "They"
refer to the people who were inside praying ([Acts 10:12](#)).

You are insane

The people not only did not believe her, but rebuked her by saying she was crazy. Alternate translation: "You are crazy" she insisted that it was so

"she insisted that what she said was true"

They said

"They answered"

It is his angel

"What you have seen is Peter's angel." Some Jews believed in guardian angels and may have thought that Peter's angel had come to them.

Acts 12:16

General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refer to the people in the house. The word "him" refers to Peter.

But Peter continued knocking

The word "continued" means that Peter kept knocking the entire time those inside were talking.

Acts 12:17

General Information:

Here both instances of "them" refer to the people who were inside praying (Acts 12:12).

Report these things

"Tell these things"

the brothers

"the other believers"

Acts 12:18

Now

This word is used to mark a break in the story-line. Time has passed; it is now the next day.

when it became day

"in the morning"

there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter

This phrase is used to emphasize what really happened. This could be said in a positive way. Alternate translation: "there was a great disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter"

there was no small disturbance among the soldiers over what had happened to Peter

The abstract noun "disturbance" can be expressed with the words "disturbed" or "upset." Alternate translation: "the soldiers were very disturbed about what had happened to Peter"

Acts 12:19

General Information:

The word "him" here refers to Peter, and both instances of "he" refers to Herod.

After Herod had searched for him and could not find him

"After Herod searched for Peter and could not find him"

After Herod had searched for him

Possible meanings are that 1) "Herod" here is a metonym for his soldiers, that is, when Herod heard Peter was missing, he sent other soldiers to search the prison, or 2) when Herod heard Peter was missing, he went himself to search the prison.

he questioned the guards and ordered them to be put to death

It was the normal punishment for the Roman government to kill the guards if their prisoner escaped.

Then Herod went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Caesarea is lower in elevation than Judea.

Acts 12:20

Connecting Statement:

Luke continues with another event in Herod's life.

Now

This word is used here to mark the next event in the story.

very angry

This phrase translates a word that speaks of a person being so angry that he is ready to kill other people.

They went to him with one purpose

Here the word "They" is a generalization. It is unlikely that all the people of Tyre and Sidon went to Herod. Alternate translation: "Men representing the people of Tyre and Sidon went with one purpose to talk with Herod"

with one purpose

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

after persuading Blastus

"after these men persuaded Blastus"

Blastus

a man's name

the king's assistant

This phrase refers to a person who assists the king in his personal life, not necessarily his work as ruler.

they asked for peace

"these men requested peace"

their country received its food from the king's country

They probably purchased this food. Alternate translation:

"the people of Tyre and Sidon bought all their food from the people that Herod ruled"

received its food

It is implied that Herod restricted this supply of food because he was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon.

Acts 12:21

On a set day

This was probably the day on which Herod agreed to meet with the representatives. Alternate translation: "On the day when Herod agreed to meet them"

royal clothing

expensive clothing that would demonstrate he was the king sat on a throne

This was where Herod formally addressed people who came to see him.

Acts 12:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 12:23

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Herod.

Immediately an angel

"Right away an angel" or "While the people were praising Herod, an angel"

struck him

"afflicted Herod" or "caused Herod to become very ill"

he did not give God the glory

Herod let those people worship him instead of telling them

to worship God.

he was eaten by worms and died

Here "worms" refers to worms inside the body, probably intestinal worms. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "worms ate Herod's insides and he died"

Acts 12:24

the word of God increased and multiplied

The word of God is spoken of as if it were a living plant able to grow and reproduce. Alternate translation: "the message of God spread to more places and more people believed in him"

the word of God

"the message God sent about Jesus"

Acts 12:25

Connecting Statement:

This verse continues the history from [11:30]

completed their mission

This refers back to when they brought money from the believers at Antioch in [Acts 11:29-30]

they returned from Jerusalem

They went back to Antioch from Jerusalem. Alternate

translation: "Barnabas and Saul returned to Antioch"

Chapter 13

Acts 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 13:33-35 and 13:41.

This chapter is where the second half of the Book of Acts begins. Luke writes more about Paul than about Peter. Luke also writes about the believers preaching to the Gentiles rather than to the Jews.

Special concepts in this chapter

A light for the Gentiles

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. The Jews considered all Gentiles as walking in darkness, but Paul and Barnabas spoke of telling the Gentiles about Jesus as if they were going to bring them physical light. (See: and righteous)

Links:

[Acts 13:1 Notes](#)

Acts 13

13:1-12

Where was Antioch?

[13:1]

See Map: Antioch

What was a prophet?

[13:1]

See: Prophet

What was a foster brother?

[13:1]

A foster brother was a boy who was raised with a family that was not his family. This foster brother was a friend or companion to the son of the king. Manaen was a close childhood friend of King Herod the Tetrarch.

See: King Herod

Who was Herod the Tetrarch?

[13:1]

See: King Herod

Why did Luke write Christians fasted two times?

[13:2, 13:3]

Luke wrote Christians fasted two times because the Christians fasted in two ways.

Christians in Antioch worshiped God by fasting in the same way priests and others who served in the temple in Jerusalem did.

Christians fasted, prayed, and laid on hands when the Holy Spirit chose leaders to serve.

See: Fasting; Worship; Priest (Priesthood); Temple

Who worshiped the Lord and fasted?

[13:2, 13:3]

Luke did not write who worshiped the Lord and fasted. Some scholars think the Jews usually used the word "worshiped"

when they were talking about the priests and Levites when these people served in the temple. Therefore, Luke was writing about the prophets and teachers. Other scholars think the priests and Levites were no longer the only ones who served and worshiped God. Everyone in the church served and worshiped God (see: Romans 12:1; 1 Peter 2:5). Thus, “they” were everyone in the church.

See: Worship; Priest (Priesthood); Tribes of Israel; Temple; Prophet; Church

How did the Christians set apart Barnabas and Saul?

[13:2]

The Christians set apart Barnabas and Saul when they separated or divided Barnabas and Saul from the others for the work of telling people about Jesus. The Christians also fasted, prayed, and laid on hands because the church wanted Barnabas and Saul to do this for God.

See: Fasting; Pray (Prayer); Laying on of Hands

What was the work the Holy Spirit called them to do?

[13:2]

Luke wrote about the work the Holy Spirit called them to do. The work was to go out and tell people about Jesus and the gospel.

See: Gospel; Call (Calling); Holy Spirit

See Map: Cyprus, Perga, Asia Minor

Why did the leaders lay their hands on Barnabas and Saul?

[13:3]

The leaders put their hands on Barnabas and Saul because they prayed for them to have God’s blessing and power. It was also a sign that they supported these men (see: Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6; Heb. 6:2).

See: Laying on of Hands ; Pray (Prayer); Bless (Blessing); Sign

How did the Holy Spirit send out Barnabas and Saul?

[13:4]

Luke did not write how the Holy Spirit sent out Barnabas and Saul. There were several ways the Holy Spirit led Christians.

Speech (see: Acts 13:2).

Prophecy (see: Acts 21:10-11).

Vision (See: Acts 16:6-10).

The Holy Spirit sent them out from the church in Antioch.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy); Vision); Church; Holy Spirit

See Map: Antioch

Where was Seleucia?

[13:4]

See Map: Seleucia

Where was Cyprus?

[13:4]

See Map: Cyprus

Why did Barnabas and Saul go to Cyprus?

[13:4]

There were several reasons why Barnabas and Saul went to Cyprus.

Barnabas was from Cyprus

It was easy to travel there.

Barnabas and others already told Jews there about Jesus (see: Acts 11:19-20).

Christians were there (see: Acts 21:16).

The Holy Spirit led them to go there.

See: Holy Spirit

See Map: Cyprus

Where was Salamis?

[13:5]

See Map: Salamis

What is the word of God?

[13:5]

See: Word of God

What was a synagogue?

[13:5]

See: Synagogue

Where was Paphos?

[13:6]

See Map: Paphos

What was a magician?

[13:6]

A magician did things using sorcery. This was evil. The Law of Moses commanded Jews not to do this (see: Leviticus 19:31). This was why Luke wrote Bar-Joshua was a false prophet (see: Acts 13:6).

See: Sorcery; Prophet

What was a proconsul?

[13:7]

A proconsul was a Roman leader who was given permission to rule a certain area.

How was Paul filled with the Holy Spirit?

[13:9]

Paul was filled with power from the Holy Spirit. Paul needed power from the Holy Spirit to defeat the evil power of the magician.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit

Why was the magician a “son of the devil”?

[13:10]

The magician was a “son of the devil” because he did the same things the devil did and he served the devil.

See: Satan (The Devil); Sorcery

Why was the magician full of “deceit and wickedness”?

[13:10]

The magician was full of “deceit” because he said wrong things about God and Jesus. That is, he made people believe wrong things about God and Jesus. He was also full of “wickedness” because he made people do wrong things the devil wanted them to do.

See: Satan (The Devil); Sorcery

How was the magician an “enemy of every kind of righteousness”?

[13:10]

This magician was an “enemy of every kind of righteousness” because he did not love or do the things God wanted him to do. Instead he “made crooked” (δυστρέφω/g1406) the “straight paths of the Lord”. That is, he stopped people from doing the things God wanted people to do.

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

What were the “straight paths of the Lord”?

[13:10]

The “straight paths of the Lord” were the right and true ways of God. This is a metaphor. Luke was writing about doing the right thing and obeying God.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Walk

What was the “hand of the Lord”?

[13:11]

“The hand of the Lord” was a metaphor. Luke was writing about God judging the magician. God caused him to be blind for a time. The words, “Now look,” told the magician that God revealed this judgement to Paul.

God also made Paul temporarily blind. The result was he was later able to see the truth about Jesus. God also healed his eyes. God sometimes struck people with blindness to stop them from doing evil or to get their attention (see: Genesis 19:11; 2 Kings 6:18-20, Acts 9:8-9).

See: Lord; Metaphor; Judge (Judgment)

Why did the proconsul believe in Jesus?

[13:12]

The proconsul believed in Jesus because he was amazed at the teaching about Jesus. Luke did not write that this man believed because of the power of God working through Paul. However, the teaching about Jesus included stories about Jesus healing people and becoming alive again. Scholars also think Paul talked about his own story about God blinding him on the way to Damascus (see: Acts 9:3-9).

This proconsul was an intelligent man (see: Acts 13:7). That is, he believed because of other things about Jesus and he knew Jesus is Lord and Savior. So the power of God over the magician helped him to believe in Jesus. When someone showed other people that Jesus had power over the devil, this helped people in Jesus (see: Mark 1:22, 27).

See: Faith (Believe in); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Lord; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Satan (The Devil)

See Map: Damascus

13:13-16

Where were Paphos, Perga, and Pamphylia?

[13:13]

See Map: Paphos; Perga; Pamphylia

Why did John leave Barnabas and Paul and return to Jerusalem?

[13:13]

Luke did not write why John left Barnabas and Paul and returned to Jerusalem. Paul said John deserted them in Pamphylia (see: Acts 15:38), but years later Paul wrote Mark was useful (see: 2 Timothy 4:11). Some scholars think John Mark was not ready for the persecution that came when they told people about Jesus. Other scholars think John Mark wanted Barnabas to be the leader instead of Paul. Up to this time Luke always listed Barnabas first and then Saul. Now Luke wrote about Paul and “his friends.” All of them continued to serve. Barnabas took John Mark with him and Paul took Silas (see: Acts 15:39).

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Where was Antioch of Pisidia?

[13:14]

See Map: Antioch of Pisidia

What was a synagogue?

[13:14]

See: Synagogue

What was the Sabbath?

[13:14]

See: Sabbath

What were the law and the prophets?

[13:15]

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

How did the leaders of the synagogue sent a message to them?

[13:15]

The rulers of the synagogue sent someone to Paul and his friends inside the synagogue. The messenger told them the message during the synagogue meeting. The leaders of the synagogue did not send a message to them over a longer distance or outside of the synagogue.

See: Synagogue

Why did Paul motion with his hand?

[13:16]

Paul motioned with his hand. People often did this to invite other people to listen. Also, Paul wanted people to be silent so they would pay attention to the things he said.

Who were those who honored God?

[13:16]

Those who honored God worshiped the God of Israel and obeyed the Law of Moses. However, they were not Jews themselves. People called them “God-fearers.” They were not born Jews and they did not become circumcised.

See: Worship; Law of Moses; Circumcise (Circumcision)

13:17-22

What happened to the Israelites in Egypt?

[13:17]

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt until God used Moses to free them from the Egyptians.

See: Serve

See Map: Egypt

What was God’s “uplifted arm”?

[13:17]

God’s “uplifted arm” was a metaphor to say God has great power. God led the Israelites out of slavery.

See: Metaphor

What were the seven nations in the land of Canaan?

[13:19]

The seven nations in the land of Canaan were the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (see: Deuteronomy 7:1). Each nation was larger and stronger than the Israelites.

See: Canaan (Promised Land)

See Map: Canaan

Why did God drive out the seven nations from Canaan?

[13:19]

God drove out the seven nations from Canaan to give the Israelites an inheritance. This land promised to their ancestor Abraham (see: Genesis 15:18). Also, the nations from Canaan were evil so God punished them (see: Leviticus 18:24-25).

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Canaan (Promised Land); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Punish (Punishment)

See Map: Canaan

What events made up the 450 years?

[13:19]

The 450 years included the time Israel spent in Egypt, 400 years, and the time they travelled in the wilderness, 40 years, and about 10 years of time it took to control Canaan. The time to control Canaan was the time they entered into Canaan to when they finished dividing the land among the tribes of Israel.

See: Canaan (Promised Land); Tribes of Israel

See Map: Canaan

What was a judge?

[13:20]

A judge was someone who helped lead or rule the Israelites in the Promised Land before there were kings in Israel

See: Judge (Judgment); Canaan (Promised Land)

Why was Samuel at the time when the period of the Judges ended?

[13:20]

God began to do something different with Israel after Samuel. Samuel was a priest, a prophet, and the last judge of Israel.

Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel (see: 1 Samuel 2:35; 3:20; 7:15–17).

See: Judge (Judgment); Priest (Priesthood); Prophet; Appoint

Why did the people ask for a king to rule over them?

[13:21]

The people asked for a king to rule over them because they rejected the judges. When they asked for a man to be king, they rejected God who was their king (see: 1 Samuel 8:6-7).

Why did God remove Saul from being king?

God removed Saul from being king because he did not obey the Lord (See: 1 Samuel 13:13-14; 15:23,26-28).

Why did Paul call David a man after God's heart?

[13:22]

Paul called David a man after God's heart because David did the things God wanted him to do. God was in the process of replacing King Saul with a new king, David.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

13:23-37

How did Paul know Jesus was a descendant of King David?

[13:23]

Paul was a Jewish teacher and he knew the promise of God to David that one of David's descendants rule forever (see: 2 Samuel 7:12-14). Because of this, the Jews kept records of everyone's ancestors.

See: Luke 3:23-38; Matthew 1:1-17

See: Covenant with David; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Son of David

What was a savior?

[13:23]

See: Savior

What John was Luke writing about?

[13:24]

Luke wrote about John the Baptist. The Jews in Palestine knew John the Baptist at that time. John the Baptist was not the messiah, but he came before the messiah to prepare people to receive the messiah. John the Baptist preached repentance from sins and he baptized people for this repentance (See: Mark 1:4-5).

See: Messiah (Christ); Preach (Preacher); Repent (Repentance); Repent (Repentance); Baptize (Baptism)

Who is the "one"?

[13:25]

John spoke of the "one" to come after him who will be Jesus (see: Isaiah 40:3; Mark 1:3). John said this "one" is far greater than he was. Jesus is so much greater than John and John thought he was not even able to be his servant (see: Mark 1:7). John baptized with water, but this "one" that comes after John will baptize with the Holy Spirit (see: Mark 1:8).

See: Baptize (Baptism)

Who were children of the offspring of Abraham?

[13:26]

The children of the offspring of Abraham were the Jews. Paul spoke to both the Jews and Gentiles who were with the Jews in the synagogue and who worshiped God.

See: Gentile; Synagogue; Worship

What was the message of salvation?

[13:26]

The message of salvation is the gospel

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gospel

How did the people and rulers of Jerusalem fulfill the voices of the prophets?

[13:27]

The people and rulers of Jerusalem fulfilled the voices of the prophets when they did not recognize Jesus. That is, they did not believe Jesus was the messiah, so they rejected Jesus (see: John 12:37-40; Romans 9:33). This was what the prophets prophesied would happen.

See: Isaiah 6:10; 2 Corinthians 4:4

See: Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Prophecy (Prophecy)

Who was Pilate?

[13:28]

Pilate was the Roman leader who ruled Judea when Jesus was alive on the earth.

See Map: Judea

What were “all the things that were written about him”?

[13:29]

“All the things that were written about him” were the things that happened to Jesus. These things were written about in the Old Testament, long before Jesus lived on the earth.

See: Isaiah 53:3-5,7; Psalm 22; 69; Zechariah 12:10

Why was Jesus on a “tree”?

[13:29]

When Luke wrote about a tree, he was writing about the cross.

See: Galatians 3:13

See: Cross

How did Jesus become alive again?

[13:30]

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Where was Galilee?

[13:31]

See Map: Galilee

What did the people do after they saw Jesus alive again?

[13:31]

The people who saw Jesus alive again told other people about Jesus, his resurrection, and the gospel.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Gospel

What was the “promise that came to our fathers”?

[13:32]

The “promise that came to our fathers” were the promises God made to Abraham, Moses, and David.

See: Galatians 3:8-9; Isaiah 55:3

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Where did God say, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David”?

[13:34]

God said, “I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David,” to the prophet Isaiah (see Isaiah 55:3). Paul was thinking about Isaiah 55:3 when he repeated the second Psalm. David wrote about God saying he is the Father of his Son Jesus in the second Psalm (see: Acts 4:25-26).

See: God the Father; Son of God

When did God “become” the Father of the Son?

[13:33]

God has always been the Father of the Son. That is, Jesus was already God’s Son even before God and Jesus made the world (see: John 17:5; 1:1-3). Paul did not say the word “become”(γεννάω/g1080) to say God became the father of Jesus when Jesus came into the world, or when Jesus was baptized, or even when Jesus became alive again. Paul wrote God powerfully “declared” or “said”(ὁρίζω/g3724) Jesus is the Son of God when he made Jesus alive again (see: Romans 1:4).

See: God the Father; Son of God

See: Matthew 3:17; 17:5

Why did Jesus’ body not decay?

[13:35]

Jesus’ body did not decay because it was dead only three days.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

13:38-43

How did Jesus forgive sins?

[13:38]

See: John 3:16

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

Why were Christians justified?

[13:39]

See: Romans 8:1-4; 10:9-10

See: Justify (Justification)

Why did Paul say “the prophets”?

[13:40]

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did Paul say the same thing Habakkuk wrote?

[13:40]

Paul said the same thing the prophet Habakkuk wrote. He did not want people to reject Jesus in the way the Israelites of Habakkuk’s day rejected God.

What were “devout proselytes”?

[13:43]

“Devout proselytes” were Gentiles who became Jews. They worshiped God, obeyed the Law of Moses, and were circumcised.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Gentile

How did someone “continue in the grace of God”?

[13:43]

Luke wrote about continuing in the grace of God. Scholars think the people continued to believe in the gospel about Jesus.

See: Gospel; Grace

13:44-52

What was the word of the Lord?

[13:44]

See: Word of God; Lord

Why were the Jews envious?

[13:45]

The Jews were envious because they saw large crowds listening to Paul and Barnabas. They wanted the people to listen to them instead of Paul and Barnabas. Some Jews believed in Jesus but many did not. This is because some people did not want God to be at peace with Gentiles who did not obey the Law of Moses (see: Acts 13:39).

Why did Paul speak the word of God to the Jews first and then the Gentiles?

[13:46]

Paul spoke the word of God to the Jews first because God gave them promises, the covenants, the Law of Moses, and the temple (see: Romans 9:4). Also, Jesus was a Jew (see: Romans 9:5). Paul wanted the Jews to know their Messiah, Jesus. Also, God wanted the Jews to help the Gentiles know about God. However, because most of the Jews did not believe in Jesus, they were not able to do this.

See: Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; Galatians 2:7).

See: Word of God; Covenant; Law of Moses; Temple; Messiah (Christ); Gentile

How did the Gentiles glorify the word of the Lord?

[13:48]

The Gentiles glorified the word of the Lord when they believed in Jesus. They praised God that they were worthy to have God save them.

See: Glory (Glorify); Faith (Believe in); Word of God; Praise; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What is “eternal life”?

[13:48]

See: Eternal Life

How did God appoint people to eternal life?

[13:48]

God appointed people to eternal life. Scholars think God chose who would have eternal life in some way. Scholars disagree about how and when God did this.

See: Eternal Life

How did the “word of the Lord” spread?

[13:49]

The “word of the Lord” spread. That is, Christians told other people about Jesus and more people knew about Jesus. As Christians began to do this, more and more people learned about Jesus and God.

See: Gospel; Faith (Believe in)

Why did the Jews incite leading men and women?

[13:50]

The Jews incited leading men and women. That is, they made these people angry. This is because these Jews rejected Jesus and they did not want people to believe in Jesus. These Jews did not want more Jews to become Christians so they tried to get people to force Paul and Barnabas out of the city.

See: Gospel; Faith (Believe in); Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Paul and Barnabas shake the dust off of their feet?

[13:51]

Jesus told his followers to shake the dust off their feet or sandals to warn people about rejecting his followers (see: Luke 9:5; 10:11). This was a sign that there will be judgment against their actions. Paul and the others did this against the Jews and the leaders who forced them out of the city.

See: Sign; Judge (Judgment)

Where was Iconmum?

[13:51]

See Map: Iconium

How were the disciples filled with joy and the Holy Spirit?

[13:52]

The disciples were filled with joy by the power and work of the Holy Spirit inside them. When people persecuted them, the Holy Spirit helped them to have joy.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Persecute (Persecution) ; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

Acts 13:1

General Information:

Verse 1 gives background information about the people in the church at Antioch.

Connecting Statement:

Luke begins to tell about the mission trips on which the church at Antioch send Barnabas and Saul.

Now in the church in Antioch

"At that time in the church at Antioch"

Simeon ... Niger ... Lucius ... Manaen

These are men's names.

foster brother of Herod the tetrarch

Manaen was probably Herod's playmate or close friend while they were growing up.

Acts 13:2

General Information:

The words "they" refers to the other three leaders ([Acts 13:1](#)), not including Barnabas and Saul, and it could include other believers.

Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul

"Appoint Barnabas and Saul to serve me"

I have called them

The verb here means that God chose them to do this work.

Acts 13:3

General Information:

The words "they" and "their" refer to the other three leaders ([Acts 13:1](#)), not including Barnabas and Saul, and they could include other believers.

laid their hands on these men

"laid their hands on these men whom God had set apart for his service." This act showed that the leaders agreed that the Holy Spirit had called Barnabas and Saul to do this work.

sent them off

"sent those men off" or "sent those men off to do the work the Holy Spirit told them to do"

Acts 13:4

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Barnabas and Saul.

So

This word marks an event that happened because of a previous event. In this case, the previous event is Barnabas and Saul being set apart by the Holy Spirit.

went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Seleucia is lower in elevation than Antioch.

Seleucia

a city by the sea

Acts 13:5

General Information:

Here the words "They" and "their" refer to Barnabas and Saul.

city of Salamis

The city of Salamis was on Cyprus Island.

proclaimed the word of God

"Word of God" here is a synecdoche for "message of God."

Alternate translation: "proclaimed the message of God"

synagogues of the Jews

Possible meanings are that 1) there were multiple Jewish synagogues in the city of Salamis where Barnabas and Saul preached or 2) Barnabas and Saul started at the synagogue at Salamis and continued to preach in all the synagogues they found while they traveled around the Island of Cyprus.

They also had John for an assistant

"John went with them and was helping them"

John

John Mark

assistant

"helper"

Acts 13:6

General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refers to Paul, Silas, and John Mark.

the whole island

They crossed from one side of the island to the other and shared the gospel message in each town they passed

through.

Paphos

a major city on Cyprus island where the proconsul lived they found

Here "found" means they came upon him without looking for him. Alternate translation: "they met" or "they came upon"

a certain magician

"a particular person who practiced witchcraft" or "a person who practiced supernatural magic arts"

whose name was Bar-Jesus

"Bar-Jesus" means "Son of Jesus." There is no relation between this man and Jesus Christ. "Jesus" was a common name at that time.

Acts 13:7

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Sergius Paulus, the proconsul. associated with

"was often with" or "was often in the company of"

proconsul

This was a governor in charge of a Roman province.

Alternate translation: "governor"

who was an intelligent man

This is background information about Sergius Paulus.

This man summoned

The phrase "this man" refers to Sergius Paulus.

he sought to hear the word of God

"he wanted to hear the word of God"

Acts 13:8

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Paul, Silas, and John Mark, and "he" refers to Elymas.

Elymas "the magician"

This was Bar Jesus, who was also called "the magician"

that is how his name is translated

"that was what he was called in Greek"

opposed them; he tried to turn

"resisted them by trying to turn" or "attempted to stop them by trying to turn"

tried to turn the proconsul away from the faith

Here "to turn ... away from" is a metaphor for convincing someone to not do something. Alternate translation:

"attempted to persuade the governor not to believe the gospel message"

Acts 13:9

General Information:

The word "him" refers to the magician Elymas, who is also called Bar Jesus ([Acts 13:6-8](#)).

Connecting Statement:

While on the island of Paphos, Paul begins to talk to Elymas.

Saul, who is also called Paul

"Saul" was his Jewish name, and "Paul" was his Roman name. Since he was speaking to a Roman official, he used his Roman name. Alternate translation: "Saul, who now called himself Paul"

stared at him intensely

"looked at him intensely"

Acts 13:10

You son of the devil

Paul is saying the man is acting like the devil. Alternate translation: "You are like the devil" or "You act like the devil"

you are full of all kinds of deceit and wickedness

"you are always intent in causing others to believe what is not true using falsehood and are always doing what is wrong"

wickedness

The word in this context means laziness and lack of diligence in following God's law.

You are an enemy of every kind of righteousness

Paul is grouping Elymas with the devil. Just as the devil is an enemy of God and is against righteousness, so also was Elymas.

You will never stop twisting the straight paths of the Lord, will you?

Paul uses this question to rebuke Elymas for opposing God.

Alternate translation: "You are always saying that the truth about the Lord God is false!"

the straight paths of the Lord

Here "straight paths" refer to the ways that are true.

Alternate translation: "the true ways of the Lord"

Acts 13:11

General Information:

The words "you," "he," and "him" refer to Elymas the magician.

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to Elymas.

the hand of the Lord is upon you

Here "hand" represents the power of God and "upon you" implies punishment. Alternate translation: "The Lord will punish you"

you will become blind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will make you blind"

You will not see the sun

Elymas will be so completely blind that he not even be able to see the sun. Alternate translation: "You will not even see the sun"

for a while

"for a period of time" or "until the time appointed by God"

there fell on Elymas a mist and darkness

"the eyes of Elymas became blurry and then dark" or

"Elymas started seeing unclearly and then he could not see anything"

he started going around

"Elymas wandered around" or "Elymas started feeling around and"

Acts 13:12

General Information:

Both instances of "he" refer to the proconsul.

the proconsul

A proconsul was a governor in charge of a Roman province.

Alternate translation: "the governor"

he believed

"he believed in Jesus"

he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the teaching about the Lord amazed him"

Acts 13:13

General Information:

Verse 13 gives background information about this part of the story. "Paul and his friends" were Barnabas and John Mark

Connecting Statement:

This is a new part of the story about Paul in Antioch in Pisidia.

Now

This marks the beginning of a new part of the story.

set sail from Paphos

"traveled by sailboat from Paphos"

came to Perga in Pamphylia

"arrived in Perga, which is in Pamphylia"

But John left them

"But John Mark left Paul and Barnabas"

Acts 13:14

General Information:

Verse 14 continues to give background information about this part of the story. The word "they" refers to Paul and his friends Barnabas and John Mark

Antioch of Pisidia

"the city of Antioch in the district of Pisidia." This is different from the city of Antioch that Paul and Barnabas left at the beginning of the chapter.

Acts 13:15

General Information:

The word "them" refers to Paul and his friends Barnabas and John Mark.

After the reading of the law and the prophets

The "law and the prophets" refer to parts of the Jewish scriptures which were read. Alternate translation: "After someone read from the books of the law and the writings of the prophets"

sent them a message, saying

"told someone to say to them" or "asked someone to say to them"

Brothers

The term "brothers" is here used by the people in the synagogue to refer to Paul and Barnabas as fellow Jews.

if you have any message of encouragement

"if you want to say anything to encourage us"

encouragement

or "exhortation"

say it

"please speak it" or "please tell it to us"

Acts 13:16

General Information:

The words "he" and "his" refer to Paul. The word "you" is plural.

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins his speech to those in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch. He begins by talking about things that happened in Israel's history.

motioned with his hand

This could refer to moving his hands as a signal that he was ready to speak. Alternate translation: "moved his hands to show that he was about to speak"

you who fear God

This refers to Gentiles who had converted to Judaism. "you who are not Israelites but who worship God"

God, listen

"God, listen to me" or "God, listen to what I am about to say"

Acts 13:17

General Information:

The word "our" includes the speaker and the hears and so is plural. The words "they" and "them" refer to "the people."

The word "he" refers to God.

The God of this people Israel

"The God the people of Israel worship"

our fathers

"our ancestors"

exalted the people

"caused the people to become very numerous"

with an uplifted arm

This refers to God's mighty power. Alternate translation:

"with great power"

out of it

"out from the land of Egypt"

Acts 13:18

he put up with them

"God tolerated the people of Israel." This means "he tolerated them." Some versions have have a different word that means "he took care of them." Alternate translation: "God endured their disobedience" or "God took care of them"

Acts 13:19

General Information:

Here both instances of "he" refer to God. The word "our" refers to Paul and his audience.

nations

Here the word "nations" refers to different people groups and not to lands with geographical boundaries.

Acts 13:20

General Information:

The word "them" refers to the people of Israel.

took place over 450 years

"took more than 450 years to accomplish"

until Samuel the prophet

"until the time of the prophet Samuel"

Acts 13:21

king for forty years

"their king for forty years" or "king, and he reigned over them for forty years"

Acts 13:22

General Information:

The quotation here is from Old Testament.

removed him from the kingship

This expression means God caused Saul to stop being king. Alternate translation: "rejected Saul from being king"

he raised up David to be their king

"God chose David to be their king"

their king

"the king of Israel" or "the king over the Israelites"

It was about David that God testified, saying,

"God gave this testimony about David:"

I have found David ... to be

"I have observed that David ... is"

a man after my heart
 This expression means "a man who wants what I want."
 Acts 13:23
 From this man's descendants
 "From David's descendants." This is placed at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize that the savior had to be one of David's descendants (Acts 13:22).
 has brought to Israel
 This refers to the people of Israel. Alternate translation: "gave to the people of Israel"
 as he promised to do
 "just as God promised he would do"
 Acts 13:24
 a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel
 You can translate the word "repentance" as the verb "repent." Alternate translation: "that all the people of Israel who wanted to repent of their sin needed to have him baptize them"
 Acts 13:25
 Who do you think I am?
 John asked this question to compel the people to think about who he was. Alternate translation: "Think about who I am."
 I am not the one
 John was referring to the Messiah, whom they were expecting to come. Alternate translation: "I am not the Messiah"
 But listen
 This emphasizes the importance of what he will say next.
 one is coming after me
 This also refers to the Messiah. Alternate translation: "The Messiah will soon come"
 the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to untie
 "I am not worthy even to untie his sandals." The Messiah is so much greater than John that he did not even feel worthy to do the lowest job for him.
 Acts 13:26
 General Information:
 Here the word "us" includes Paul and his entire audience in the synagogue.
 Brothers, children of the offspring of Abraham, and those among you who fear God
 Possible meanings are 1) this is a list with three items, and Paul is addressing three groups of people together, or 2) the phrases "children of the offspring of Abraham" and "those among you who fear God" refer to the two groups of people whom Paul addresses as "brothers."
 those among you who fear God
 These words refer specifically to Gentiles who worshiped in the synagogue and obeyed much of the law of Moses but had not been circumcised.
 the message about this salvation has been sent
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has sent the message about this salvation"
 about this salvation
 The word "salvation" can be translated with the verb "save." Alternate translation: "that God will save people"
 Acts 13:27
 General Information:

The word "they" and "their" refers to the Jews who lived in Jerusalem.
 did not recognize him
 "did not realize that this man Jesus was the one whom God had sent to save them"
 the voices of the prophets
 Here the word "voices" is a metonym for the message that the voices spoke. Alternate translation: "the writings of the prophets" or "the messages of the prophets"
 that are read
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which someone reads"
 Acts 13:28
 General Information:
 Here the word "they" refers to the Jewish people and their religious leaders in Jerusalem. The word him" here refers to Jesus.
 they found no reason for the death penalty
 It is implied that they found no legal reason for Jesus to be put to death. Alternate translation: "they found no legal reason for Jesus to be killed" or "they found no legal reason to kill Jesus"
 Acts 13:29
 When they had completed all the things that were written about him
 "When they did to Jesus all the things that the prophets said would happen to him"
 they took him down from the tree
 It may be helpful to explicitly say Jesus died before this happened. Alternate translation: "they killed Jesus and then took him down from the cross after he died"
 from the tree
 "from the cross." This was another way people at that time referred to the cross.
 Acts 13:30
 But God raised him
 "But" indicates a strong contrast between what the people did and what God did.
 raised him from the dead
 "raised him from among those who were dead." To be with "the dead" means to be dead. To raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again.
 Alternate translation: "caused him to live again"
 from the dead
 From among all those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To raise someone from among them speaks of making that person alive again.
 Acts 13:31
 He was seen for many days by those who had come up with him ...
 Jerusalem
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The disciples who traveled with Jesus ... Jerusalem saw him for many days"
 many days
 We know from other writings that this period was 40 days. Translate "many days" with a term that would be appropriate for that length of time.
 are now his witnesses to the people
 "are now testifying to the people about Jesus" or "are now

telling the people about Jesus"

Acts 13:32

So

This word marks an event that happened because of previous event. In this case, the previous event is God's raising Jesus from the dead.

our fathers

"our ancestors." Paul is still speaking to the Jews and Gentile converts in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. These were the physical ancestors of the Jews, and the spiritual ancestors of the converts.

Acts 13:33

God has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus

You may need to rearrange the parts of this sentence, which begins in verse 32. "God has fulfilled for us, their children, the promise that he made to our fathers, by raising up Jesus"

for us, their children

"for us, who are the children of our ancestors." Paul is still speaking to the Jews and Gentile converts in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia. These ancestors were the physical ancestors of the Jews and the spiritual ancestors of the converts.

by raising up Jesus

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "by making Jesus alive again"

As it is written in the second Psalm

"This is what was written in the second Psalm"

the second Psalm

"Psalm 2"

Son ... Father

These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God.

Acts 13:34

General Information:

The quotation is from the prophet Isaiah.

As to his raising him from the dead, never to return to decay, he has spoken in this way:

"God has spoken in this way that he raised him up from the dead never to return to decay" "God used these words to say that he raised him up from the dead, and so he would never die again"

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

never to return to decay

"and he will never die again"

he has spoken in this way

God has said using these words

sure blessings

"certain blessings"

Acts 13:35

This is why he also says in another Psalm

Paul's audience would have understood that this Psalm refers to the Messiah. Alternate translation: "In another Psalm of David, he also says about the Messiah"

he also says

"David also says." David is the author of Psalm 16, from which this quotation is taken.

You will not allow your Holy One to see decay

The phrase "see decay" is a metonym for "decay." Alternate translation: "You will not allow the body of your Holy One to rot"

You will not allow

David is speaking to God here.

Acts 13:36

in his own generation

"during his lifetime"

served the purpose of God

"did what God wanted him to do" or "did what pleased God"

he fell asleep

This was a polite way to refer to death. Alternate

translation: "he died"

was laid with his fathers

"was buried with his ancestors who had died"

his body experienced decay

The phrase "his body experienced decay" is a less direct way of saying "his body decayed" or "his body rotted."

Acts 13:37

he whom God raised up experienced

"Jesus, whom God raised up, experienced"

God raised up

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "God caused to live again"

experienced no decay

The phrase "experienced no decay" is a way to say "his body did not decay." Alternate translation: "did not rot"

Acts 13:38

let it be known to you

"know this" or "this is important for you to know"

brothers

Paul uses this term because they are his fellow Jews and followers of Judaism. They are not Christian believers at this point. Alternate translation: "my fellow Israelites and other friends"

that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that we proclaim to you that your sins can be forgiven through Jesus"

forgiveness of sins

The abstract noun "forgiveness" can be translated with the verb "to forgive." Alternate translation: "that God can forgive your sins"

Acts 13:39

But by this man God makes righteous everyone who believes

"But God makes righteous everyone who believes in this man"

by this man

Here "this man" refers to Jesus Christ.

Acts 13:40

be careful

It is implied that the thing they should be careful about is Paul's message. Alternate translation: "give close attention to the things I have said"

that the thing the prophets spoke about

"so that what the prophets spoke about"

Acts 13:41

General Information:

In his message to the people in the synagogue, Paul quotes the prophet Habakkuk. Here the word "I" refers to God.

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his speech in the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, which he began in Acts 13:16.

you despisers

"you who feel contempt" or "you who ridicule"

be astonished

"be amazed" or "be shocked"

then perish

"then die"

am doing a work

"am doing something" or "am doing a great deed"

in your days

"during your lifetime"

days, a work that

"days. I am doing something that"

even if someone announces it to you

"even if someone tells you about it"

Acts 13:42

As Paul and Barnabas left

"When Paul and Barnabas were leaving"

begged them that they might

"begged them to"

these same words

Here "words" refers to the message that Paul had spoken.

Alternate translation: "this same message"

Acts 13:43

When the synagogue meeting ended

Possible meanings are 1) this restates "As Paul and Barnabas left" in verse 42 or 2) Paul and Barnabas left the meeting before it ended and this occurs later.

proselytes

These were non-Jewish people who converted to Judaism.

who were speaking to them and persuading them

"and Paul and Barnabas were speaking to those people and persuading them"

to continue in the grace of God

It is implied that they believed Paul's message that Jesus was the Messiah. Alternate translation: "to continue to trust that God kindly forgives people's sins because of what Jesus did"

Acts 13:44

almost the whole city was

The "city" represents the people in the city. This phrase is used to show the great response to the Lord's word.

Alternate translation: "almost all the people of the city were"

to hear the word of the Lord

It is implied that Paul and Barnabas were the ones who spoke the word of the Lord. Alternate translation: "to hear Paul and Barnabas speak about the Lord Jesus"

Acts 13:45

General Information:

Here the word "him" refers to Paul.

the Jews

Here "Jews" represents Jewish leaders. Alternate

translation: "the Jewish leaders"

were filled with envy

Here envy is spoken of as if it were something that could fill up a person. Alternate translation: "became very envious" spoke against

"contradicted" or "opposed"

the things that were said by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that Paul said"

Acts 13:46

General Information:

Both instances of the word "you" and the word "yourselves" refer to the Jews to whom Paul is speaking and so are plural. The word "we" refers to Paul and Barnabas but not the crowd that was present.

It was necessary

This implies that God had commanded this be done.

Alternate translation: "God commanded"

that the word of God should first be spoken to you

This can be stated in active form. "Word of God" here is a synecdoche for "message from God." Alternate translation: "that we speak the message from God to you first" or "that we speak the word of God to you first"

Seeing you push it away from yourselves

Their rejection of the word of God is spoken of as if it were something they pushed away. Alternate translation: "Since you reject the word of God"

consider yourselves unworthy of eternal life

"have shown that you are not worthy of eternal life" or "act as though you are not worthy of eternal life"

we will turn to the Gentiles

"we will go to the Gentiles." Paul and Barnabas were implying that they would preach to the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "we will leave you and start preaching to the Gentiles"

Acts 13:47

General Information:

The word "us" refers to Paul and Barnabas but not the crowd that was present, so it is exclusive.

commanded us ... 'I have appointed you as a light ... you should bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth.'

Both instances of "you" here are singular, but when Paul said, "... the Lord commanded us," Paul was applying those singular words to both himself and Barnabas. The words in the quotation were originally spoken by God through Isaiah the prophet to God's servant. By quoting Isaiah's prophecy, Paul was saying that he and Barnabas were doing what God commanded his servant to do. Paul was not saying that God had spoken directly to him.

as a light

Here the truth about Jesus that Paul was preaching is spoken of as if it were a light that allowed people to see.

bring salvation to the uttermost parts of the earth

The abstract word "salvation" can be translated with the verb "to save." The phrase "uttermost parts" refers to everywhere. Alternate translation: "tell people everywhere in the world that I want to save them"

Acts 13:48

glorified the word of the Lord

Here "word" refers to the message about Jesus that they had believed. Alternate translation: "glorified God for the message about the Lord Jesus" or "glorified the Lord for his word"

As many as were appointed to eternal life

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As many as God appointed to eternal life" or "All the people whom God had chosen to receive eternal life"

Acts 13:49

The word of the Lord was spread out through the whole region

Here "word" refers to the message about Jesus. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Those who believed spread the word of the Lord through the whole region" or "Those who believed went everywhere in the region and told others about the message of Jesus"

Acts 13:50

the Jews

This probably refers to the leaders of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

incited ... women ... and ... men

This means that they spoke to the women and men and caused them to be angry and act violently. Alternate translation: "stirred up ... women ... and ... men"

the devout women of high standing

The word "devout" means that these women feared God.

The phrase "of high standing" means that people respected

these women.

the leading men

"the most important men"

They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas

The word "they" here probably refers to the devout women and the leading men. They listened to the Jews and then convinced the rest of the people in the city to persecute the apostles and throw them out.

threw them out of their region

"made Paul and Barnabas leave their land"

region

Here this word refers to the area that the people of the city considered their own, not to land within an official government border.

Acts 13:51

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas end their time in Antioch of Pisidia and go to Iconium.

shook off the dust from their feet against them

This was a symbolic act to indicate to the unbelieving people that God had rejected them and would punish them.

Acts 13:52

the disciples

This probably refers to the new believers in the Antioch of Pisidia that Paul and Silas just left.

Chapter 14

Acts 14 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"The message of his grace"

The message of Jesus is the message that God will show grace to those who believe in Jesus. (See: grace and believe)

Zeus and Hermes

The Gentiles in the Roman Empire worshiped many different false gods who do not really exist. Paul and Barnabas told them to believe in the "living God." (See: falsegod)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"We must enter into the kingdom of God through many sufferings."

Jesus told his followers before he died that everyone who followed him would suffer persecution. Paul is saying the same thing using different words.

Links:

[Acts 14:1](#)

Acts 14

14:1-7

Where was Iconium?

[14:1]

See Map: Iconium

What was a synagogue?

[14:1]

See: Synagogue

What did the Jews and Greeks believe?

[14:1]

Scholars think that the Jews and Greeks believed the message about Jesus. That is, Jesus was the one God had promised to send to save people from their sins.

See: Gentile; Messiah (Christ); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin

What was “a great multitude”?

[14:1]

A great multitude means a very large number. Some scholars think there were several hundreds of people who believed in Jesus.

Who were disobedient Jews and what did they do?

[14:2]

When Luke wrote about Jews who were disobedient, he was speaking about Jews who refused to believe the message about Jesus. When Luke wrote that these Jews made the minds of the Gentiles “bitter”(κακώω/g2559) against the brothers, he meant the Jews turned the Gentiles away from believing the truth about Jesus.

See: Gentile; Family of God

How did Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly with the Lord’s power?

[14:3]

Paul and Barnabas spoke boldly with the Lord’s power. That is, Paul and Barnabas spoke without being afraid of who might hear them. Scholars think that Jesus gave Paul and Barnabas power to keep on teaching and preaching.

See: Preach (Preacher)

What was the message of God’s grace?

[14:3]

The message of God’s grace was the gospel.

See: Gospel; Grace

What were signs and wonders?

[14:3]

See: Sign

What was an apostle?

[14:4]

See: Apostle

Where were Lycaonia, Lystra, and Derbe?

[14:6]

See Map: Lycaonia; Lystra; Derbe

What was the gospel?

[14:7]

See: Gospel

14:8-18

How did the man have faith to be made well?

[14:9]

The man had faith to be made well. Scholars think that Paul saw something and he knew the man believed in Jesus. They think the Holy Spirit helped Paul to know that the man believed Jesus was going to make him well.

See: Acts 3:1-10

See: Faith (Believe in); Holy Spirit

Who were Zeus and Hermes?

[14:12]

In ancient times, some people worshipped the Greek gods. The king of the Greek gods was Zeus, and Hermes was the god who delivered messages to the people from Zeus. After the healing miracle, the people began to call Paul “Hermes” because he did most of the speaking. They also called Barnabas “Zeus”.

See: False gods; Miracle

Why did Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes?

[14:14]

Scholars think Paul and Barnabas tore their clothes as a sign of strong disapproval of what the people wanted to do. Paul and Barnabas wanted the crowds to know that they were just men and that the actions of the crowd were blaspheming God.

See: Sign; Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

Why did Paul tell the crowd that they should turn from these useless things?

[14:15]

When Paul urged the crowd to “turn from these useless things,” he wanted them to stop worshipping those things.

Scholars think Paul was speaking about the idols because they had no power and were not real.

See: Worship; Idolatry (Idol)

How did God allow all the nations to walk in their own ways?

[14:16]

God allowed the nations to walk in their own ways. God allowed the Gentile nations to live in the way they wanted to live.

That is, he allowed them to live without the Law of Moses. He allowed them to sin because they wanted to sin. The nations worshipped many things, but not the one true God.

See: Gentile; Sin

Advice to translators: When speaking about the nations here, it means the people who lived in those nations.

14:19-28

Where were Antioch and Iconium?

[14:19]

See Map: Antioch; Iconium

What was a disciple?

[14:20]

See: Disciple

Where was Derbe?

[14:20]

See Map: Derbe

How did Paul and Barnabas strengthen “the souls of the disciples”?

[14:22]

Paul and Barnabas strengthened the souls of the disciples. Scholars think that Paul and Barnabas taught people about the Bible to remind the disciples about the truth about God and God’s promises. When they did this, Paul and Barnabas encouraged the disciples to make choices to trust God even when they were persecuted.

See: Soul; Disciple; Persecute (Persecution)

What was the kingdom of God about which Paul and Barnabas spoke?

[14:22]

See: Kingdom of God

How does someone enter into the Kingdom of God through many sufferings?

[14:22]

Scholars think Paul and Barnabas taught that many Christians will experience suffering and persecution while they are living in this present world. Jesus himself said, “In this world you will have tribulation” (see: John 16:33). They think that Paul and Barnabas meant that when Jesus returns to the earth to rule, Christians will no longer experience the world’s sufferings.

See: Persecute (Persecution); Tribulation

What was an elder?

[14:23]

See: Elder

What was fasting?

[14:23]

See: Fasting

What did it mean that Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders to the Lord?

[14:23]

When they “entrusted”(παράτιθημι/g3908) the elders to the Lord, Paul and Barnabas committed the care of the elders to Jesus. That is, they asked Jesus to protect the elders as they served the growing number of Christians.

See: Elder

Where were Pisidia, Pamphylia, Perga, and Attalia?

[14:24]

See Map: Pisidia; Pamphylia; Perga; Attalia

What was meant by the words, “committed to the grace of God”?

[14:26]

Paul and Barnabas were first committed to the grace of God for their work among the Jews and Gentiles beyond Antioch with prayer, fasting and the laying on of hands of the Christians in Antioch (see: Acts 13:2,3). That is, they were set apart to do the work to which God had called them.

See: Grace; Gentile; Pray (Prayer); Fasting; Laying on of Hands ; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Call (Calling)

See Map: Antioch

What was a church?

[14:27]

See: Church

What was a “door of faith for the Gentiles”?

[14:27]

When Luke wrote about a “door of faith for the Gentiles,” this was a metaphor. He was writing that God opened the hearts and minds of the Gentiles to understand the gospel and believe in Jesus.

Acts 14:1

General Information:

The story of Paul and Barnabas in Iconium continues.

It came about in Iconium that

Possible meanings here are 1) "It happened in Iconium that" or 2) "In Iconium, as usual,"

spoke in such a way

"spoke so powerfully." It may be helpful to state that they spoke the message about Jesus. Alternate translation:

"spoke the message about Jesus so powerfully"

Acts 14:2

the Jews who were disobedient

This refers to the portion of the Jews who did not believe the message about Jesus.

stirred up the minds of the Gentiles

Causing the Gentiles to become angry is spoken of as if calm waters were disturbed.

the minds of the Gentiles

Here the word "minds" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles"

the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to Paul and Barnabas and the new believers.

Acts 14:3

General Information:

Here the words "he," "his," and "He" refer to the Lord.

So they stayed there

"Nevertheless they stayed there." Paul and Barnabas stayed in Iconium to help the many people who had believed in Acts 14:1. "So" could be omitted if it adds confusion to the text.

gave evidence about the message of his grace

"demonstrated that the message about his grace was true"

about the message of his grace

"about the message of the Lord's grace"

by granting signs and wonders to be done by the hands of Paul and Barnabas

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by enabling Paul and Barnabas to perform signs and wonders" by the hands of Paul and Barnabas

Here "hands" refers to the will and effort of these two men as guided by the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "by the ministry of Paul and Barnabas"

Acts 14:4

the people of the city were divided

"the people of the city disagreed with each other"

sided with the Jews

"supported the Jews" or "agreed with the Jews." The first group mentioned did not agree with the message about grace.

with the apostles

The second group mentioned agreed with the message about grace. It may be helpful to restate the verb. Alternate translation: "sided with the apostles"

the apostles

Luke refers to Paul and Barnabas. Here "apostle" might be used in the general sense of "ones sent out."

Acts 14:5

made an attempt to mistreat them

Here the words "made an attempt" implies that they were not able to mistreat Paul and Barnabas before Paul and Barnabas left the city.

to mistreat them and to stone

"to beat Paul and Barnabas and to kill them by throwing stones at them"

Acts 14:6

Lycaonia

A district in Asia Minor

Lystra

A city in Asia Minor south of Iconium and north of Derbe

Derbe

A city in Asia Minor south of Iconium and Lystra

Acts 14:7

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

where they continued to proclaim the gospel

"where Paul and Barnabas continued to proclaim the good news"

Acts 14:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are now in Lystra.

a certain man sat

This introduces a new person in the story.

powerless in his feet

"unable to move his legs" or "unable to walk on his feet"

a cripple from his mother's womb

"having been born as a cripple"

cripple

person who cannot walk

Acts 14:9

General Information:

The words "him" and "he" refer to the crippled man.

Paul fixed his eyes on him

"Paul looked straight at him"

had faith to be made well

The abstract noun "faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "believed that Jesus could heal him" or "believed that Jesus could make him well"

Acts 14:10

he said to him

"Paul said to the crippled man"

jumped up

"leaped in the air." This implies that his legs were completely healed.

Acts 14:11

what Paul had done

This refers to Paul's healing the crippled man.

they raised their voice

To raise the voice is to speak loudly. Alternate translation:

"they spoke loudly"

in the dialect of Lycaonia

"in their own Lycaonian language." The people of Lystra spoke Lycaonian and also Greek.

The gods have become like men and come down to us

These people believed that the gods needed to change their appearance in order to look like men. A large number of people believed Paul and Barnabas were their pagan gods who had come down from heaven. Alternate translation: "The gods have come down from heaven to us in the form of men"

Acts 14:12

Zeus

The people of Iconium probably considered Zeus to be the king over all the other pagan gods.

Hermes

The people of Iconium probably considered Hermes to be the pagan god who brought messages to people from Zeus and the other gods.

Acts 14:13

The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought It may be helpful to include additional information about the priest. Alternate translation: "There was a temple just outside the city where the people worshiped Zeus. When the priest who served in the temple heard what Paul and Barnabas had done, he brought"

oxen and wreaths

The oxen were to be sacrificed. The wreaths were either to crown Paul and Barnabas, or put on the oxen for sacrifice. to the gates

The gates of the cities were often used as a meeting place for the people of the city.

wanted to offer sacrifice

"wanted to offer sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas as the gods Zeus and Hermes"

Acts 14:14

the apostles, Barnabas and Paul

Luke is here probably using "apostle" in the general sense of "one sent out."

they tore their clothing

This was a symbolic action to show that they were deeply distressed and upset that the crowd wanted to sacrifice to them.

Acts 14:15

Men, why are you doing these things?

Barnabas and Paul are rebuking the people for trying to sacrifice to them. Alternate translation: "Men, you must not do these things!"

doing these things

"worshiping us"

We also are human beings, with the same nature as you

By this statement, Barnabas and Paul are saying that they are not gods. Alternate translation: "We are just human beings like you. We are not gods"

with the same nature as you

"like you in every way"

telling you good news that you should turn

"telling you good news: you can turn" or "giving you good advice to turn." That is, the good news is that they can and should turn.

turn from these useless things to the living God

Here "turn from ... to" is a metaphor meaning to stop doing one thing and start doing something else. Alternate translation: "stop worshiping these false gods that cannot

help you, and instead begin to worship the living God"

the living God

"the God who truly exists" or "the God who lives"

Acts 14:16

In the past ages

"In previous times" or "Until now"

to walk in their own ways

Walking in a way, or walking on a path, is a metaphor for living one's life. Alternate translation: "to live their lives the way they wanted to" or "to do whatever they wanted to do"

Acts 14:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas continue speaking to the crowd outside the city of Lystra (Acts 14:8).

he did not leave himself without witness

This could also be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God has certainly left a witness" or "God has indeed testified"

in that

"as shown by the fact that"

filling your hearts with food and gladness

Here "your hearts" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "giving you enough to eat and things about which to be happy"

Acts 14:18

Paul and Barnabas barely kept the multitudes from sacrificing to them Paul and Barnabas stopped the multitude from sacrificing to them, but it was difficult to do so.

barely kept

"had difficulty preventing"

Acts 14:19

General Information:

Here the words "he" and "him" refer to Paul.

persuaded the crowds

It may be helpful to explicitly state what they persuaded the crowd to do. Alternate translation: "persuaded the people not to believe Paul and Barnabas, and to turn against them" the crowds

This may not be the same group as the "multitude" in the previous verse. Some time had passed, and this might be a different group that gathered together.

thinking that he was dead

"because they thought that he was already dead"

Acts 14:20

the disciples

These were new believers in the city of Lystra.

entered the city

"Paul re-entered Lystra with the believers"

he went to Derbe with Barnabas

"Paul and Barnabas went to the city of Derbe"

Acts 14:21

General Information:

Here both instances of "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas. that city

"Derbe" (Acts 14:20)

Acts 14:22

General Information:

Here the words "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas, and the word "We" includes Paul, Barnabas, and the disciples. The

word "them" refers to the disciples.

They kept strengthening the souls of the disciples

Here "souls" refers to the disciples. This emphasizes their inner thoughts and beliefs. Alternate translation: "Paul and Barnabas urged the believers to continue to believe the message about Jesus" or "Paul and Barnabas urged the believers to continue to grow strong in their relationship with Jesus"

encouraging them to continue in the faith

"encouraging the believers to keep trusting in Jesus"

saying, "We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations."

Some version translate this as an indirect quote, "saying that we must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations." The word "we" here includes Luke and the readers.

We must enter

Paul includes his hearers, so the word "we" is inclusive.

Acts 14:23

they had appointed for them

"Paul and Barnabas had appointed for the believers"

they entrusted them ... they had believed

Possible meanings are 1) "Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders they had appointed ... the elders had believed" or 2)

"Paul and Barnabas entrusted the elders they had appointed and the other disciples ... the elders and other disciples had believed"

Acts 14:24

General Information:

The word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 14:25

General Information:

Both instances of "they" refer to Paul and Barnabas.

had spoken the word

"Word" here is a metonym for "message of God." Alternate translation: "had spoken the message of God"

went down to Attalia

The phrase "went down" is used here because Attalia is lower in elevation than Perga.

Acts 14:26

where they had been committed to the grace of God

This can be stated in the active form. Alternate translation:

"where believers and leaders in Antioch had committed

Paul and Barnabas to the grace of God" or "where the

people of Antioch prayed that God would care for and

protect Paul and Barnabas"

Acts 14:27

General Information:

Here the words "they," "them," and "They" refer to Paul and Barnabas. The word "he" refers to God.

gathered the church together

"called the local believers to meet together"

he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles

God's enabling the Gentiles to believe is spoken of as if he had opened a door that had prevented them from entering into faith. Alternate translation: "God had made it possible for the Gentiles to believe"

Acts 14:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 15

Acts 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 15:16-17.

The meeting that Luke describes in this chapter is commonly called the "Jerusalem Council." This was a time when many church leaders got together to decide if believers needed to obey the whole law of Moses.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers

In this chapter Luke begins to use the word "brothers" to refer to fellow Christians instead of fellow Jews.

Obedying the law of Moses

Some believers wanted the Gentiles to be circumcised because God had told Abraham and Moses that everyone who wanted to belong to him had to be circumcised and that this was "an everlasting covenant." But Paul and Barnabas had seen God give uncircumcised Gentiles the gift of the Holy Spirit, so they did not want the Gentiles to be circumcised. Both groups went to Jerusalem to have the church leaders decide what they should do.

"Abstain from things sacrificed to idols, blood, things strangled, and from sexual immorality"

It is possible that the church leaders decided on these laws so that Jews and Gentiles could not only live together but eat the same foods together.

Links:

[Acts 15:1 Notes](#)

Acts 15

15:1-5

Who were the brothers?

[15:1]

The brothers were Gentile Christians.

See: Family of God; Gentile

What did it mean to be “circumcised according to the custom of Moses”?

[15:1]

The “custom of Moses” referred to the Law of Moses. Some of the Jewish leaders were teaching that Gentiles could not be saved unless they, too, were circumcised according to the law of Moses.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses; Gentile; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Luke write that people went up to Jerusalem?

[15:2]

Luke wrote people went up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem was on a mountain. Therefore, people said they went up to Jerusalem.

See Map: Antioch; Jerusalem

Where were Phoenicia and Samaria?

[15:3]

See Map: Phoenicia; Samaria

What were “all the things God had done” that Paul and Barnabas reported?

[15:4]

Some scholars think Luke was writing about the following events:

God filled the disciples with the Holy Spirit and with joy (see: Acts 13:52).

God did miracles (see: Acts 14:3).

Christians were persecuted (see: Acts 10:14:19; 15:26).

Christians became leaders in churches (see: Acts 14:23).

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit; Disciple; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Miracle; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did some Jews want to circumcise Gentile Christians?

[15:5]

Some scholars think that some Jews wanted to circumcise Gentile Christians men because they believed that Gentiles had to be circumcised to be at peace with God. They thought Christians needed to follow the Law of Moses. Other scholars think some of the Jews wanted to circumcise the Gentile christian men to show that they were joined together with Jewish Christians.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses; Gentile

15:6-12

Why did Peter say, “making their hearts clean by faith”?

[15:9]

Peter said, “making their hearts clean by faith.” Scholars think Peter wanted people to know that God cleansed the Gentile Christians because they believed in Jesus and not because they followed the Law of Moses and were circumcised. They did not need to do these things to be at peace with God.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Clean and Unclean; Faith (Believe in); Law of Moses

Why did Peter ask the Jewish Christians, “why do you test God”?

[15:10]

Peter asked the Jewish Christians why they tested God. Some scholars think Peter told people that all Christians are at peace with God because they believe in Jesus. Here, Peter asked the Jewish Christians if they were putting God to the test to see if God really saved Gentiles simply by faith. Other scholars think Peter was asking the Jewish Christians if they were trying to make God angry by suggesting the Gentiles had to follow the Law of Moses to become Christians.

See: Test; Faith (Believe in); Gentile

What was a yoke?

[15:10]

When Peter spoke about a “yoke,” this was a metaphor. A “yoke” was a thick wooden beam that was set across the neck and shoulders of animals. This allowed the animals to pull heavy loads in a cart, or to pull a plow. Peter spoke about the Law of Moses as a yoke. He wanted to say that it was very hard to try to obey the Law of Moses.

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses

What did it mean to be “saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus”?

[15:11]

Peter wanted people to know that someone has peace with God because they believe in Jesus. They did not need to do certain things to be at peace with God. They do not need to follow the Law of Moses. When God does this, he is gracious.

See: Grace; Faith (Believe in); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Law of Moses

What were signs and wonders?

[15:12]

See: Sign

15:13-21

Why did James speak about Peter using the name Simon?

[15:14]

James spoke about Peter using the name Simon because Simon was Peter's name in Hebrew.

Why did James say, "take from them a people for his name"?

[15:14]

James said, "take them a people for his name." Some scholars think James was speaking about the Gentiles becoming God's people. Other scholars think James wanted to say that both Jews and Gentiles could be Christians. This honored God.

See: Name; Gentile; People of God

Why did James say the same thing Amos wrote?

[15:15]

James said the same thing Amos wrote (see: Amos 9:11-12). He wanted people to know that even the prophets of the Old Testament spoke about Gentiles being called by God's name. That is, Amos prophesied that the Gentiles would one day worship God and be at peace with God.

See: Prophet; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Gentile; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Worship

What are the things that have been known from ancient times?

[15:18]

Luke wrote about things that have been known from ancient times. Scholars think Luke wanted people to know that God knew everything that would happen before he even made of the world. This included knowing that both Jews and Gentiles would worship God (see: Ephesians 1:4-5).

See: Gentile; Worship

What was the "pollution of idols"?

[15:20]

Luke wrote about the "pollution of idols." Scholars think Luke was writing about the animals used for sacrifices when people worshipped idols. James' did not want the Gentile Christians to eat these foods. This was not because it was wrong to eat these foods because they were unclean. However, it was wrong to eat these foods if it offended the Jewish Christians (see: 1 Corinthians 10:27-29).

See: Idolatry (Idol); Sacrifice; Gentile; Clean and Unclean

What was "sexual immorality"?

[15:20]

See: Sexual Immorality

What was "meat of strangled animals"?

[15:20]

"Meat of strangled animals" was meat from animals people killed but they did not drain the animal's blood. The Jews drained blood. This is the Law of Moses commanded people to eat blood (see: Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:10-14).

See: Law of Moses

Why did James want the Gentile Christians to keep away "from blood"?

[15:20]

Some scholars think James did not want the Gentile Christians to eat blood. Other scholars think James wanted the Gentile Christians to hurt or kill other people.

Why did James say Moses was proclaimed from ancient times and in the synagogues every Sabbath?

[15:21]

James said that Moses was proclaimed from ancient times and in the synagogue every Sabbath. Scholars think that even though the Jewish Christians knew they did not need to follow the Law of Moses, they still felt they should do some of the things in the Law of Moses. They thought they should eat in the way taught in the Law of Moses. They think James wanted the Gentile Christians to respect the Jewish Christians and not offend the Jewish Christians.

See: Synagogue; Sabbath; Law of Moses

15:22-29

Who was Judas?

[15:22]

Judas Barsabbas known as a Christian prophet who was a leader in the Jerusalem church.

See: Prophet; Church

Who were the Gentile brothers?

[15:22]

The Gentile "brothers" (ἀδελφός/g0080) included both Christian men and women.

See: Family of God

Why did James say, “all of us have agreed”?

[15:25]

James said, “all of us have agreed.” Scholars think that after hearing what everyone said, the leaders all agreed with Paul and Barnabas. Because of this, the leaders send other people to help Paul and Barnabas.

Why did Luke write it “seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us”?

[15:28]

Some scholars think the words, “seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us” meant that because the leaders agreed about the Gentile Christians. They believed the Holy Spirit was helping them when they gathered together. That is, the Holy Spirit helped them to agree with one another.

See: Holy Spirit

Why did they write for Gentile Christians not to do four things?

[15:29]

See: Acts 15:13-21.

15:30-35

How was it that Judas and Silas “encouraged the brothers with many words”?

[15:32]

Scholars think Judas and Silas stayed in Antioch for a short time to instruct the Christians there from the scriptures and urge them to follow the teachings of Jesus. These scholars think Judas and Silas wanted to strengthen the faith of the Christians in Antioch.

See Map: Antioch

How were Paul and Silas “sent away in peace”?

[15:33]

In ancient times, it was common for people to welcome a visitor in peace and to also send them on a journey in peace. The Christians in Antioch were sending greetings with Paul and Silas back to the Christians in Jerusalem. They sent them on their way in peace.

See Map: Jerusalem; Antioch

Did Luke write the words in verse 34?

[15:34]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have the words in verse 34. Fewer ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words in verse 34. Scholars think Luke did not write these words. They think someone added these words to help people understand how Silas remained at Antioch.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

How does someone “proclaim the word of the Lord”?

[15:35]

Scholars think that to “proclaim the word of the Lord” meant that Paul and Barnabas taught people about the gospel and the messiah (see: Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 2:8-9).

See: Gospel; Word of God; Messiah (Christ)

15:36-41

Where were Pamphylia, Cyprus, Syria, and Cilicia

[15:38, 15:39, 15:41]

See Map: Pamphylia; Cyprus; Syria; Cilicia

How did the church at Antioch entrust Paul to the grace of the Lord?

[15:40]

Some scholars say the church at Antioch entrusted Paul to the grace of the Lord by trusting that God would lead and protect Paul. This is because they knew God is kind and powerful. Other scholars think the church also entrusted Silas to the grace of the Lord.

See: Church; Grace; Lord

See Map: Antioch

Acts 15:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are still in Antioch when there is a dispute about the Gentiles and circumcision.

Some men

"Some men." You can make explicit that these men were Jews who believed in Christ.

came down from Judea

The phrase "came down" is used here because Judea is

higher in elevation than Antioch.

taught the brothers

Here "brothers" stands for believers in Christ. It is implied that they were in Antioch. Alternate translation: "taught the believers at Antioch" or "were teaching the believers at Antioch"

Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Unless someone circumcises you according to the custom of Moses, God cannot save you" or "God will not save you from your sins unless you receive circumcision according to the law of Moses"

Acts 15:2

This brought ... into a sharp dispute and debate with them

The abstract nouns "sharp dispute" and "debate" can be stated as verbs and where the men came from can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "... had confronted and debated with the men from Judea"

go up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher than almost any other place in Israel, so it was normal for Israelites to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

this question

"this issue"

Acts 15:3

General Information:

Both instances of "They" here refer to Paul, Barnabas, and certain others (Acts 15:2).

They therefore, being sent by the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Therefore the community of believers sent them from Antioch to Jerusalem"

passed through ... announced

The words "passed through" and "announced" indicate they spent some time in different places sharing in detail what God was doing.

announced the conversion of the Gentiles

The abstract noun "conversion" means the Gentiles were rejecting their false gods and believing in God. Alternate translation: "announced to the community of believers in those places that Gentiles were believing in God"

They brought great joy to all the brothers

Their message causing the brothers to be joyful is spoken of as if "joy" were an object that they brought to the brothers. Alternate translation: "What they said caused their fellow believers to rejoice"

the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to fellow believers.

Acts 15:4

General Information:

All instances of "they" and "them" here refer to Paul, Barnabas, and certain others (Acts 15:2).

they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the apostles, the elders, and the rest of the community of believers welcomed them"

with them

"through them"

Acts 15:5

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to non-Jewish believers who were not circumcised and did not keep the Old Testament laws of God.

Connecting Statement:

Paul and Barnabas are now in Jerusalem to meet with the apostles and elders there.

But certain men

Here Luke contrasts those who believe that salvation is only in Jesus to others who believe salvation is by Jesus but also believe that circumcision is required for salvation.

to keep the law of Moses

"to obey the law of Moses"

Acts 15:6

to consider this matter

The church leaders decided to discuss whether or not Gentiles needed to be circumcised and obey the law of Moses in order for God to save them from their sins.

Acts 15:7

General Information:

The word "them" refers to apostles and elders

Connecting Statement:

Peter begins to speak to the apostles and elders who met to discuss whether Gentiles had to receive circumcision and keep the law ([Acts 15:5-6](#)).

Brothers

Peter is addressing all of the believers who are present.

by my mouth

Here "mouth" refers to Peter. Alternate translation: "from me" or "by me"

the Gentiles should hear

"the Gentiles would hear"

the word of the gospel

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation:

"the message about Jesus"

Acts 15:8

General Information:

The word "them" refers to the Gentiles, and both instances of "you" are plural.

who knows the heart

Here "heart" refers to the "minds" or "inner beings."

Alternate translation: "who knows the people's minds" or

"who knows what people think"

has testified to them

"has testified to the Gentiles"

giving them the Holy Spirit

"causing the Holy Spirit to come upon them"

Acts 15:9

General Information:

The word "he" refers to God, the word "us" refers to the speaker and the hearers, and the word "them" refers to the Gentiles.

made no distinction

God did not treat Jewish believers differently from Gentile believers.

having cleansed their hearts by faith

God's forgiving the Gentile believers' sins is spoken of as though he cleaned their hearts. Here "heart" stands for the person's inner being. Alternate translation: "forgiving their sins because they believe in Jesus"

Acts 15:10

General Information:

Peter includes his audience by his use of "our" and "we."

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

why do you test God, that you should put a yoke upon the neck of the

disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Peter uses a question with a word picture to tell the Jewish believers they should not require the non-Jewish believers to perform circumcision to be saved. Alternate translation: "Do not test God by putting a burden on the non-Jewish believers which we Jews were not able to bear!"

our fathers

This refers to their Jewish ancestors.

Acts 15:11

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes speaking to the apostles and elders.

But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they were

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"But we believe the Lord Jesus will save us by his grace, just as he saved the non-Jewish believers"

Acts 15:12

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

All the multitude

"Everyone" or "The whole group" (Acts 15:6)

God had worked

"God had done" or "God had caused"

Acts 15:13

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:12).

Connecting Statement:

James begins to speak to the apostles and elders (Acts 15:6).

Brothers, listen

"Fellow believers, listen." James was probably speaking only to men.

Acts 15:14

in order to take from them a people

"so that he might choose from among them a people"

for his name

"for God's name." Here "name" refers to God. Alternate translation: "for himself"

Acts 15:15

Connecting Statement:

James quotes the prophet Amos from the Old Testament.

The words of the prophets agree

Here "words" stands for a message. Alternate translation:

"What the prophets said agrees" or "The prophets agree" agree with this

"confirm this truth"

as it is written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as they wrote" or "as the prophet Amos wrote long ago"

Acts 15:16

General Information:

Here "I" refers to God, who spoke through the words of his prophet.

I will build again the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down ... its ruins again

This speaks of God's again choosing one of David's descendants to rule over his people as though he were setting up a tent again after it fell down.

tabernacle

Here the word "tabernacle," a dwelling place, stands for David's family. The same word is used for the tent that Yahweh told Moses to construct.

Acts 15:17

the remnant of men may seek the Lord

This speaks about people wanting to obey God and learn more about him as if they were literally looking for him. remnant of men

Here "men" includes males and females. Alternate translation: "remnant of people"

may seek the Lord

God is speaking about himself in the third person. Alternate translation: "may seek me, the Lord"

including all the Gentiles called by my name

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"including all the Gentiles who belong to me"

my name

Here "my name" stands for God.

Acts 15:18

that have been known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that people have known"

Acts 15:19

General Information:

Here "we" includes James, the apostles, and the elders.

we should not trouble those of the Gentiles

You can make explicit in what way James does not want to trouble the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "we should not require the Gentiles to become circumcised and obey the laws of Moses"

who turn to God

A person who starts obeying God is spoken of as if the person is physically turning towards God.

Acts 15:20

they must keep away from the pollution of idols ... sexual immorality ... strangled ... blood

Sexual immorality, strangling animals, and consuming blood were often part of ceremonies to worship idols and false gods.

pollution of idols

This possibly refers to eating the meat of an animal that someone has sacrificed to an idol or to anything to do with idol worship.

from the meat of strangled animals, and from blood

God did not allow Jews to eat meat that still had the blood in it. Also, even earlier in Moses's writings in Genesis, God had forbidden the drinking of blood. Therefore, they could not eat an animal that someone strangled because the blood was not properly drained from the body of the animal.

Acts 15:21

Connecting Statement:

James finishes speaking to the apostles and elders. (See: Acts 15:2 and [Acts 15:13](#))

Moses has been proclaimed in every city ... and he is preached in the synagogues every Sabbath

James is implying that Gentiles know how important these rules are because Jews preach them in every city where there is a synagogue. It also implies the Gentiles can go to

the teachers from the synagogues to learn more about these rules.

Moses has been proclaimed ... he is preached

Here "Moses" represents the law of Moses, and so does "he."

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The law of Moses has been proclaimed ... the law is read" or "Jews have taught the law of Moses ... they read the law" in every city

The word "every" here is a generalization. Alternate translation: "in many cities"

Acts 15:22

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to Judas and Silas.

Judas called Barsabbas

This is the name of a man. "Barsabbas" is a second name that people called him.

leaders of the brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to the people there who believed in Jesus. Alternate translation: "leaders of the believers" or "leaders of the church"

Acts 15:23

They wrote this with their hands

One or more of the apostles and elders wrote the letter and gave it to Judas and Silas so Judas and Silas could give it to the Gentile brothers.

From the apostles and elders, your brothers, to the Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings!

This is the introduction of the letter. Your language may have a way of introducing the author of the letter and to whom it is written. Alternate translation: "This letter is from your brothers, the apostles and elders. We are writing to you Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings to you" or "To our Gentile brothers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia. Greetings from the apostles and elders, your brothers"

your brothers ... the Gentile brothers

Here the word "brothers" refers to fellow believers. By using these words, the apostles and elders assure the Gentile believers that they accept them as fellow believers.

Cilicia

This is the name of a province on the coast in Asia Minor north of the Island of Cyprus.

Acts 15:24

General Information:

Here all instances of "we" and "us" refer to the writers but not the readers

that certain men

"that some men"

with no orders from us

"even though we gave no orders for them to go"

disturbed you with words that upset your souls

Here "souls" refers to the people. Alternate translation:

"taught things that have troubled you"

Acts 15:25

General Information:

Here the words "us" and "our" refer to the writers but not the readers

who have come to one mind

"who are now agree completely"

one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

to choose men

The men they sent were Judas, who was called Barsabbas, and Silas (Acts 15:22).

Acts 15:26

men who have risked their lives

These words refer to Barnabas and Paul, not to Judas and Silas.

for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Here "name" refers to the whole person. Alternate

translation: "because they believe in our Lord Jesus Christ" or "because they serve our Lord Jesus Christ"

Acts 15:27

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writers of the letter [Acts 15:22]

who will report to you the same things in their own words

This phrase emphasizes that Judas and Silas will say the same things that the apostles and elders had written.

Alternate translation: "who themselves will tell you the same things about which we have written"

Acts 15:28

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to the writers of the letter [Acts 15:22]

to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things

This speaks about laws that people need to obey as if they were objects that people carry on their shoulders.

Acts 15:29

Connecting Statement:

This concludes the letter from the Jerusalem church to the Gentile believers in Antioch.

from things sacrificed to idols

This means they are not allowed to eat the meat of an animal that someone sacrifices to an idol.

blood

This refers to drinking blood or eating meat from which the blood has not been drained.

things strangled

A strangled animal was killed but its blood was not drained.

Farewell

This announces the end of the letter. Alternate translation: "Goodbye"

Acts 15:30

Connecting Statement:

Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas leave for Antioch.

So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch

The word "they" refers to Paul, Barnabas, Judas, and Silas.

Alternate translation: "So when the four men were dismissed, they came down to Antioch"

when they were dismissed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"when the apostles and elders dismissed the four men" or "when the believers in Jerusalem sent them"

came down to Antioch

The phrase "came down" is used here because Antioch is

lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

Acts 15:31

they rejoiced

"the believers in Antioch rejoiced"

because of the encouragement

The abstract noun "encouragement" can be expressed with the verb "encourage." Alternate translation: "because what the apostles and elders wrote encouraged them"

Acts 15:32

also prophets

Prophets were teachers authorized by God to speak for him. Alternate translation: "because they were prophets" or "who were also prophets"

the brothers

"the fellow believers"

strengthened them

Judas and Silas' helping them to depend even more on Jesus is spoken of as if they were making them physically stronger.

Acts 15:33

Connecting Statement:

Judas and Silas return to Jerusalem while Paul and Barnabas remain in Antioch.

After they had spent some time there

This speaks about time as if it were a commodity that a person could spend. The word "they" refers to Judas and Silas. Alternate translation: "After they stayed there for a while"

they were sent away in peace from the brothers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the brothers sent Judas and Silas back in peace"

the brothers

This refers to the believers in Antioch.

to those who had sent them

"to the believers in Jerusalem who sent Judas and Silas" (Acts 15:22)

Acts 15:34

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 15:35

the word of the Lord

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation:

"the message about the Lord"

Acts 15:36

Let us return now

"I suggest we now return"

visit the brothers

"care for the brothers" or "offer to help the believers"

the word of the Lord

Here "word" stands for the message. Alternate translation:

"the message about the Lord"

see how they are

"learn how they are doing." They want to learn about the current condition of the brothers and how they are holding on to God's truth.

Acts 15:37

to also take with them John, who was called Mark

"to take John, who was also called Mark"

Acts 15:38

Paul thought it was not good to take Mark

The words "not good" are used to say the opposite of good.

Alternate translation: "Paul thought that taking Mark would be bad"

Pamphylia

This was a province in Asia Minor. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

did not go further with them in the work

"did not continue to work with them then" or "did not continue to serve with them"

Acts 15:39

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Barnabas and Paul.

Then there arose a sharp disagreement

The abstract noun "disagreement" can be stated as the verb "disagree." Alternate translation: "They strongly disagreed with each other"

Acts 15:40

after he was entrusted by the brothers to the grace of the Lord

To entrust to someone means to place the care and

responsibility for someone or something to another person.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"after the believers in Antioch entrusted Paul to the grace of the Lord" or "after the believers in Antioch prayed for the Lord to take care of Paul and show kindness to him"

Acts 15:41

he went

The previous sentence implies that Silas was with Paul.

Alternate translation: "they went" or "Paul and Silas went" or "Paul took Silas and went"

went through Syria and Cilicia

These are provinces or areas in Asia Minor, near the island of Cyprus.

strengthening the churches

Encouraging the believers in the churches is spoken of as though Paul and Silas were making the believers physically stronger. The word "churches" refers to the groups of believers in Syria and Cilicia. Alternate translation:

"encouraging the believers in the churches" or "helping the community of believers to depend even more in Jesus"

Chapter 16

Acts 16 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Timothy's circumcision

Paul circumcised Timothy because they were telling the message of Jesus to Jews and Gentiles. Paul wanted the Jews to know that he respected the law of Moses even though the church leaders in Jerusalem had decided that Christians did not need to be circumcised.

The woman who had a spirit of divination

Most people want very much to know the future, but the law of Moses said that speaking with the spirits of dead people to learn about the future is a sin. This woman seems to have been able to tell the future very well. She was a slave, and her masters made much money from her work. Paul wanted her to stop sinning, so he told the spirit to leave her. Luke does not say that she began to follow Jesus or tell us anything more about her.

Links:

[Acts 16:1 Notes](#)

Acts 16

16:1-5

Where were Derbe and Lystra?

[16:1]

See Map: Derbe; Lystra

Why did Paul circumcise Timothy?

[16:3]

Paul wanted Timothy to be circumcised. Scholars think this is because Timothy's mother was Jewish, Timothy was also a Jew even though his father was a Greek. Because he was not circumcised, the Jews rejected Timothy. Paul wanted Timothy to be circumcised so that the Jews would allow him to teach into the synagogues.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Synagogue

What "instructions" did Paul deliver to the churches that they should obey them?

[16:4]

Paul delivered the "decisions" (δόγμα/g1378) about how to live as Christians from the things the Christian leaders taught in Jerusalem.

16:6-10

Where were Phrygia and Galatia?

[16:6]

See Map: Phrygia; Galatia

How was Paul forbidden by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the word in Asia?

[16:6]

Scholars think there may have been various ways in which Paul and Barnabas were forbidden the Holy Spirit to proclaim the word of God in Asia. They think the Holy Spirit helped Paul to know this in some way.

See: Holy Spirit; Word of God

See Map: Asia; Mysia; Bithynia; Troas

What did Luke mean by writing "Spirit of Jesus"?

[16:7]

Most scholars think that when Luke wrote about the "Spirit of Jesus" he was referring to the Holy Spirit. These scholars think Luke was writing about one Spirit when he wrote about either the "Spirit of Jesus", the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God.

See: Holy Spirit; Trinity

What was a "vision"?

[16:9]

See: Vision)

Why did Luke write "immediately"?

[16:10]

Luke wrote "immediately" (εὐθέως/g2112) because Paul and his friends immediately obeyed God and went to Macedonia.

Why did Luke start writing "we" instead of "they"?

[16:10]

Luke started writing "we" instead of "they" because Luke joined Paul and his friends at that time. Luke then saw the things about which he wrote.

16:11-15

What was a "place of prayer"?

[16:13]

In ancient Israel, places of prayer were often rock enclosures with trees surrounding them. Some scholars think Paul and his companions may have noticed a place to sit near the water that they thought could be used for prayer.

See Map: Troas; Samothrace; Neapolis; Philippi

Who was Lydia?

[16:14]

Lydia was a Gentile woman who wanted to worship God in the way Jews worshiped God. She was from Thyatira, a place famous for making purple dyes.

See: Gentile; Worship

See Map: Thyatira; Asia

What was meant by the words, “The Lord opened her heart”?

[16:14]

When Luke wrote that God opened Lydia’s heart, he used a metaphor. It meant that God helped Lydia to understand all that Paul taught and that God greatly encouraged her through Paul’s words.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Metaphor

What did it mean that “she and her house were baptized”?

[16:15]

The words, “she and her house were baptized” meant that Lydia and all who lived in her house were baptized. This would have included any servants, children and relatives.

See: Baptize (Baptism)

What was meant by the words, “if you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord”?

[16:15]

Scholars think Lydia was saying, “if you have judge me to be a woman believer in Jesus.” That is, she told Paul that she believed in Jesus and was a Christian.

16:16-24

What was a “spirit of divination”?

[16:16]

Some scholars think the girl that “spirit of divination” was a demon who told the future. Scholars think the girl had no control over how the demon spoke through her, and that the demon used many kinds of voices to speak through her.

See: Demon; Sorcery; Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons)

Why did the demon possessed woman shout out that Paul and his friends proclaimed the way of salvation?

[16:17]

Scholars think the demon possessed woman shouted that Paul and his friends proclaimed the way of salvation for several reasons:

Some scholars think she did not glorify or respect God. When she said Paul and his friends were servants of the Most High God she was not thinking about the one God of the Bible. She was thinking about many false gods where one god was greater than the other gods.

Some scholars think the girl shouted out that Paul spoke about “a way of salvation”, and not “the way of salvation.” They think she spoke the truth but only some things she said were true.

Some scholars think she was trying to get people not to serve Paul and his friends. That is, she wanted people to watch her and not to listen to what Paul said about Jesus.

Some scholars think the demons said similar things to Jesus (see: Luke 4:41). Perhaps they did this to confuse people.

See: Demon; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Demon Possession (Casting Out Demons); Glory (Glorify); False gods

Why did Paul command the spirit “in the name of Jesus Christ”?

[16:18]

Scholars think that when Paul commanded the spirit “in the name of Jesus Christ” to come out, he wanted people to know that Jesus gave him permission and power to do these things. This honored Jesus.

See: Name

What was the marketplace?

[16:19]

Most ancient cities had a city square in the center of town called a marketplace. The marketplace was where people gathered to buy things, to talk, and to plan things. Sometimes leaders resolved arguments between people in the marketplace.

Who were the magistrates?

[16:20]

Magistrates were leaders of a city. They could decide what to do if there was a problem or trouble in the city. They could also decide how a person should be punished if the person did something wrong.

Why did the magistrates tear the garments off of Paul and Silas?

[16:22]

The magistrates tore the garments off of Paul and Silas because they planned to beat Paul and Silas. People who were beaten were struck with whips or rods on their bare backs.

What were the “stocks” fastened to Paul and Silas’ feet when they were put in prison?

[16:24]

The “stocks”(ξύλον/g3586) fastened to Paul and Silas’ feet were wooden blocks that locked their feet into one position. This made it very difficult for them to walk.

16:25-34

Why was the jailer about to kill himself?

[16:27]

The jailer was about to kill himself because he knew the penalty for allowing prisoners to escape was death (see: Acts 16:12). Scholars think he did not want to be dishonored.

Why did the other prisoners not escape?

[16:28]

Scholars give several reasons why the other prisoners did not escape.

They were afraid of the prison guards.

They wanted to hear Paul and Silas talk about salvation from Jesus because they heard Paul and Silas pray and sing to God.

Perhaps the jailer secured the other prisoners before he fell down and talked to Paul and Silas.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Pray (Prayer)

Why did the jailer ask how to be saved?

[16:30]

Some scholars say the jailer might have heard the girl’s announcement that Paul and Silas knew the way of salvation. Also, he just experienced an earthquake that opened all the prison doors, yet no one escaped. Scholars think the jailer was full of fear. He wanted to know how to be at peace with God.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What did Paul tell the jailer in order for him to be saved?

[16:31]

Paul told the jailer how to be at peace with God. All he needed to do was to believe in Jesus. Paul told the jailer about the forgiveness of sins found in Jesus.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin

What did it mean that the jailer and his household were baptized immediately?

[16:33]

Scholars think that when the jailer took Paul and Silas to cleanse their wounds, he likely took them to a well in the prison courtyard. While there, Paul and Silas baptized the jailer and his family in the water of the same well.

See: Baptize (Baptism)

How did the jailer and his household rejoice greatly?

[16:34]

The jailer and his household rejoiced greatly with a meal at his house for Paul and Silas. They rejoiced because they had believed in God and they now had peace with God.

16:35-40

Why did the magistrates command the jailer to release Paul and Silas the next day?

[16:35]

Scholars give several reasons why the magistrates commanded the jailer to release Paul and Silas the next day.

They thought the earthquake was a sign from their false gods.

Lydia persuaded the magistrates to release Paul and Silas.

They thought the shame from beating Paul and Silas and putting them in prison would make Paul and Silas stop talking and causing trouble in Philippi.

See: Sign; False gods

See Map: Philippi

Why did Paul want the magistrates to lead them out of prison?

[16:37]

During that time, when the magistrates led a person out from the prison, it showed that the person had been treated unjustly. That is, they were accused falsely. Paul knew if the magistrates led them out from the prison, they would still have a good reputation with the people of Philippi.

Why did the magistrates ask Paul and Silas to leave Philippi?

[16:39]

Scholars think the magistrates asked Paul and Silas to leave Philippi because they did not want the crowds to cause another riot. Other scholars think the magistrates did not want the crowd to favor Paul and Silas and turn against the magistrates. Also, they did not want Paul and Silas to report that the magistrates beat Roman citizens and put them in

prison without a trial.

See: Citizen

How did Paul and Silas encourage the Christians at Lydia's house?

[16:40]

Scholars think the Christians at Lydia's house were encouraged because they saw that God answered their prayers for the release of Paul and Silas.

Acts 16:1

Connecting Statement:

This continues the missionary journeys of Paul with Silas. Timothy is introduced into the story and joins Paul and Silas. Verses 1 and 2 give background information about Timothy.

Paul also came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

Derbe

This is the name of a city in Asia Minor. See how you translated it in Acts 14:6.

behold

The word "behold" alerts us to a new person in the narrative. Your language may have a way of doing this.

who was a believer

The words "in Christ" are understood. Alternate translation: "who was a believer in Christ" or "who believed in Christ"

Acts 16:2

He was well spoken of by the brothers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The brothers spoke well of him" or "Timothy had a good reputation among the brothers" or "The brothers said good things about him"

by the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers. Alternate translation: "by the believers"

Acts 16:3

wanted him ... took him ... circumcised him ... his father

"wanted Timothy ... took Timothy ... circumcised Timothy ... Timothy's father"

with him ... he took

"with Paul ... Paul took"

circumcised him

It is possible that Paul himself circumcised Timothy, but it is more likely that he had someone else circumcise Timothy.

because of the Jews that were in those places

"because of the Jews living in the areas where Paul and Timothy would be traveling"

for they all knew that his father was a Greek

Since Greek men did not have their sons circumcised, the Jews would have known Timothy was not circumcised, and they would have rejected Paul and Timothy before hearing their message about Christ.

Acts 16:4

General Information:

The word "they" here refers to Paul, Silas (Acts 15:40), and Timothy ([Acts 16:3](#)).

the decrees to obey

"the decrees for the church members to obey" or "the decrees for the believers to obey"

that were decided on by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had decided on"

Acts 16:5

the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the believers became stronger in their faith, and there were more and more people becoming believers every day"

the churches were strengthened in the faith

This speaks of helping someone to believe more confidently as if it were making them physically stronger.

Acts 16:6

Phrygia

This is a region in Asia. See how you translated this name in Acts 2:10.

they had been forbidden by the Holy Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit had forbidden them" or "the Holy Spirit did not permit them"

the word

Here "word" stands for "message." Alternate translation: "the message about Christ"

Acts 16:7

When they came

Here "came" can be translated as "went" or "arrived."

Mysia ... Bithynia

These are two more regions in Asia.

the Spirit of Jesus

"the Holy Spirit"

Acts 16:8

they came down to the city of Troas

The phrase "came down" is used here because Troas is lower in elevation than Mysia.

they came down

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

Acts 16:9

A vision appeared to Paul

"Paul saw a vision from God" or "Paul had a vision from God"

begging him

Or "inviting him."

Come over into Macedonia

The phrase "Come over" is used because Macedonia is across the sea from Troas.

Acts 16:10

we sought to go to Macedonia ... God had called us

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to Paul and his companions, including Luke, the author of Acts.

we sought to go to Macedonia

"we looked for a way to go to Macedonia" or "we prepared to go to Macedonia"

Acts 16:11

Samothrace ... Neapolis

These are coastal cities near Phillipi in Macedonia.

we came to Neapolis

Here "came to" can be translated as "went to" or "arrived at."

Acts 16:12

a Roman colony

This is a city outside of Italy where many people who came from Rome lived. The people there had the same rights and freedoms as people who lived in cities in Italy. They could govern themselves and they did not have to pay taxes.

Acts 16:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul and his companions are now in Philippi on their missionary trip. The story of Lydia begins here. This short story happens during Paul's travels.

Acts 16:14

A certain woman named Lydia

Here "A certain woman" introduces a new person in the story. Alternate translation: "There was a woman named Lydia"

a seller of purple

Here "cloth" is understood. Alternate translation: "a merchant who sold purple cloth"

Thyatira

This is the name of a city.

worshiped God

A worshiper of God is a Gentile who gives praise to God and follows him, but does not obey all of the Jewish laws.

The Lord opened her heart to pay attention

For the Lord to cause someone to pay attention and believe a message is spoken of as if he were opening a person's heart. Alternate translation: "The Lord caused her to listen well and to believe"

opened her heart

Here "heart" stands for a person's mind. Also, the author speaks about the "heart" or "mind" as if it were a box that a person could open so it is ready for someone to fill it.

what was said by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what Paul said"

Acts 16:15

Connecting Statement:

The story of Lydia ends here.

When she and her house were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When they baptized Lydia and members of her household" her house

Here "house" represents the people who live in her house.

Alternate translation: "the members of her household" or "her family and household servants"

Acts 16:16

General Information:

Background information is given here to explain that this young fortune teller brought much financial gain to her masters by guessing people's futures.

Connecting Statement:

This begins the first event in another short story during Paul's travels; it is about a young fortune teller.

It came about that

This phrase marks the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

a certain slave girl ... encountered

The phrase "a certain" introduces a new person to the story. Alternate translation: "there was a slave girl ... who encountered"

a spirit of divination

An evil spirit spoke to her often about the immediate future of people.

Acts 16:17

the way of salvation

How a person can be saved is spoken of here as if it were a way or path that a person walks on. Alternate translation: "how God can save you"

Acts 16:18

But Paul, being greatly annoyed by her, turned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But she greatly annoyed Paul, so he turned around"

in the name of Jesus Christ

Here "name" stands for speaking with the authority or as the representative of Jesus Christ.

it came out at that same hour

"the spirit came out immediately"

Acts 16:19

her masters

"the owners of the slave girl"

their hope of profit was now gone

Here the word "hope" is the reason for which a person can expect that what he desires will happen. Now that the spirit was gone, the girl's masters could not expect to earn money from the spirit's telling people things. Alternate translation: "their opportunity to make money was now gone" or "they could no longer expect to make money"

their hope of profit was now gone

It can be stated clearly why they no longer expected to make money. Alternate translation: "she could no longer earn money for them by telling fortunes"

into the marketplace

"into the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services takes place.

before the authorities

"into the presence of the authorities" or "so that the authorities could judge them"

Acts 16:20

When they had brought them to the magistrates

"When they had brought them to the judges"

magistrates

rulers, judges

These men are causing trouble in our city

Here the word "our" refers to the people of the city and includes the magistrates who ruled it.

Acts 16:21

to accept or practice

"to believe or to obey" or "to accept or to do"

Acts 16:22

General Information:

Here the words "their" and "them" refer to Paul and Silas.

commanded them to be beaten with rods
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "commanded the soldiers to beat them with rods"
 Acts 16:23
 they had ... upon them, they threw them ... guard them
 "the magistrates had ... upon Paul and Silas, the magistrates
 threw Paul and Silas ... keep Paul and Silas"
 had laid many blows upon them
 "had hit them many times with rods"
 commanded the jailer to guard them securely
 "told the jailer to make sure they did not get out"
 jailer
 a person responsible for all the people held in the jail or
 prison
 Acts 16:24
 he got this command
 "he heard this command"
 fastened their feet in the stocks
 "securely locked their feet in the stocks"
 stocks
 a piece of wood with holes for preventing a person's feet
 from moving
 Acts 16:25
 General Information:
 The word "them" refers to Paul and Silas.
 Connecting Statement:
 This continues Paul and Silas' time in Philippi in prison and
 tells what happens to their jailer.
 Acts 16:26
 earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison"
 the foundations of the prison
 When the foundations shook, this caused the entire prison
 to shake.
 all the doors were opened
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all
 the doors opened"
 everyone's chains were unfastened
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "everyone's chains came loose"
 Acts 16:27
 The jailer was awakened from sleep
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "The jailer woke up"
 was about to kill himself
 "was ready to kill himself." The jailer preferred to commit
 suicide rather than suffer the consequences of letting the
 prisoners escape.
 Acts 16:28
 General Information:
 Here the word "we" refers to Paul, Silas, and all of the other
 prisoners but excludes the jailer.
 Acts 16:29
 called for lights
 The reason why the jailer needed light can be made
 explicit. Alternate translation: "called for someone to bring
 light so he could see who was still in the prison"
 for lights

The word "lights" stands for something that makes light.
 Alternate translation: "for torches" or "for lamps"
 rushed in
 "quickly entered the jail"
 fell down before Paul and Silas
 The jailer humbled himself by bowing down at the feet of
 Paul and Silas.
 Acts 16:30
 brought them out
 "led them outside the jail"
 what must I do to be saved
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "what must I do for God to save me from my sins"
 Acts 16:31
 you will be saved
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "God will save you" or "God will save you from your sins"
 your house
 Here "house" stands for the people who live in the house.
 Alternate translation: "all the members of your household"
 or "your family"
 Acts 16:32
 General Information:
 The word "They" refers to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:25), and
 the word "him" refers to the jailer.
 They spoke the word of the Lord to him
 Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation:
 "They told him the message about the Lord Jesus"
 Acts 16:33
 General Information:
 The words "them" and "their" refer to Paul and Silas (Acts
 16:25), and the words "he" and "his" refer to the jailer.
 he and those in his entire house were baptized immediately
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "Paul and Silas immediately baptized the jailer and all the
 members of his household"
 Acts 16:34
 General Information:
 All instances of "he" and "his" refer to the jailer.
 Acts 16:35
 General Information:
 This is the last event in the story of Paul and Silas in
 Philippi (Acts 16:12).
 Now
 This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.
 Here Luke tells the last event in the story that started in
 Acts 16:16.
 sent word to the guards
 Here "word" stands for "message" or "command." Alternate
 translation: "sent a message to the guards" or "sent a
 command to the guards"
 sent word
 Here "sent" means the magistrates told someone to go tell
 the guards their message.
 Let those men go
 "Release those men" or "Allow those men to leave"
 Acts 16:36
 come out
 "come outside of the jail"

Acts 16:37

General Information:

The word "they" refers to the magistrates. All instances of "we" and "us" refer only to Paul and Silas and so are exclusive.

said to them

Probably Paul is speaking to the jailer, but he intends for the jailer to tell the magistrates what he says. Alternate translation: "said to the jailer"

They have publicly beaten us

Here "They" refers to the magistrates who commanded their soldiers to beat them. Alternate translation: "The magistrates ordered their soldiers to beat us in public"

without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens—and they threw us into prison

"men who are Roman citizens, and they had their soldiers put us in jail though they had not proven in court that we were guilty"

Do they now want to send us away secretly? No!

Paul uses a question to emphasize that he will not allow the magistrates to send them out the city in secret after they had mistreated Paul and Silas. Alternate translation: "I will certainly not let them send us out of the city in secret!"

Let them come themselves

Here "themselves" is used for emphasis.

Acts 16:38

when they heard that Paul and Silas were Romans, they were afraid

To be a Roman meant to be a legal citizen of the Empire. Citizenship provided freedom from torture and the right to a fair trial. The city leaders were afraid that more important Roman authorities might learn how the city leaders had mistreated Paul and Silas.

they heard ... they were afraid

"the magistrates heard ... the magistrates were afraid"

Acts 16:39

General Information:

All instances of "them" refer to Paul and Silas.

Acts 16:40

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to Paul and Silas. The word "them" refers to the believers in Philippi.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of Paul and Silas' time in Philippi. came to the house

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

the house of Lydia

"the home of Lydia"

saw the brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "saw the believers"

Chapter 17

Acts 17 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Misunderstandings about the Messiah

The Jews expected the Christ or Messiah to be a powerful king because the Old Testament says so many times. But it also says many times that the Messiah would suffer, and that was what Paul was telling the Jews. (See: christ)

The religion of Athens

Paul said that the Athenians were "religious," but they did not worship the true God. They worshiped many different false gods. In the past they had conquered other peoples and begun to worship the gods of the people they had conquered. (See: falsegod)

In this chapter Luke describes for the first time how Paul told the message of Christ to people who knew nothing of the Old Testament.

Links:

[Acts 17:1 Notes](#)

Acts 17

17:1-9

Where were Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Thessalonica?

[17:1]

See Map: Amphipolis; Apollonia; Thessalonica

Why did Luke write that Paul reasoned from the scriptures for three Sabbath days?

[17:2]

Luke wrote that Paul reasoned from Scripture for three Sabbath days. Scholars think that the regular meaning of "three Sabbath days" during Paul's time meant three weeks of time. Paul taught people about Jesus from the Old Testament for three weeks.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Sabbath

Why did Paul say "it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise again"?

[17:3]

Paul said "it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise again" because the Old Testament prophets spoke of these events, and Jesus himself also spoke of these events.

See: Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Luke 18:31-33; 24:25-26

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Prophet; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What was meant by the words, “not a few of the leading women”?

[17:4]

The words “not a few of the leading women” meant a large number of women. These women were likely wives of the city’s leaders.

Why were the unbelieving Jews jealous of Paul and Silas?

[17:5]

Scholars think the unbelieving Jews were jealous of Paul and Silas because many more Gentiles than Jews believed in Jesus. More people became Christians. Perhaps the unbelieving Jews were also afraid they will lose control of their synagogue.

See: Synagogue; Gentile

Advice to translators: The unbelieving Jews were Jews who rejected Jesus. They were not Christians.

How did the unbelieving Jews create an uproar?

[17:5]

There were several things the unbelieving Jews did to create an uproar.

They went to the marketplace and gathered wicked men to cause trouble. These wicked men did not work in the marketplace. They were always there wanting to do wrong things.

The wicked men helped them start a riot in the city.

They went to the house of Jason and broke down the door of his house. They then dragged him and other Christians in front of the city leaders. Paul and Silas were in another part of the city.

They made the crowd and the city leaders angry by shouting lies against Paul and the Christians.

Who was Jason?

[17:6]

Jason was a relative of Paul and scholars think Paul and Silas stayed with him while they were in Thessalonica.

See Map: Thessalonica

What did it mean to “act against the decrees of Caesar”?

[17:7]

When Paul and Silas were accused of acting “against the decrees of Caesar” it meant they were accused of rebelling against all the Roman laws. This is because Jesus is a king. However, Jesus is not a king in the same way that the Roman Caesar was a king. People said that Paul and Silas were trying to get people to serve a different king other than Caesar.

They wanted Paul and Silas to be arrested.

Why did the city leaders make Jason pay money as a security?

[17:9]

The leaders of the city made Jason pay a security. That is, Jason assured the city leaders that Paul and Silas would leave the city and not to return.

17:10-15

How were the people in Berea more noble than the people in Thessalonica?

[17:11]

When Luke said that the people in Berea were more noble than the people in Thessalonica, he meant they wanted to learn about Jesus from Paul and Silas. That is, they wanted Paul and Silas to teach them about the Bible.

See Map: Berea; Thessalonica

What was meant by the words, “examining the scriptures daily”?

[17:11]

When Luke said that the Bereans “examined”(ἀνακρίνω/g0350) the scriptures daily, he meant they examined the Bible and compared the Bible to the things Paul and Silas taught. They wanted to prove that Paul and Silas taught the same thing the Bible taught. They wanted to know if Paul said correct things about Jesus.

How was it that the Jews from Thessalonica “stirred up and troubled the crowds”?

[17:13]

When Luke wrote that the Jews from Thessalonica “stirred up and troubled the crowds” he meant they caused confusion among the people. That is, they kept insisting that people follow the Law of Moses instead of what Paul and Silas taught.

See: Law of Moses

See Map: Thessalonica

Where was Athens?

[17:15]

See Map: Athens

17:16-21

Why did idols “provoke” Paul’s spirit?

[17:16]

Idols “angered”(παροξύνω/g3947) Paul because idols made Israel sin against God (see: 2 Kings 17:12). Also, the Christian leaders in Jerusalem did not want Christians to worship idols (see: 15:29).

See: Idolatry (Idol); Sin

What was the marketplace?

[17:17]

See: Acts 16:19

What were philosophers?

[17:18]

Philosophers were people who loved wisdom. Philosophers taught different things about the world. In ancient Israel, many philosophers went to Athens. Paul warned that things they taught Christians were the wrong things and stopped Christians from believing the right things (see: Colossians 2:8).

See Map: Athens

What did Epicureans believe?

[17:18]

Epicureans followed a man named Epicurus who lived about 300 years before Paul. They taught certain things. They believed several things differently from Jews and Christians.

They taught that people should avoid pain .

They taught that God or other gods did not do anything with people. There were no miracles or prophecy. They did not think God or other gods controlled anything.

When a person died, nothing happened.

See: False gods; Miracle; Prophecy (Prophecy)

What did Stoics believe?

[17:18]

Stoics followed a man named Zeno who lived about 300 years before Paul. They believed several things differently from Jews and Christians.

They believed that some power created things and people.

They wanted people to think the same way gods thought.

They followed their conscience.

They did not want to feel pleasure, pain, joy, and sadness.

See: Conscience

What was a babbler?

[17:18]

A babbler was a bird pecking grain. It was a metaphor to say Paul was not a real teacher and a worthless person.

See: Metaphor

What was meant by the words “follow strange gods”?

[17:18]

People said that Paul followed strange gods. They said that Paul was teaching about foreign gods. In the ancient world, people did not worship foreign gods. When someone did this, people thought they rejected the nation where they lived.

See: False gods

What was the Areopagus?

[17:19]

The Areopagus was the highest court in Athens. It was on the hill of Ares or Mars Hill.

See Map: Athens; Ares; Mars Hill

Why did they take Paul to the Areopagus?

[17:19]

They took Paul to the Areopagus because of the things he said about Jesus and becoming alive again. They wanted to know about the things Paul taught. They were polite to Paul. They always wanted to hear new things.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

17:22-31

Why did Paul say they were “religious”?

[17:22]

Paul said these people were “religious”(δεισιδαίμων/g1174). That is, they worshipped and obey their false gods. Some scholars think Paul said something good about them. That is, they honored their gods and built altars for their gods. Other scholars think Paul said this so they will listen to him. He did not say that because he thought they were right.

See: Worship; False gods; Altar

Why did they build an altar to an unknown god?

[17:23]

They built an altar to an unknown god because they believed some god controlled the world. Because of this, they knew there may be a god who made all things. However, they did not understand anything else about this god.

See: Altar; False gods

What did Paul have to say about the altar that said, "To an Unknown God"?

[17:24, 17:25, 17:26, 17:27]

Paul saw the altar with the words "To an Unknown God" written on it. After he saw this, he wanted to teach them about God. People can know about God. However, God is not one god of many God. There is only one God.

How did Paul try to correct the wrong thinking with regard to the various altars?

[17:24, 17:25, 17:26, 17:27]

Paul told them it was wrong to worship idols. This was taught in the Old Testament.

God created everything (see: Genesis 1:1).

God is ruler over everything (see: Isaiah 45:23; Daniel 5:23).

God is too great to live in a temple (see: 1 Kings 8:27; Isaiah 57:15; 66:1-2).

People do not need to serve God in the way pagans served gods with sacrifices. God does not need anything. God gives everything people need (see: Psalm 50:8-13; Genesis 2:7; James 1:17).

See: Idolatry (Idol); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Altar; Temple; Pagan; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice

Did Luke write the word blood in verse 26?

[17:26]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the word blood in verse 26. Older ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. Scholars do not think Luke wrote this word. Paul was thinking about Adam when he said God made every nation of people (see: Luke 3:38; Genesis 3:20). Everyone is a descendant of Adam (see: Genesis 3:20).

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Why did Paul say the same thing a pagan poet said?

[17:28]

Paul said the same thing a pagan poet said because that pagan poet was right when he wrote God gave life to people. God makes everyone alive (see: Job 12:10). However, the pagan poet was wrong about many other things. Paul only repeated the part where the pagan was right.

See: Pagan

What was a deity?

[17:29]

Deity was a word for a divine being. It can be used to talk about the one true God or false gods.

See: God; False gods

Why did God overlook times of ignorance?

[17:30]

God overlooked times of ignorance. That is, God does not judge people when they know they are doing something wrong. This is because he loves people in the world and he did not judge them yet. People were said to be ignorant because they did not know God created them and that he rules everything. They did not know it was wrong to worship idols. However, Jesus came and God wanted everyone to repent. That is, God wanted people to stop worshipping idols and worship God.

See: Repent (Repentance); Judge (Judgment); Idolatry (Idol)

How will God judge all the people in the world in righteousness?

[17:31]

God will judge all the people in the world according to his righteousness when he judges everyone through Jesus. That is, the same righteous standard will be used by God to judge all peoples of the world.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Judge (Judgment)

Who is the man God "has chosen"?

[17:31]

Paul spoke about the man God has chosen. Paul was speaking about Jesus. God has "chosen" (ᾧρισεν/g3724) to judge the world through Jesus. Paul taught that God chose Jesus to be the judge by raising him from the dead.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Judge (Judgment)

17:32-34

Why did some of the men of Athens mock Paul when he said God made Jesus alive again?

[17:32]

Some of the men of Athens mocked Paul when he said God made Jesus alive again because they believed that God will not judge and God did not do miracles. They also thought the world will never end.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Judge (Judgment); Miracle

See Map: Athens

What was an Areopagite?

[17:34]

An Areopagite was a member of the Areopagus court. Some scholars think Dionysius was one of the twelve judges of the Athenian court.

See: Judge (Judgment)

See Map: Athens

Acts 17:1

General Information:

Both instances of "they" refers to Paul and Silas (Acts 16:40).

Connecting Statement:

This continues the story of Paul, Silas, and Timothy's missionary trip. They arrive in Thessalonica, apparently without Luke, since he says "they" and not "we."

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke, the author, starts to tell a new part of the story. passed through

"traveled through"

cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia

These are coastal cities in Macedonia.

they came to the city

Here "came to" can be translated as "went to" or "arrived at." Alternate translation: "they went to the city" or "they arrived at the city"

Acts 17:2

went to them ... reasoned with them

"went to the Jews ... reasoned with the Jews"

as his custom was

"as his habit was" or "as his common practice was." Paul usually went to the synagogue on the Sabbath when Jews would be present.

for three Sabbath days

"on each Sabbath day for three weeks"

reasoned with them from the scriptures

"gave them reasons to believe from the scriptures" or "debated with them about the scriptures" or "discussed the scriptures with them." Paul explained what the scriptures mean in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah.

Acts 17:3

General Information:

Here the word "He" refers to Paul (Acts 17:2).

He was opening the scriptures

Possible meanings are 1) to explain the scriptures in a way that people can understand is spoken of as if Paul were opening something so people can see what is inside of it) or 2) Paul was literally opening a book or scroll and reading from it.

it was necessary

"it was part of God's plan"

to rise again

"to come back to life"

from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive

again.

Acts 17:4

the Jews were persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Jews believed" or "the Jews understood"

joined Paul

"became associated with Paul"

devout Greeks

This refers to Greeks who worshiped God but had not converted to Judaism through circumcision.

not a few of the leading women

This is an understatement to emphasize that many leading women joined them. Alternate translation: "many leading women"

Acts 17:5

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the unbelieving Jews and wicked men from the marketplace.

being moved with jealousy

The feeling of jealousy is spoken of as if jealousy were actually moving the person. Alternate translation: "feeling very jealous" or "feeling very angry"

with jealousy

It can be stated explicitly that these Jews were jealous because some of the Jews and Greeks believed Paul's message.

took certain wicked men

Here "took" does not mean the Jews took these people by force. It means the Jews persuaded these wicked men to help them.

certain wicked men

"some evil men." The word "men" here refers specifically to males.

from the marketplace

"from the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services take place.

set the city in an uproar

Here "the city" stands for the people in the city. Alternate translation: "caused the people of the city to be in an uproar" or "caused the people of the city to riot"

Assaulting the house

"Violently attacking the house." This probably means the people were throwing rocks at the house and trying to break down the door of the house.

Jason

This is the name of a man.

they were seeking to bring Paul ... out

The word "seeking" here means that the people wanted to bring Paul out and were trying to bring him out.

out to the people

Possible meanings or "people" are 1) a governmental or legal group of citizens gathered to make a decision or 2) a mob.

Acts 17:6

certain other brothers

Here "brothers" refers to believers. Alternate translation: "some other believers"

before the officials

"into the presence of the officials"

These men who have

The Jewish leaders were speaking, and the phrase "These men" refers to Paul and Silas.

turned the world upside down

This phrase is another way of saying Paul and Silas were causing trouble everywhere they went. The Jewish leaders were exaggerating the influence Paul and Silas were having with their teaching. Alternate translation: "caused trouble everywhere in the world" or "caused trouble everywhere they have gone"

Acts 17:7

Jason has welcomed

This phrase signals that Jason was in agreement with the apostles' troubling message.

Acts 17:8

They troubled the crowd

"They caused the people in the city to be afraid"

Acts 17:9

the rest

The words "the rest" refers to other believers that the Jews brought before the officials.

they took security ... they let them go

"the officials took security ... they let Jason and the other believers go"

took security

Jason and the others gave the money to the officials to show that they would not cause any more trouble. This was not a fine or a punishment, so they might have expected the officials to give the money back later.

Acts 17:10

General Information:

Paul and Silas travel on to the town of Berea.

the brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "the believers"

Acts 17:11

Now

The word "now" is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke tells background information about the people in Berea and how they were willing to listen to Paul and examine what he said.

more noble

These "well-born" people were willing to think more objectively about new ideas than other people. Alternate translation: "more open minded" or "more willing to listen"

received the word

Here "word" refers to a teaching. Alternate translation: "listened to the teaching"

with all readiness of mind

These Bereans were prepared to examine earnestly Paul's teachings about the scripture.

examining the scriptures daily

"carefully reading and evaluating the scriptures every day"

these things were so

"the things Paul said were true"

Acts 17:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 17:13

General Information:

Athens was south of Berea. Both were on the coast of Macedonia. Athens was one of the most important cities in Greece.

went there and stirred up

This speaks about their agitating people as though it were a person stirring a liquid and causing the things at the bottom of the liquid to rise to the surface. Alternate translation: "went there and agitated" or "went there and disturbed"

troubled the crowds

"worried the crowds" or "caused dread and fear among the people"

Acts 17:14

brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "believers"

to go to the sea

"to go to the coast." From here Paul would probably sail to another city.

Acts 17:15

who were leading Paul

"who were accompanying Paul" or "who were going along with Paul"

they received from him instructions for Silas and Timothy

"he told them to instruct Silas and Timothy." This can also be stated as a direct quotation as in the UDB.

Acts 17:16

General Information:

This is another part of the story of Paul and Silas' travels. Paul is now in Athens where he is waiting for Silas and Timothy to join him.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story. Here Luke starts to tell a new part of the story.

his spirit was provoked within him as he saw the city full of idols

Here "spirit" stands for Paul himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he became upset because he saw that there were idols everywhere in the city" or "seeing the idols everywhere in the city upset him"

Acts 17:17

he reasoned

"he debated" or "he discussed." This means that his listeners also spoke and asked him questions. He was not the only speaker.

others who worshiped God

This refers to Gentiles who gave praise to God and followed him but did not obey all of the Jewish laws.

in the marketplace

"in the public square." This is a public place of business, where buying and selling of goods, cattle, or services take place.

Acts 17:18

General Information:

Here the words "him," "He," and "he" refer to Paul.

Epicurean and Stoic philosophers

Philosophers are people who think about the world and try to understand how people should live. The Epicureans and the Stoics were two groups of philosophers. They believed that a god or gods existed, but they did not trust in or obey any god. Alternate translation: "thinkers called Epicureans and Stoics"

encountered him

"happened upon him"

Some said

"Some of the philosophers said"

What is this babbler

The word "babbler" was used to refer to birds picking up seeds as food. It refers negatively to a person who only knows a little bit of information. The philosophers said Paul had bits of information which were not worth listening to. Alternate translation: "What is this uneducated person"

Others said

"Other philosophers said"

He seems to be one who calls people to follow

"He seems to be a proclaimer" or "He seems to be on a mission to add people to his philosophy"

strange gods

This is not in the sense of "odd," but in the sense of "foreign," that is, gods that Greeks and Romans do not worship or know about.

Acts 17:19

They took ... brought him

This does not mean they arrested Paul. The philosophers invited Paul to speak formally to their leaders.

to the Areopagus

The "Areopagus" was the place where the leaders met.

Alternate translation: "to the leaders that met on the Areopagus"

the Areopagus, saying

Here the leaders on the Areopagus are speaking. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "the Areopagus. The leaders said to Paul"

Areopagus

This is a prominent rock outcropping or hill in Athens upon which the supreme court of Athens may have met.

Acts 17:20

For you bring some strange things to our ears

Paul's teachings about Jesus and the resurrection are spoken of as an object that a person can bring to another person. Here "ears" refers to what they hear. Alternate translation: "For you are teaching some things that we have never heard before"

Acts 17:21

Now all the Athenians and the strangers living there

The word "all" is a generalization referring to many.

Alternate translation: "Now many of the Athenians and the strangers living there"

all the Athenians

"Athenians" are people from Athens, a city near the coast below Macedonia

the strangers

"the foreigners"

spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening

Here "time" is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "used their time doing nothing but either telling or listening" or "were always doing nothing but telling or listening"

spent their time in nothing but either telling or listening

The phrase "spent their time in nothing" is an exaggeration.

Alternate translation: "did not do much but tell or listen" or

"spent much of their time telling or listening"

telling or listening about something new

"discussing new philosophical ideas" or "talking about what was new to them"

Acts 17:22

General Information:

Paul begins his speech to the philosophers on the Areopagus.

very religious in every way

Paul is referring to the Athenians' public display of honoring the gods through prayers, building altars, and offering sacrifices.

Acts 17:23

as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship

"as I walked among the objects of your worship and observed them" or "as I walked around in the city, I observed the objects of your worship"

To an Unknown God

Possible meanings are 1) "to a certain unknown god" or 2)

"to a god not known." This was a specific writing or inscription on that altar.

Acts 17:24

the world

In the most general sense, the "world" refers to the heavens and the earth and everything in them.

since he is Lord

"because he is the Lord." Here "he" is referring to the unknown god mentioned in Acts 17:23 that Paul is explaining is the Lord God.

of heaven and earth

The words "heaven" and "earth" are used together to mean all beings and things in heaven and earth.

built with hands

Here "hands" stands for people. Alternate translation: "built by the hands of people" or "that people built"

Acts 17:25

Neither is he served by men's hands

Here "served" has the sense of a doctor treating a patient to make the patient well again. Alternate translation: "Neither do men's hands take care of him"

by men's hands

Here "hands" stands for the whole person. Alternate translation: "by humans"

since he himself

"because he himself." The word "himself" is added for emphasis.

Acts 17:26

General Information:

Here the word "he" refer to God, the creator, and both instances of "their" refer to every nation of people living on the surface of the earth.

one man

This means Adam, the first person God created. This can be stated to include Eve. It was through Adam and Eve that God made all other people. Alternate translation: "one couple"

having determined their appointed seasons and the boundaries of their living areas

This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "and he determined when and where they would live"

Acts 17:27

General Information:

All instances of "they" and "their" refer to the people who live on earth, all instances of "him" and "he" refer to God, and the word "us" includes the speaker, the hearers, and the people who live on earth.

so that they should search for God and perhaps they may feel their way toward him and find him

Here "search for God" represents desiring to know him, and "feel their way toward him and find him" represents praying and having a relationship with him. Alternate translation: "so that they should want to know God and perhaps pray to him and become one of his people"

Yet he is not far from each one of us

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Yet he is very near to every one of us"

Acts 17:28

General Information:

Here the words "him" and "his" refer to God

For in him

"Because of him"

Acts 17:29

General Information:

Both instances of "we" include the speaker, the hearers, and other people.

are God's offspring

Because God created everyone, all people are spoken of as if they were God's literal children.

the qualities of deity are like

Here "deity" refers to God's nature or attributes. Alternate translation: "God is like"

images created by the art and imagination of man

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"which a man then uses his skill to make it into something that he has designed" or "images that people make by using their art and imagination"

Acts 17:30

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to God.

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true"

God overlooked the times of ignorance

"God decided not to punish people during the time of

ignorance"

times of ignorance

This refers to the time before God fully revealed himself through Jesus Christ and before people truly knew how to obey God.

all men

This means all people, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "all people"

Acts 17:31

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his speech to the philosophers in the Areopagus, which he began in Acts 17:22.

when he will judge the world in righteousness by the man he has appointed

"when the man he has chosen will judge the world in righteousness"

he will judge the world

Here "world" refers to the people. Alternate translation: "he will judge all people"

in righteousness

"justly" or "fairly"

God has given proof of this man

"God has demonstrated his choice of this man"

from the dead

From among all those who have died. The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

Acts 17:32

General Information:

Here the word "We" refers to the men of Athens but not to Paul, so this is exclusive. Though some of them probably did want to hear Paul again, they may only have been being polite.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Paul in Athens.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

Here Luke changes from Paul's teachings to the reaction of the people of Athens.

the men of Athens

These are the people who were present at the Areopagus and were listening to Paul.

some mocked Paul

"some ridiculed Paul" or "some laughed at Paul." These did not believe it was possible for someone to die and then return to life.

Acts 17:33

General Information:

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Acts 17:34

Dionysius the Areopagite

Dionysius is a man's name. Areopagite implies that Dionysius was one of the judges at the council of Areopagus.

Damaris

This is the name of a woman.

Acts 18 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

The baptism of John

Some Jews who lived far away from Jerusalem and Judea had heard of John the Baptist and followed his teachings. They had not yet heard about Jesus. One of these Jews was Apollos. He followed John the Baptist, but he did not know that the Messiah had come. John had baptized people to show that they were sorry for their sins, but this baptism was different from Christian baptism. (See: faithful and christ and repent)

Links:

[Acts 18:1](#)

Acts 18

18:1-11

Why did Paul leave Athens?

[18:1]

Luke did not write why Paul left Athens. Some scholars think Paul was not able to make tents there because Athens was not a city where people made tents. Other scholars think Corinth needed someone to preach the gospel. Also, Corinth was a city where people made tents.

See: Gospel

See Map: Athens

Where was Corinth?

[18:1]

See Map: Corinth

Where were Pontus, Italy, and Rome?

[18:2]

See Map: Pontus; Italy; Rome

Who was Claudius?

[18:2]

Claudius was the fourth Roman Emperor. He ruled the Roman Empire about 10 years after Jesus died. He allowed the Jews to obey the Law of Moses and to do things the religious things the Jews did.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Law of Moses

Why did Claudius make all the Jews leave Rome?

[18:2]

The Roman Emperor Claudius made all the Jews leave Rome because the Jews caused many riots in Rome. Scholars do not know if Aquila and Priscilla participated in those riots at Rome or if they did not.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did Paul go to Aquila and Priscilla?

[18:2, 18:3]

Some scholars think Paul went to Aquila and Priscilla because they were Christians. Perhaps they helped start the church in Rome. Other scholars think they were not Christians and Paul went to them because they also made tents. Then Paul taught them and they became Christians. Aquila and Priscilla helped Paul many times.

See: Acts 18:18, 26; Romans 16:3; 1 Corinthians 16:19; 2 Timothy 4:19).

See Map: Rome

How did the church in Corinth begin?

[18:4] The church in Corinth began when Paul persuaded Jews and Greeks to believe that Jesus is the messiah. Paul talked to these Jews and Greeks at the synagogue in Corinth. At first, the synagogue allowed Paul to tell people about Jesus.

Later, they did not want Paul to talk about Jesus.

See: Church; Synagogue; Messiah (Christ)

Did Luke write that the Holy Spirit led Paul?

[18:5] Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words, the Holy Spirit led Paul in verse. However, more and older copies of the Greek New Testament have the words, Paul was devoted to the word. Scholars think Luke wrote that Paul was devoted to the word.

See: Word of God

Where was Macedonia?

[18:5]

See Map: Macedonia

Why did Paul shake out his garment at the Jews who opposed and insulted him?

[18:6] Paul shook out his garment at the Jews who opposed and insulted him. This was a sign that he stop talking to them about Jesus. Paul also warned them God will judge them. However, God will not judge Paul because Paul warned them. This was similar to what God told Ezekiel to do (see: Ezekiel 3:16-21).

See: Sign; Judge (Judgment)

Advice to translators: A garment was a piece of clothing.

What did Paul do when Silas and Timothy went to Corinth?

[18:7, 18:8]

Paul stopped making tents and give all of time to telling people about Jesus when Silas and Timothy went to Corinth. They were in Corinth with Paul. Some scholars think Silas and Timothy brought money so that Paul did not need to make tents. Other scholars think Silas and Timothy worked and made enough money so that Paul did not need to make tents.

See Map: Corinth

What was a vision?

[18:9]

See: Vision

Why did the Lord speak to Paul in a vision at night?

[18:9]

The Lord spoke to Paul in a vision at night because Paul was afraid he would have to leave Corinth. Persecution in other cities forced Paul to leave when he wanted to continue serving God. However, Paul was not afraid to suffer (see: 21:10-14). Also, the vision helped Paul know he pleased God by the way he served God in Corinth.

See: Persecute (Persecution)

18:12-17

Who was Gallio?

[18:12]

Gallio was the leader of Achaia in Greece for two years. He began ruling about 20 years after Jesus died. He was killed by a Roman emperor.

See Map: Achaia; Greece

What was the judgement seat?

[18:12]

See: Judge (Judgment)

Why did the Jews bring Paul before Gallio?

[18:12]

The Jews brought Paul before Gallio because they wanted to persuade him to judge against Paul. However, their plan failed. The Lord's promise in the vision to protect Paul at Corinth came true.

See: Judge (Judgment); Vision)

See Map: Corinth

Which law did the Jews talk about?

[18:13]

Some scholars think the law the Jews talked about was the Law of Moses. They wanted the governor to allow them to follow the Law of Moses. Other scholars think the Jews talked about Roman laws. Roman laws allowed the Jews to worship God and follow the Law of Moses. If these Jews were able to convince Gallio the Christians were different from the Jews, then Roman law would not allow Christians to worship God. Other scholars think the Jews talked about both the law of Moses and Roman laws.

See: Law of Moses

Who was Sosthenes?

[18:17]

Sosthenes was the ruler of the synagogue in Corinth. If he was the same person in 1 Corinthians 1:1, then he became a Christian at sometime and later he helped Paul write the first letter to the Corinthian church.

See: Synagogue

Why did people beat Sosthenes?

[18:17]

Scholars give several reasons why people beat Sosthenes.

Some scholars think the Jews beat Sosthenes because he was not able to persuade Gallio to judge Paul.

Some scholars think the Jews beat Sosthenes because he became a Christian.

Some scholars think the Gentiles beat Sosthenes because they did not like Jews.

See: Gentile

18:18-23

Why did Paul do a third missionary journey?

[18:8]

This was the beginning of Paul's third missionary journey. He wanted to visit and help the churches he established in his first and second missionary journeys. He wanted them to know he did not forget about them.

See: Paul's Missionary Journeys; Church

See Map: Syria; Cenchrea; Ephesus; Caesarea; Antioch; Galatia; Phrygia

What vow did Paul take?

[18:8]

Scholars have several ideas of what vow Paul took.

Some scholars think Paul made a Nazarite vow (see: Numbers 6)

Some scholars think Paul made a vow of thanksgiving because God protected him in Corinth.

Sometimes ancient sailors shaved their heads after living through a difficult journey. This was a type of vow.

Some scholars think Paul made a private vow.

See: Vow

Why did Paul say "if it is God's will"?

[18:21]

Paul said "if it is God's will" because he always depended on God leading him by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes the Holy Spirit sent Paul to a certain place (see: Acts 13:2). Other times God allowed Paul to visit churches he wanted to visit (see: Acts 15:36). Paul wanted to do God's will.

See: Will of God; Holy Spirit

18:24-28

Where was Alexandria?

[18:24]

See Map: Alexandria

What spirit was Apollos fervent in?

[18:24]

Scholars think Apollos was fervent in his own spirit. This was a metaphor. He loved to speak about Jesus and was excited to speak about Jesus (see: Romans 12:11). Fewer scholars think Luke was writing about the Holy Spirit. Fewer scholars think Luke was writing about both Apollos' spirit and the Holy Spirit.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit; Metaphor

How did Priscilla and Aquila tell Apollos the way of God more accurately?

[18:26]

Some scholars think Priscilla and Aquila told Apollos the way of God more accurately by telling him about Christian baptism in water. The Holy Spirit already live him. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit did not yet live in Apollos but Priscilla and Aquila explained that to him (see: 2:1-4). In the same way, many of the five-hundred who saw Jesus alive again did not go to Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit began to live in the apostles and other Christians (1 Corinthians 15:6).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit: Pentecost; Apostle

See Map: Jerusalem

Acts 18:1

Connecting Statement:

This is another part of the story of Paul's travels as he goes to Corinth.

After these things

"After these events took place in Athens"

Athens

Athens was one of the most important cities in Greece. See how you translated this in Acts 17:15.

Acts 18:2

General Information:

The writer begins to give background information about Aquila and Priscilla.

There he met

Possible meanings are that 1) Paul happened to find by chance or 2) Paul intentionally found.

a Jew named Aquila

Here the phrase "a certain" indicates this is introducing

new person in the story.

a native of Pontus

Pontus was a province on the southern coast of the Black Sea.

had recently come

This is probably sometime in the past year.

Italy

This is the name of land. Rome is the capital city of Italy.

Claudius had commanded

Claudius was the current Roman emperor. See how you translated this in Acts 11:28.

Acts 18:3

General Information:

The writer finishes giving background information about Aquila and Priscilla.

he worked at the same trade

"he did the same kind of work that they did"

Acts 18:4

So Paul reasoned

"So Paul debated" or "So Paul discussed." He gave reasons. This means that rather than just preaching, Paul talked and interacted with the people.

trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks

Possible meanings are 1) "and he caused both Jews and Greeks to believe" or 2) "and he kept trying to persuade the Jews and the Greeks."

Acts 18:5

General Information:

Silas and Timothy rejoin Paul.

Acts 18:6

shook out his garment

This is a symbolic action to indicate that Paul will no longer try to teach the Jews there about Jesus. He is leaving them to God's judgment.

May your blood be upon your own heads

Here "blood" stands for the guilt of their actions. Here "heads" refers to the whole person. Paul tells the Jews they are solely responsible for the judgment they will face for their stubbornness if they refuse to repent. Alternate translation: "You alone bear the responsibility for your punishment for sin"

I am clean

The word "clean" here is a metaphor for Paul being innocent of wrong against either the people or God. Alternate translation: "I am innocent" or "God will not punish me when he punishes you"

Acts 18:7

he left ... His house

"Paul left ... Titius' Justus's house"

Titius Justus

This is the name of a man.

worshiped God

A worshiper of God is a Gentile who gives praise to God and follows him but does not necessarily obey all of the Jewish laws.

Acts 18:8

Crispus

This is the name of a man.

leader of the synagogue

a layperson who sponsored and administered the synagogue, not necessarily the teacher

all his household

Here "his household" refers to the people who lived together in his house. Alternate translation: "the people who lived with him in his house"

his household

Crispus's household

were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "received baptism"

Acts 18:9

Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent

The Lord is giving one command in two different ways to emphasize that Paul should certainly continue preaching. Alternate translation: "You must not be afraid; instead, you should continue to speak and not become silent"

speaking and do not be silent

The Lord gives the same command in two different ways to strongly command Paul to speak. Alternate translation: "you must certainly continue to speak"

do not be silent

It can be stated explicitly what the Lord wants Paul to speak. Alternate translation: "do not stop speaking about the gospel"

Acts 18:10

I have many people in this city

"there are many people in this city who have put their faith in me" or "many people in this city will put their faith in me"

Acts 18:11

Paul lived there ... teaching the word of God among them

This is a concluding statement for this part of the story.

"Word of God" here is a synecdoche for the entire scriptures. Alternate translation: "Paul lived there ... teaching the scriptures among them"

Acts 18:12

General Information:

Achaia was the Roman province in which Corinth was located. Corinth was the largest city in southern Greece and the capital of the province.

Connecting Statement:

The unbelieving Jews bring Paul to the judgment seat before Gallio.

Gallio

This is the name of a man.

the Jews

This stands for the Jewish leaders that did not believe in Jesus.

rose up

This phrase means that the Jews began to act, not that they rose into the air or rose to stand from a sitting position. If your language has a different idiom for beginning to act, you may use it here.

with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

brought him before the judgment seat

The Jews took Paul by force to bring Paul before the court. Here "judgment seat" refers to the place where Gallio sat when he made legal decisions in court. Alternate translation: "took him so that the governor could judge him at the judgment seat"

Acts 18:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 18:14

Gallio said

Gallio was the Roman governor of the Province.

Acts 18:15

your own law

Here "law" can refer to either the law of Moses or the Jewish customs of Paul's time. Gallio is simply telling the Jews that they are to do what they think right and that he is not interested in being the judge.

I do not wish to be a judge of these matters

"I refuse to make a judgment about these matters"

Acts 18:16

Gallio made them leave the judgment seat

"Gallio dismissed the Jews from the judgment seat." Here "judgment seat" refers to the place where Gallio sits to make legal decisions in court. Alternate translation: "Gallio made them leave his presence in the court" or "Gallio made them leave the court"

Acts 18:17

General Information:

It is not clear what events this verse describes. The Jews had been accusing Paul, but it appears that they ended up beating Sosthenes and not Paul.

So they all seized Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the judgment seat

Possible meanings are 1) the Gentiles beat Sosthenes in the court in front of the judgment seat because he was the Jewish leader or 2) Sosthenes was a believer in Christ, so even though he was "the ruler of the synagogue," the Jews beat him in front of the court.

they all seized

This may be an exaggeration to emphasize the strong feelings the people had. Alternate translation: "many people seized" or "many of them grabbed"

Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue

Sosthenes was "the ruler of the synagogue" at Corinth. beat him

"repeatedly hit him" or "repeatedly punched him."

Acts 18:18

General Information:

Here both instances of "he" refer to Paul.

left the brothers

The word "brothers" refers to men and women believers. Alternate translation: "left the fellow believers"

sailed for Syria with Priscilla and Aquila

Paul got on a ship that sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila went with him.

Cenchreae

This was a town near Corinth in Greece. It was on the coast, and Paul probably got on the ship there.

he had his hair cut off

This is a symbolic action that indicates that he had done something he had vowed to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he had someone cut off the hair on his head"

Acts 18:19

Connecting Statement:

This continues Paul's missionary journey as Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila leave Corinth. This seems to indicate that Silas and Timothy remain, since it says "he" here and not "they." The word "they" refers to Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila.

reasoned with the Jews

"gave the Jews reasons to believe" or "debated with the Jews about the scriptures" or "discussed the scriptures with the Jews." Paul explained what the scriptures mean in order to prove to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. See how you translated "reasoned with" in [Acts 17:2]

Acts 18:20

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jews in Ephesus.

Acts 18:21

General Information:

Here the word "them" refers to the Jews in Ephesus. The word "you" is plural.

taking his leave of them

"saying good-bye to them"

Acts 18:22

General Information:

Phrygia is a province in Asia which is now modern day Turkey. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues his missionary journey.

landed at Caesarea

"arrived at Caesarea." The word "landed" is used to show that he arrived by ship.

he went up

He traveled to the city of Jerusalem. The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Caesarea.

greeted the Jerusalem church

Here "church" refers to the believers in Jerusalem.

Alternate translation: "greeted the members of the church of Jerusalem"

then went down

The phrase "went down" is used here because Antioch is lower in elevation than Jerusalem.

Acts 18:23

Paul departed

"Paul went away" or "Paul left"

After having spent some time there

This speaks about "time" as if it were a commodity that a person could spend. Alternate translation: After staying there for a while"

Acts 18:24

General Information:

Apollos is introduced to the story. Verses 24 and 25 give background information about him.

Connecting Statement:

Luke tells what happens in Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

a certain Jew named Apollos

The phrase "a certain" indicates that Luke is introducing a new person in the story.

an Alexandrian by birth

"a man who was born in the city of Alexandria." This was a city in Egypt on the north coast of Africa.

eloquent in speech

"a good speaker"

mighty in the scriptures

"he knew the scriptures thoroughly." He understood the Old Testament writings well.

Acts 18:25

Apollos had been instructed in the teachings of the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Other believers had taught Apollos how the Lord Jesus wanted people to live"

Being fervent in spirit
Here "spirit" refers to the entire person of Apollos.
Alternate translation: "Being very enthusiastic"
the baptism of John
"the baptism that John performed." John's baptism was with water, but Jesus's baptism is with the Holy Spirit.
Acts 18:26
the way of God
How God wants people to live is spoken of as if it were a road that a person travels.
more accurately
"correctly" or "more fully"
Acts 18:27
General Information:
Here the he words "he" and "him" refer to Apollos ([Acts 18:24](#)).
to pass over into Achaia
"to go to the region of Achaia." The phrase "pass over" is used here because Apollos had to cross the Aegean Sea to get to Achaia from Ephesus.

Achaia
Achaia was a Roman Province in the southern section of Greece. See how you translated this in Acts 18:12.
brothers
The word "brothers" here refers to men and women believers. You can make explicit that these are believers in Ephesus. Alternate translation: "fellow believers in Ephesus"
wrote to the disciples
"wrote a letter to the Christians in Achaia"
those who believed by grace
"those who had believed in salvation by grace" or "those who by God's grace believed in Jesus"
Acts 18:28
Apollos powerfully refuted the Jews in public debate
"In public debate Apollos powerfully showed that the Jews were wrong"
showing by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ
"as he showed them by the scriptures that Jesus is the Christ"

Chapter 19

Acts 19 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Baptism

John baptized people to show that they were sorry for their sins. Jesus's followers baptized people who wanted to follow Jesus.

Temple of Diana

The temple of Diana was an important place in the city of Ephesus. Many people came to Ephesus to see this temple, and they bought statues of the goddess Diana while they were there. The people who sold statues of Diana were afraid that if people did not believe Diana was a real goddess, they would stop giving the sellers money for statues.

Links:

[Acts 19:1 Notes](#)

Acts 19

19:1-7

Who were these disciples?

[19:1]

Some scholars think these disciples were Christians. They were not only disciples of John the Baptist but they were also disciples of Jesus. They think that only people who followed and believed in Jesus were disciples in the book of Acts. Some scholars think these disciples were not Christians. They did not have the Holy Spirit in them. Only people who had the Holy Spirit were Christians (see: John 3:5; Romans 8:9). They did not know about baptism in the name of Jesus. Some scholars think people believed these people were disciples. However, Paul did think they really were disciples. Some scholars think Apollos persuaded people to believe in Jesus before Priscilla and Aquila taught Apollos.

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Baptize (Baptism)

How did Paul ask these disciples when they believed?

[19:2]

Scholars have two ideas of how Paul asked these disciples when they believed.

Paul asked them if God gave them the Holy Spirit when they believed in Jesus. That is, God filled Christians with the Holy Spirit when they believed in Jesus. Christians knew they already had the Holy Spirit. However, these disciples did not know God gave the Holy Spirit (see: John 7:39).

Paul asked them if God gave them the Holy Spirit after they believed in Jesus. That is, Christians had the Holy Spirit when they believed in Jesus. However, God filled Christians with the Holy Spirit at a later time so that they could better serve God. The Jews and the people John the Baptist baptized knew about the Holy Spirit. Therefore, when they said they did not hear about the Holy Spirit they were thinking about God filling people with the Holy Spirit.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Disciple; Filling of the Holy Spirit

Why did these disciples say they were baptized with John's baptism?

[19:3]

These disciples said they were baptized by John the Baptist. However, they were not baptized as Christians. This was a different baptism.

See: Baptize (Baptism)

Why did Paul lay his hands on these disciples?

[19:6]

See: Laying on of Hands ; Disciple

How did the Holy Spirit come on these disciples?

[19:6]

The Holy Spirit came on these disciples in the same way God filled disciples with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and they spoke in "tongues" (γλῶσσα/g1100) (see: Acts 2:4) and prophesied.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Filling of the Holy Spirit; Pentecost; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Speaking in Tongues

19:8-20

What was the "Way"?

[19:9]

In ancient Israel, people called Christians the "Way" (ὁδός/g3598). A "way" was a road or path from one place to another. It a metaphor of how a person lived their life. That is, when a person lived in a way that honored God, they were following the right way. Christians did more than believe the right things about God and Jesus. Christians also honored God in the way they lived (see: Acts 15:11; 18:25-26; John 14:6).

See: Acts 9:2; 22:4; 24:14,22

What was the "lecture hall of Tyrannus"?

[19:9]

The "lecture hall of Tyrannus" was a place where people taught others. Here, Paul was able to speak every day rather than just one day a week at the synagogue. Paul made tents in Ephesus (see: Acts 20:34) in the mornings and taught people at the hall of Tyrannus in the afternoons. Then in the evenings he served at houses (see: Acts 20:20).

See: Synagogue

See Map: Ephesus

How did all the Jews and Greeks in Asia hear the word of the Lord?

[19:10]

All the Jews and Greeks in Asia heard the word of the Lord when Christians went to cities in Asia and told people about Jesus. Many of these people went to Ephesus to do trade with others.

See: Word of God

See Map: Asia; Ephesus

What were "extraordinary miracles"?

[19:11]

See: Miracle

Who was Sceva?

[19:14]

Some scholars think Sceva was a "chief" priest rather than the "high" priest. That is, he was not the high priest who stayed in Jerusalem but he was a priest who serve the high priests Annas and Caiaphas. Other scholars think Sceva gave himself this title and Luke wrote what Sceva called himself this. He was not truly a priest in Israel. In ancient Israel, some people said they were priests when they were not priests.

See: High Priest; Priest (Priesthood)

Why did the evil spirit take control over the sons of Sceva?

[19:14]

The evil spirit took control over the sons of Sceva because they tried to do it themselves, rather than trusting in Jesus.

They tried to force the evil spirit out the same way other Jewish leaders did except they also said the name of Jesus. This did not help them because they did not believe in Jesus.

See: Demon

Why did many believers have magic books?

[19:19]

Many believers had magic books because they were recently became Christians. The ancient city of Ephesus had many magicians with books of formulas for casting spells. Many people did magic all their lives before they began to believe in Jesus. However, the failure of the sons of Sceva to force out an evil spirit made Christians know their magic formulas did not have the same power as Jesus. Therefore, they burned their magic books and honored the Lord Jesus.

See Map: Ephesus

How much was fifty-thousand pieces of silver?

[19:19]

Fifty-thousand pieces of silver was the same amount two-hundred workers or soldiers earned in a year.

19:21-22

What were “these things”?

[19:21]

Some scholars “these things” were the two years Paul served the Christians in Ephesus. Other scholars think he was writing about the things in 19:13-19. Paul believed he finished serving the Christians in Ephesus. The church grew and became strong. It was time for Paul to serve in other places.

See: Church

How did Paul decide in the Spirit?

[19:21]

Some scholars think Paul decided in his own spirit to go through Macedonia and Achaia on his way to Jerusalem. More scholars think the Holy Spirit led Paul to travel. This was how the Holy Spirit led Paul.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit

See Map: Macedonia; Achaia; Jerusalem

Why did Paul say he must see Rome?

[19:21]

Paul said he must see Rome because he knew God wanted him to go there. Later, God told this to Paul (see: Acts 23:11) and also an angel told this to Paul (see: Acts 27:23-24).

See: Angel

See Map: Rome

How did Paul go to Rome?

[19:21]

Paul did not go to Rome right away. He needed to visit other churches first. However, from here to the end of the book of Acts Paul’s purpose was to go to Rome.

See: Church; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

See Map: Rome

Why did Paul send Timothy and Erastus ahead to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia?

[19:22]

Paul sent Timothy and Erastus ahead to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia because he wanted them to prepare those churches for his visit.

19:23-41

What was Artemis?

[19:24]

Artemis was a pagan fertility goddess with many breasts, or planets, or fruits, or bee or ostrich eggs, or castrated organs. The ancient Ephesians built a temple to Artemis. The temple was a bank and people put money there. The temple was destroyed and rebuilt many times. During the time of Paul, people made many small silver shrines of the temple. That is, they made little copies or models of the temple. Many people went to Ephesus and bought the silver shrines and used them to worship false gods in their houses. However, when many people no longer believed in idols because they believed in Jesus, then the people who made these idols did not make as much money.

See: Idolatry (Idol); False gods; Temple

Why did Demetrius say Paul persuaded many people in Ephesus and most of Asia?

[19:24]

Demetrius said Paul persuaded many people in Ephesus and most of Asia because he wanted to gather people against Paul. However, Demetrius did not know he said Paul was very successful in persuading people to believe in Jesus.

See: Luke 13:18-20

Why did Luke write about Gaius and Aristarchus?

[19:29]

Luke wrote about Gaius and Aristarchus because he wanted people to know Paul persuaded many people to believe in Jesus when he served in Macedonia, especially in Thessalonica (see: Acts 20:4).

See Map: Macedonia; Thessalonica

Why did Luke write most of the people did not know why they gathered?

[19:32]

Luke wrote most of the people did not know why they gathered because he wanted people to laugh at the crowd. In ancient Greece, writers often wanted the people to laugh when people did stupid things.

Why did the Jews push forward Alexander to make a defense?

[19:33]

The Jews wanted Alexander to make a defense because they wanted the crowd not to think they were Christians. The people knew the Jews also did not believe in idols. The Jews wanted the people to know they had nothing to do with Paul or the Christians.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

What was the town clerk?

[19:35]

The town clerk was the highest official in the city. He kept the city and temple records. He reigned over city meetings. He also talked to Rome about the city.

See: Temple

How did the town clerk know the Christians did not rob the temples or blaspheme the goddess?

[19:37]

The town clerk knew the Christians did not rob temples or blaspheme the goddess because Christians were in Ephesus for at least three years and the Christians did not do these things. The Christians preached about Jesus and fewer people bought silver shrines of the goddess.

See: Temple; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); False gods; Preach (Preacher)

See Map: Ephesus

Acts 19:1

General Information:

The "upper country" was an area of Asia which today is part of modern-day Turkey to the north of Ephesus. Paul must have traveled by land around the top of the Aegean Sea in order to come to Ephesus (also in Turkey today), which is directly east of Corinth by sea.

Connecting Statement:

Paul travels to Ephesus.

It came about that

This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

passed through

"traveled through"

Acts 19:2

receive the Holy Spirit

This means to have the Holy Spirit come upon them.

we did not even hear about the Holy Spirit

"we have not even heard about the Holy Spirit"

Acts 19:3

General Information:

The word "They" refers to the disciples ([Acts 19:1](#)). The word "you" is plural.

Into what then were you baptized?

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "What kind of baptism did you receive?"

Into John's baptism

You can translate this as a complete sentence. Alternate translation: "We were baptized into John's baptism" or "We received the kind of baptism about which John taught"

Acts 19:4

the baptism of repentance

You can translate the abstract noun "repentance" as the verb "repent." Alternate translation: "the baptism that people requested when they wanted to repent"

the one who would come

Here "the one" refers to Jesus.

come after him

This means to come after John the Baptist in time and not following after him physically.

Acts 19:5

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues staying in Ephesus.

When the people

Here "people" refers to the disciples in Ephesus who were talking with Paul (Acts 19:1), they were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they received baptism"

in the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority.

Alternate translation: "as believers in the Lord Jesus"

Acts 19:6

General Information:

All instances of "them" and "they" refer to "the people" ([Acts 19:5](#))

laid his hands on them

"placed his hands on them." He probably placed his hands on their shoulders or heads. Alternate translation: "placed his hands on their heads as he prayed"

they spoke in tongues and prophesied

Unlike in Acts 2:3-4, there are no details of who understood their messages.

Acts 19:7

General Information:

All instances of "them" and "they" refer to "the people" ([Acts 19:5](#))

In all they were about twelve men

This tells how many men were baptized.

twelve men

"12 men"

Acts 19:8

Paul went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months

"Paul regularly attended the synagogue meetings for three months and spoke there boldly"

reasoning and persuading them

Probable meanings are 1) the words "reasoning" and "persuading" are a hendiadys that means "arguing persuasively" or 2) the words describe two separate

activities, "giving them reasons to believe" and "convincing them"

about the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "about God's rule as king" or "about how God would show himself as king"

Acts 19:9

some Jews were hardened and disobedient

People who were stubbornly refusing to believe are spoken of as though they were becoming hard and unable to move.

Alternate translation: "some Jews were stubborn and did not believe" or "some Jews stubbornly refused to accept and obey the message"

to speak evil of the Way before the crowd

What Christ wants people to believe is spoken of as though it were a road that a person travels. The phrase, "the Way," seems to have been a title for Christianity at the time.

Alternate translation: "to speak evil about Christianity to the crowd" or "to speak to the crowd evil things about those who follow Christ and who obey his teaching about God" (See: and Acts 9:2)

to speak evil of

"to speak bad things about"

in the lecture hall of Tyrannus

"in the large room where Tyrannus had taught people"

Tyrannus

This is the name of a man.

Acts 19:10

all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord

Here "all" is a generalization that means very many people throughout Asia heard the gospel.

the word of the Lord

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the message about the Lord"

Acts 19:11

God was doing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul

Here "hands" stands for Paul's whole person. Alternate translation: "God was causing Paul to do extraordinary miracles" or "God was doing extraordinary miracles through Paul"

Acts 19:12

General Information:

Here the words "them" and "their" refer to those who were sick.

even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick and

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when they took to sick people even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul"

even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him

Possible meanings are 1) these were cloth items that Paul had touched or 2) these were cloth items that Paul had worn or used.

handkerchiefs

cloths worn around the head

aprons

clothing worn on the front of the body to protect the clothes of people

the sick

This refers to sick people. Alternate translation: "sick people" or "those who were sick"

their illnesses left them

"those who were sick became healthy"

Acts 19:13

General Information:

This is the beginning of another event that happened while Paul was in Ephesus. It is about Jewish exorcists.

exorcists

people who send evil spirits away from people or places

the name of the Lord Jesus

Here "name" refers to Jesus's power and authority.

By the Jesus whom Paul proclaims

"Jesus" was a common name at the time, so these exorcists wanted people to know of whom they spoke.

By the Jesus

This stands for the power and authority of Jesus. Alternate translation: "by the authority of Jesus" or "by the power of Jesus"

Acts 19:14

Sceva

This is the name of a man.

Acts 19:15

Jesus I know, and Paul I know

"I know Jesus and Paul" or "I know Jesus, and I know Paul" but who are you?

The spirit asked this question to emphasize that the exorcists had no authority over evil spirits. Alternate translation: "but I do not know you!" or "but you have no authority over me!"

Acts 19:16

The evil spirit in the man leaped

This means that the evil spirit caused the man whom it was controlling to leap on the exorcists.

exorcists

This refers to people who send evil spirits from people or places. See how you translated this in Acts 19:13.

they fled ... naked

The exorcists fled with their clothes ripped off them.

Acts 19:17

the name of the Lord Jesus was honored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they honored the name of the Lord Jesus" or "they considered the name of the Lord Jesus to be great"

the name

This stands for the power and authority of Jesus.

Acts 19:18

Connecting Statement:

This ends the story about the Jewish exorcists.

Acts 19:19

brought their books

"collected their books." The word "books" refers to scrolls on which magical incantations and formulas were written.

in the sight of everyone

"in front of everyone"

the value of them

"the value of the books" or "the value of the scrolls"

fifty thousand

"50,000"

pieces of silver

A "piece of silver" was the approximate daily wage for a

common laborer.

Acts 19:20

So the word of the Lord spread very widely in powerful ways
"So because of these powerful deeds, more and more people heard the message about the Lord Jesus"

Acts 19:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks about going Jerusalem but does not leave Ephesus yet.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.
Here Luke starts to tell a new part of the story.

these things were completed

"Paul completed the work that God had for him to do in Ephesus"

Paul decided in the Spirit

Possible meanings are 1) Paul decided with the help of the Holy Spirit or 2) Paul decided within his own spirit, which means he made up his mind.

Achaia

Achaia was the Roman province in which Corinth was located. It was the largest city in southern Greece and the capital of the province. See how you translated this in Acts 18:12.

I must also see Rome

"I must also travel to Rome"

Acts 19:22

Erastus

This is the name of a man.

But he himself stayed in Asia for a while

It is made explicit in the next few verses that Paul remains in Ephesus.

he himself

This is repeated for emphasis.

Acts 19:23

Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about a riot that broke out while Paul was in Ephesus.

there was no small disturbance in Ephesus concerning the Way

This is a summary opening statement.

there was no small disturbance

"the people became very upset" See how you translated this in Acts 12:18

the Way

This was a term used to refer to Christianity. See how you translated this title in Acts 9:1.

Acts 19:24

General Information:

The writer introduces Demetrius to the story and gives background information about him. Ephesus had a large temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis, sometimes translated as "Diana." She was a false goddess of fertility.

A certain silversmith named Demetrius

The use of the words "a certain" introduces a new person in the story.

silversmith

a craftsman who works with silver metal to make statues and jewelry

named Demetrius

This is the name of a man. Demetrius was a silversmith in Ephesus who was against Paul and the local church.

brought in much business for the craftsmen

"enabled those who made the idols to make much money" shrines of Artemis

These were probably carved or molten images of the temple of Artemis or of the part of the temple in which the statue of Artemis stood.

Acts 19:25

the workmen of that occupation

An occupation is a profession or job. Alternate translation: "others who did that kind of work"

Acts 19:26

Connecting Statement:

Demetrius continues to speak to the craftsmen.

You see and hear that

"You have come to know and understand that"

persuaded and turned away many people

Paul's stopping people from worshiping idols is spoken of as though Paul were turning the people in a different direction. Alternate translation: "persuaded many people and caused them to stop worshiping the local gods"

He is saying that gods made by hands are not gods

Here the word "hands" can refer to the whole person.

Alternate translation: "He is saying that the idols that people make are not real gods"

Acts 19:27

that our trade will be discredited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that what Paul is saying will discredit our trade" or "that people will think that our trade is false"

our trade

This refers to their business of making and selling idols.

the temple of the great goddess Artemis might be regarded as worthless

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"people will think that the temple of the great goddess Artemis is worthless" or "people will think there is no benefit in going to the temple to worship the great goddess Artemis"

her greatness would be brought to nothing

"Her greatness" is a metonym for her reputation of being

great. Being "brought to nothing" is a metaphor for

becoming nothing or no longer existing. Alternate

translation: "People would no longer recognize how great she is" or "She will lose her reputation of being great"

whom all Asia and the world worship

This was an exaggeration to show how popular the goddess Artemis was. Here the words "Asia" and "the world" refer to the people in the province of Asia and the known world.

Alternate translation: "whom many people in Asia and in other parts of the world worship"

Acts 19:28

General Information:

Here "they" refers to the craftsmen who made the idols ([Acts 19:24-25](#)).

they were filled with anger

This speaks of the craftsmen as though they were

containers. Here "anger" is spoken of as if it were the

contents that fill a container. Alternate translation: "they

became very angry"

cried out

"shouted aloud" or "shouted loudly"

Acts 19:29

The whole city was filled with confusion

Here "city" refers to the people. The city is spoken of as if it were a container. And, "confusion" is spoken of as if it were the contents that filled the container. Alternate translation: "Then people all over the city became upset and started shouting"

the people rushed with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

into the theater

The Ephesus theater was used for public meetings and for entertainment such as plays and music. It was an outdoor semi-circular area with bench seats that could hold thousands of people.

Paul's travel companions

The men who had been with Paul.

Gaius and Aristarchus

These are names of men. Gaius and Aristarchus came from Macedonia but were working with Paul in Ephesus at this time.

Acts 19:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 19:31

officials of the province of Asia

Ephesus was in the Roman Empire's province of Asia.

enter the theater

The Ephesus theater was used for public meetings and for entertainment such as plays and music. It was an outdoor semi-circular area with bench seats that could hold thousands of people. See how you translated "theater" in Acts 19:29.

Acts 19:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 19:33

Alexander

This is the name of a man.

motioned with his hand

You can make explicit that Alexander was showing the crowd that he wanted them to be quiet. Alternate translation: "gestured to the crowd to be quiet"

to give a defense

It is not clear whom or what Alexander wanted to defend.

If your language requires this information, it might be best to use a general phrase like "to explain what was going on."

Acts 19:34

with one voice

The shouting together of the people at the same time is spoken of as though they were speaking with one voice.

Alternate translation: "in unison" or "together"

Acts 19:35

Connecting Statement:

The clerk of Ephesus speaks to quiet the crowd.

the town clerk

This refers to the town "writer" or "secretary."

what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper ... heaven?

The clerk asked this question to assure the crowd they were right and to comfort them. Alternate translation: "every man knows that the city of the Ephesians is temple keeper ... heaven."

who does not know

The town clerk uses "not" to emphasize that all of the people knew this.

temple keeper

The Ephesian people maintained and guarded the temple of Artemis.

the image which fell down from heaven

Within the temple of Artemis was an image of the goddess. It had been fashioned from a meteorite which fell from the sky. People thought that this rock had come directly from Zeus, the ruler of the Greek gods (idols).

Acts 19:36

General Information:

The word "you" is plural.

Seeing then that these things are undeniable

"Since you know these things"

do nothing rash

"do not do anything before you have had time to think about it"

rash

without careful thought

Acts 19:37

General Information:

The word "you" is plural.

these men

The words "these men" refer to Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions (Acts 19:29).

Acts 19:38

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." The town clerk had said in Acts 19:37 that Gaius and Aristarchus were not robbers or blasphemers.

have an accusation against anyone

The word "accusation" can be stated as the verb "accuse."

Alternate translation: "want to accuse someone"

proconsuls

the Roman governor's representatives who made legal decisions in court

Let them accuse one another

This does not mean Demetrius and those with him will accuse each other. It means this is a place where people in general can speak their accusation. Alternate translation: "There people can accuse one another"

Acts 19:39

Connecting Statement:

The town clerk finishes speaking to the crowd.

But if you are seeking anything more

"But if you want to ask about anything more" or "But if you have something to discuss about other matters"

it should be resolved in the regular assembly

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let

us settle it in the regular assembly"
the regular assembly
This refers to a regular public gathering of citizens over which the county clerk presided.
Acts 19:40

For we are in danger of being accused of rioting today
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in danger of the Roman authorities accusing us of starting this riot today"

Chapter 20

Acts 20 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter Luke describes Paul's last visits to believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Asia before he went to Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Race

Paul spoke of living for Jesus as if he were running in a race. By this he meant that he needed to keep working hard even when things were difficult and he wanted to quit. (See: and discipline)

"Compelled by the Spirit"

Paul thought that the Holy Spirit wanted him to go to Jerusalem even if Paul did not want to go there. The same Holy Spirit told other people that when Paul arrived in Jerusalem, people would try to harm him.

Links:

[Acts 20:1](#)

Acts 20

20:1-6

How did Paul encourage the disciples?

[20:1]

Paul encouraged the disciples by telling them to continue trusting in God and to live in a way that honors God. Paul wrote these things in his letters when he encouraged Christians.

See: Disciple

What was the plot the Jews formed against Paul?

[20:3]

The plot the Jews formed against Paul was a plan to do something evil to Paul or even kill him. Because of this, Paul changed his plans and went by land back to Macedonia rather than sail on a ship toward Syria.

See Map: Macedonia; Greece; Syria

Why did Luke write "us" in verse five?

[20:5]

Some scholars think Luke wrote "us" in verse five because Luke began to travel with Paul. Fewer scholars think "us" also included other Christians who traveled with Paul and Luke.

Why did the Christian men meet Paul and Luke at Troas?

[20:5]

Christian men met Paul and Luke at Troas because they sailed on a ship and arrived there before Paul did because he traveled on land. Scholars think these men had money to give to the poor Christians in Jerusalem (see: 1 Corinthians 16:1-4).

See Map: Berea; Thessalonica; Derbe; Asia; Troas

What were the days of unleavened bread?

[20:6]

The days of unleavened bread was the festival of Passover.

See: Passover; Festival of Unleavened Bread

20:7-12

How did they break bread?

[20:7]

Some scholars think they broke bread by eating a meal (see: 2:46). Other scholars think they ate a meal and had the Lord's supper (see: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

See: Lord's Supper

Why did Luke write there were many lamps?

[20:8]

Some scholars think Luke wrote there were many lamps because the odor, heat, or smoke of the lamps took away the air to breath in the upper room. This made Eutychus sleep even though he sat near a window. Other scholars think the lamps gave much light so that Paul was able to continue speaking to the Christians all night.

How did Eutychus die?

[20:9]

Some scholars think Eutychus died from the fall. They say Paul prayed when he stretched himself and embraced Eutychus. Eutychus then became alive again. Luke was a doctor so he knew Eutychus was dead. Fewer scholars think they do not know if Eutychus really died. They say Eutychus did not wake up until later.

See: Pray (Prayer); Resurrect (Resurrection)

20:13-16

Why did Paul travel by land from Troas to Assos?

[20:13]

Luke did not write why Paul traveled by land from Troas to Assos. Scholars think Paul wanted time alone to talk to God. The Holy Spirit told Paul many times he will go to prison (see: 20:22-23). Paul was alone and God strengthened Paul to accept God's will and serve Jesus until Paul died (see: 20:24).

See: Acts 9:15-16

See: Holy Spirit; Will of God

See Map: Troas; Assos

Why did Paul hurry to go to Jerusalem?

[20:16]

Paul hurried to go to Jerusalem to be there for the Day of Pentecost. Many Jewish Christians were in Jerusalem for Pentecost. Paul wanted the Gentile Christians from Macedonia and Greece to give the money to the poor Jewish Christians. He knew this would help join the Gentile and Jewish Christians together.

See: Pentecost

See Map: Mitylene; Chios; Samos; Miletus; Ephesus; Asia; Jerusalem; Macedonia; Greece

20:17-35

What were the “elders” in the church?

[20:17]

The “elders”(πρεσβύτερος/g4245) were the leaders in the church. They were also called “overseers”(ἐπίσκοπος/g1985) or “shepherds”(ποιμαίνω/g4165) (see: Acts 20:28).

See: Elder; Overseer; Shepherd

How did Paul do the things he wanted the church leaders to do?

[20:18, 20:19, 20:24]

There were many ways Paul did the things he wanted the church leaders to do (see: 1 Corinthians 4:6; 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).

He was with them all the time.

He served Jesus even when he was persecuted.

He did not think he was greater than other people (see: 2 Corinthians 12:7).

He was innocent of all blood. That is, Paul preached the gospel to all people and warned them to repent and believe in Jesus (see: Ezekiel 3:18,20; 33:6,8).

He warned them about people who did not teach the truth.

He did not want people to give him things.

He worked and did not rely on people to give him money.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Repent (Repentance)

How did the Holy Spirit testify to Paul?

[20:23]

The Holy Spirit testified to Paul through prophecy. That is Paul knew what the Holy Spirit wanted him to know through prophecies. Luke wrote about the prophecy in Caesarea because it was an example of prophecies in other cities (see: 21:10-11). The Holy Spirit was able to testify to Paul through visions (see: 16:9-10) or talking to Paul when he worshipped God or fasted (see: 13:2). Paul knew the Holy Spirit did not want to stop Paul from going to Jerusalem. The Holy Spirit told Paul about God's plan for Paul to tell people about the gospel and God's grace (see: 20:24).

See: Testify (Testimony); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Holy Spirit; Vision); Worship; Fasting; Grace

See Map: Caearea ; Jerusalem

What was “the grace of God”?

[20:24]

See: Grace

What was “the whole will of God”?

[20:27]

The “whole will of God” was the whole plan of God to save people. That is, it was God’s plan in the whole Bible. Jesus fulfilled all of God’s plan.

See: Will of God; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Fulfill (Fulfillment)

What were “vicious wolves”?

[20:29]

When Paul spoke about “vicious wolves,” this was a metaphor. He was speaking about people from outside the church who came into the church and taught wrong things about God and Jesus. Paul called them “vicious” because they were wild and cruel. Jesus called them false prophets (see: Matthew 7:15).

See: Church; False Prophet

What was the “flock”?

[20:29]

The “flock” was a metaphor for the church. Wolves attacked the “flock” and killed sheep. False teachers will teach wrong things about God and Jesus until Jesus returns.

See: Shepherd; Metaphor; Church; False Teacher; Jesus’ Return to Earth

What was the inheritance?

[20:32]

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

What was sanctification?

[20:32]

See: Sanctify (Sanctification)

Who were the “weak”?

[20:35]

The “weak”(ἀσθενέω/g0770) were people who were poor people or people who were sick or suffering.

Why did Paul repeat what Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than receive”?

[20:35]

Paul repeated what Jesus said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” because Paul did not want anyone to think he preached to make money. Therefore, he worked to meet his own needs. Paul was talking about how he helped a new church. That is, Paul was at the church in Ephesus when it just started. However, after a church grew Paul wanted them to support the leaders in this church (see: Galatians 6:6; 1 Timothy 5:17-18). Also, Paul was an example to them of how to help the weak.

See: Bless (Blessing); Preach (Preacher); Church

See Map: Ephesus

20:36-38

Why did Paul kneel down to pray?

[20:36]

Paul knelt down to pray because this was a time of strong feelings for Paul (see: 21:5; 9:40). Christians prayed standing or sitting.

See: Pray (Prayer)

Acts 20:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul leaves Ephesus and continues his travels.

After the uproar

"After the riot" or "Following the riot"

he said farewell

"he said goodbye"

Acts 20:2

had spoken many words of encouragement to them

"had greatly encouraged the believers" or "had said many things to encourage the believers"

Acts 20:3

After he had spent three months there

"After he had stayed there three months." This speaks about time as if it were something a person could spend.

a plot was formed against him by the Jews

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Jews formed a plot against him" or "the Jews formed a secret plan to harm him"

by the Jews

This means only some of the Jews. Alternate translation:

"by some of the Jews"

as he was about to sail for Syria

"as he was ready to sail for Syria"

Acts 20:4

Accompanying him

"Traveling with him." Here the word "him" refers to Paul (Acts 20:1).

Sopater ... Pyrrhus ... Secundus ... Tychicus ... Trophimus

These are names of men.

Berea ... Derbe

These are names of places.

Aristarchus ... Gaius

These are names of men. See how you translated these names in Acts 19:29.

Acts 20:5

these men had gone before us

"these men had traveled ahead of us"

before us ... for us

Here "us" refers to the writer and Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Troas

This is the name of a place.

Acts 20:6

General Information:

All instances of "we" refer to the writer and Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

the days of unleavened bread

This refers to the Jewish religious feast time during the Passover season. See how you translated this in Acts 12:3.

Acts 20:7

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader. (See: and [Acts 20:4-6](#))

Connecting Statement:

Luke tells about Paul's preaching in Troas and about what happened to Eutychus.

the next day

"when the sun came up again." If the writer was using the Jewish system of determining days, Paul was planning to travel after sunrise on "the first day of the week." If the writer was using the Greek system, Paul was planning to travel on the second day of the week.

to break bread

Bread was part of their meals. Possible meanings are 1) this refers simply to eating a meal together. Alternate translation: "to eat a meal" or 2) this refers to the meal they would eat together in order to remember Christ's death and resurrection. Alternate translation: "to eat the Lord's Supper"

he prolonged his message

"he continued to speak"

Acts 20:8

upper room

This may have been on the third floor of the house.

Acts 20:9

In the window

This was an opening in the wall with a ledge that was wide enough on which a person could sit.

Eutychus

This is the name of a man.

who fell into a deep sleep

This speaks about sleep as if it were a deep hole into which a person could fall. Alternate translation: "who slept soundly" or "who became more and more tired until finally he was sleeping soundly"

third story and was picked up dead

When they went down to check his condition, they saw he was dead. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "third story; and when they went to pick him up, they found that he was dead"

third story

This means two floors above the ground floor. If your culture does not count the ground floor, you may state this as the "second story."

Acts 20:10

on him ... embraced him ... he is alive

Here "him" and "he" refers to the young man, Eutychus.

he said

Here "he" refers to Paul.

Acts 20:11

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Paul.

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the part of the story about Paul's preaching at Troas and about Eutychus.

broke bread

Bread was a common food during meals. Here "broke bread" probably means that they shared a meal with more kinds of food than just bread.

he left

"he went away"

Acts 20:12

the boy

This refers to Eutychus (Acts 20:9). Possible meanings are 1) he was a young man over 14 years old or 2) he was a boy between 9 and 14 years old or 3) the word "boy" implies that he was a servant or a slave.

Acts 20:13

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer and those traveling with him, but not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

The writer Luke, Paul, and his other companions continue their travels; however, Paul goes separately for part of the trip.

We ourselves went

The word "ourselves" adds emphasis and separates Luke and his traveling companions from Paul, who did not travel by boat.

sailed away to Assos

Assos is a town located directly below present day Behram in Turkey on the coast of the Aegean sea.

he himself desired

Here "he himself" refers to Paul. "Himself" is used to emphasize that this is what Paul wanted.

to go by land

"to travel on land"

Acts 20:14

he met ... took him

Here "he" and "him" refer to Paul.

met us ... we took

Here the words "we" and "us" refer to the writer and those traveling with him, but not to the reader.

went to Mitylene

Mitylene is a town located in present day Mitilini in Turkey on the coast of the Aegean sea.

Acts 20:15

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul, the writer, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

opposite the island

"near the island" or "across from the island"

the island of Chios

Chios is an island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the

Aegean Sea.

we touched at the island of Samos

"we arrived at the island of Samos"

island of Samos

Samos is an island south of Chios in the Aegean Sea off the coast of modern day Turkey.

the city of Miletus

Miletus was a port city in western Asia Minor near the mouth of the Meander River.

Acts 20:16

For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus

Paul sailed south past the port city of Ephesus, further south in order to land at Miletus.

so that he would not spend any time

This speaks about "time" as if it were a commodity that a person could spend or use up. Alternate translation: "so that he would not have to remain for a time" or "so that he would not have a delay"

Acts 20:17

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Paul.

Connecting Statement:

Paul calls the elders of the church of Ephesus and begins to speak to them.

Miletus

Miletus was a port city in western Asia Minor near the mouth of the Meander River. See how you translated this in [Acts 20:15]

Acts 20:18

You yourselves

Here "yourselves" is used for emphasis.

I set foot in Asia

Here "foot" stands for the entire person. Alternate translation: "I entered Asia"

how I always spent my time with you

This speaks about time as if it were something that a person could spend. Alternate translation: "how I always conducted myself when I was with you"

Acts 20:19

lowliness of mind

This speaks about something humble as if it were low to the ground. The word "mind" stands for a person's inner attitude. Alternate translation: "humility" or "humbleness"

with tears

Here "tears" stands for feeling sad and crying. Alternate translation: "with crying as I served the Lord"

in trials that happened to me

"Trials" is an abstract noun. The meaning can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "while God was testing me" of the Jews

This does not mean every Jew. This lets us know who plotted. Alternate translation: "of some of the Jews"

Acts 20:20

You know how I did not keep back from declaring to you

"You know how I was never silent, but I always declared to you"

from house to house

"I also taught when I was in your homes"

Acts 20:21

about repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus

The abstract nouns "repentance" and "faith" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "that they need to repent before God and believe in our Lord Jesus Christ"

our Lord Jesus

The word "our" refers to Paul and the elders to whom he is speaking.

Acts 20:22

General Information:

Here the word "I" refers to Paul.

compelled by the Spirit

They can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"because the Spirit compels me to go there"

not knowing what will happen to me there

"and I do not know what will happen to me there"

Acts 20:23

chains and afflictions await me

Here "chains" refers to Paul's being arrested and put in prison. Alternate translation: "people will put me in prison and cause me to suffer"

Acts 20:24

if only I may finish the race and complete the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus

This speaks about Paul's "race" and "ministry" as if they are objects that Jesus gives and Paul receives. Here "race" and "ministry" mean basically the same thing. Paul repeats this for emphasis. Alternate translation: "so that I may complete the work that the Lord Jesus has commanded me to do"

finish the race

Paul speaks about completing the work that Jesus has commanded him to do as if he were running a race.

to testify to the gospel of the grace of God

"to tell people the good news about God's grace." This is the ministry that Paul received from Jesus.

Acts 20:25

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to talk to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17).

Now look, I know

"Now, pay careful attention, because I know"

I know that you all

"I know that all of you"

among whom I went about proclaiming the kingdom

Here "kingdom" stands for God's rule as king. Alternate translation: "to whom I preached the message about God's reign as king" or "to whom I preached about how God will show himself as king"

will see my face no more

The word "face" here represents Paul's physical body.

Alternate translation: "will not see me anymore on this earth"

Acts 20:26

I am innocent of the blood of any man

Here "blood" stands for a person's death, which, in this case, is not physical death but spiritual death when God declares a person guilty of sin. Paul had told them God's truth. Alternate translation: "I am not responsible for

anyone whom God judges guilty of sin because they did not trust in Jesus"

any man

Here this means any person whether male or female.

Alternate translation: "any person"

Acts 20:27

For I did not hold back from declaring to you

"For I did not keep silent and not tell you." This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "For I certainly declared to you"

Acts 20:28

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true," referring to all that Paul has said so far in his speech about his leaving them.

the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers. Be careful to shepherd the church of God

Believers are likened to a "flock" of sheep here. Church leaders are entrusted by God with the care of the community of believers just as a shepherd would care for his flock of sheep and protect them from wolves. Alternate translation: "the group of believers the Holy spirit has entrusted to you. Be sure to take care of the church of God"

the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood

The shedding of the blood of Christ here is likened to a payment to God for our sins. Alternate translation: "the people Christ saved from their sins by shedding his blood on the cross"

his own blood

Here "blood" stands for Christ's death.

Acts 20:29

vicious wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock

This is a picture of people who teach false doctrine and who harm the community of believers as though they were wolves that eat the sheep of the flock. Alternate translation: "many enemies will come among you and try to harm the community of believers"

Acts 20:30

to draw away the disciples after them

A false teacher convincing believers to start believing his false teaching is spoken of as if he were leading sheep away from the flock to follow him. Alternate translation: "in order to convince people who are disciples of Christ to become his disciples instead"

Acts 20:31

be on guard. Remember

"be on guard and remember" or "be on guard as you remember"

be on guard

"be awake and alert" or "watch out." Christian leaders being alert about anyone that may harm the community of believers is spoken of as if they were guards in an army watching out for the enemy army.

Remember that

"Continue to remember that" or "Do not forget that"

for three years I never stopped warning ... night and day

Paul taught them over the space of three years, but not necessarily every day for three years.

I never stopped warning ... you

This does not mean that the only words he spoke were words of warning. Rather, Paul is using hyperbole to remind them that he had told them often that evil men would try to deceive them. Alternate translation: "I

warned ... you as often as I could"

with tears

Here "tears" refers to Paul's crying because of the strong emotion of concern he felt while he was warning the people.

Acts 20:32

I commit you to God and to the word of his grace

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "I ask God to take care of you and to help you to keep believing the message I spoke to you about his grace"

which is able to build you up

A person's faith becoming stronger is spoken of as if the person were a wall and someone were building him higher and stronger. Alternate translation: "which is able to make become stronger and stronger in your faith"

to give you the inheritance

This speaks about the "word of his grace" as if the word itself would give the inheritance to believers. Alternate translation: "God will give you the inheritance"

the inheritance

The blessings that God gives believers are spoken of as if they were money or property that a child inherits from his father.

Acts 20:33

I coveted no man's silver

"I did not desire someone's silver" or "I did not want for myself anyone's silver"

man's silver, gold, or clothing

Clothing was considered a treasure; the more you had, the richer you were.

Acts 20:34

You yourselves

The word "yourselves" is used here to add emphasis.

these hands served my own needs

The word "hands" here represents the entire person.

Alternate translation: "I worked to earn money and pay for my own expenses"

Acts 20:35

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to the elders of the church of Ephesus; he began to speak them in Acts 20:18.

you should help the weak by laboring

"you should work so as to have money to help people who cannot earn it for themselves"

the weak

You can state this nominal adjective as an adjective.

Alternate translation: "weak persons" or "those who are weak"

weak

"sick"

the words of the Lord Jesus

Here "words" refers to what Jesus has said.

It is more blessed to give than to receive

This means a person receives the favor of God and experiences more joy when he gives to other people rather than always receiving from other people.

Acts 20:36

Connecting Statement:

Paul ends his time with the elders of the church of Ephesus

by praying with them.
he knelt down and prayed
It was a common custom to kneel down while praying. It was a sign of humility before God.
Acts 20:37
embraced Paul
"hugged him closely" or "put their arms around him"
kissed him

Kissing someone on the cheek is an expression of brotherly or friendly love in the Middle East.
Acts 20:38
they would never see his face again
The word "face" here represents Paul's physical body.
Alternate translation: "they would not see him anymore on this earth"

Chapter 21

Acts 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Acts 21:1-19 describes Paul's journey to Jerusalem. After he arrived in Jerusalem, the believers there told him that the Jews wanted to harm him and what he should do so they would not harm him (verses 20-26). Even though Paul did what the believers told him to do, the Jews tried to kill him. The Romans rescued him and gave him a chance to speak to the Jews.

The last verse of the chapter ends with an incomplete sentence. Most translations leave the sentence incomplete, as the ULB does.

Special concepts in this chapter

"They are all determined to keep the law"

The Jews in Jerusalem were following the law of Moses. Even those who were following Jesus still kept the law. Both groups thought that Paul had been telling Jews in Greece not to keep the law. But it was only the Gentiles to whom Paul was saying that.

Nazarite vow

The vow that Paul and his three friends made was probably a Nazarite vow, because they shaved their heads ([Acts 21:23](#)).
Gentiles in the temple

The Jews accused Paul of bringing a Gentile man into a part of the temple into which God only allowed Jews to go. They thought that God wanted them to punish Paul by killing him. (See: holy)

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens.

Links:

[Acts 21:1 Notes](#)

Acts 21

21:1-6

Why did Paul and his friends find the disciples at Tyre?

[21:3]

Paul and his friends found the disciples at Tyre because they did not know where the disciples were in Tyre. When Paul and his friends found the disciples they were in Tyre for seven days while merchants unloaded cargo from the ship.

See: Disciple

See Map: Cos; Rhodes; Patara; Phoenicia; Cyprus; Syria; Tyre

Why did the disciples at Tyre urge Paul not to go to Jerusalem?

[21:4]

The disciples at Tyre did not want Paul not to go to Jerusalem because they did not want Paul to suffer and go to prison in Jerusalem. However, the Holy Spirit was sending Paul to Jerusalem to suffer (see: Acts 19:21; 20:22-23). The disciples at Tyre did not tell Paul what the Holy Spirit told them to say when they told Paul not to go. Instead, they told Paul to not go because the Holy Spirit said Paul will suffer in Jerusalem. Luke wrote more about this when the same thing happened in Caesarea (see: Acts 21:12).

See: Disciple; Holy Spirit

See Map: Tyre; Jerusalem; Caesarea

21:7-14

How was Philip an "evangelist"?

[21:8]

Scholars have several ideas of how Philip was an “evangelist”(εὐαγγελιστής/2099). He was not the same Philip who was an apostle (see: Luke 6:13-14).

He helped people to believe in Jesus in Samaria and Judea.
God gave him the gift of “evangelist.”
He started the church at Caesarea.

See: Apostle; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Gospel
See Map: Samaria; Judea; Ptolemais; Caesarea
Why did Paul and his friends stay for several days in Philip’s house?
[21:8]

Scholars say there were two reasons why Paul and his friends stayed in Philip’s house for several days.
Philip’s daughters prophesied to Paul and encouraged him.
Philip told Luke about the Christians in Jerusalem (see: 6:5).

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)
Why did Luke write Philip’s daughters were virgins?
[21:9] Luke wrote Philip’s daughters were virgins because they were under sixteen years of age and not married. Some ancient pagan leaders wanted people who served in their temples to be virgins. However, Christians did not have to be virgins to prophesy or serve (see: 1 Corinthians 9:5).
See: Pagan; Temple; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Serve
How did God did fulfill Agabus’ prophecy?
[21:10, 21:11]
Some scholars think God did not fulfill all of Agabus’ prophecy because the Romans in Jerusalem tied Paul’s feet and hands. Other scholars think God fulfilled all of Agabus’ prophecy because the Jews in Jerusalem accused Paul of doing evil things and made the Romans tie his feet and hands.

See: Acts 23:27
See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Fulfill (Fulfillment)
Why did the Holy Spirit give prophecies to say Paul will suffer in Jerusalem?
[21:11]
The Holy Spirit gave prophecies to say Paul will suffer in Jerusalem. The Jewish enemies of Paul will not be able to say God judged Paul because he preached a wrong gospel. These Jews were wrong to think that Gentiles need to become Jews before they became Christians (see: Acts 15:1-29). The prophecies stopped people from thinking wrong things about how Paul served God. The church continued to grow after Paul went to Jerusalem.
See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Gentile; Church
See Map: Jerusalem

Why did the Christians say, “May the will of the Lord be done”?
[21:14]
The Christian said, “May the will of the Lord be done,” because they finally accepted God’s plan for Paul to suffer in Jerusalem. They agreed with Paul and prayed for the things to happen as God said (see: Luke 2:42).
See: Lord; Will of God; Pray (Prayer)

21:15-26

Why did Luke write they went up to Jerusalem?
[21:15]
Luke wrote they went up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem was on a mountain. Even when people traveled from the north to Jerusalem the Bible wrote they went up to Jerusalem.
See Map: Jerusalem; Caesarea; Cyprus
Who was this James?
[21:18]
This James was the brother of Jesus. He was the leader of the church in Jerusalem.
See: Church; Family of Jesus
Why did not any of the other apostles meet Paul?
[21:18]
None of the other apostles met Paul because none of them were in Jerusalem. All of the other apostles left Jerusalem to go and tell people about Jesus.
See: Apostle
When did the things God did for the Gentiles happen?
[21:19]
The things God did for the Gentiles happened after Paul visited Jerusalem (see: Acts 15). This was during Paul’s second and

third missionary journeys.

See: Paul's Missionary Journeys; Gentile

What vow did the four men make?

[21:23]

The four men vowed a Nazirite Vow (see: Numbers 6:14-20). At the end of the time of the vow, the person who made the vow shaved their heads and offered sacrifices. James and the leaders did not ask Paul to take the Nazirite Vow himself. However, they thought if Paul paid for the sacrifices of the four men, then the Jews will know it was wrong to say Paul did not keep the law of Moses.

See: Vow; Offer (Offering); Law of Moses

What did Luke write in verse 25?

[21:25]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that the Gentiles do not do these things Older and more copies of the Greek New Testament do not say this. Scholars do not think Luke wrote these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

Why did James repeat the letter from Acts 15?

[21:25]

James repeated the letter from Acts 15 because he wanted everyone to know the church in Jerusalem did not change what they thought about Gentile Christians. That is, even though the Jerusalem church asked Paul to pay for sacrifices in the Law of Moses, they still did not ask Gentile Christians to become Jews.

See: Church; Gentile; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice; Law of Moses

See Map: Jerusalem

21:27-36

How did the Jews from Asia lay hands on Paul?

[21:27]

The Jews from Asia laid hands on Paul. That is, they tried to hurt or kill Paul.

See Map: Asia

How did the Jews from Asia say wrong things about Paul?

[21:28]

The Jews from Asia lied about Paul by saying Paul spoke against the Jews, the Law of Moses, and the temple. They also lied and said that Paul brought a Gentile into a part of the temple where Gentiles were not supposed to go.

See: Law of Moses; Temple

See Map: Asia

Why did they close the doors of the temple?

[21:30]

They closed the doors of the temple so the crowd in an uproar will not defile the temple. If the crowd killed Paul in the temple it will defile the temple.

See: Temple

Who was "the chief captain of the cohort"?

[21:31]

"The chief captain of the cohort" was a Roman officer. He commanded between six hundred and one thousand Roman soldiers.

Where was the fortress?

[21:34]

The fortress was a tower northwest of the temple. It was called the Antonia tower. A person was able to see the temple from the tower. It was used to protect the temple.

See: Temple

Why did the crowd shout, "Away with him!"?

[21:36]

Some scholars think the crowd shouted, "Away with him!" because they wanted to kill Paul. Fewer scholars think they wanted to take Paul away and judge him.

See: 22:22; Luke 23:18

See: Judge (Judgment)

21:37-40

Why did the captain ask Paul if he was the Egyptian who started a rebellion?

[21:38]

The captain asked Paul if he was the Egyptian who started a rebellion because Paul spoke Greek. Many people in Egypt spoke Greek. Paul defended himself by saying he was a Jew from the city of Tarsus. That gave him Roman citizenship.

See: Citizen

See Map: Egypt; Tarsus
Who were the "Assassins"?
[21:38]

The "Assassins" were a group of certain people who fought against the Romans. They carried small knives and they killed people in crowds at festivals.

Why was Tarsus an important city?
[21:39]

Tarsus was an important city because many people lived there and they ruled themselves. Many people in Tarsus were rich.

How did Paul speak in the Hebrew language?
[21:40]

Some scholars think Paul spoke Aramaic. Aramaic was the language the Jews spoke when they lived in Babylon. At this time, the people in Israel spoke Aramiac. Only certain Jewish teachers read or spoke Hebrew. Fewer scholars think the Jews in Jerusalem read the Hebrew Old Testament.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Babylon
See Map: Babylon

Acts 21:1

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

The writer Luke, Paul, and his companions continue their travels.

we took a straight course to the city of Cos

"we went straight to the city of Cos" or "we went directly to the city of Cos"

city of Cos

Cos is a Greek island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the South Aegean Sea region.

city of Rhodes

Rhodes is a Greek island off the coast of modern day Turkey in the South Aegean Sea region south of Cos and northeast of Crete.

city of Patara

Patara is a city on the southwest coast of modern day Turkey south of the Aegean Sea in the Mediterranean Sea.

Acts 21:2

When we found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia

Here "a ship crossing over" stands for the crew that would sail the ship. Alternate translation: "When we found a ship with a crew sailing over to Phoenicia"

a ship crossing over

Here "crossing" does not mean it was presently crossing but that it would be crossing to Phoenicia soon. Alternate translation: "a ship that would be going across the water" or "a ship that would be going"

Acts 21:3

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Cyprus, leaving it on the left side of the boat

The left is the "port" side of a boat. Here this means they sailed south of Cyprus. Alternate translation: "Cyprus, sailing south of it"

where the ship was to unload its cargo

Here "ship" stands for the crew that was sailing the ship. Alternate translation: "the crew would unload the cargo from the ship"

Acts 21:4

Through the Spirit they kept urging Paul not to go to Jerusalem

"The Spirit caused them to urge Paul again and again not to go to Jerusalem." The Spirit may have revealed to them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem. Alternate translation:

"Because the Spirit had told them that Paul would suffer in Jerusalem, they urged him again and again not to go there"

Acts 21:5

General Information:

Here the word "They" refers to the believers from Tyre.

When our days there were over

"When the seven days were over" or "When it was time to leave"

knelt down on the beach, prayed

It was a common custom to kneel down while praying. This was a sign of humility before God.

Acts 21:6

said farewell to each other

"said goodbye to one another"

Acts 21:7

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

we arrived at Ptolemais

Ptolemais was a city south of Tyre, Lebanon. Ptolemais is modern day Acre, Israel.

the brothers

"fellow believers"

Acts 21:8

Connecting Statement:

This begins Paul's time in Caesarea.

one of the seven

The "seven" refers to the men chosen to distribute food and aid to the widows in Acts 6:5.

evangelist

a person who tells people good news

Acts 21:9

this man

"Philip" from verse 8.

Now

This word is used here to mark a stop in the main story.

Here Luke tells background information about Philip and

his daughters.
 four virgin daughters who prophesied
 "four virgin daughters who regularly received and passed along messages from God"
 Acts 21:10
 General Information:
 Here the words "we" and "us" refers to Luke, Paul, and those with them, but not to the reader.
 a certain prophet named Agabus
 This introduces a new person in the story.
 named Agabus
 Agabus was a man from Judea.
 Acts 21:11
 Connecting Statement:
 This tells about a prophecy made about Paul in Caesarea by the prophet Agabus.
 took Paul's belt
 "removed Paul's belt from Paul's waist"
 Thus says the Holy Spirit, "This is how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up ... of the Gentiles."
 This is a quotation within a quotation. The inner quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation. Alternate translation: "The Holy Spirit says that this will be how the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up ... of the Gentiles."
 the Jews
 This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders" or "some of the Jews"
 hand him over
 "deliver him"
 into the hands of the Gentiles
 The word "hands" here represents control. Alternate translation: "into the legal custody of the Gentiles" or "to the Gentiles"
 the Gentiles
 This stands for the authorities among the Gentiles.
 Alternate translation: "the Gentile authorities"
 Acts 21:12
 General Information:
 Here the word "we" refers to Luke and the other believers but does not include the reader.
 Acts 21:13
 What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart?
 Paul asks this question to show the believers they should stop trying to persuade him. Alternate translation: "Stop what you are doing. Your weeping is breaking my heart."
 breaking my heart
 This is a metaphor for making someone sad or discouraging them. Here "heart" stands for a person's emotions.
 Alternate translation: "discouraging me" or "making me very sad"
 not only to be tied up
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not only for them to tie me up"
 for the name of the Lord Jesus
 Here "name" refers to the person of Jesus. Alternate translation: "for the sake of the Lord Jesus" or "because I believe in the Lord Jesus"
 Acts 21:14
 Paul would not be persuaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul would not allow us to persuade him" or "we were unable to persuade Paul"
 persuaded
 You may need to make explicit what they could not persuade Paul not to do. Alternate translation: "persuaded not to go up to Jerusalem"
 May the will of the Lord be done
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May everything happen as the Lord has planned it"
 Acts 21:15
 General Information:
 Here the word "we" refers to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, and not to the reader.
 Connecting Statement:
 This ends Paul's time in Caesarea.
 Acts 21:16
 They brought with them a man
 "Among them was a man"
 Mnason, a man from Cyprus
 Mnason was a man from the island of Cyprus.
 an early disciple
 This means Mnason was one of the first to believe in Jesus.
 Acts 21:17
 General Information:
 Here the words "we" and "us" refer to Luke, Paul, and those traveling with them, and not to the reader.
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul and his companions arrive in Jerusalem.
 the brothers welcomed us
 Here "brothers" refers to the believers in Jerusalem, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "the fellow believers welcomed us"
 Acts 21:18
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 Acts 21:19
 General Information:
 Here the words "he" and "his" refer to Paul. The word "them" refers to the elders.
 he reported one by one
 "he gave a detailed account of all"
 Acts 21:20
 Connecting Statement:
 The elders in Jerusalem begin their response to Paul.
 they heard ... they glorified ... they said to him
 Here the word "they" refers to James and the elders. The word "him" refers to Paul.
 brother
 Here "brother" means "fellow believer."
 They are
 The word "they" refers to Jewish believers who wanted all believing Jews to keep the Jewish laws and customs.
 the law
 this phrase here refers to the law of Moses
 Acts 21:21
 They have been told
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People have told the Jewish believers"

to abandon Moses

Here "Moses" stands for the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "to stop obeying the laws that Moses gave us" not to walk according to the traditional ways

A person who obeys the traditions and customs is spoken of as if he were walking on a path. Alternate translation: "not to obey the old customs" or "not to practice the old customs"

the traditional ways

"the usual Jewish customs"

Acts 21:22

we do

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders

They will

The word "They" refers to the Jewish believers in Jerusalem who wanted to teach Jewish believers that they could still follow the laws of Moses ([Acts 21:20-21](#)).

you have come

The word "you" refers to Paul.

Acts 21:23

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders

four men who made a vow

"four men who made a promise to God." This was the kind of vow where a person would not drink alcohol or cut his hair until the end of a set period of time.

Acts 21:24

Connecting Statement:

James and the elders continue speaking to Paul.

Take these men and purify yourself with them

They had to make themselves ritually pure so they could worship in the temple.

pay their expenses for them

"pay for what they will need." The expenses would go toward buying a male and female lamb, a ram, and grain and drink offerings.

they may shave their heads

This was a sign that the person had completed what they promised God they would do.

the things they have been told about you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that people are saying about you"

Acts 21:25

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to James and the elders.

Connecting Statement:

James and the elders in Jerusalem finish their request to Paul ([Acts 21:18](#)).

they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled

All of these are rules about what they can eat. They are forbidden to eat meat of animals sacrificed to an idol, meat with blood still in it, and meat from a strangled animal because it would still have blood in the meat. See how you translated similar phrases in [[Acts 15:20](#)]

they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they stay away from the meat of an animal that someone sacrificed to an idol"

from what is strangled

This can be stated in active form. You can also state explicitly the assumed information about strangled animals. Alternate translation: "from animals that a person has strangled" or "from animals that a person killed for food but did not drain its blood"

Acts 21:26

took the men

These are the 4 men who made a vow.

he purified himself along with them

Before entering the temple area the Jews were required to be ceremonially or ritually clean. This cleansing had to do with Jews having contact with Gentiles.

went into the temple

They did not go into the temple itself where only the high priest was allowed to enter. They entered the temple courtyard. Alternate translation: "went into the temple courtyard"

the days of purification

This is a separate purification process from the purification process which they were required to fulfill in order to enter the temple area.

the offering would be presented

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they presented the animals for an offering"

Acts 21:27

Connecting Statement:

This begins the story of Paul's arrest.

the seven days

These are the seven days for purification.

in the temple

Paul was not in the temple itself. He was in the temple courtyard. Alternate translation: "in the temple courtyard"

stirred up the whole crowd

People who incited a crowd to become very angry at Paul are spoken of as if they stirred up the crowd's emotions.

Alternate translation: "caused a large number of people to be very angry at Paul"

laid hands on him

Here "laid hands on" means to "seized" or to "grabbed." See how you translated "laid hands on" in [[Acts 5:18](#)]

Acts 21:28

the people, the law, and this place

"the people of Israel, the law of Moses, and the temple"

Besides, he has also brought Greeks into the temple

Only Jewish males were allowed in certain areas of the courtyard of the Jerusalem temple.

Acts 21:29

General Information:

Verse 29 gives background information about the Jews from Asia.

For they had previously ... into the temple

This is background information. Luke is explaining why the Jews from Asia thought Paul brought a Greek into the temple.

Trophimus

This was a Greek man that they accused Paul of having brought into the inner temple area that was only for Jews.

See how you translated his name in [Acts 20:4](#).

Acts 21:30

All the city was excited

The word "All" here is an exaggeration for emphasis. The word "city" represents the people in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "Many people in the city became angry at Paul" laid hold of Paul

"seized Paul" or "grabbed Paul"

the doors were immediately shut

They shut the doors so that there would not be rioting in the temple area. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews immediately shut the temple doors" or "the temple guards immediately shut the doors"

Acts 21:31

news came up to the chief captain of the company of soldiers

Here "news" refers to the messenger who went to speak the news. Alternate translation: "someone gave news to the chief captain of the cohort"

news came up to the chief captain

The phrase "came up to" is used because the chief captain was in a fortress connected to the temple that was higher in elevation than the temple courtyard.

the chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers.

the company of soldiers

A company is a group of about 1,000 soldiers.

all Jerusalem was in an uproar

The word "Jerusalem" here represents the people of Jerusalem. The word "all" is an exaggeration to show a large crowd was upset. Alternate translation: "all the people in Jerusalem were in an uproar" or "the large crowd in Jerusalem was in an uproar" (See: and)

Acts 21:32

General Information:

The first word "he" refers to the chief captain of the guard mentioned in Acts 21:31.

ran down

From the fortress, there are stairs going down into the court.

Acts 21:33

laid hold of Paul

"took hold of Paul" or "arrested Paul"

commanded him to be bound

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"commanded his soldiers to bind him"

with two chains

This means they bound Paul to two Roman soldiers, one on each side of him.

he asked who he was and what he had done.

This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "he asked, 'Who is this man? What has he done?'"

he asked who he was

The chief captain is speaking to the crowd, not to Paul.

Acts 21:34

and others another

The words "were shouting" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and others were shouting another" or "and others in the crowd were shouting something else"

he ordered that Paul be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he ordered his soldiers to bring Paul"

into the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court.

Acts 21:35

When he came to the steps, he was carried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When Paul came to the steps of the fortress, the soldiers carried him"

Acts 21:36

Away with him

The crowd is using somewhat milder and less exact language to ask for Paul's death. Alternate translation: "Put him to death" or "Kill him"

Acts 21:37

As Paul was about to be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "As the soldiers were ready to bring Paul"

the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

The captain said, "Do you know Greek?"

The chief captain uses this questions to express surprise that Paul is not who he thought he was. Alternate translation: "So you know Greek." or "I didn't know you knew Greek."

know Greek

know how to speak and understand the Greek language

Acts 21:38

Are you not then the Egyptian ... wilderness?

The chief captain uses this question and the question "Do you speak Greek?"

Are you not then the Egyptian

Shortly before Paul's visit, an unnamed man from Egypt had launched a revolt against Rome in Jerusalem. Later he escaped into the wilderness and the commander wonders if Paul might be the same man.

started a rebellion

This word "rebellion" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "caused people to rebel against the Roman government"

the four thousand men

"the 4,000 terrorists"

Assassins

This refers to a group of Jewish rebels who killed Romans and anyone who supported the Roman government.

Acts 21:39

Connecting Statement:

Paul is correcting the chief captain's wrong idea about who Paul is.

Tarsus in Cilicia

Cilicia was a Roman province across the Mediterranean Sea from Egypt, and Tarsus was a large, well-known city.

I am a citizen of no unimportant city

Paul uses the double negative in the phrase "no unimportant city" to emphasize that the chief captain should have known that Tarsus was an important city.

Alternate translation: "I am a citizen of an important city"

I beg you
Or "I plead with you."
allow me
"please allow me" or please permit me"
Acts 21:40
the captain had given him permission
The word "permission" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "the captain permitted Paul to speak" or "the captain allowed Paul to speak"

Paul stood on the steps
The word "steps" here refers to the steps on the stairway to the fortress.
motioned with the hand to the people
It can be stated explicitly why Paul motioned with the hand. Alternate translation: "motioned with his hand for the people to be quiet"
When there was a deep silence
"When the people were completely silent"

Chapter 22

Acts 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the second account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts. Because this is such an important event in the early church, there are three accounts of Paul's conversion. (See: Acts 9 and Acts 26)

Special concepts in this chapter

"In the Hebrew language"

Most Jews at this time spoke Aramaic and Greek. Most of the people who spoke Hebrew were educated Jewish scholars. This is why the people paid attention when Paul started speaking in Hebrew.

"The Way"

No one knows for sure who first started calling believers "followers of the Way." This is probably what the believers called themselves, because the Bible often speaks of a person living his life as if that person were walking on a path or "way." If this is true, the believers were "following the way of the Lord" by living in a way that pleased God.

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. The "chief captain" could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way he would treat a non-citizen.

Links:

[Acts 22:1 Notes](#)

Acts 22

22:1-21

Why did speaking in Hebrew make the crowd quiet?

[22:2]

Speaking in Hebrew made the crowd quiet. When they heard Paul speaking Hebrew, they knew Paul was a Jew.

Who was Gamaliel?

[22:3]

Gamaliel was a Pharisee and teacher in Jerusalem. People respected this man. He taught many other Jewish teachers.

See: Acts 5:34

How did Paul study at the feet of Gamaliel?

[22:3]

When Paul he studied at the feet of Gamaliel, he used a metaphor. Gamaliel taught Paul. Some scholars think Gamaliel taught and raised Paul. Other scholars think Gamaliel taught Paul but he did not raise him. Because Gamaliel taught Paul, Paul had the best education in the Law of Moses and the things the Jews taught.

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses

Why did Paul say he was zealous for God?

[22:3]

Paul said he was 'zealous'(ζηλωτής/g2207) for God because he wanted the Jewish crowd to know he was not angry at them for beating him and wanting to kill him. He did the same things to Christians before he believed in Jesus. What was the Way? "The way" was a name for Christians (see: Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

See: John 14:6

Why was the high priest able to bring Christians from another country to Jerusalem in bonds?

[22:4]

At that time the high priest in Jerusalem had permission to bring back a prisoner to Jerusalem from other areas under Roman control. Saul looked for Christians who left Jerusalem when the people persecuted Christians (see: Acts 8:1).

See: High Priest; Persecute (Persecution)

See Map: Jerusalem

How did Paul persecute Jesus?

[22:7]

Paul persecuted Jesus when he persecuted the followers of Jesus. That is, Christians represented Jesus (see: Luke 10:16).

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Paul say those with him did not understand the voice of Jesus?

[22:9]

Paul said those with him did not understand the voice of Jesus, because Jesus spoke only to Paul. Why did Paul say his old name “Saul” when he talked about when Jesus appeared to him?

Paul said his name “Saul” when he talked about when Jesus appeared to him. Perhaps he did this because Paul wanted to say exactly what Jesus said to him.

See: Acts 9:4

How did Paul call Jesus “Lord”?

[22:10]

Paul called Jesus “Lord” two times. The first time Paul gave respect in the same way people gave respect to any leader.

Paul did not know it was Jesus (see: Acts 22:8). The second time Paul knew Jesus reigned over everything and everyone.

Paul was ready to obey Jesus (see: Acts 22:10).

See: Lord

Why did Jesus say things were appointed for Paul to do?

[22:10]

Jesus said things were appointed for Paul to do and God wanted Paul to be a part of his plan. Because Jesus said these things to Paul, Paul waited to hear what God had appointed for him to do.

What did it mean that Ananias was devout according to the Law of Moses?

[22:12]

When Paul said Ananias was devout according to the Law of Moses, he meant that Ananias obeyed the Lord of Moses.

Ananias was also a Christian.

See: Law of Moses

Why did Ananias call Paul “brother”?

[22:13]

Ananias called Paul “brother”(αδελφος/g0080) because Ananias knew Paul was a Christian.

See: Family of God

Why did Ananias tell Paul to be baptized in water?

[22:16]

Ananias told Paul to be baptized in water because Paul needed to make others aware he believed in Jesus.

See: Baptize (Baptism)

When did Paul return to Jerusalem?

[22:17]

Some scholars think Paul returned to Jerusalem for a brief visit after becoming a Christian. Other scholars think Paul did not return to Jerusalem until three years after he became a Christian.

See: Acts 9:26-30

What was a “vision”?

[22:17]

See: Vision)

What was meant by the words, “they will not accept your testimony about me”?

[22:18]

Jesus told Paul that people would not accept the testimony about Jesus. That is, people would not believe in Jesus when Paul told them about Jesus. Scholars think this was because they would not be able to believe Paul since had persecuted people for believing in Jesus.

See: Testify (Testimony); Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Paul talk about Gentiles?

[22:21]

Paul talked about Gentiles because God wanted everyone to hear about Jesus. Paul did that even though he knew the Jews would become angry.

See: Gentile

22:22-29

Why did the Jewish crowd want to kill Paul when he talked about Gentiles?

[22:22]

The Jewish crowd did not think God wanted to do anything good for the Gentiles. They forgot God cared about Gentiles (see: Genesis 12:3). Jews hated the Gentiles because they thought they were evil. Because they hated the Gentiles, this made them want to kill Paul.

See: Gentile

Why did the Jewish crowd shout, take off their cloaks, and throw dust?

[22:23]

Some scholars think the crowds were taking off their cloaks because they were preparing to fight Paul. Other scholars think that taking off cloaks and making dust was a way of rejecting the person speaking. Other scholars think this was a sign that they believed Paul was blaspheming God.

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

What was scourging?

[22:24]

Scourging was a type of whipping. People were whipped with pieces of bone and metal sown into the leather whip. It caused permanent physical damage and sometimes people died.

Why did Paul's Roman citizenship stop the soldiers from scourging him?

[22:25, 22:26]

According to Roman law, it was not permitted to scourge a person who was a Roman citizen. It was also not permitted to punish a Roman citizen without first having a trial to determine guilt.

See: Citizen; Punish (Punishment)

How did the chief captain pay a large amount of money for his citizenship?

[22:28]

Roman Citizenship was often sold for money. Often it was a bribe. Certain Roman leaders became wealthy from selling citizenships. The chief captain used this to become an officer in the Roman army.

See: Citizen

22:30

What was the council?

[22:30]

See: Jewish Council-Sanhedrin

Acts 22:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks to the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem.

Brothers and fathers

This is a polite way of addressing men who are Paul's age as well as the older men in the audience.

I will now make to you

"I will now explain to you" or "I will now present to you"

Acts 22:2

the Hebrew language

The Hebrew language was the language of the Jews.

Acts 22:3

but educated in this city at the feet of Gamaliel

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but I was a student of Gamaliel here in Jerusalem"

at the feet of Gamaliel

Here "feet" stands for the place where a student would sit while learning from a teacher. Alternate translation: "by Gamaliel"

Gamaliel

Gamaliel was one of the most prominent teachers of the Jewish law. See how you translated this name in Acts 5:34.

I was instructed according to the strict ways of the law of our fathers

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He instructed me how to carefully obey every law of our forefathers" or "The instruction I received followed the exact details of the law of our forefathers"

law of our fathers

"law of our ancestors." This refers to the law that God gave to the people of Israel through Moses.

I am zealous for God

"I am completely dedicated to obeying God" or "I am passionate about my service to God"

just as all of you are today

"in the same way all of you are today." Paul compares himself with the crowd.

Acts 22:4

I persecuted this Way to the death

Here "this Way" represents the people who belonged to the group called "the Way." The word "death" can be translated with the verb "kill." Alternate translation: "I persecuted the people who belonged to this Way and I looked for ways to kill them"

this Way

This was a term used to refer to Christianity. See how you translated "the Way" in Acts 9:2.

binding up and delivering to prison both men and women

"tying up both men and women and taking them to prison"

Acts 22:5

I received letters from them

"The high priests and elders gave me letters"

for the brothers in Damascus

Here "brothers" refers to "fellow Jews."

to bring them back in bonds to Jerusalem

"to bind those of the Way with chains and bring them back to Jerusalem"

to be punished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that they would receive punishment" or "so that the Jewish authorities could punish them"

Acts 22:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul describes his encounter with Jesus.

It happened that

This phrase is used here to mark where the action starts. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.

Acts 22:7

heard a voice say to me

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "I heard someone say to me"

Acts 22:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 22:9

they did not understand the voice of him who spoke to me

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "they did not understand what the one who spoke to me was saying"

Acts 22:10

There you will be told

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "There someone will tell you" or "There you will learn"

Acts 22:11

I could not see because of that light's brightness

"I was left blind because of that light's brightness"

being led by the hands of those who were with me, I came into Damascus

Here "hands" stands for those leading Paul. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those with me guided me into Damascus"

Acts 22:12

Ananias

Though this is not the same Ananias who died earlier in [Acts 5:3]

devout man according to the law

Ananias was very serious about following God's law.

law and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there

This can be stated in active form in a new sentence.

Alternate translation: "law. All the Jews who lived there spoke well of him"

Acts 22:13

General Information:

The words "He" and "him" refer to Ananias.

Brother Saul

Here "Brother" is a polite way to address someone.

Alternate translation: "My friend Saul"

receive your sight

The word "sight" can be translated with the verb "see."

Alternate translation: "see again"

In that very hour

This was a customary way of saying something happened immediately. Alternate translation: "At that instant" or "Instantly" or "Immediately"

Acts 22:14

General Information:

The word "he" refers to Ananias (Acts 22:12).

his will

"what God is planning and will cause to happen"

to hear the voice coming from his own mouth

Both "voice" and "mouth" refer to the one speaking.

Alternate translation: "to hear him speak directly to you"

Acts 22:15

to all men

Here "men" means all people whether male or female.

Alternate translation: "to all people"

Acts 22:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes telling what had happened to him in Damascus. He quotes what Ananias said to him. This is still part of his speech to the crowd in Jerusalem.

Now

Here "now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

why are you waiting?

This question was asked to exhort Paul to be baptized.

Alternate translation: "do not wait!" or "do not delay!"

be baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "let me baptize you" or "receive baptism"

wash away your sins

As washing one's body removes dirt, calling on the name of Jesus for forgiveness cleanses one's inner being from sin.

Alternate translation: "ask forgiveness for your sins"

calling on his name

Here "name" refers to the Lord. Alternate translation:

"calling on the Lord" or "trusting in the Lord"

Acts 22:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to tell the crowd about his vision of Jesus.

a trance came on me

This metaphor means that Paul went into the trance without expecting it or desiring it. See how you translated similar words in [Acts 10:10]

Acts 22:18

I saw him say to me

"I saw Jesus as he said to me"

they will not accept your testimony about me

"those who live in Jerusalem will not believe what you tell them about me"

Acts 22:19

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the non-believing Jews in Jerusalem.

they themselves know

The word "themselves" is used for emphasis.

in every synagogue

Paul went to synagogues to find Jews who believed in Jesus.

Acts 22:20

the blood of Stephen your witness was spilled

Here "blood" stands for Stephen's life. To spill blood means to kill. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they killed Stephen, who testified about you"

Acts 22:21

Connecting Statement:

This ends what Paul was able to say to the crowd of Jewish people by the fortress.

Acts 22:22

General Information:

Here the words "him" and "he" refer to Paul.

until that statement

"until Paul said that"

Away with such a fellow from the earth

The phrase "from the earth" adds emphasis to "Away with such a fellow." Alternate translation: "Kill him"

Acts 22:23

As they were

"While they were." The phrase "As they were" is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time.

throwing off their cloaks, and throwing dust into the air

These actions show that the Jews there are outraged because they feel Paul has spoken against God.

Acts 22:24

chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

commanded Paul to be brought

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "ordered his soldiers to bring Paul"

the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

He ordered that he should be questioned with scourging

The commander wants soldiers to torture Paul by whipping him to ensure he tells the truth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "He ordered his soldiers to whip Paul to force him to tell the truth"

He ordered that he

The first "he" refers to chief captain. The second "he" refers to Paul.

that he himself

The word "himself" is used for emphasis.

Acts 22:25

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the soldiers.

the thongs

These were strips of leather or animal hide.

Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and who has not been put on trial?

Paul uses this question to make the centurion check the validity of having his soldiers whip Paul. Alternate

translation: "It is not lawful for you to whip a man who is a Roman and who was not given his legal right to a trial!"

Acts 22:26

What are you about to do?

This question is used to urge the commander to reconsider his plan to whip Paul. Alternate translation: "You should

not do this!"

Acts 22:27

General Information:

Here the word "him" refers to Paul.

The chief captain came

Here "came" can be translated as "went."

Acts 22:28

It was only with a large amount of money

"It was only after I paid a lot of money to the Roman authorities." The captain makes this statement because he knows how hard it is to become a Roman citizen, and he suspects Paul is not telling truth.

I acquired citizenship

"I got citizenship." The word "citizenship" is an abstract noun. Alternate translation: "I became a citizen"

I was born a Roman citizen

If a man was a Roman citizen, then his children become Roman citizens automatically when they were born.

Acts 22:29

the men who were going to question

"the men who planned to question" or "the men who were preparing to question"

Acts 22:30

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to the chief captain.

So he untied his bonds

Possibly the "chief captain" stands for the chief captain's soldiers. Alternate translation: "So the chief captain ordered his soldiers to untie Paul's bonds"

he brought Paul down

There was a stairway going down from the fortress to the temple courts.

Chapter 23

Acts 23 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted material in 23:5.

Special concepts in this chapter

Resurrection of the dead

The Pharisees believed that after people died, they would become alive again and God would either reward them or punish them. The Sadducees believed that once people died, they stayed dead and would never become alive again. (See: raise and reward)

"Called a curse"

Some Jews promised God that they would not eat or drink until they killed Paul, and they asked God to punish them if they did not do what they had promised to do.

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and

others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. The "chief captain" could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way he would treat a non-citizen.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Whitewashed

This is a metaphor in scripture describing someone who appears to be good or clean or righteous when that person is evil or unclean or unrighteous.

Links:

[Acts 23:1](#)

Acts 23

23:1-11

Why did Paul look directly at the council?

[23:1]

Paul looked directly at the council because he did not fear them. Some scholars think Paul was confident because he was also confident of the message he was about to give to them. He knew he was in God's will. He also knew the Holy Spirit led him.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Will of God; Holy Spirit

When did Paul have a good "conscience"?

[23:1]

Some scholars think Paul always had a good "conscience" (συνείδησις/g4893). That is, he always thought he did the right things. He even thought this when he persecuted Christians. Other scholars think Paul had a good "conscience" only after he became a Christian.

Paul wanted the Jewish council to know that he believed he did nothing wrong.

See: Conscience; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did the high priest command someone to strike Paul on the mouth?

[23:2]

Some scholars think Ananias had someone strike Paul on the mouth because they did not like something Paul said. Other scholars think Ananias was a man with a quick temper to become very angry.

See: High Priest

What was a whitewashed wall?

[23:3]

A whitewashed wall was a crumbling or decaying wall painted to make it look better. Whitewashed walls were usually walls facing streets. This was a metaphor. Scholars think Paul was saying that they wanted other people to think they did things that honor God. However, they did not want to do things that honor God. They wanted to do evil things. Paul thought that Ananias was being a hypocrite.

See: Metaphor; Hypocrisy (Hypocrite)

Why did Paul call the high priest a whitewashed wall?

[23:3]

Paul called the high priest a whitewashed wall to say the high priest did not obey the Law of Moses himself even when he judged Paul for not obeying the law of Moses (see: Leviticus 19:15).

See: High Priest; Law of Moses; Judge (Judgment)

Why did Paul not know the high priest?

[23:5]

Scholars think Paul did not know the high priest because Paul had been away from Jerusalem. Also, the high priest did not sit in his usual seat because the Roman leader wanted the Jewish council to meet.

See: Exodus 22:28

See: High Priest; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

Why did Paul say he was a Pharisee?

[23:6]

Scholars think Paul knew he would not receive justice from the council. Paul had been a Pharisee. He knew the Pharisees believed in the resurrection. Therefore, Paul spoke about the resurrection. This caused people in the Jewish council to fight with one another.

See: Pharisees; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

How did Jesus stand beside Paul and speak to Paul?

[23:11]

Some scholars think Jesus stood beside Paul and helped him. Other scholars think Paul had a vision of Jesus standing with him. Other scholars think Paul must have dreamed that the Lord encouraged him.

See: Vision

23:12-22

What was meant by the words, “called a curse down upon themselves with an oath”?

[23:14]

See: Curse; Swear (Oath)

Why did the Jews want to kill Paul on the way to the council?

[23:15]

Some scholars think a group of Jews were very disappointed that the Jewish council did not kill Paul. They made a plan to have the council bring Paul back to answer more questions. They wanted to kill Paul while he was on his way to speak to the council once again.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin)

23:23-35

Why did the chief captain send Paul to Caesarea?

[23:23]

The Roman soldier sent Paul to Caesarea because Paul was a Roman citizen. Roman law required the chief captain to keep Roman citizens safe. The chief captain sent Paul to Caesarea because he thought Paul would be safer there.

See: Citizen

See Map: Caesarea

Who was Claudius Lysias?

[23:26]

Claudius Lysias was the chief captain, a Roman soldier and leader. He was born a Greek because Lysias was a Greek name. Claudius was the name of a Roman Emperor. The chief captain took the name of the Roman Emperor who reigned when he became a Roman citizen.

See: Citizen; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

Why did the chief captain write that he rescued Paul from the Jews when he knew Paul was a Roman citizen?

[23:27]

The Roman soldier wrote that he rescued Paul from the Jews when he knew Paul was a Roman citizen because he wanted the governor to think he protected Paul. He wanted the governor to know that he wanted to know for himself if Paul was guilty of the things people said he did.

See: Citizen

Where was Antipatris?

[23:31]

See Map: Antipatris

Why did the governor ask Paul what province he was from?

[23:34]

The governor asked Paul what area he was from because Roman leaders usually heard trials for people from the places over which they reigned. Some scholars think the province of Cilicia was a large territory and the Roman leader over it did not want to hear a small court case. Therefore, Felix decided to hear Paul's case. Other scholars think the governor wanted an easy way to give Paul's case to another Roman ruler.

See Map: Cilicia

What was Herod's government headquarters?

[23:35]

Herod's government headquarters was a palace Herod the Great built. It was in Caesarea.

See: King Herod

See Map: Caesarea

Acts 23:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul stands before the chief priests and the council members (Acts 22:30).

Brothers

Here this means "Fellow Jews."

I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day

"I know that even to this day I have done what God has wanted me to do"

Acts 23:2

Ananias

This is the name of a man. Although he has the same name,

the Ananias here is neither the Ananias mentioned in [Acts 5:1]

Acts 23:3

whitewashed wall

This refers to a wall that was painted white to make it look clean. Paul told Ananias that just as a wall can be painted to look clean so Ananias appeared to look morally clean, but he was really full of evil intent. Alternate translation: "white-painted wall" or "wall painted white"

Are you sitting to judge ... against the law?

Paul uses a question to point out Ananias' hypocrisy. Some modern translations read this as a statement, "You are

sitting to judge ... against the law." Alternate translation: "You are wrong to sit there to judge ... against the law." order me to be struck

This can be stated in active form. You can use the same word for "strike" as you did in the phrase "God will strike you." Alternate translation: "command people to strike me" Acts 23:4

Is this how you insult God's high priest?

The men use this question to scold Paul for what he has said in [Acts 23:3]

Acts 23:5

For it is written

Paul is about to quote what Moses wrote in the law. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For Moses wrote in the law"

Acts 23:6

Brothers

Here "Brothers" means "Fellow Jews"

a son of Pharisees

Here "son" means he is the literal son of a Pharisee and also the descendant of Pharisees. Alternate translation: "and my father and forefathers were Pharisees"

I have the hope of the resurrection of the dead

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." The abstract noun "resurrection" can be expressed with the verb phrase "become alive again." Alternate translation: "I confidently expect the resurrection of the dead" or "I trust that the dead will become alive again"

the dead

The phrase "the dead" can be expressed as "those who have died."

I am being judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are judging me"

Acts 23:7

the crowd was divided

"the people in the crowd strongly disagreed with one another"

Acts 23:8

For the Sadducees ... but the Pharisees

This is background information about the Sadducees and Pharisees.

Acts 23:9

So a large uproar occurred

"So they began shouting loudly at one another." The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened previously. In this case, the previous event is Paul's stating his belief in the resurrection.

What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?

The Pharisees use this question to suggest that Paul may have gotten his teaching from an angel or a spirit. They may be rebuking the Sadducees for not believing that spirits and angels exist and can speak to people. Alternate translation: "Maybe a spirit or an angel has spoken with him!"

Acts 23:10

When there arose a great argument

The words "a great argument" can be re-stated as "argue violently." Alternate translation: "When they began to argue violently"

chief captain

This is a Roman military leader of about 1,000 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

Paul would be torn to pieces by them

This can be stated in active form. The phrase "be torn to pieces" might be an exaggeration of how the people might harm Paul. Alternate translation: "they might tear Paul to pieces" or "they would cause Paul great physical harm"

take him by force

"use physical force to take him away"

into the fortress

This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.

Acts 23:11

The following night

This means the night after the day Paul went before the council. Alternate translation: "That night"

testify in Rome

The words "about me" are understood. Alternate translation: "testify about me in Rome"

Acts 23:12

Connecting Statement:

While Paul is in the prison at the fortress, the disbelieving religious Jews vow to kill him.

formed a conspiracy

"organized a group with a shared purpose." The purpose for organizing this group was to kill Paul.

put themselves under an oath

The noun "oath" is an abstract noun that refers to a promise that the men made to God to kill Paul. It can also be made explicit what would happen to the men if they did not do what they had promised to do. Alternate translation: "asked God to curse them if they did not do what they promised"

Acts 23:13

forty men

"40 men"

who formed this conspiracy

"who made this plan" or "who planned to kill Paul"

Acts 23:14

General Information:

Here the word "They" refers to the forty Jews in Acts 23:13.

We have sworn a great oath to eat nothing until we have killed Paul

"We have sworn to eat nothing until we have killed Paul. We asked God to curse us if we do not do what we promised to do"

Acts 23:15

General Information:

Here "you" is plural and refers to the chief priests and elders. Both "us" and "we" refer to the forty Jews who planned to kill Paul.

Now, therefore

"Because what we have just said is true" or "Because we have put ourselves under this curse"

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw

attention to the important point that follows.
bring him down to you
"bring Paul from the fortress to meet with you"
as if you would decide his case more precisely
"as though you want to learn more about what Paul has done"
Acts 23:16
Paul's sister's son
"the son of Paul's sister" or "Paul's nephew"
they were lying in wait
"they were ready to ambush Paul" or "they were waiting to kill Paul"
the fortress
This fortress was connected to the outer temple court. See how you translated this in Acts 21:34.
Acts 23:17
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 23:18
Paul the prisoner called me to him
"Paul the prisoner asked me to come talk with him"
this young man
Since the chief captain calls him a young man, this suggests Paul's nephew may have been 12 to 15 years old.
Acts 23:19
chief captain took him by the hand
Since the chief captain took the young man by the hand and calls him a young man (verse 18), this suggests Paul's nephew may have been 12 to 15 years old.
Acts 23:20
The Jews have agreed
This does not mean all Jews, but all of the group that was there. Alternate translation: "Some of the Jews have agreed" to bring down Paul
"to bring Paul down from the fortress"
they were going to ask more precisely about his case
"they wanted to learn more about what Paul has done"
Acts 23:21
forty men
"40 men"
lying in wait for him
"ready to ambush Paul" or "ready to kill Paul"
They have put themselves under oath neither to eat nor to drink until they have killed him
"They have sworn to eat and drink nothing until they have killed Paul. And they asked God to curse them if they do not do what they promised to do"
for your approval
"for you to agree to do what they have asked you to do"
Acts 23:22
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Acts 23:23
he called to him
"he called to himself." Both "he" and "him" refer to the chief captain.
two of the centurions
"2 of the centurions"
seventy horsemen

"70 horsemen"
two hundred spearmen
"200 soldiers that are armed with spears"
third hour of the night
This was about 9:00 p.m. at night.
Acts 23:24
Felix the governor
Felix, who resided at Caesarea, was the roman governor of the area.
Acts 23:25
General Information:
Here "he" refers to the chief captain.
Acts 23:26
General Information:
Claudius Lysias was the name of the chief captain.
Governor Felix was the Roman governor over the whole region.
Claudius Lysias to the most excellent Governor Felix, greetings
This is a formal introduction to the letter. The chief captain begins by referring to himself. You can translate it in the first person. The words "am writing" are understood.
Alternate translation: "I, Claudius Lysias, am writing to you, the most excellent Governor Felix, and I greet you"
to the most excellent Governor Felix
"to Governor Felix, you who deserve the greatest honors"
Acts 23:27
This man was arrested by the Jews
Here "Jews" means "some of the Jews." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Some of the Jews arrested this man"
was about to be killed by them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they were ready to kill him"
I came upon them with soldiers
"I with my soldiers arrived at the place where Paul and these Jews were"
Acts 23:28
General Information:
Here the word "I" refers to Claudius Lysias, the chief captain. The word "they" refers to the Jews who accused Paul. The word "him" refers to Paul.
Acts 23:29
that he was being accused about questions concerning
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that they were accusing him of questions about"
but that there was no accusation against him that deserved death or imprisonment
The abstract nouns "accusation," "death," and "imprisonment" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "but nobody accused him of anything that should cause Roman authorities to kill him or to send him to prison"
Acts 23:30
Connecting Statement:
The chief captain ends his letter to Governor Felix.
Then it was reported to me
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone told me" or "Then I learned"
sent him to you

Here "you" refers to Governor Felix.

Acts 23:31

Connecting Statement:

This ends Paul's time under arrest in Jerusalem and begins his time of arrest in Caesarea with Governor Felix.

So the soldiers obeyed their orders

The word "so" marks an event that happened because of something else that happened previously. In this case, the previous event is the chief captain's commanding the soldiers to escort Paul.

They took Paul and brought him by night

Here "brought" can be translated as "took." Alternate translation: "They got Paul and took him at night"

Antipatris

Antipatris was a city built by Herod in honor of his father, Antipater. It stood at a site located today in central Israel.

Acts 23:32

to go with him

Here "him" refers to Paul.

Acts 23:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 23:34

he asked what province Paul was from. When he learned that he was from Cilicia

This can be stated with direct quotations. Alternate translation: "he asked Paul, 'What province are you from?' Paul said, 'I am from Cilicia.' When the governor learned this"

When he learned that he

"When the governor learned that Paul"

Acts 23:35

he said

"the governor said"

I will hear you fully

"I will listen to all you have to say"

he commanded him to be kept

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he commanded soldiers to keep him" or "commanded soldiers to restrain him"

Chapter 24

Acts 24 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul told the governor that he had not done what the Jews were accusing him of doing and that the governor should not punish him for what he did do.

Special concepts in this chapter

Respect

Both the Jewish leaders ([Acts 24:2-4](#)) and Paul ([Acts 24:10](#)) began their speeches with words that show respect to the governor.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Governmental leaders

The words "governor," "commander," and "centurion" may be difficult to translate into some languages.

Links:

[Acts 24:1 Notes](#)

Acts 24

24:1-9

What was an orator?

[24:1]

An orator was a person who made money speaking in front of many other people. The Jews hired Tertullus to speak against Paul in the Roman court. Scholars do not know if Tertullus was Jewish or not.

See: High Priest; Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

What was the Nazarene sect?

[24:5]

The Nazarene sect was a group of followers of the Man of Nazareth. The Man of Nazareth is Jesus. However, the orator wanted to make Felix think these people will cause fighting. The orator wanted Felix to judge Paul.

See: Judge (Judgment)

What did Luke write in verse 6-7?

[24:6, 24:7]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament say that the Jews wanted to judge Paul by their law but Lysias took Paul away from them. Other ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. Scholars do not know whether Luke wrote these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

How did the Jews join the accusation against Paul?

[24:9]

The Jews joined the accusation against Paul by saying again and again these lies were really true.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

24:10-21

How did Paul talk to the governor?

[24:10, 24:11]

Paul talked to the governor with confidence because the governor had judged the Jews for years. Paul was glad because Paul did not act against Jewish laws. Paul believed the governor would make the right judgment.

Why did Paul say it was not more than twelve days since he went to Jerusalem to worship?

[24:11]

Scholars think it would have been very easy for the governor to find out whether Paul was guilty of doing evil things. This is because it had only been a period of twelve days.

See: Worship

Why was Christianity called the Way?

[24:14]

"The way" was a name for Christians (see: Acts 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

See: John 14:6

24:22-27

Why did Felix say he will decide Paul's case when Lysias came?

[24:22]

Felix said he will decide Paul's case when Lysias came because Felix did not want to make a decision. Some scholars think Felix knew about the Christians and did not want to make things difficult for Christians.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

Why did Felix give Paul some freedom?

[24:23]

Felix gave Paul some freedom because he knew Paul did not do the crimes of which he was accused. Also, Paul was a Roman citizen.

See: Citizen

Why did Luke write Drusilla was Jewish?

[24:24]

Luke wrote Drusilla was Jewish because the wife of the governor influenced the governor's thinking. Some scholars think her faith made Felix listen to Paul. Other scholars think Felix wanted Paul to give him personal advice in the same way some other Roman leaders paid people to give them personal advice.

See: Faith (Believe in)

Why did Felix become frightened?

[24:25]

Felix became frightened because he and his wife, Drusilla, did many evil things. Paul's speech about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment reminded Felix of the evil things he did. However, Felix did not repent.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment; Repent (Repentance)

Why did Felix want Paul to give him money?

[24:26]

Felix wanted Paul to give him money because Felix wanted to be rich from bribes. Some scholars think Paul received an inheritance. Other scholars think Felix wanted Paul's friends to give Felix money.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

Acts 24:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul is on trial in Caesarea. Tertullus presents Governor Felix with the charges against Paul.

After five days

"Five days after the Roman soldiers took Paul to Caesarea"

Ananias

This is the name of a man. He is not the same Ananias as in [Acts 5:1]

an orator

"a lawyer." Tertullus was an expert in Roman law who was there to accuse Paul in court.

Tertullus

This is the name of a man.

went there

"went to Caesarea where Paul was"

before the governor

"in the presence of the governor, who was judge in the court"

brought charges against Paul

"began to argue the case before the governor that Paul had broken the law."

Acts 24:2

Because of you

Here the word "you" refers to Felix, the governor.

we have great peace

Here "we" refers to the citizens under Felix. Alternate

translation: "we, the people that you govern, have great

peace"

and your foresight brings good reform to our nation

"and your planning has greatly improved our nation"

Acts 24:3

so with all thankfulness we welcome everything that you do

The word "thankfulness" is an abstract noun. It can be stated as an adjective or verb. Alternate translation: "so we are very thankful and we welcome everything that you do" or "so we thank you very much and welcome everything that you do"

most excellent Felix

"Governor Felix, who deserves greatest honor." Felix was the roman governor over the whole region. See how you translated a similar phrase in Acts 23:25.

Acts 24:4

So that I detain you no more

Possible meanings are 1) "so that I will not take up too much of your time" or 2) "so that I will not tire you"

in your kindness to hear us briefly

"to be kind and listen to the short speech I am giving to state these men's case"

Acts 24:5

General Information:

The word "we" refers to Ananias, certain elders, and Tertullus.

this man to be a pest

Here "pest" is a metaphor for a person who causes trouble.

Alternate translation: "this man to be a trouble maker"

all the Jews throughout the world

The word "all" here is probably an exaggeration used to strengthen their accusation against Paul.

He is a leader of the Nazarene sect

The phrase "Nazarene sect" is another name for the Christians. Alternate translation: "He also leads the entire group whom people call the followers of the Nazarene" sect

This is a smaller group of people within a larger group group. Tertullus considers the Christians to be a small group within Judaism.

Acts 24:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 24:7

General Information:

Here the word "you" is singular and refers to Governor Felix.

Acts 24:8

Connecting Statement:

Tertullus finishes presenting the charges against Paul before Governor Felix.

to learn about all the things of which we are accusing him

"to learn whether or not these charges that we bring against him are true" or "to learn whether or not he is guilty of the things we accuse him of"

Acts 24:9

The Jews

This refers to the Jewish leaders who were there at Paul's trial.

Acts 24:10

Connecting Statement:

Paul responds to Governor Felix about the charges brought against him.

the governor motioned

"the governor gestured"

a judge to this nation

Here "nation" refers to the people of the Jewish nation.

Alternate translation: "a judge for the people of the Jewish nation"

explain myself

"explain my situation"

Acts 24:11

twelve days since

"12 days since"

Acts 24:12

General Information:

Here the word "they" refers to the Jews who were accusing Paul.

I did not stir up a crowd

"Stir up" here is a metaphor for agitating people into unrest, just as stirring a liquid agitates it. Alternate translation: "I did not cause a crowd to riot"

Acts 24:13

the accusations

"the blames for wrongdoings" or "the charges for crimes"

Acts 24:14

I confess this to you

"I acknowledge this to you"

that according to the Way

The phrase "the Way" was a title used for Christianity during Paul's time.

a sect

This is a smaller group of people within a larger group. Christianity was originally considered to be a small group within Judaism. See how you translated "sect" in Acts 24:5.

the law

Paul is referring to the law of Moses.

Acts 24:15

I have a hope in God, which these men also have, that there will be a resurrection

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "Just as these men, I trust in God that there will be a resurrection"

these men

the Jews who are accusing Paul in court

that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked

The abstract noun "resurrection" can be stated with the verb "resurrect." Alternate translation: "that God will resurrect all who have died, both the righteous and the unrighteous"

the righteous and the wicked

the righteous and the wicked

These nominal adjectives refer to righteous people and wicked people. Alternate translation: "righteous people and wicked people" or "those who have done what is right and those who have done what is evil"

Acts 24:16

I always strive
"I always work hard" or "I do my best"
to have a blameless conscience
Here "conscience" refers to a person's inner morality that chooses between right and wrong. Alternate translation: "to be blameless" or "to always do what is right"
before God
"in the presence of God"
Acts 24:17
Now
This word marks a shift in Paul's argument. Here he explains the situation in Jerusalem when some of the Jews arrested him.
after many years
"after many years away from Jerusalem"
I came to give alms to my nation and present sacrifices
Here "I came" can be translated as "I went." Alternate translation: "I went to help my people by bringing them money as a gift; I also went to present sacrifices"
Acts 24:18
in a purification ceremony in the temple
"in the temple after I had finished a ceremony to purify myself"
in the temple, not with a crowd or an uproar
This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "in the temple. I had not gathered a crowd nor was I trying to start a riot"
Acts 24:19
These men
"The Jews from Asia"
if they have anything
"if they have anything to say"
Acts 24:20
these same men
This refers to the members of the council who were present in Jerusalem at Paul's trial.
should say what wrong they found in me
"should say the wrong thing I did that they were able to prove"
Acts 24:21
Connecting Statement:
Paul finishes responding to Governor Felix about the charges brought against him.
It is concerning the resurrection of the dead
The abstract noun "resurrection" can be stated as "God brings back to life." Alternate translation: "It is because I believe that God will bring back to life those who have died"
I am on trial before you today
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you are judging me today"

Acts 24:22
General Information:
Felix is the Roman governor of the area who resides at Caesarea. See how you translated this name in [Acts 23:24]
the Way
This is a title for Christianity. See how you translated this in Acts 9:2.
When Lysias the commander comes down
"when Lysias the commander comes down" or "at the time Lysias the commander comes down"
Lysias
This is the name of the chief captain. See how you translated this name in Acts 23:26.
comes down from Jerusalem
Jerusalem was higher than Caesarea so it was normal to speak of coming down from Jerusalem.
I will decide your case
"I will make a decision concerning these accusations against you" or "I will judge whether you are guilty"
Acts 24:23
to have some freedom
"to have some freedom not otherwise granted to prisoners"
Acts 24:24
After some days
"After several days"
Drusilla his wife
Drusilla is a woman's name.
Acts 24:25
Felix became frightened
Felix may have felt conviction of his sins.
for now
"for the present time"
Acts 24:26
he hoped that Paul would give money to him
Here the word "hope" means think that what one desires might happen. Sometimes prisoners gave money to government officials so that the officials would free them from prison early, and Felix hoped that Paul would do that. Alternate translation: "he thought that Paul might give money to him"
so he often sent for him and spoke with him
"so Felix often sent for Paul and spoke with Paul"
Acts 24:27
Porcius Festus
This was the Roman Governor who replaced Felix.
wanted to gain favor with the Jews
Here "the Jews" refers to the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "wanted the Jewish leaders to like him"
he left Paul bound
"he left Paul in prison"

Chapter 25

Acts 25 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Favor

This word is used in two different ways in this chapter. When the Jewish leaders asked Festus for a favor, they were asking him to do something special for them on that day. They wanted him to do for them something that he would not

usually do. When Festus "wanted to gain the favor of the Jews," he wanted them to like him and be willing to obey him in the months and years to come. (See: favor)

Roman citizenship

The Romans thought that they needed to treat only Roman citizens justly. They could do as they desired with people who were not Roman citizens, but they had to obey the law with other Romans. Some people were born Roman citizens, and others gave money to the Roman government so they could become Roman citizens. Roman officials could have been punished for treating a Roman citizen the same way they would treat a non-citizen.

Links:

[Acts 25:1 Notes](#)

Acts 25

25:1-12

Where was Caesarea and Jerusalem?

[25:1]

See Map: Caesarea; Jerusalem

Why did Festus refuse to bring Paul to Jerusalem?

[25:3]

Festus refused to bring Paul to Jerusalem. Some scholars think that because Paul was a Roman citizen, Festus could not transfer Paul to the court in Jerusalem. Other scholars think Festus did not want to stay in Jerusalem long enough for there to be a trial.

See: Citizen; Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

What was a "judgment seat"?

[25:6]

A "judgment seat" was an actual chair in a court upon which the governing ruler sat to make legal decisions for the court.

See: Judge (Judgment); Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

Why did Paul appeal to Caesar?

[25:10]

Any Roman citizen accused of crimes for which they could be killed, had the right to appeal to Caesar. The Jewish leaders wanted Paul to be killed. People accused Paul of doing wrong things, but no one tried to find out if he did these things. Felix had the opportunity and the right to release Paul earlier. Because Felix did not release Paul, Paul wanted the Roman emperor to judge him and release him.

See: Citizen; Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

25:13-22

Who were the chief priests and elders of the Jews?

[25:15]

See: Chief Priest; Elder

What was a sentence of condemnation?

[25:15]

A "sentence of condemnation" was a decision made by the courts to convict a person of a crime. In this case, the Jews were hoping for Paul to be judged and killed.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit); Condemn (Condemnation); Judge (Judgment)

What was the "religion" about which Festus spoke?

[25:19]

Some scholars think when Festus spoke about a "religion" (δεισιδαιμονία/g1175), he was speaking about the Jewish religion. That is, it was how the Jews followed the Law of Moses and did certain things to worship God. Fewer scholars think when Festus spoke about a religion, he was speaking about Christians.

See: Law of Moses; Worship

Why did Agrippa say he wanted to hear Paul?

[25:22]

Agrippa said he wanted to hear Paul. Agrippa wanted to be able to give advice to Festus about Paul (see: 25:26). Also, sometimes Roman leaders wanted to hear people teach about God (see: Luke 23:8).

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

25:23-27

Why did Festus not have something more to write about Paul's case?

[25:26]

Festus did not have anything more to write about Paul's case because there was no evidence that Paul did something

wrong. Therefore, Festus did not think Paul was guilty of the things people said he did.
See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

Acts 25:1

General Information:

Festus becomes the governor of Caesarea. See how you translated this name in Acts 24:27.

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to be a prisoner in Caesarea.

Now

This word marks the beginning of a new event in the story.

Festus entered the province

Possible meanings are 1) Festus arrived in the area to begin his rule or 2) Festus simply arrived in the area.

he went from Caesarea up to Jerusalem

The phrase "went up" is used here because Jerusalem is higher in elevation than Caesarea.

Acts 25:2

The chief priests and the prominent Jews brought their charges against Paul

This speaks about accusations as if they were an object that a person could bring to someone else. Alternate translation: "The chief priests and the important Jews accused Paul to Festus"

Acts 25:3

to summon him to Jerusalem

Some versions translate this as "to have him summoned to Jerusalem." The word "him" refers to Paul. The Jews wanted Festus to have his soldiers take Paul to Jerusalem.

for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way

They were going to hide along the road and kill Paul as he was passing by, but Festus was not aware of this part of their plan.

Acts 25:4

Festus answered that Paul was being held in custody at Caesarea, and that he himself was going there soon.

This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "But Festus said, 'Paul is being held in custody in Caesarea, and I myself will soon return there.'"

Acts 25:5

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Festus and the Romans traveling with him, but not to his audience.

"Therefore, those who can," he said, "should go there with us

The phrase "he said" can be moved to the beginning of the sentence. Alternate translation: "Then he said, 'Therefore, those who are able to go to Caesarea should go there with us'"

If there is something wrong with the man

"If Paul has done something wrong"

you should accuse him

"you should accuse him of violating laws" or "you should bring charges against him"

Acts 25:6

down to Caesarea

Jerusalem is higher geographically than Caesarea. It was common to speak of coming down from Jerusalem.

sat on the judgment seat

Here "judgment seat" refers to Festus' ruling as judge over

Paul's trial. Alternate translation: "sat upon the seat where he acted as judge" or "sat down as judge"

Paul to be brought to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his soldiers bring Paul to him"

Acts 25:7

When he arrived

"When Paul came and stood before Festus"

they brought many serious charges

Charging a person with a crime is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could bring to court. Alternate translation: "they spoke against Paul many serious things"

Acts 25:8

against the temple

Paul says he did not break any rules about who could enter the Jerusalem temple. Alternate translation: "against the entry rules of the temple"

Acts 25:9

wanted to gain the favor of the Jews

Here "the Jews" means the Jewish leaders. Alternate translation: "wanted to please the Jewish leaders"

to go up to Jerusalem

Jerusalem was higher geographically than Caesarea. It was common to speak of going up to Jerusalem.

and to be judged by me about these things there

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"where I will judge you with regard to these charges"

Acts 25:10

I stand before the judgment seat of Caesar where I must be judged

The "judgment seat" refers to Caesar's authority to judge Paul. This can be stated in active form. Alternate

translation: "I ask to go before Caesar, so he can judge me"

Acts 25:11

Though if I have done wrong ... I do not refuse to die

Paul does not believe that he has done wrong, but he shows that he will submit to the law and will not refuse to be punished if he really has done wrong.

if I have done what is worthy of death

"if I have done some wrong that deserves the death penalty"

if their accusations are nothing

"if the charges against me are not true"

no one can hand me over to them

Possible meanings are 1) Festus does not have the legal authority to hand Paul over to these false accusers or 2) the governor should not give in to the request of the Jews.

I appeal to Caesar

"I ask to go before Caesar so he can judge me"

Acts 25:12

with the council

This is not the Sanhedrin that is referred to as "council" throughout Acts. This is a political council in the Roman government. Alternate translation: "with his own government advisors"

Acts 25:13

General Information:

King Agrippa and Bernice are new people in the story. Though he ruled over only a few territories, King Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine. Bernice was Agrippa's sister.

Now

This word marks the beginning of a new event in the story. to pay an official visit to Festus

"to visit Festus concerning official matters"

Acts 25:14

After they

"After King Agrippa and Bernice"

A certain man was left behind here by Felix as a prisoner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When Felix left office, he left a man in prison here"

Felix

Felix was the Roman governor of the area and resided in Caesarea. See how you translated this name in Acts 23:24.

Acts 25:15

brought charges against this man to me

This is a metaphor that means to accuse someone in court.

Alternate translation: "spoke to me against this man"

they asked for a sentence of condemnation against him

The abstract nouns "sentence" and "condemnation" can be expressed as verbs. The phrase "a sentence of condemnation" implies that they were requesting that Paul be executed. Alternate translation: "they asked me to sentence him to death" or "they asked me to condemn him to death"

Acts 25:16

to hand over anyone

Here "hand over" represents sending someone to people who will punish or kill him. Alternate translation: "let someone punish anyone" or "to condemn anyone to death" before the accused had faced his accusers

Here "faced his accusers" is an idiom that means to meet with the people who accuse him. Alternate translation: "before the person whom others have accused of a crime had met directly with those who accused him"

Acts 25:17

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." Festus has just said that an accused man should be able to face his accusers and make his defense.

when they came together here

"when the Jewish leaders came to meet with me here"

I sat in the judgment seat

Here "judgment seat" refers to Festus ruling over Paul's trial as judge. Alternate translation: "I sat upon the seat to act as judge" or "I sat down as judge"

I ordered the man to be brought in

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ordered the soldiers to bring Paul before me"

Acts 25:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 25:19

their own religion

Here "religion" means the belief system people have toward life and the supernatural.

Acts 25:20

to stand trial there about these charges

To "stand trial" is an idiom meaning to speak to a judge so the judge can decide if a person is right or wrong. Alternate translation: "to go to trial about these charges" or "for a judge to decide if these charges against him are true or not"

Acts 25:21

Connecting Statement:

Festus finishes explaining Paul's case to King Agrippa.

But when Paul appealed to be kept in custody while awaiting the decision of the emperor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"But when Paul insisted that he stay under Roman guard until the time when the emperor could decide his case"

I ordered him to be held in custody

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I ordered the soldiers to keep him in custody" or "I told the soldiers to guard him"

Acts 25:22

"Tomorrow," Festus said, "you will hear him."

The phrase "Festus said" can be moved to the beginning of the sentence. Alternate translation: "Festus said, 'I will arrange for you to listen to Paul tomorrow.'"

Acts 25:23

General Information:

Though he ruled over only a few territories, Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine. Bernice was his sister. See how you translated these names in Acts 25:13. with much ceremony

"with a great ceremony to honor them"

the hall

This was a large room where people gathered for ceremonies, trials, and other events.

Paul was brought to them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the soldiers brought Paul to appear before them"

Acts 25:24

Connecting Statement:

Festus again gives information about Paul's case to King Agrippa.

all the multitude of Jews

The word "all" is an exaggeration used to emphasize that a great number of Jews wanted Paul to die. Alternate translation: "a great number of the Jews" or "many of the Jewish leaders"

they shouted to me

"they spoke very strongly to me"

he should no longer live

This statement is made in the negative to emphasize the positive equivalent. Alternate translation: "he should die immediately"

Acts 25:25

because he appealed to the emperor

"because he said that he wanted the emperor to judge him"

the emperor

The emperor was the ruler of the Roman empire. He ruled over many countries and provinces.

Acts 25:26

to write to my lord

Festus used the word "lord" to refer to the emperor.
Alternate translation: "to write to the emperor"
I have brought him to you, especially to you, King Agrippa
Here the first "you" is plural and refers to all the men to whom Festus is speaking. The second "you" is singular and refers to King Agrippa. Alternate translation: "I have brought Paul to all of you, but especially to you, King Agrippa"
so that I might have something more to write
"so that I will have something else to write" or "so that I will

know what I should write"
Acts 25:27
it seems unreasonable for me to send a prisoner and to not also state
The negative words "unreasonable" and "to not ... state" can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "it seems reasonable to me to send a prisoner and to also state" the charges against him
Possible meanings are 1) the accusations that the Jewish leaders have brought against him or 2) the charges under Roman law that apply to Paul's case.

Chapter 26

Acts 26 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the third account of Paul's conversion in the book of Acts. Because this is such an important event in the early church, there are three accounts of Paul's conversion. (See: Acts 9 and Acts 22)

Paul told the King Agrippa why he had done what he had done and that the governor should not punish him for that.

Special concepts in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Links:

[Acts 26:1 Notes](#)

Acts 26

26:1-11

Why did Paul stretch out his hand?

[26:1]

Some scholars think it was common in those days to raise a hand toward the king in order to greet him. Other scholars think Paul stretched out his hand toward the king because it indicated he was about to make a speech.

What did Paul mean by saying he was happy?

[26:2]

When Paul said he was happy, he meant he felt fortunate or blessed to make his case before King Agrippa. King Agrippa was also a Roman and he knew Roman laws.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit); Bless (Blessing)

Who were the fathers?

[26:6]

Some scholars think the fathers about which Paul spoke were Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about other ancestors of Israel.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

What was the promise God made to the fathers?

[26:6]

God promised many things to these fathers. God promised the messiah, resurrection from the dead, the kingdom of God, and eternal life with God the Father.

See: Messiah (Christ); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Kingdom of God; Eternal Life; God the Father

What did Paul mean when he said, "I cast my vote against them"?

[26:10]

Some scholars think Paul meant that he wanted Christians to be punished and killed. More scholars do not think Paul was a ruler on the Jewish council.

See: Jewish Council (Sanhedrin); Punish (Punishment)

What did it mean to "blaspheme"?

[26:11]

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

26:12-18

Why did Jesus say, “It is hard for you to kick a goad”?

[26:14]

Scholars think that when Jesus said, “It is hard for you to kick a goad” he used a metaphor. In ancient times, people used a goad to make an ox move. If an ox kicked against the stick, this caused more discomfort for the ox. Scholars think Jesus said this to Paul in order to tell Paul that he was resisting God. That is, when Paul wanted to persecute Christians, this fought against God. It was not what God wanted Paul to do.

See: Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution)

How did Paul persecute Jesus?

[26:14]

Paul persecuted Jesus when he persecuted Christians. When he did this, he persecuted Jesus (see: Luke 10:16).

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Paul use his old name “Saul” when he talked about when Jesus appeared to him?

[26:14]

Paul said his old name “Saul” when he talked about when Jesus appeared to him because Paul wanted to say exactly what Jesus said to Paul.

How was Paul able to “open their eyes”?

[26:18]

Paul was able to open people’s eyes. This is a metaphor. God gave Paul the ability to teach the Gentiles about sin. Before Paul taught them, the Gentiles did not know they sinned. They now knew they sinned.

See: Metaphor; Gentile; Sin

What did it mean to turn, “from darkness to light”?

[26:18]

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

26:19-23

What was the heavenly vision?

[26:19]

Scholars think the heavenly vision was the revelation Jesus gave Paul on the road to Damascus.

See: Heaven; Vision)

Who were the small and the great?

[26:22]

When Paul wrote about the small and the great, he was speaking about all people. The small included poor and servants.

The great included rich people and free people, including King Agrippa.

See: Galatians 3:28; Job 3:19

26:24-32

What did Festus mean when he said, “your great learning makes you insane”?

[26:24]

Scholars give several reasons why Festus said Paul was insane.

Festus thought it was insane to believe dead people will become alive again.

Festus thought it was insane to believe Jesus became King by suffering and dying.

Festus thought it was insane to write a report to government leaders in Rome about becoming alive again.

Because King Agrippa was a Jew, he understood Paul. However, he did not think Paul was thinking in the right way.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Advice to translators: Someone who is insane is crazy or is ill and cannot think the right way.

What was meant by the words, “this has not been done in a corner”?

[26:26]

When Paul said, “this has not been done in a corner” he used a metaphor. He meant that all the events that were fulfilled God’s promises and people could see these promises being fulfilled. People saw Jesus resurrected. Paul also said that all these events were prophesied by Moses and the ancient prophets of Israel.

See: Metaphor; Fulfill (Fulfillment); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophet

Why did Paul want people to be like him but without prison chains?

[26:29]

Paul wanted people to be like him, but without prison chains. Paul prayed that Agrippa would believe Jesus as Paul believed Jesus. However, Paul did not wish Agrippa to be imprisoned. Paul was imprisoned, but he did not do anything wrong.

Why did the king stand up?

[26:30]

Scholars think that both Agrippa and Festus had heard everything they wanted to hear from Paul. When they stood up,

this meant that their meeting had ended.

Acts 26:1

Connecting Statement:

Festus has brought Paul before King Agrippa.

Agrippa

Agrippa was the current reigning king in Palestine, though he ruled over only a few territories. See how you translated this name in Acts 25:13.

stretched out his hand

"held out his hand" or "gestured with his hand"

made his defense

The abstract noun "defense" can be stated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "began to defend himself against those who were accusing him"

Acts 26:2

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives his defense to King Agrippa.

I consider myself happy

Paul was happy because he considered his appearance before Agrippa to be an opportunity to speak about the gospel.

to make my case

This phrase means to describe one's situation, so that those in court can discuss and make a decision about it. Alternate translation: "to defend myself"

against all the accusations of the Jews

The abstract noun "accusations" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Alternate translation: "against all the Jews who are accusing me"

the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

Acts 26:3

questions

You can make explicit what kinds of questions this means.

Alternate translation: "questions about religious matters"

Acts 26:4

all the Jews

This is a generalization. Possible meanings are 1) Jews in general who knew about Paul. Alternate translation: "the Jews" or 2) Pharisees who knew Paul. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"

in my own nation

Possible meanings are 1) among his own people, not necessarily in the geographical land of Israel or 2) in the land of Israel.

Acts 26:5

the strictest party of our religion

"a group within Judaism that lives by very strict rules"

Acts 26:6

Now

This word marks a shift from Paul discussing his past to talking about himself in the present.

I stand here to be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am here, where they are putting me on trial"

because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation

that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "trust" or "confidently wait." Alternate translation: "because I trust in the promise made by God to our fathers"

because of my hope in the promise made by God to our fathers

Hope in a promise is the expectation that the promise will be fulfilled. Alternate translation "because of my hope that God will do what he promised our forefathers he would do" or "because I confidently wait for God to do what he promised our forefather he would do"

Acts 26:7

this promise that our twelve tribes hope to receive

This speaks about a promise being fulfilled as if it were an object that is received. Alternate translation: "the promise that our twelve tribes confidently wait for God to fulfill"

our twelve tribes

The phrase "our twelve tribes" stands for the people in those tribes. Alternate translation: "our fellow Jews in the twelve tribes"

worship God earnestly night and day

The extremes "night" and "day" are used together to mean consistently mean Alternate translation: "continually worship God earnestly"

king

Paul is addressing King Agrippa by his title, not by his name. Your language may require that you add another word or part of a word, as in older English "O King," or that you add the king's name, as in "King Agrippa," or that you use another expression such as "Your Majesty."

that the Jews

This does not mean all the Jews. Alternate translation: "that the leaders of the Jews"

Acts 26:8

General Information:

Here "you" is plural and refers to the people who were listening to Paul.

Why should any of you judge it to be incredible that God raises the dead?

Paul uses a question to challenge the Jews there. They believe that God can raise the dead, but they do not believe that God brought Jesus back to life. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You should not judge it to be unbelievable that God raises the dead" Or "You should not say that it is impossible to believe that God raises the dead."

raises the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "makes dead people come alive again"

Acts 26:9

Now indeed

Paul uses this phrase to mark another shift in his defense. He is now beginning to describe how he formerly persecuted Jesus's people.

against the name of Jesus

The word "name" here stands for the teaching about the person. Alternate translation: "to stop people from teaching

about Jesus"

Acts 26:10

when they were killed, I cast my vote against them

The phrase "were killed" can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "I voted in agreement with the other Jewish leaders to condemn believers to die"

Acts 26:11

I punished them many times

Possible meanings are 1) Paul punished some believers many times or 2) Paul punished many different believers.

Acts 26:12

Connecting Statement:

While talking to King Agrippa, Paul tells about when the Lord spoke with him.

While I was doing this

Paul uses this phrase to mark another shift in his defense. He is now telling about when he saw Jesus and became his disciple.

While

This word is used to mark two events that are happening at the same time. In this case, Paul went to Damascus during the time when he persecuted Christians.

with authority and orders

Paul had letters from the Jewish leaders granting him authority to persecute the Jewish believers.

Acts 26:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 26:14

I heard a voice speaking to me that said

Here "voice" stands for the person speaking. Alternate translation: "I heard someone speaking to me who said"

Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?

This is a rhetorical question. The speaker is alerting Saul to what Saul is doing to him, and implying that Saul should not do that. Alternate translation: "Saul, Saul, you are persecuting me." or "Saul, Saul, stop persecuting me."

It is hard for you to kick a goad

For Paul to resist Jesus and to persecute believers is spoken of as if he were an ox kicking at the sharp stick that a person uses to prod

Acts 26:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

Acts 26:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

Acts 26:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

Acts 26:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving his defense to King Agrippa, quoting his conversation with the Lord.

to open their eyes

Paul helping people to understand the truth is spoken of as

if he were helping them to open their physical eyes.

Alternate translation: "to make them able to understand the truth"

to turn them from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God

Paul convincing people to stop obeying Satan and doing evil things and to start obeying God and doing good things is spoken of as if Paul were taking them out of a dark place where Satan controlled them and into a place where there was light and God controlled them. Alternate translation: "to help them stop doing what is evil, stop obeying Satan, and start trusting and obeying God"

they may receive from God the forgiveness of sins

The abstract noun "forgiveness" can be stated as the verb "forgive." Alternate translation: "God may forgive their sins and they may receive"

the inheritance that I give

The abstract noun "inheritance" may be stated as the verb "inherit." Alternate translation: "they may inherit that which I give"

the inheritance

The blessings that Jesus gives to those who believe in him are spoken of as if they were an inheritance that children receive from their father.

sanctified by faith in me

Jesus choosing some people to belong to him is spoken of as if he literally set them apart from other people.

by faith in me

"because they believe in me." Here Paul finishes quoting the Lord.

Acts 26:19

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true." Paul had just explained what the Lord had commanded him in his vision.

I did not disobey

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I obeyed"

the heavenly vision

This refers to what the person in the vision told Paul.

Alternate translation: "what the person from heaven told me in the vision"

Acts 26:20

turn to God

To start trusting God is spoken of as if a person turns to start walking toward God. Alternate translation: "trust in God"

doing deeds worthy of repentance

The abstract noun "repentance" can be stated as the verb "repented." Alternate translation: "and start doing good deeds to show they truly have repented"

Acts 26:21

the Jews

This does not mean all of the Jews. Alternate translation: "some Jews"

Acts 26:22

to both small and great about nothing

Here "small" and "great" refer to people who are unimportant and important, respectively, and are used together to mean "all people." Alternate translation: "to all

people, whether unimportant or important, about nothing" about nothing more than what
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "about the exact thing that"
what the prophets
Paul is referring to the collective writings of the Old Testament prophets.
Acts 26:23
Connecting Statement:
Paul finishes giving his defense to King Agrippa.
that Christ must suffer
You can make explicit that Christ must also die. Alternate translation: "that Christ must suffer and die"
from the dead
The phrase "the dead" refers to the spirits of people who have died. To rise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.
he would proclaim light
"he would proclaim the message about the light." To tell people about how God saves people is spoken of as if a person were speaking about the light. Alternate translation: "he would proclaim the message about how God saves people"
Acts 26:24
Connecting Statement:
Paul and King Agrippa continue to talk together.
you are insane
"you are speaking nonsense" or "you are crazy"
your great learning makes you insane
"you have learned so much that you are now crazy"
Acts 26:25
I am not insane ... but
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I am sane ... and" or "I am able to think well ... and"
most excellent Festus
"Festus, who deserves highest honors"
Acts 26:26
For the king ... to him ... from him
Paul is still speaking to King Agrippa, but he is referring to him in the third person. Alternate translation: "For you ... to you ... from you"
I am persuaded
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am sure"
that none of this is hidden from him
This can be stated in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "that he is aware of this" or "that you are aware of this"

has not been done in a corner
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "has not happened in a corner"
in a corner
This means doing something in secret as if a person went and did something in the corner of a room where no one can see him. Alternate translation: "in a dark place" or "in secret"
Acts 26:27
Do you believe the prophets, King Agrippa?
Paul asks this question to remind Agrippa that Agrippa already believes what the prophets said about Jesus. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You already believe what the Jewish prophets said, King Agrippa."
Acts 26:28
In a short time would you persuade me and make me a Christian?
Agrippa asks this question to show Paul that he cannot convince Agrippa so easily without more proof. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Surely you do not think you can convince me so easily to believe in Jesus!"
Acts 26:29
but without these prison chains
Here "prison chains" stands for being a prisoner. Alternate translation: "but, of course, I do not want you to be a prisoner, as I am"
Acts 26:30
General Information:
Bernice was the sister of King Agrippa (Acts 25:13).
Connecting Statement:
This ends Paul's time before King Agrippa.
Then the king stood up, and the governor
"Then King Agrippa stood up, and Governor Festus"
Acts 26:31
the hall
This was a large room for ceremonies, trials, and other events.
This man does nothing worthy of death or of bonds
The abstract noun "death" can be stated as the verb "die."
Here "bonds" stands for being in prison. Alternate translation: "This man does not deserve to die or to be in prison"
Acts 26:32
This man could have been freed
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This man could have gone free" or "I could have freed this man"

Chapter 27

Acts 27 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Sailing

People who lived near the sea traveled by boat powered by the wind. During some months of the year, the wind would blow in the wrong direction or so hard that sailing was impossible.

Trust

Paul trusted God to bring him safely to land. He told the sailors and soldiers to trust that God would also keep them alive. (See: trust)

Paul breaks bread

Luke uses almost the same words here to describe Paul taking bread, thanking God, breaking it, and eating it that he used to describe the last supper Jesus ate with his disciples. However, your translation should not make your reader think that Paul was leading a religious celebration here.

Links:

[Acts 27:1 Notes](#)

Acts 27

27:1-12

Why did Luke write “we”?

[27:1]

Luke wrote “we” because he went with Paul on the ship. Luke was writing about things that he saw. Some scholars think Luke and Aristarchus were Paul’s servants on the ship. Other scholars think “we” included everyone on the ship.

What was the Imperial Regiment?

[27:1]

The Imperial Regiment was a group of eighty soldiers. This regiment was under the command of a centurion named Julius.

Where was Adramyttium?

[27:2]

See Map: Adramyttium

Why did Paul go to his friends “to receive their care”?

[27:3]

When Paul received the care of his friends, it meant they cared for Paul and helped him.

Where was Cyprus, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Myra, and Lycia?

[27:4, 27:5]

See Map: Cyprus; Cilicia; Pamphylia; Myra; Lycia

What was an Alexandrian ship?

[27:6]

An Alexandrian ship was a ship from Egypt. These ships were very large and carried a lot of grain.

See: Grain (Grain Offering)

See Map: Mediterranean Sea; Alexandria; Egypt; Rome; Italy; Cnidus; Salmone; Fair Havens; Lasea

When was the Jewish Fast?

[27:9]

The Jewish fast was usually in September or October. It was also called the Day of Atonement.

See: Atone (Atonement); Fasting

How did Paul know the voyage will bring loss?

[27:10]

Paul knew the voyage will bring loss because he was already in three shipwrecks (see: 2 Corinthians 11:25) and he knew winter storms were dangerous.

See Map: Phoenix; Crete

27:13-38

Why did Paul remind the sailors they did not listen to him?

[27:21]

Paul reminded the sailors they did not listen to him because he wanted them to know he spoke wisely when he first spoke to them. He was hoping they would listen to the things he said now. That is, he was going to give them wise advice once again.

See Map: Crete; Cauda

How did Paul talk about salvation?

[27:22]

Paul talked about salvation from the storm and shipwreck. He was not talking about the forgiveness of sins. Paul wanted them to eat so they will have the strength to survive.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin

What did Paul mean when he said, “not one of you will lose a single hair from his head”?

[27:34]

When Paul said they will not lose a single hair from their head, he used a metaphor. It meant the men would not die in the storm or shipwreck.

Why did they want the ship to be lighter in weight?

[27:38]

They wanted the ship to be lighter in weight so that the ship would not sink and they would be able to get closer to land.

27:39-44

Why did the soldiers want to kill the prisoners to keep them from escaping?

[27:42]

The soldiers wanted to kill the prisoners to keep them from escaping because Roman leaders killed Roman soldiers when a prisoner escaped (see: Acts 12:18-19; 16:27). However, God wanted to bring Paul to Rome. The Roman soldier did God's will when he stopped the soldiers from killing the prisoners.

See: Will of God

See Map: Rome

Acts 27:1

General Information:

Adramyttium was a city possibly located on the west coast of modern-day Turkey. The word "we" includes the author of Acts, Paul, and the others traveling with Paul, but not the reader.

Connecting Statement:

Paul, as a prisoner, begins his journey to Rome.

When it was decided

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When the king and the governor decided"

sail for Italy

Italy is the name of the province Rome was in. See how you translated "Italy" in Acts 18:2.

they committed Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Augustan company of soldiers.

"they put a centurion named Julius, of the Imperial Regiment, in charge of Paul and some other prisoners"

they committed

Possible meanings are that 1) "they" refers to the governor and the king or 2) "they" refers to other Roman officials.

a centurion named Julius

Julius is a man's name.

the Augustan company of soldiers

Some versions translate the word Augustan as "Imperial" or "emperor's."

company of soldiers

This was a group of about 1,00 soldiers. See how you translated this in Acts 21:31.

Acts 27:2

We boarded a ship from Adramyttium which was about to sail along the coast of Asia

If your language requires a person to act here, you can add human actors: "We boarded a ship that people had brought from Adramyttium; they were about to sail it along."

a ship from Adramyttium

Possible meanings are 1) a ship that had come from Adramyttium or 2) a ship that was registered or licensed in Adramyttium.

about to sail

"soon going to sail" or "would depart soon"

went to sea

"began our journey on the sea"

Aristarchus

Aristarchus came from Macedonia but had been working with Paul in Ephesus. See how you translated his name in Acts 19:29.

Acts 27:3

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Julius treated Paul kindly

"Julius treated Paul with a friendly concern." See how you translated "Julius" in Acts 27:1.

go to his friends to receive their care

The abstract noun "care" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "go to his friends so they could care for him" or "go to his friends so they could help him with whatever he needed"

Acts 27:4

we went to sea and sailed

"we started sailing and went"

sailed under the lee of Cyprus, close to the island

"the lee of Cyprus" is the side of that island that blocks the strong wind, so sailing vessels are not forced off their course.

Acts 27:5

Pamphylia

This was a province in Asia Minor. See how you translated this in Acts 2:10.

we landed at Myra, a city of Lycia

You can make explicit that they got off of the ship in Myra.

Alternate translation: "came to Myra, a city of Lycia, where we got off the ship"

a city of Lycia

Lycia was a Roman province, located on the southwestern coast of modern-day Turkey.

Acts 27:6

found a ship from Alexandria that was going to sail to Italy

It is implied that a crew would sail the ship to Italy.

Alternate translation: "found a ship that a crew had sailed from Alexandria and was about to sail to Italy"

Alexandria

This is the name of a city.

Acts 27:7

When we had sailed slowly ... finally arrived with difficulty

You can make explicit that the reason they were sailing slowly and with difficulty was because the wind was blowing against them.

near Cnidus

This is an ancient settlement located in modern-day Turkey. the wind no longer allowed us to go that way

"we could no longer go that way because of the strong wind"

we sailed along the sheltered side of Crete

"we sailed along the side of Crete where there was less

wind"

opposite Salmone

This is a coastal city in Crete.

Acts 27:8

We sailed along the coast with difficulty

You can make explicit that even though the winds were not as strong as before, they were still strong enough to make sailing difficult.

Fair Havens

This was a port near Lasea, located on the south coast of Crete.

near the city of Lasea

This is a coastal city in Crete.

Acts 27:9

We had now taken much time

Because of the direction the wind was blowing, the journey from Caesarea to Fair Havens had taken more time than planned.

We had now taken

The writer includes himself, Paul, and those who were traveling with them, but not the reader.

the time of the Jewish fast also had passed, and it had now become dangerous to sail

This fast took place on the Day of Atonement, which was usually either in the last part of September or the first part of October according to Western calendars. After this time, there was a higher risk of seasonal storms.

Acts 27:10

I see that the voyage we are about to take will be with injury and much loss

"if we travel now, we will suffer much injury and loss"

with injury

If your language has a word for "injury" that results from wrongdoing, you may want to use it here.

we are about to take ... our lives

Paul includes himself and his hearers, so this is inclusive.

loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives

Here "loss" means destruction when referring to things and death when referring to people.

not only of the cargo and the ship

Cargo is something that a person transports from one place to another by boat. Alternate translation: "not only the ship and the goods on the ship"

Acts 27:11

that were spoken by Paul

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that Paul said"

Acts 27:12

harbor was not easy to spend the winter in

You can make explicit why it was not easy to stay in the harbor. Alternate translation: "harbor did not sufficiently protect docked ships during winter storms"

harbor

a place near land that is usually safe for ships

city of Phoenix

Phoenix was a port city on the south coast of Crete.

to spend the winter there

This speaks about the season of winter as if it were a commodity that someone can spend. Alternate translation:

"to stay there for the cold season"

facing both southwest and northwest

Here "faces northwest and southwest" means the opening of the harbor was toward those directions. Alternate translation: "it opened to the northwest and southwest"

southwest and northwest

These directions are based on what one sees as one faces

the setting sun. Northwest is a little to the right of the

setting sun, and southwest is a little to the left of the setting

sun.

Acts 27:13

weighed anchor

Here "weighed" means "pulled out of the water." An anchor is a heavy object attached to a rope that is secured to the boat. The anchor is tossed into the water and sinks to the bottom of the sea to keep the ship from drifting about.

Acts 27:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul and those traveling on the boat encounter a fierce storm.

after a short time

"after a little while"

a wind of hurricane force

"a very strong, dangerous wind"

called the northeaster

"called 'a strong wind from the northeast.'" The word for "the northeaster" in the original language is "Euroclydon." You can transliterate this word for your language.

began to beat down from the island

"came in from the island of Crete, and it blew strongly against our ship"

Acts 27:15

When the ship was caught by the storm and could no longer head into the wind

"When the wind blew so strongly against the front of the ship that we could not sail against it"

we had to give way to the storm and were driven along by the wind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we stopped trying to sail forward, and we let the wind push us whichever way it blew"

Acts 27:16

We sailed along the lee of a small island

"We sailed on the side of the island where the wind was not so strong"

a small island called Cauda

This island was located on the south coast of Crete.

lifeboat

This was a smaller boat towed behind or secured onto a ship, used to take people and goods across water too shallow for the ship and also to escape from the ship if it sank. At this point the lifeboat was in the water being towed by the ship.

Acts 27:17

they had hoisted the lifeboat up

"they had lifted up the lifeboat" or "they had pulled the lifeboat aboard the ship"

they used its ropes to bind the hull of the ship

The "hull" is the body of the ship. They tied ropes around it so that the ship would not come apart during the storm.

sandbars of Syrtis

Sandbars are very shallow areas in the sea where ships can get stuck in the sand. Syrtis is located on the coast of Libya, northern Africa.

they lowered the sea anchor

A sea anchor is something that is towed in the water behind a ship to slow the ship down and make it more stable. It may be a large cloth or a stiff board. Alternate translation: "they let the floating anchor down into the water"

were driven along

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "had to go in whatever direction the wind blew us"

Acts 27:18

We took such a violent battering by the storm

"The wind blew us so roughly back and forth that all of us were badly battered and bruised by the storm"

they began throwing the cargo overboard

The word "they" refers to the sailors. This is done to lighten the weight of the ship in an effort to prevent the ship from sinking.

cargo

Cargo is something that a person transports from one place to another by boat. See how you translated this in Acts 27:10. Alternate translation: "goods on the ship"

Acts 27:19

the sailors threw overboard the ship's equipment with their own hands

Here "equipment" refers to the sailors' equipment needed to sail the ship: tackle, hoists, beams of wood, block and tackle, ropes, lines, sails, and the like. This indicates how desperate the situation was.

Acts 27:20

When the sun and stars did not shine on us for many days

They could not see the sun and stars because of the dark storm clouds. Sailors needed to see the sun and stars in order to know where they were and what direction they were headed.

the great storm still beat upon us

"the terrible storm still blew us roughly back and forth"

any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone abandoned hope that we would be saved"

any more hope that we should be saved was abandoned

Here the word "hope" is a person's thought that what he desires might happen. Here the men on the boat had no reason to believe that they would be rescued, so they quit hoping. Alternate translation: "we quit thinking that we might be saved"

be saved

"be rescued." Since there is no mention of the people praying for God to save them, this might simply have the sense of "survive."

Acts 27:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks to the sailors on the ship.

When they had gone long without food

Here "they" refers to the sailors. It is implied that Luke, Paul, and those with them had not eaten either. Alternate translation: "When we had gone a long time without food" among the sailors

"among the men"

so as to get this injury and loss

"and as a result suffer this harm and loss"

Acts 27:22

there will be no loss of life among you, but only the loss of the ship
Paul is speaking to the sailors. It is implied that Paul also means that he and those with him will not die either.

Alternate translation: "none of us will die: the storm will destroy only the ship"

Acts 27:23

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 27:24

You must stand before Caesar

The phrase "stand before Caesar" refers to Paul's going to court and letting Caesar judge him. Alternate translation: "You must stand before Caesar so he can judge you"

has given to you all those who are sailing with you

"has decided to allow all those who are sailing with you to live"

Acts 27:25

just as it was told to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "just as the angel told me"

Acts 27:26

we must run aground upon some island

"we must steer our boat so that it wrecks on some island"

Acts 27:27

Connecting Statement:

The fierce storm continues.

When the fourteenth night had come

The ordinal number "fourteenth" can be translated as "fourteen" or "14." Alternate translation: "After 14 days since the storm started, that night"

as we were driven this way and that

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as the wind blew us back and forth"

the Adriatic Sea

This is the sea between Italy and Greece.

Acts 27:28

They took soundings

"They measured the depth of the sea water." They measured the depth of water by dropping a line with a weight tied to the end of it into the water.

found twenty fathoms

"found 20 fathoms." A "fathom" is a unit of measurement for measuring the depth of water. One fathom is about two meters. Alternate translation: "found 40 meters"

found fifteen fathoms

"found 15 fathoms." A "fathom" is a unit of measurement for measuring the depth of water. One fathom is about two meters. Alternate translation: "found 30 meters"

Acts 27:29

anchors

An anchor is a heavy object attached to a rope that is secured to the boat. The anchor is tossed into the water and sinks to the bottom of the sea, keeping the ship from drifting about. See how you translated this in Acts 27:13. from the stern

"from the back of the ship"

Acts 27:30

the lifeboat

This was a smaller boat towed behind or secured onto a ship, used to take people and goods across water too shallow for the ship and also to escape from the ship if it sank. See how you translated this in Acts 27:16.

from the bow

"from the front of the ship"

Acts 27:31

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the centurion and the Roman soldiers.

Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved

Paul meant that if those men left the ship, then no one on the ship would be saved. This can be stated positively, and the passive phrase "be saved" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You can be saved only if these men stay in the ship" or "Only if these men stay in the ship will you survive"

Acts 27:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 27:33

When daylight was coming on

"When it was almost sunrise"

This day is the fourteenth day that

The ordinal number "fourteenth" can be stated as

"fourteen." Alternate translation: "For 14 days"

Acts 27:34

not one of you will lose a single hair from his head

This was a customary way of saying no harm would come upon them. Alternate translation: "every one of you will survive this disaster unharmed"

Acts 27:35

broke the bread

"tore the bread" or "tore off a piece from the loaf of bread"

Acts 27:36

Then they were all encouraged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"This encouraged all of them"

Acts 27:37

We were 276 souls on the ship

"There were two hundred and seventy-six of us in the ship."

This is background information.

souls

This is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "people"

Acts 27:38

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Acts 27:39

bay

a large area of water partly surrounded by land

did not recognize the land

"saw land but could not recognize it as any place they knew"

Acts 27:40

cut loose the anchors and left them

"cut the ropes and left the anchors behind"

rudders

large oars or pieces of wood at the back of the ship used for steering

the foresail

"the sail at the front of the ship." The sail was a large piece of cloth that caught the wind to move the ship.

they headed to the beach

"they steered the ship toward the beach"

Acts 27:41

a sandbar

an underwater pile of sand that made the water suddenly shallow

The bow

the front end of the ship

the stern

"the back end of the ship"

Acts 27:42

The soldiers' plan was

"The soldiers were planning"

Acts 27:43

so he stopped their plan

"so he stopped them from doing what they planned to do"

jump overboard

"jump off the ship into the water"

Acts 27:44

some on planks

"some on wooden boards"

Chapter 28

Acts 28 General Notes

Structure and formatting

No one knows for sure why Luke ends his history without telling what happened to Paul after he had been in Rome for two years.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Letters" and "brothers"

The Jewish leaders were surprised that Paul wanted to speak with them, because they had received no letters from the high priest in Jerusalem telling them that Paul was coming.

When the Jewish leaders spoke of "brothers," they were referring to fellow Jews, not to Christians.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"He was a god"

The native people believed that Paul was a god, but they did not believe that he was the one true God. We do not know

why Paul did not tell the native people that he was not a god.

Links:

[Acts 28:1 Notes](#)

Acts 28

28:1-10

What did it mean that the natives offered more than “ordinary kindness”?

[28:2]

The people of Malta showed the shipwrecked people more than ordinary “kindness”(φιλανθρωπία/g5363). That is, they were more kind to these people than other would have been.

See Map: Malta; Phoenicia

What did it mean that a viper “fastened” onto Paul’s hand”?

[28:3]

Scholars think the viper bit into Paul’s hand and kept hanging on. That is, it attached itself to Paul’s hand.

What was meant by the words, “justice does not permit him to live”?

[28:4]

The people of Malta believed in a goddess named “justice.” This false god judged a person who escaped from captivity. Other scholars think the people in Malta believed that the justice of their god would not let Paul live.

See: False gods; Judge (Judgment)

See Map: Malta

Who was Publius?

[28:7]

Some scholars think Publius was a Roman whom the Roman government appointed Publius to rule the island of Malta.

Other scholars think Publius was very rich and many people knew him. He then became the leader of the island.

See Map: Malta

What kind of illness did Publius’ father have?

[28:8]

Scholars think Publius’ father often had fever and dysentery. That is, he was often ill.

How was Publius’ father, and the rest of the people healed?

[28:9]

Scholars think Publius’ father and the rest of the people were miraculously healed when Paul placed his hands upon them and prayed for them. That is, God healed the people for whom Paul prayed.

See: Miracle; Pray (Prayer)

28:11-16

What were “the twin gods”?

[28:11]

“The twin gods” were Castor and Pollux. The Greeks believed these false gods were the sons of another false god, Zeus.

The Greeks thought that these gods protected ships. Pagan sailors prayed to them for protection in storms.

See: Idolatry (Idol); False gods; Pagan

See Map: Syracuse; Rhegium; Puteoli

Where was Puteoli?

[28:13]

See Map: Puteoli

Who were the “brothers” about whom Luke wrote?

[28:15]

Luke wrote “brothers”(ἀδελφός/g0080) to let his readers know they were Christians. They also included Christian women.

See: Family of God

What was the market of Appius?

[28:15]

The Market of Appius was a market on a paved road to Rome. The paved road was about 60 kilometers from Rome.

What was the Three Taverns?

[28:15]

The Three Taverns was a place on the Appian Way. It was about 50 kilometers from Rome.

How did the soldier guard Paul?

[28:16]

The soldier guarded Paul with a small chain on Paul’s wrist (see: Acts 28:20).

28:17-29

What did Paul mean by the word, “brothers” in this context?

[28:17]

When Paul spoke to the “brothers”(ἀδελφοί/g0080) here, he was speaking to the Jewish leaders. They ruled over several synagogues in Rome.

See: Synagogue

See Map: Rome

What was the hope of Israel?

[28:20]

Scholars say the hope of Israel was two things.

They had hope of becoming alive again after death. This was made possible because Jesus died and became alive again. They had hope of the coming of the messiah. This hope was fulfilled when Jesus came to earth.

See: Hope; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Messiah (Christ); Fulfill (Fulfillment)

What was the “sect” about which the Jewish leaders spoke?

[28:22]

The Jewish leaders wanted to hear from Paul regarding the “sect.” That is, they wanted to know about Christianity and about the things he believed and taught. The Jewish leaders also heard the “sect” was called the Nazarenes.

Advice to translators: A sect is a group of religious people who believe the same thing.

What was meant by the words, “testified about the kingdom of God”?

[28:23]

When Luke wrote that Paul “testified about the kingdom of God,” he meant that Paul taught the Jewish leaders about Jesus. He taught them that Jesus is the messiah whom God promised to Israel.

See: Testify (Testimony); Kingdom of God; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Paul say the same thing Isaiah wrote?

[28:25]

Scholars think Paul said the same thing Isaiah wrote because he wanted people to know something. He wanted them to remember what happened when Isaiah lived. At that time, people would not understand what God said to them through the prophets. Now, Paul wanted people to know that the Jewish leaders did not understand what God said to them through the apostles and prophets (see: Isaiah 6:9-10).

See: Apostle; Prophet

What did it mean that the people’s hearts had become “dull”?

[28:27]

Some scholars think that when the people’s hearts had become “dull” it meant that the people simply refused to listen and understand God’s messengers. Other scholars think the people’s hearts were dull because they had been disobedient to God’s word for so long, they could no longer understand the things God wanted them to know.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Word of God

What did Luke write in verse 29?

[28:29]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words in verse 29. Older and more ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have the words of verse 29. Scholars do not think Luke wrote these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible

28:30-31

What did Luke mean when he wrote that Paul taught the things about Jesus “with all boldness”?

[28:31]

Scholars think that during these two years Paul was able to teach anyone and anywhere, and no one attempted to stop him from teaching.

Acts 28:1

General Information:

Here the word “we” refers to Paul, the writer, and those who traveled with them, but not to the reader.

Connecting Statement:

After the shipwreck, people on the island of Malta helped Paul and everyone on the ship. They stay there for 3 months.

When we were brought safely through

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

“When we arrived safely”

we learned

Paul and Luke learned the name of the island. Alternate

translation: “we learned from the people” or “we found out from the residents”

the island was called Malta

Malta is an island located south of the modern-day island of Sicily.

Acts 28:2

The native people

“The local people”

offered to us not just ordinary kindness

Being kind to someone is spoken of as if it were an object

that someone offers. Alternate translation: “were not only

very kind to us"

not just ordinary kindness

This phrase is used to emphasize the opposite of what is said. Alternate translation: "a great deal of kindness"

they lit a fire

"they put together twigs and branches and burned them"

welcomed us all

Possible meanings are 1) "welcomed all of the people from the ship" or 2) "welcomed Paul and all his companions."

Acts 28:3

a viper came out

"a poisonous snake came out of the bundle of sticks"

fastened onto his hand

"bit Paul's hand and did not let go"

Acts 28:4

This man certainly is a murderer

"For sure, this man is a murderer" or "This man is truly a murderer"

Justice

"Justice" was the name of a goddess that the people on the island worshiped. Alternate translation: "the goddess called Justice"

Acts 28:5

shook the animal into the fire

"shook his hand so that the snake fell from his hand into the fire"

suffered no harm

"Paul was not hurt at all"

Acts 28:6

waiting for him to swell up

They thought that his body would swell because of the snake venom.

nothing was wrong with him

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "everything about him was as it should be"

they changed their minds

To think differently about a situation is spoken of as if a person is changing his mind. Alternate translation: "they thought again"

said that he was a god.

Perhaps the people believed that someone who lived after a poisonous snake bite was divine or a god. This can be stated as a direct quotation. Alternate translation: "said, 'This man must be a god.'"

Acts 28:7

General Information:

Here the words "us" and "we" refer to Paul, Luke, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.

Now in a nearby place

"Now" is used to introduce a new person or event in the account.

chief man of the island

Possible meanings are 1) the main leader of the people or 2) someone who was the most important person on the island, perhaps because of his wealth.

Acts 28:8

It happened that the father of Publius ... fever and dysentery

This is background information about Publius' father that is important to understanding the story.

was lying afflicted

"was in bed, ill"

afflicted with a fever and dysentery

Dysentery is an infectious disease of the intestines.

placed his hands on him

"touched him with his hands"

Acts 28:9

were healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he healed them too"

Acts 28:10

honored us with many honors

Probably they honored Paul and those with him by giving them gifts.

Acts 28:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul's journey to Rome continues.

that had spent the winter at the island

"that the crew left at the island for the cold season"

a ship of Alexandria

Possible meanings are this refers to 1) a ship that came from Alexandria, or 2) a ship that was registered or licensed in Alexandria.

the twin gods

On the bow of the ship, there was a carving of the two idols called "the twin gods." Their names were Castor and Pollux.

Acts 28:12

city of Syracuse

Syracuse is a city on the southeast coast of the modern-day island of Sicily, just southwest of Italy.

Acts 28:13

city of Rhegium

This is the port city located at the southwestern tip of Italy.

a south wind sprang up

"the wind began to blow from the south"

city of Puteoli

Puteoli is located in modern-day Naples on the west coast of Italy.

Acts 28:14

There we found

"There we met"

brothers

These were followers of Jesus, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "fellow believers"

were invited

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they invited us"

In this way we came to Rome

Once Paul reached Puteoli, the rest of the journey to Rome was on land. Alternate translation: "And after we stayed seven days with them, we went to Rome"

Acts 28:15

General Information:

The Market of Appius was a popular market village about 60 kilometers south of the city of Rome on a road called the Appian Way. The Three Taverns was another village about 50 kilometers south of Rome.

after they heard about us

"after they heard we were coming"

he thanked God and took courage
 Courage is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could take. Alternate translation: "this encouraged him, and he thanked God"
 Acts 28:16
 General Information:
 Here the word "we" refers to the writer, Paul, and those traveling with them, but not to the reader.
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul arrives in Rome as a prisoner but with the freedom to stay in his own place. He calls the local Jews together to explain what has happened to him.
 When we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "After we had arrived in Rome, the Roman authorities gave Paul permission to"
 Acts 28:17
 Then it came about that
 This phrase is used here to mark the beginning of a new part of the story. If your language has a way for doing this, you could consider using it here.
 the leaders among the Jews
 These are the Jewish civil or religious leaders present in Rome.
 Brothers
 Here this means "Fellow Jews."
 against the people
 "against our people" or "against the Jews"
 I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some of the Jews arrested me in Jerusalem and placed me in the custody of the Roman authorities"
 into the hands of the Romans
 Here "hands" stands for power or control.
 Acts 28:18
 there was no reason for the death penalty in my case
 "there was no reason for them to execute me" or "I had done nothing to cause them to kill me"
 Acts 28:19
 the Jews
 This does not mean all of the Jews. Alternate translation: "the Jewish leaders"
 spoke against their desire
 "complained about what the Roman authorities wanted to do"
 I was forced to appeal to Caesar
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I had to ask for Caesar to judge me"
 although it is not as if I were bringing any accusation against my nation
 The abstract noun "accusation" can be stated as the verb "accuse." Here "nation" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "but it was not because I wanted to accuse the people of my nation before Caesar"
 Acts 28:20
 the hope of Israel
 Here the word "hope" is what a person desires to happen and is confident will happen. In this case it is what the people of Israel hope for. Alternate translation: "what Israel

joyfully waits for" or "what the people of Israel confidently expect"
 the hope of Israel
 Paul did not state clearly what Israel hoped for. He may have been referring 1) to their hope that the Messiah would come or 2) to their hope that God would cause those who have died to live again.
 Israel
 Here "Israel" stands for the people. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel" or "the Jews"
 that I am now wearing this chain
 Here "wearing this chain" stands for being a prisoner.
 Alternate translation: "that I am a prisoner"
 Acts 28:21
 General Information:
 Here the word "We" refers to the Jewish leaders in Rome.
 Connecting Statement:
 The Jewish leaders respond to Paul.
 nor did any of the brothers
 Here "brothers" stands for fellow Jews. Alternate translation: "nor did any of our fellow Jews"
 Acts 28:22
 General Information:
 Here the words "we" and "us" refer to the Jewish leaders in Rome.
 you think about this sect
 A sect is a smaller group within a larger group. Here it refers to those who believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: "you think about this group to which you belong"
 because it is known by us
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because we know"
 it is spoken against everywhere
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "many Jews all over the Roman Empire are saying bad things about it"
 Acts 28:23
 General Information:
 Here all instances of "they" and "them" refer to the Jewish leaders in Rome. All instances of "him," "his," and "He" refer to Paul (Acts 28:17).
 had appointed a day for him
 "had chosen a time for him to speak to them"
 testified about the kingdom of God
 Here "kingdom of God" stands for God's rule as king.
 Alternate translation: "told them about God's rule as king" or "told them how God would show himself as king"
 from the prophets
 Here "the prophets" refers to what they wrote. Alternate translation: "from what the prophets wrote"
 Acts 28:24
 Some were convinced about the things which were said
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Paul was able to convince some of them"
 Acts 28:25
 General Information:
 Here the word "they" refers to the Jewish leaders in Rome (Acts 28:17). The word "your" refers to the people to whom Paul had been speaking.

Connecting Statement:

As the Jewish leaders were ready to leave, Paul quoted the Old Testament scriptures that were appropriate for this time.

after Paul had spoken this one word

Here "word" stands for a message or statement. Alternate translation: "after Paul had said one more thing" or "after Paul had made this statement"

The Holy Spirit spoke well through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers. This sentence contains quotations within quotations.

Acts 28:26

General Information:

Paul begins to quote the book that the prophet Isaiah wrote.

He said, 'Go to this people and say, "Hearing you will hear, but you will never understand; seeing, you will see, but you will never know.

This is the end of the sentence that begins with the words "The Holy Spirit spoke" in verse 25 and that contains quotations within quotations. You can translate one of the inner quotations as an indirect quotation, or you can translate two of the inner quotations as indirect quotations. Alternate translation: "The Spirit told Isaiah to go tell them that they will hear but will not understand and they will see but they will not know"

Hearing you will hear ... seeing, you will see

The words "hear" and "see" are repeated for emphasis. "You will listen carefully ... you will look intently"

but you will never understand ... but you will never know

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. They emphasize that the Jewish people will not understand God's plan.

Acts 28:27

General Information:

Translate Paul's quotation of Isaiah as a direct quotation or an indirect quotation according to how you translated it in [Acts 28:25-26](#).

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes quoting Isaiah the prophet.

For the heart of this people has become dull

People who stubbornly refuse to understand what God is

saying or doing are spoken of as if their heart is dull. Here "heart" is a metonym for the mind.

with their ears they hardly hear, and they have shut their eyes

People who stubbornly refuse to understand what God is saying or doing are spoken of as if they are unable to hear and are shutting their eyes so that they will not see.

understand with their heart

Here "heart" stands for the mind.

turn again

To start obeying God is spoken of as though the person were physically turning toward God.

I would heal them

This does not mean God would only heal them physically.

He would also heal them spiritually by forgiving their sins.

Acts 28:28

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes speaking to the Jewish leaders in Rome.

this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles

God's message about how he saves people is spoken of as if it were an object that is sent. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is sending his messengers to the Gentiles to tell them about how he will save them"

they will listen

"some of them will listen." This response of the Gentiles is in contrast to the way the Jews of that time responded.

Acts 28:29

General Information:

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Acts 28:30

General Information:

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Acts 28:31

Connecting Statement:

Luke ends the story of Paul in the book of Acts.

He was proclaiming the kingdom of God

Here "kingdom of God" refers to God's rule as king.

Alternate translation: "He was preaching about God's rule as king" or "He was preaching about how God will show himself as king"

Introduction to Romans

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Romans

Introduction (1:1-15) Righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ (1:16-17) All mankind is condemned because of sin (1:18-3:20) Righteousness through Jesus Christ by faith in him (3:21-4:25) The fruits of the Spirit (5:1-11) Adam and Christ compared (5:12-21) Becoming like Christ in this life (6:1-8:39) God's plan for Israel (9:1-11:36) Practical advice for living as Christians (12:1-15:13) Conclusion and greetings (15:14-16:27)

Who wrote the Book of Romans?

The Apostle Paul wrote the Book of Romans. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul probably wrote this letter while he was staying in the city of Corinth during his third trip through the Roman Empire.

What is the Book of Romans about?

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Rome. Paul wanted to get them ready to receive him when he visited them. He said his purpose was to "bring about the obedience of faith" (16:26).

In this letter Paul most fully described the gospel of Jesus Christ. He explained that both Jews and non-Jews have sinned,

and God will forgive them and declare them righteous only if they believe in Jesus (chapters 1-11). Then he gave them practical advice for how believers should live (chapters 12-16),

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Romans." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Rome," or "A Letter to the Christians in Rome."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What are the titles used to refer to Jesus?

In Romans, Paul described Jesus Christ by many titles and descriptions: Jesus Christ (1:1), the Seed of David (1:3), the Son of God (1:4), the Lord Jesus Christ (1:7), Christ Jesus (3:24), Propitiation (3:25), Jesus (3:26), Jesus our Lord (4:24), Lord of Hosts (9:29), a Stumbling Stone and Rock of Offence (9:33), the End of the Law (10:4), the Deliverer (11:26), Lord of the Dead and the Living (14:9), and the Root of Jesse (15:12).

How should theological terms in Romans be translated?

Paul used many theological terms that are not used in the four gospels. As early Christians learned more about the meaning of Jesus Christ and his message, they needed words and expressions for new ideas. Some examples of these words are "justification" (5:1), "works of the law" (3:20), "reconcile" (5:10), "propitiation" (3:25), "sanctification" (6:19), and "the old man" (6:6).

The "key terms" dictionary can help translators understand many of these terms.

Terms such as those given above are difficult to explain. It is often hard or impossible for translators to find equivalent terms in their own languages. It can help to know that word equivalents of these terms are not necessary. Instead, translators can develop short expressions to communicate these ideas. For example, the term "gospel" can be translated as "the good news about Jesus Christ."

Translators should also remember that some of these terms have more than one meaning. The meaning will depend on how the author is using the word in that particular passage. For example, "righteousness" sometimes means that a person obeys God's law. At other times, "righteousness" means that Jesus Christ has perfectly obeyed God's law for us.

What did Paul mean by "a remnant" of Israel (11:5)?

The idea of a "remnant" is important both in the Old Testament and for Paul. Most of the Israelites were either killed or scattered among other people when the Assyrians and then the Babylonians conquered their land. Only a relatively few Jews survived. They were known as "the remnant."

In 11:1-9, Paul spoke of another remnant, the Jews whom God saved because they believed in Jesus. (See: remnant)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

The phrase "in Christ" and similar phrases occur in 3:24; 6:11, 23; 8:1,2,39; 9:1; 12:5,17; 15:17; and 16:3,7,9,10. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." For example, in 3:24 ("the redemption that is in Christ Jesus"), Paul referred to our being redeemed "because" of Jesus Christ. In 8:9 ("you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit"), Paul spoke of believers submitting "to" the Holy Spirit. In 9:1 ("I tell the truth in Christ"), Paul meant that he is telling the truth that "is in agreement with" Jesus Christ. The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

How are the ideas of "holy," "saints" or "holy ones," and "sanctify" represented in Romans in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, the ULB uses the following principles:

Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God considers Christians to be sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is perfect and faultless. A third fact is that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless and faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULB uses "holy," "holy God," "holy ones" or "holy people." (See: 1:7) Sometimes the meaning in a passage indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In cases where some other English versions have "saints" or "holy ones," the ULB uses "believers." (See: 8:27; 12:13; 15:25, 26, 31; 16:2, 15) Sometimes the meaning in a passage indicates the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "set apart," "dedicated to," "consecrated," or "reserved for." (See: 15:16)

The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Romans?

For the following verses, modern version of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB includes the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote.

"he [God] works all things together for good" (8:28). Some older translations read, "All things work together for good." "But

if it is by grace, it is no longer by works. Otherwise grace would no longer be grace" (11:6). Some older translations read: "But if it is by works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

The following verse is not in the best ancient copies of the Bible. Translators are advised not to include this verse.

However, if in the translators' region there are older Bible versions that have this verse, the translators can include it. If it is translated, it should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that it is probably not original to the Book of Romans.

"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (16:24).

Chapter 1

Romans 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first verse is a type of introduction. People in the ancient Mediterranean region often started their letters this way. Sometimes this is called a "salutation."

Special concepts in this chapter

The gospel

When Paul writes of "the gospel" in this chapter (verses 1, 2, 9, 15, 16, 17), he is referring to the message about God's salvation for people through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross.

Harvest

This chapter uses the image of a harvest ([1:13](#)) to speak of the Roman Christians doing good works because they believe what Paul has told them about Jesus. (See: fruit and faith and righteous)

Universal Condemnation and the Wrath of God

This chapter explains that everyone is without excuse. We all know about the true God, Yahweh, from his creation all around us. Because of our sin and our sinful nature, every person justly deserves the wrath of God. This wrath was satisfied by Jesus dying on a cross for those who believe in him. (See: believe and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"God gave them over"

Many scholars view the phrases "God gave them over" and "God gave them up" as theologically significant. In both cases, it means that God had stopped trying to teach the people the right way and had allowed them to do whatever they want, even though everything they wanted to do was evil.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Difficult phrases and concepts

This chapter has many difficult ideas in it. The way Paul writes makes many of the phrases in this chapter difficult to translate. The translator may need to use the UDB to understand the meaning of the phrases and then translate them in a way that is easy for people to understand. Some of the difficult phrases include: "obedience of faith," "whom I serve in my spirit," "from faith to faith" and "exchanged the glory of the imperishable God for the likenesses of an image of perishable man."

Links:

[Romans 1:1 Notes](#) [Romans intro](#)

Romans 1 Commentary

1:1-7

How was Paul a servant?

[1:1]

Paul called himself a slave or "servant" (δοῦλος/g1401) of Jesus Christ. Some scholars think that he wanted people to think about Joshua, Moses, and Jonah, who were also called "servants." More scholars think that Paul was a servant because he wanted to obey and serve God.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave)

See: Romans 15:16; Titus 1:1

What was an "apostle"?

[1:1]

See: Apostle

When was the promise made in the "holy scriptures"?

[1:2]

When Paul wrote about promises made the holy scriptures, he was speaking about the Old Testament.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

How was Jesus a "descendent of David"?

[1:3]

The Bible prophesied that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David (see: 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 23:5-6). Jesus was a descendant of David (see: Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38).

See: Matthew 9:27; 12:23; 21:9; 22:41-45; 2 Timothy 2:8; Revelation 5:5

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Messiah (Christ); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Son of David
What was the “Spirit of holiness”?

[1:4]

Paul wrote about the spirit of holiness. Some scholars think Paul was speaking about the Holy Spirit (see: Isaiah 63:10). Other scholars state that it referred to the holiness Christians have (see: 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13).

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Holy Spirit

What was meant by the words, “declared with power to be the Son of God”?

[1:4]

Paul wrote “declared with power to be the Son of God.” Scholars think that God declared Jesus to be the Son of God when Jesus was resurrected.

See: Son of God; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What was “received grace and apostleship”?

[1:5]

Paul wrote “received grace and apostleship.” Some scholars he was talking about all Christians. Christians received grace in the same way that Paul did. Other scholars think Paul spoke about the other apostles who, like him, were called by Jesus.

See: Apostle; Grace; Call (Calling)

What was the “obedience of faith”?

[1:5]

When Paul wrote about the obedience of faith, he was speaking about obeying God because someone believed in Jesus.

See: Acts 6:7; Romans 16:26

See: Faith (Believe in)

1:8-17

How was God a witness?

[1:9]

When God’s people insisted that they were telling the truth, they sometimes said that God was a witness of the things they said. This was a type of oath.

See: Romans 9:1; 1 Thessalonians 2:5, 10

See: Swear (Oath); Witness (Martyr)

What did it mean to serve “in my spirit”?

[1:9]

Some scholars think that in his “spirit” meant that Paul completely served God. Other scholars think he was speaking serving God with the power of the Holy Spirit.

See: Spirit (Spiritual)); Holy Spirit

What is the “spiritual gift” that Paul wanted to give the Romans?

[1:11]

When Paul wrote about a spiritual gift here, he was speaking about God blessing people (see: Romans 11:29).

See: Spirit (Spiritual)

How did Paul want to “have some fruit”?

[1:13]

He wanted people to believe in Jesus and help them in a way that honors God.

See: Philippians 1:22; Colossians 1:6

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

Who are the Gentiles, Greeks, and foreigners?

[1:14]

Gentiles were any non-Jewish people. Many Gentiles were also “Greeks,” because they spoke Greek. “Foreigners” were Gentile people who could not speak Greek (see: 1 Corinthians 14:11).

See: Colossians 3:11

See: Gentile

What made Paul a “debtor” to everyone?

[1:14]

A “debtor”(ὀφειλέτης/g3781) was someone who owe something to someone (see: Romans 15:27). This was often money. God wanted him to preach the gospel. Therefore, Paul needed to preach the gospel.

See: 1 Corinthians 9:16

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Why did it mean to not be “ashamed” of the gospel?

[1:16]

Paul did not want people to be ashamed of the gospel. He did not want people to worry about people judging them for believing the gospel.

See: Jeremiah 9:24; Mark 8:38; 2 Timothy 1:8, 12

See: Shame (Ashamed)

What was “for the Jew first and for the Gentile”?

[1:16]

Paul said that salvation came to the Jews first. He wanted to know that Jesus began to tell Jewish people how to be at peace with God before he began telling the Gentiles how to have peace with God. He did this after the Jews rejected their messiah.

See: Acts 11:18; 20:21; Romans 10:12-13; Ephesians 2:11-18

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gentile; Messiah (Christ)

What was “God’s righteousness”?

[1:17]

Paul spoke about God’s “righteousness.” Some scholars think Paul wanted to say that God is righteous (see: Psalm 50:6; Romans 3:5). Other scholars think Paul was writing about the righteousness that God gave people when he justified them (see: Romans 3:21; 10:3). Other scholars think Paul was writing about salvation (see: Isaiah 51:6).

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Justify (Justification); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

How was God’s righteousness “revealed from faith to faith”?

[1:17]

Paul wrote about God’s righteousness revealed from faith to faith. Some scholars think Paul wanted people to know that they were saved because they believe in Jesus. Other scholars think Paul wanted Christians to have more faith or to trust God more. Other scholars think Paul wanted them to the Jews to change what they believed. Before, they needed to believe in God. Now, they also need to believe in Jesus, who is God.

See: Faith (Believe in); Righteous (Righteousness); Jesus is God

1:18-25

What is the “wrath of God”?

[1:18]

See: Ezekiel 25:17; Romans 5:9; 12:19; Ephesians 5:6

See: Wrath

What was “unrighteousness”?

[1:18]

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

How did people “hold back the truth”?

[1:18]

Paul wrote about holding back the truth. This is a metaphor. The evil people tried to stop the truth. They did not destroy the truth, but they did keep it from changing them.

See: 2 Thessalonians 2:10

What was their “senseless hearts were darkened”?

[1:21]

People with “senseless hearts” could not think in the right way because of their sin.

See: John 3:19; Ephesians 4:17-18

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

What was the “likenesses of an image”?

[1:23]

Gentiles who did not know God made idols. These were statues that were “like” how a man or an animal looked, that is, its image.

See: Deuteronomy 5:8; Isaiah 44:12-17; Acts 17:29

See: Idolatry (Idol); Image

How did God give people “over to the lusts of their hearts”?

[1:24]

God gave people over to the lusts of their hearts. God allowed people to do the sins they wanted to do and to be punished for their sins.

See: Psalm 81:11-12; Acts 7:42

See: Heart (Metaphor); Sin

1:26-32

What were “dishonorable passions”?

[1:26]

Paul wrote about people with dishonorable passions. These people were sexually immoral.

See: Ephesians 4:18-19; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:4-5

See: Sexual Immorality

What were "natural" and "unnatural" relations?

[1:26]

Paul wrote about natural and unnatural relations. Sex between a husband and a wife were "natural"(φυσικός/g5446).

That is, it is the way God intended it to be. Other types of sex were "unnatural"(φύσις/g5449). They are sins and God does not want people to do these things.

See: Jude 7

See: Sexual Immorality

What was "burned in their lust"?

[1:27]

Paul wrote about people who burned with lust. This is a metaphor. They really wanted to be sexually immoral.

See: 1 Corinthians 7:9, 36; 1 Timothy 5:11

See: Sexual Immorality

What was a "corrupted mind"?

[1:28]

A corrupted mind thought evil things that were worthless (see: Titus 1:16). This person did not think the things that God wanted them to think.

See: 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; 2 Timothy 3:8

See: Mind

What did "not proper" mean?

[1:28]

Something that was not proper was against God's holy will.

See: Romans 8:7-8; Titus 1:16

See: Will of God

Romans 1:1

Paul

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. You may also need to tell in this same verse who the people are to whom Paul wrote the letter

Christ, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Christ. God called me to be an apostle and chose me to tell people about the gospel"

called

appointed or chosen by God to be his child, to be his servant and proclaimer of his message of salvation through Jesus

Romans 1:2

which he promised beforehand by his prophets in the holy scriptures
God promised his people that he would set up his kingdom.
He told the prophets to write these promises in the Scriptures.

Romans 1:3

concerning his Son

This refers to "the gospel of God," the good news that God promised to send his Son into the world.

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

who was a descendant of David according to the flesh

Here the word "flesh" refers to the physical body. Alternate translation: "who is a descendant of David according to the physical nature" or "who was born into the family of David"

Romans 1:4

he was declared with power to be the Son of God

The word "he" refers to Jesus Christ. You can translate this

in an active form. Alternate translation: "God declared him with power to be the Son of God"

by the resurrection from the dead

"by raising him from among the people who are dead." This expression speaks of all dead people together in the underworld, and coming alive again is spoken of as resurrection from among them.

Spirit of holiness

This refers to the Holy Spirit.

Romans 1:5

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks here about his obligation to preach.

we have received grace and apostleship

God has given Paul the gift of being an apostle. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God caused me to be an apostle. This is a special privilege"

for obedience of faith among all the nations, for the sake of his name

Paul uses the word "name" as a metonym to refer to Jesus.

Alternate translation: "in order to teach all nations to obey because of their faith in him"

Romans 1:6

General Information:

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Romans 1:7

To all in Rome who are beloved of God and called to be his holy people

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "I am writing this letter to all of you in Rome whom God loves and has chosen to become his people"

Grace to you and peace

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "May God give you grace and peace" or "May

God bless you and give you inner peace"

God our Father

The word "Father" is an important title for God.

Romans 1:8

the whole world

the world Paul and his readers knew and could travel in, which was the Roman Empire

Romans 1:9

For God is my witness

Paul emphasizes that he earnestly prays for them and that God has seen him praying. The word "for" is often left untranslated.

in my spirit

A person's spirit is the part of him that can know God and believe in him.

the gospel of his Son

The good news (gospel) of the Bible is that the Son of God has given himself as the Savior of the world.

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

I make mention of you

"I talk to God about you"

Romans 1:10

I always request in my prayers that ... I may at last be successful ... in coming to you

"Every time I pray, I ask God that ... I may succeed ... in coming to visit you"

by any means

"in whatever way God allows"

at last

"eventually" or "finally"

now by the will of God

"now, because God desires it,"

Romans 1:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues his opening statements to the people in Rome by stating his desire to see them in person.

For I desire to see you

"Because I really want to see you"

some spiritual gift, in order to strengthen you

Paul wants to strengthen the Roman Christians spiritually.

Alternate translation: "some gift that will help you to grow spiritually"

Romans 1:12

That is, I long to be mutually encouraged among you, through each other's faith, yours and mine

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I mean that I want us to encourage each other by sharing our experiences of faith in Jesus"

Romans 1:13

I do not want you to be uninformed

Paul is emphasizing that he wanted them to have this information. You can translate this double negative in a positive form. Alternate translation: "I want you to know"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

I was hindered until now

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "something has always prevented me"

in order to have some fruit among you

The word "fruit" is a metaphor that represents people in Rome whom Paul wants to believe the gospel. Alternate translation: "that more people among you might trust in Jesus"

the rest of the Gentiles

the Gentiles in the other regions where he had gone

Romans 1:14

I am a debtor both to

Using the metaphor "debtor," Paul speaks of his duty to serve God as if he owed God a financial debt. Alternate translation: "I must take the gospel to"

Romans 1:15

General Information:

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Romans 1:16

I am not ashamed of the gospel

You can translate this in a positive form. Possible meanings are that 1) Paul is not ashamed of believing the gospel because he knows it is true. Alternate translation: "I am confident in the gospel" 2) Paul is not ashamed of preaching the gospel because he knows that is true. Alternate translation: "I confidently preach the gospel"

it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes

Here "believes" means that one puts his trust in Christ.

Alternate translation: "it is through the gospel that God powerfully saves those who put their trust in Christ"

for the Jew first and for the Greek

"for Jewish people and also for Greek people"

first

Here "first" means coming before all others in order of time.

Romans 1:17

For in it

Here "it" refers to the gospel. Paul explains why he completely trusts in the gospel.

God's righteousness is revealed from faith to faith

Paul speaks about the gospel message as if it were an object that God could physically show to people. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has told us that it is by faith from beginning to end that people become righteous"

as it has been written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "as someone has written in the Scriptures"

The righteous will live by faith

Possible meanings are 1) the words "by faith" describe "righteous," and those who by faith are righteous will live, or 2) the words "by faith" describe "will live," and those who are righteous will live by faith.

The righteous

The word "righteous" can be written as an adjective.

Alternate translation: "Righteous people" or "A person who is righteous"

Romans 1:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul reveals God's great anger against sinful man.

For the wrath of God is revealed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For God shows how angry he is"

For

Paul uses the word "for" to show he is about to tell why people know that what he has said in Romans 1:17 is true. the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of people

The words "ungodliness" and "unrighteousness" are abstract nouns that can be expressed using the adjectives "ungodly," which describes the people, and "unrighteous," which describes their deeds. These nouns are metonyms for the people with whom God is angry. You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "God reveals from heaven how angry he is with people because they are ungodly and do unrighteous deeds"

hold back the truth

Here "truth" refers to true information about God.

Alternate translation: "hide the true information about God"

Romans 1:19

that which is known about God is visible to them

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "they can know about God because of what they can plainly see"

For God has enlightened them

Here "enlightened them" means God has shown them the truth about him. Alternate translation: "Because God has shown everyone what he is like"

Romans 1:20

world

This refers to the heavens and the earth, as well as everything in them.

his invisible qualities, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen

Paul speaks of people understanding God's invisible qualities as if people have seen those qualities. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people have clearly understood God's invisible qualities, namely his eternal power and divine nature"

divine nature

"all the qualities and characteristics of God" or "the things about God that make him God"

having been discerned

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "because people have discerned them" or "because people have understood them"

in the things that have been made

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "in the things that God has made"

they are without excuse

"people do not have an excuse" or "these people can never say that they did not know"

Romans 1:21

became foolish in their thoughts

"began to think foolish things"

their senseless hearts were darkened

Here "darkness" is a metaphor that represents the people's lack of understanding. Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "they

became unable to understand what God wanted them to know"

Romans 1:22

They claimed to be wise, but they became foolish

"While they were claiming that they were wise, they became foolish"

They ... they

the people in Romans 1:18

Romans 1:23

exchanged the glory of the imperishable God

"traded the truth that God is glorious and will never die"

exchanged the glory of the imperishable God for the likenesses of an image of

"stopped loving the glory of the God who never dies and instead chose to worship idols that looked like"

perishable man

"human beings, who will die"

of birds, of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things

"or that looked like birds, four-footed beasts, or creeping things"

Romans 1:24

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true"

God delivered them over to

"God allowed them to indulge in"

them ... their ... themselves

These words refer to the "people" of Romans 1:18.

the lusts of their hearts for uncleanness

Here "lusts of their hearts" is a synecdoche that represents the evil things they wanted to do. Alternate translation: "the morally impure things they desired greatly"

for their bodies to be dishonored among themselves

This is a euphemism that means they committed immoral sexual acts. You can translate this in an active form.

Alternate translation: "and they committed sexually immoral and degrading acts"

Romans 1:25

they

This word refers to the "people" of Romans 1:18.

who worshiped and served the creation

Here "creation" refers to what God created. Alternate translation: "They worshiped things that God created"

instead of

"rather than"

Romans 1:26

Because of this

"Because of idolatry and sexual sin"

God delivered them over to dishonorable lusts

"God allowed them to do all the dishonorable things they very much wanted to do"

dishonorable lusts

"shameful sexual desires"

lusts, for their women

"lusts. For example, their women"

exchanged natural relations for those that were unnatural

The idea of relations "that were unnatural" is a euphemism for immoral sexuality. Alternate translation: "started practicing sexuality in a way God did not design"

Romans 1:27

men also left their natural relations with women
 Here "natural relations" is a euphemism for sexual relationships. Alternate translation: "many men stopped having natural sexual desire for women"
 burned in their lust for one another
 "experienced strong sexual desire for other men"
 committed shameless acts with men and
 "committed acts with men for which they should have been ashamed. But they were not ashamed, and they"
 men and received in themselves the penalty they deserved for their error
 "men, and God has punished them justly for the error they committed"
 error
 moral wrong, not a mistake about facts
 Romans 1:28
 And just as they did not approve of having God in their awareness
 "They did not think it was necessary to know God"
 And just as
 Possible meanings are 1) God "gave them up to a corrupted mind ... proper" (see the words in this verse) because they not only "exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and ... worshiped and served the creation" (Romans 1:25), but they also "did not approve ... awareness," or 2) God "gave them up ... proper" because "they did not approve ... awareness," in which case "And just as" should be translated "Because." they ... their ... them
 These words refer to the "people" of Romans 1:18.
 he gave them up to a corrupted mind
 Here "a corrupted mind" means a mind that thinks only about immoral things. Alternate translation: "God allowed their minds, which they had filled with worthless and immoral thoughts, to completely control them"
 not proper

"disgraceful" or "sinful"
 Romans 1:29
 They have been filled with all
 You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "They have in them a strong desire for all" or "They strongly desire to do deeds of"
 They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and evil intentions
 "Many are constantly envying other people ... Many constantly desire to murder people ... to cause arguments and quarrels among people ... to deceive others ... to speak hatefully about others"
 Romans 1:30
 slanderers
 A slanderer says false things about another person in order to damage that person's reputation.
 inventing ways of doing evil
 "thinking of new ways to do evil things to others"
 Romans 1:31
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 Romans 1:32
 They understand the ordinance of God, that
 "They know how God wants them to live and that"
 that those who practice such things
 Here "practice" refers to continually or habitually doing things that are evil. Alternate translation: "that those who keep on doing wicked things"
 are deserving of death
 "deserve to die"
 these things
 "these kinds of evil things"
 who do them
 Here the verb "do" refers to continuing to do things that are evil. Alternate translation: "who keep on doing evil things"

Chapter 2

Romans 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter shifts its audience from Roman Christians to those who "judge" other people and do not believe in Jesus. (See: judge and believe)

"Therefore you are without excuse"

This phrase looks back at Chapter 1. In some ways, it actually concludes what Chapter 1 teaches. This phrase explains why everyone in the world must worship the true God.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Doers of the Law"

Those who try to obey the law will not be justified by trying to obey it. Those who are justified by believing in Jesus show that their faith is real by obeying God's commands. (See: justice and lawofmoses)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: guilt and sin and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You who judge"

At times, this could be translated in a simpler way. But it is translated in this relatively awkward way because when Paul refers to "people who judge" he is also saying that everyone judges. It is possible to translate this as "those who judge (and everyone judges)."

Links:

Romans 2

2:1-16

How were people “without excuse”?

[2:1]

Paul wrote that people were “without excuse”(ἀναπολόγητος/g0379). That is, they could not argue that they did not sin or they knew enough to worship God (see: Romans 1:20).

See: Hebrews 10:26

See: Worship

Paul spoke to someone. Who was this?

[2:1, 2:3]

In verse 1 and 3, Paul wrote about people who disagreed with the gospel he taught. He wanted people to know that they were Christians, but they were not Jews.

See: Romans 2:17

What did “judge” mean?

[2:2]

See: Matthew 7:1-5; John 8:7; Ephesians 2:11

See: Judge (Judgment)

How did god judge “according to truth”?

[2:2]

God judges according to the truth. That is, God is always fair and just.

See: Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 9:7-8; 98:9; Zephaniah 3:5; Revelation 19:2

See: Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment

How does God’s judgment “falls on” someone?

[2:2]

Paul wrote about God’s judgment falling on someone. That is, God would judge people

See: Psalm 11:5-6; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9

Why did Paul ask many questions?

[2:3, 2:4]

In ancient times, teachers often asked questions when they were teaching. This helped people to think about what they were teaching.

See: Proverbs 11:21; Matthew 23:33

What was “delayed punishment”?

[2:4]

God delayed punishment. That is, people would not be immediately punished for their sins. Instead, God will judge them on judgment day. Instead of immediately punishing people, God gave people time to repent.

See: Romans 9:22-23; 2 Peter 3:9

See: Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment; Punish (Punishment); Repent (Repentance)

How did people store up wrath?

[2:5]

Paul wrote that people stored up wrath. That is, the more people sinned, the more they caused God to be angry. God became more angry the more people sinned.

See: Deuteronomy 32:34-35; Romans 9:22; James 5:3; 2 Peter 3:7; Jude 1:6

See: Wrath; Sin

What was the day of wrath?

[2:5]

See: Revelation 6:17; Amos 5:18; Obadiah 1:15; 1 Corinthians 1:8; 5:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:2

See: Day of the Lord; Wrath

What was “incorruptibility”?

[2:7]

Paul spoke about “incorruptibility”(ἀφθαρσία/g0861). Some scholars think Paul was writing about not sinning (see: Ephesians 6:24). More scholars think Paul was speaking about someone’s body after they are resurrected (see: 1 Corinthians 15:42, 50, 52-54). God would raise his people in bodies that would not decay or die.

See: 2 Timothy 1:10

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

What is eternal life?

[2:7]

See: Romans 5:21; 6:22-23; Galatians 6:8

See: Eternal Life

How was someone “self-seeking”?

[2:8]

Someone who was “self-seeking”(ἐπιθεία/g2052) did things they wanted to do, but did not help other people (see: 2 Corinthians 12:20; Galatians 5:20; Philippians 1:17; 2:3). How was salvation “to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”?

See: Romans 1:16

See: Israel

How is there “no partiality with God”?

[2:11]

There is no partiality with God. That is God treats all people fairly. He does not favor one person more than another. In ancient Israel, people did not think the Gentiles could be at peace with God. They did not think God would favor them. Paul taught that this was not true.

See: Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34; Colossians 3:25

How did someone sin “without the law”?

[2:12]

When Paul wrote about sin without the Law, he was speaking about the Gentiles, who did not try to obey the Law of Moses. God judged the Jews according to if they obey the Law of Moses. However, God judged the Gentiles in a different way.

See: Romans 4:15; 1 Corinthians 9:21

See: Judge (Judgment); Sin

What did it mean to be “justified”?

[2:13]

See: Exodus 23:7; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 3:11-12; James 2:21-25

See: Justify (Justification)

Who are the gentiles who “do by nature the things of the law”?

[2:14]

Certain Gentiles do things of the law by nature. They obeyed the things taught in the Law of Moses even though they did not know the Law of Moses. Scholars think Paul spoke about different things.

Some scholars think Paul was speaking about something happening that could not happen. This is because no one could completely obey the Law of Moses. Some scholars think Paul was speaking about living in the right way as much as they could by obeying their conscience. Some scholars think Paul was speaking about Gentile Christians who lived in the right way because they believed in Jesus and God changed them. He made them want to live in a way that honors God.

See: Acts 10:35; 2 Corinthians 3:2

See: Gentile; Law of Moses; Conscience; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

2:17-29

Who named himself a Jew?

[2:17]

Paul wrote about someone who named himself a Jew. This was a person who said they were a Jew. Paul was writing as if he was arguing with a Jewish person who thought they were at peace with God because they did good things or because they were a good person.

See: Isaiah 48:1-2; Revelation 2:9; 3:9

See: Israel

How did someone “rest upon the law”?

[2:17]

Paul wrote about someone resting upon the Law. Paul was writing about someone who depended on the obeying the Law of Moses so they could be at peace with God.

See: Matthew 3:9; John 5:45; 9:28-29

See: Law of Moses

Who was a “guide to the blind” and a “light to those who are in darkness”?

[2:19]

In the Bible, blindness and darkness were metaphors for people who did not know God. Paul wrote about people who thought they could help other people know about God and be at peace with God. They could not do this because they did not know God.

See: Matthew 15:14; John 9:39-41; Revelation 3:17-18

See: Blind (Metaphor); Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

What was a “teacher of little children”?

[2:20]

Paul wrote about a teacher of little children. This was a metaphor. Little children were children who were very young (see: Matthew 21:16; Ephesians 4:14). Paul was speaking about people who did not understand the things about God or how to live in a way that honors God. The Roman Christians thought they could teach these people. However, they could not teach these people unless they came to believe in Jesus first.

See: 1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:13

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul ask, “do you not teach yourself”?

[2:21]

Paul wrote to Jews who thought they were better than the Gentiles. Because of this, they thought they should teach the Gentiles. However, these Jews needed to be taught the right things about God.

See: Psalm 50:16-21; Matthew 23:3-28; Luke 12:47

How did someone rob temples?

[2:22]

Paul wrote about someone robbing temples. Some scholars think Paul was speaking about Jews who did not pay the money they owed to the temple in Jerusalem (see: Malachi 3:8). Other scholars think they stole money from temples to false god. still others believe that it meant taking gold and silver derived from idol worship into their homes (see: Deuteronomy 7:25-26).

See: Temple; False gods

Why did Paul say, “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you”?

[2:24]

Paul said that the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles. He wanted people to know that the things the Jews did harmed the Gentiles. They caused the Gentiles to think the wrong things and say the wrong things about God. The Jews caused the Gentiles to sin.

See: Isaiah 52:5; Ezekiel 36:20-23; Titus 2:5

See: Name; Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Gentile

How did “circumcision becomes uncircumcision”?

[2:25]

The “circumcision” were Jews and the “uncircumcision” were Gentiles (see: Ephesians 2:11). Paul wanted the Jews to know that they were not better than the Gentiles because they did not obey God. The Jews thought the Gentiles did not obey God.

See: Deuteronomy 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 6:15

See: Circumcise (Circumcision)

What was circumcision which is “merely outward in the flesh”?

[2:28]

Paul wrote about a circumcision that was merely outward. He wanted people to know that if someone cut off the end of their penis but did not obey God, then they were not circumcised to obey God. They only cut off the end of their penis.

See: 2 Corinthians 3:6

See: Flesh; Circumcise (Circumcision)

Who was a Jew inwardly?

[2:29]

Paul wrote about a person who was at peace with God. Some scholars think Paul wanted people to know that anyone who was at peace with God was a Jew in some way. Gentiles could be Jews in some way. Other scholars think the Gentiles could not be Jews, even if they obeyed God.

See: Israel; Gentile

What was circumcision “of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter”?

[2:29]

Paul wrote about a circumcision of the heart. He was writing about God changing a person after they believe in Jesus.

They want to live in a way that honors God. This is what God wanted. He did not want people to follow the Law of Moses unless they were doing it to honor God.

See: Deuteronomy 30:6; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Philippians 3:2-3; Colossians 2:11-12

See: Heart (Metaphor); Spirit (Spiritual); Law of Moses; Circumcise (Circumcision)

What was “praise” from God?

[2:29]

When God praised someone, he said they did the right thing (see: Romans 3:30).

See: John 5:44; 2 Corinthians 10:18

See: Praise

Romans 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul has stated that all people are sinners and continues to remind his readers that all people are wicked.

Therefore you are without excuse

The word "therefore" marks a new section of the letter. It also makes a concluding statement based on what Paul has said in [Romans 1:1-32]

you are

Paul is writing here as if he were addressing a Jewish person who is arguing with him. Paul is doing this to teach his audience that God will punish everyone who continually sins, whether Jew or Gentile.

you

Here the pronoun "you" is singular.

excuse, you person, you who judge, for in things for which you judge the other person, you condemn yourself

"excuse. You are just a human being, yet you judge others and say they deserve God's punishment. But you are only judging yourself because you do the same wicked deeds that they do"

you person

Another possible meaning is "whoever you are."

Romans 2:2

But we know

Here the pronoun "we" may include Christian believers and also Jews who are not Christians.

God's judgment is according to truth when it falls on those

Here Paul speaks of "God's judgment" as if it were alive and could "fall" on people. Alternate translation: "God will judge those people truly and fairly"

those who practice such things

"the people who do those wicked deeds"

Romans 2:3

But consider this

"So consider this" or "Therefore, consider this"

consider this

"think about what I am going to tell you"

you person

Use the phrase "you, whoever you are" or use "you," (with the comma), followed by a general word for a human being.

you who judge those who practice such things although you do the same things

"you who say someone deserves God's punishment while you do the same wicked deeds"

Will you escape from the judgment of God?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. You can also translate this question as a strong negative statement. Alternate translation: "You will certainly not escape God's judgment!"

Romans 2:4

Or do you think so little of the riches of his kindness, his delayed punishment, and his patience ... repentance?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. You can also translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You should not act like it does not matter that God is good and that he patiently waits a long time before he punishes people so that his goodness will cause them to repent!"

think so little of the riches ... patience

"consider the riches ... patience unimportant" or

"consider ... patience not good"

Do you not know that his kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

This remark appears in the form of a question to add emphasis. You can also translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You must know that God shows you he is good so that you might repent!"

Romans 2:5

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the people that all people are wicked.

But it is to the extent of your hardness and unrepentant heart

Paul uses a metaphor to compare a person who refuses to obey God to something hard, like a stone. He also uses the metonym "heart" to represent the person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "It is because you refuse to listen and repent"

hardness and unrepentant heart

This is a doublet that you can combine as "unrepentant heart."

you are storing up for yourself wrath

The phrase "storing up" implies a metaphor that usually refers to a person gathering his treasures and putting them in a safe place. Paul says, instead of treasures, that the person is gathering God's punishment. The longer they go without repenting, the more severe the punishment. Alternate translation: "you are making your punishment worse"

on the day of wrath ... the day of the revelation of God's righteous judgment

Both of these phrases refer to the same day. Alternate translation: "when God will show everyone that he is angry and that he judges all people fairly"

Romans 2:6

pay back

"give a fair reward or punishment"

to every person according to his actions

"each person according to what that person has done"

Romans 2:7

who according to the perseverance of good deeds have

who, by persevering and doing good deeds, have

have sought

have tried to get

glory, honor, and incorruptibility

They want God to praise and honor them, and they want to never die.

incorruptibility

This refers to physical, not moral, decay.

Romans 2:8

self-seeking

"selfish" or "only concerned with what makes themselves happy"

disobey the truth but obey unrighteousness

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second intensifies the first.

wrath and fierce anger will come

The words "wrath" and "fierce anger" mean basically the same thing and emphasize God's anger. Alternate translation: "God will show his terrible anger"

wrath

Here the word "wrath" is a metonym that refers to God's

severe punishment of wicked people.

Romans 2:9

Connecting Statement:

Though this section is speaking to the non-religious wicked person, Paul sums it up by stating both non-Jews and Jews are wicked before God.

tribulation and distress on

The words "tribulation" and "distress" mean basically the same thing here and emphasize how bad God's punishment will be. Alternate translation: "awful punishments to"

on every human soul

Here, Paul uses the word "soul" as a synecdoche that refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "upon every person"

has practiced evil

"has continually done evil things"

evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek

"evil. He will judge the Jewish people first, and then those people who are not Jewish"

first

Possible meanings are 1) "first in order of time" or 2) "most certainly"

Romans 2:10

But glory, honor, and peace will come

"But God will praise, honor, and give peace"

practices good

"continually does what is good"

good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek

"good. God will reward the Jewish people first, and then those people who are not Jewish"

first

You should translate this the same way you did in Romans 2:9.

Romans 2:11

For there is no partiality with God

You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "For God treats all people the same"

Romans 2:12

For as many as have sinned

"For all those who have sinned"

without the law will also perish without the law

Paul repeats "without the law" to emphasize that it does not matter if people do not know the law of Moses. If they sin, God will judge them. Alternate translation: "without knowing the law of Moses will certainly still die spiritually"

as many as have sinned

"all those who have sinned"

with respect to the law will be judged by the law

God will judge sinful people according to his law. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "and who do know the law of Moses, God will judge them according to that law"

Romans 2:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to let the reader know that perfect obedience to God's law is required even for those who never had God's law.

it is not the hearers of the law

Here "the law" refers to the law of Moses. Alternate

translation: "it is not those who only hear the law of Moses"

who are righteous before God

"whom God considers righteous"

but it is the doers of the law

"but it is those who obey the law of Moses"

who will be justified

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "whom God will accept"

Romans 2:14

For

This verse is the beginning of an interruption of Paul's main argument, in which he gives the reader extra information. If you have a way to mark an interruption like this in your language, you can use it here.

a law to themselves ... do not have the law

This is an idiom that means that these people naturally obey God's laws. Alternate translation: "have God's laws already inside them ... actually do not have the law"

they do not have the law

Here "the law" refers to the law of Moses." Alternate translation: "they do not actually have the laws that God gave to Moses"

Romans 2:15

General Information:

This verse is the end of an interruption of Paul's main argument, in which he gives the reader extra information. If you have a way to mark an interruption like this in your language, you can use it here.

By this they show

"By naturally obeying the law they show"

that the actions required by the law are written in their hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for the person's thoughts or inner person. The phrase "written in their hearts" is a metaphor for knowing something in their mind. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "that God has written on their hearts what the law requires them to do" or "that they know the actions that God wants them to do according to his law"

bears witness to them

Here "bears witness" refers to the knowledge they gain from the law that God has written in their hearts. Alternate translation: "tells them if they are disobeying or obeying God's law"

Romans 2:16

when God will judge

This finishes Paul's thought from Romans 2:13. You can put a period at the end of 2:15 and start a new sentence here.

Alternate translation: "This will happen when God judges"

Romans 2:17

Connecting Statement:

Here begins Paul's discussion that the law the Jews possess

actually condemns them because they do not obey it.

if you say that you are a Jew

"since you call yourself a Jew" or "if you want people to think of you as a Jew"

rest upon the law

The phrase "rest upon the law" represents believing that they can become righteous by obeying the law. Alternate translation: "rely on the law of Moses"

Romans 2:18

know his will

"and know God's will"

because you have been instructed from the law

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"because people have taught you what is right from the law" or "because you have learned from the law"

Romans 2:19

that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness

Here "the blind" and "those who walk in darkness"

represent people who do not understand the law. Alternate translation: "that because you teach the law, you yourself are like a guide to blind people, and you are like a light to people who are lost in the dark"

Romans 2:20

an instructor of the foolish

"you correct those who do wrong"

a teacher of little children

Here Paul compares those who do not know anything about the law to very small children. Alternate translation: "you teach those who do not know the law"

and that you have in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth

The knowledge of the truth that is in the law comes from God. Alternate translation: "and you are sure you understand the truth that God has given in the law"

Romans 2:21

You who teach others, do you not teach yourself?

Paul is using a question to scold his listeners. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You teach others, but you do not teach yourself!" or "You teach others, but you do not do what you teach!"

You who preach against stealing, do you steal?

Paul is using a question to scold his listeners. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You tell people not to steal, but you steal!"

Romans 2:22

You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?

Paul is using a question to scold his listeners. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You tell people not to commit adultery, but you commit adultery!"

You who hate idols, do you rob temples?

Paul is using a question to scold his listener. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You say you hate idols, but you rob temples!"

do you rob temples

Possible meanings are 1) "do you steal items from local pagan temples to sell and make a profit" or 2) "do you keep back from the Jerusalem temple all the money that is due to God"

Romans 2:23

You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by transgressing the law?

Paul uses a question to scold his listener. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "It is wicked that you claim to be proud of the law while at the same time you disobey it and bring shame to God!"

Romans 2:24

the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "many Gentiles blaspheme the name of God" name of God

The word "name" is a metonym that refers to the entirety of God, not just his name.

Romans 2:25

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to show that God, by his law, condemns even the Jews who have God's law.

For circumcision is profitable to you

"I say all of this because it is good for you to be circumcised"

if you are a transgressor of the law

"if you do not obey the commandments found in the law"

your circumcision becomes uncircumcision

"it is as though you were no longer circumcised"

Romans 2:26

the uncircumcised person

"the person who is not circumcised"

keeps the requirements of the law

"obeys what God commands in the law"

will not his uncircumcision be considered as circumcision?

This is the first of two questions Paul asks here to emphasize that circumcision is not what makes one right before God. You can translate this question as a statement in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will consider him as circumcised."

Romans 2:27

And will not the one who is naturally uncircumcised condemn you ... the law?

This is the second of two questions that Paul asks here

Romans 2:28

outwardly

This refers to Jewish rituals, such as circumcision, which people can see.

merely outward in the flesh

This refers to the physical change to a man's body when someone circumcises him.

flesh

This is a synecdoche for the whole body. Alternate translation: "body"

Romans 2:29

he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart

These two phrases have similar meanings. The first phrase, "he is a Jew who is one inwardly," explains the second phrase, "circumcision is that of the heart."

inwardly

This refers to the values and motivations of the person whom God has transformed.

of the heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for the inner person.

in the Spirit, not in the letter

Here "letter" is a synecdoche that refers to written Scripture. Alternate translation: "through the work of the Holy Spirit, not because you know the Scriptures"

in the Spirit

This refers to the internal, spiritual part of a person that the

Chapter 3

Romans 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 4 and 10-18 of this chapter, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Chapter 3 answers the question, "What advantage does being a Jew have over being a Gentile?" (See: lawofmoses and save)

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"

Because God is holy, anyone with him in heaven must be perfect. Any sin at all will condemn a person. (See: heaven and condemn)

The purpose of the law of Moses

Obedying the law cannot make a person right with God. Obeying God's law is a way a person shows they believe in God.

People have always been justified only by faith. (See: justice and faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul frequently uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: and guilt)

Links:

[Romans 3:1 Notes](#)

Romans 3

3:1-8

What was the benefit of circumcision?

[3:1]

Paul wrote about the benefit of circumcision. Being circumcised did not help people to be at peace with God. However, people who were circumcised were Jews. These people were taught about God. Therefore, this helped them to know more about God and helped them to believe in Jesus.

See: Genesis 25:32

See: Circumcise (Circumcision)

What was the "revelation from God"?

[3:2]

God revealed certain things to the Jews through prophets. He gave them the Law of Moses (see: Acts 7:38). He also told them other prophecies (see: 1 Peter 4:11). Paul wanted people to know that God gave them Bible to people.

See: Deuteronomy 4:7-8; Psalm 147:19-20; Romans 9:4

See: Reveal (Revelation); Prophet; Prophecy (Prophecy)

How might Israel "abolish God faithfulness"?

[3:3]

Israel abolished God's faithfulness by rejecting Jesus. That is, they were not faithful to God when God was faithful to them.

Paul taught that even if they disobeyed the things God revealed to them, they were still true things.

See: Romans 3:31; Matthew 24:35; Romans 10:16; 2 Timothy 2:13; Hebrews 4:2

See: Faithful; Reveal (Revelation)

What did the phrase "may it never be" mean?

[3:4]

Paul wrote, "may it never be." He wanted to say, "absolutely not!" (see: 1 Corinthians 6:15; Galatians 2:17; 3:21; 6:14; also Luke 20:16). Paul wrote these words 10 times in Romans (see: Romans 3:6; 3:31; 6:2; 6:15; 7:7; 7:13; 9:14; 11:1; 11:11).

Why did Paul say the same thing as Psalm 51:4?

[3:4]

Paul wrote the same thing as Psalm 51:4. He wanted people to know that God revealed himself to people in the Bible. He also wanted people to know that God kept the promises he made to people even if people sin.

See: Hebrews 6:18; 1 John 5:20

See: Reveal (Revelation); Sin

What did "the truth of God" mean?

[3:4]

Paul wrote about the truth of God. That is God does not lie.

What was a “human argument”?

[3:5]

Paul wrote about a human argument. People thought in a certain way that was wrong. This type of thinking did not honor God.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:32

Why did Paul write, “multiplies his glory”?

[3:7]

Paul wrote about something multiplying God’s glory. That is, it makes God more glorious. Some people thought they should sin because it made people think God was more holy. They should not do this because it did not honor God.

See: Romans 9:17

See: Glory (Glorify); Sin; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

What was “slandered as saying, and as some affirm that we say”?

[3:8]

Paul wrote, “slandered as saying, and as some affirm that we say.” He was writing about certain people lying about him. They said that Paul taught that people could sin and still be at peace with God.

See: Matthew 5:11; Romans 6:15; Galatians 5:13; 2 Peter 3:15-16

How was someone’s condemnation just?

[3:8]

People who attacked Paul did something evil. He wanted them to know that God is just. They will know this when he judges them and condemns them.

See: Psalm 34:21-22; Jude 4

See: Condemn (Condemnation); Justice (Just, Unjust)

3:9-20

Why did Paul write “are we excusing ourselves”?

[3:9]

Paul asked, “are we excusing ourselves?” Some scholars think Paul was asking if people are trying to defend or excuse themselves. Other scholars think Paul was asking if the Jews were better than the Gentiles in some way (see: 3:1-2). Why did Paul write many things that were also written in the Old Testament?

Why did Paul write many things that were also written in the Old Testament?

[3:10, 3:11, 3:12, 3:13, 3:14, 3:15, 3:16, 3:17, 3:18]

Paul wrote the same things that were written in the Old Testament. He wanted people to know that the gospel was teaching the same things about God that were written in the Old Testament.

See: Ecclesiastes 7:20; Psalm 5:9; 10:7; 14:1-3; 36:1; 53:1-3; 140:3; Isaiah 59:7

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Gospel

How did someone seek God?

[3:11]

When someone sought God, they were humble and wanted to trust and obey God.

See: Isaiah 55:6-7; 65:1-2, Romans 10:20-21

How did Paul use the word “law” in this chapter?

[3:19]

Here, when Paul wrote about the Law, he was writing about the Old Testament.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

How was every mouth shut?

[3:19]

A person with their mouth shut could not defend himself, and instead kept quiet. Paul wanted people to know that no one could defend their sins.

See: Job 40:4-5; Psalm 107:42

See: Sin

How was someone accountable to God?

[3:19]

People are accountable to God. That is, people should know that God will judge them.

What are “works of the Law”?

[3:20]

See: Works (Works of the Law)

3:21-31

How was God’s righteousness revealed?

[3:21]

God's righteousness was revealed through Jesus. Jesus gave righteousness to those who believe in him.

See: Romans 1:17

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Reveal (Revelation)

How was God's righteousness "witnessed by the law and the prophets"?

[3:21]

Paul said that the Law and prophets witnessed God's righteousness. That is, the Old Testament told people about God's righteousness.

See: John 1:45; Acts 10:43; Romans 1:2; 1 Peter 1:10-12

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

How was there no distinction between different groups of people?

[3:22]

God made no "distinction" (διαστολή/g1293) between different groups of people. That is, God is just to everyone (see: Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 9:7-8; 98:9; Zephaniah 3:5; Revelation 19:2).

See: Acts 15:9; Romans 10:12; Colossians 3:11

See: Justice (Just, Unjust)

How did something "come short of the glory of God"?

[3:23]

Paul wrote that all have come short of the glory of God. Some scholars think Paul was speaking about Adam and Eve. These scholars think that Adam and Eve had a type of glory you could see before they sinned. After they sinned, they lost this glory. More scholars think Paul was speaking about how everyone sins. They are not perfect like God and do not always do what God wants them to do.

See: Glory (Glorify); Sin

How was someone justified?

[3:24]

See: Justify (Justification)

What was the "redemption" that Jesus accomplished?

[3:24]

See: Redeem (Redemption)

What was "propitiation"?

[3:25]

See: Propitiation

What was "through faith in his blood"?

[3:25]

When Paul wrote about faith in Jesus blood, he was writing about believing that Jesus died so that people could be at peace with God.

See: Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; 2:13; Colossians 1:20; Hebrews 9:14; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 5:9

See: Blood; Faith (Believe in); Atone (Atonement)

How was boasting excluded?

[3:27]

Paul wrote about boasting being excluded. Boasting was when someone said or believed that he was righteous without Jesus. This insulted God.

See: Romans 4:2; 1 Corinthians 1:29-31; Ephesians 2:8-9

See: Boast

What was the "law of faith"?

[3:27]

Paul wrote about the law. Here, he was talking about general rules. He was not speaking about the Law of Moses. Paul wanted people to know that people are saved through faith, not because of the things they do.

See: Law of Moses; Faith (Believe in); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Paul say that "God is one"?

[3:30]

Paul said that God is one because this is something the Jews said in all of their prayers (see: Deuteronomy 6:4). Paul wanted people to know that there is only one God.

See: Mark 12:29-32; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; Galatians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:5

See: Jesus is God

How did someone nullify the law?

[3:31]

Paul wrote about someone destroying the law in some way. People thought Paul dishonored God because he did not obey the Law of Moses. However, he lived in a way that honored God.

See: Matthew 5:17; Galatians 2:21

Romans 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul proclaims the advantage that Jews have because God gave them his law.

Then what advantage does the Jew have? And what is the benefit of circumcision?

Paul presents ideas that people might have after they hear what he wrote in chapter 2. He does this in order to respond to them in verse 2. Alternate translation: "Some people might say, 'Then what advantage does the Jew have? And what is the benefit of circumcision?'" or "Some people might say, 'If that is true, then the Jews do not have any advantage, and there is no benefit in being circumcised.'"

Romans 3:2

It is great in every way

Paul now responds to the concerns brought up in verse 1.

Here "It" refers to being a member of the Jewish people.

Alternate translation: "But there is great advantage to being a Jew"

First of all

Possible meanings are 1) "First in order of time" or 2) "Most certainly" or 3) "Most importantly."

the Jews were entrusted with revelation from God

Here "revelation" refers to God's words and promises. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God gave his words that contain his promises to the Jews"

Romans 3:3

For what if some Jews were without faith? Will their unbelief nullify God's faithfulness?

Paul uses these questions to make people think. Alternate translation: "Some Jews have not been faithful to God. We should not conclude from this that God will not fulfill his promise."

Romans 3:4

May it never be

This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have an expression in your language that you could use here. "That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!"

Instead, let

"We should say this instead, let"

let God be found to be true

God will always be true and will keep his promises.

Alternate translation: "God always does what he has promised"

even though every man is a liar

The words "every" and "liar" are exaggerations here to add emphasis that God alone is always true to his promises.

Alternate translation: "even if every man were a liar"

As it has been written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "The Scriptures themselves agree with what I am saying"

That you might be shown to be righteous in your words, and that you might prevail when you come into judgment

These two phrases have very similar meanings. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation:

"Everyone must acknowledge that what you say is true, and

you will always win your case when anyone accuses you"

Romans 3:5

But if our unrighteousness shows the righteousness of God, what can we say? Can we say that God is unrighteous to bring his wrath upon us?

Paul uses these questions to present what some people were arguing and to get his readers to think about whether or not this argument is true. Alternate translation: "Some people say that since our unrighteousness shows God's righteousness, then God is unrighteous when he punishes us."

to bring his wrath upon us

Here "wrath" is a metonym for punishment. Alternate translation: "to bring his punishment upon us" or "to punish us"

I am using a human argument

"I am saying here what some people say" or "This is what some people say"

Romans 3:6

May it never be

"We must never say that God is unrighteous"

For then how would God judge the world?

Paul uses this question to show that the arguments against the gospel are not valid, since the Jews believe that God will judge all people. Alternate translation: "We all know that God will in fact judge the world!"

the world

The "world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "the people who live in the world"

Romans 3:7

But if through my lie the truth of God increases his glory, why am I still being judged as a sinner?

Here Paul imagines someone continuing to reject the Christian gospel. That adversary argues that his sin shows that God is righteous, so God should not declare that person guilty of sin on judgment day.

increases his glory

"causes people to praise God for his glory"

Romans 3:8

Why not say ... come?"

Here Paul raises a question of his own, to show how ridiculous the argument of his imaginary adversary is. Alternate translation: "I might as well be saying ... come!" as we are slandered as saying "as some lie to others, claiming that this what we are saying"

evil ... good

These Greek words are plural: "evil deeds ... good things" good may come

You may need to make explicit that the speakers expect to receive good things. Alternate translation: "good things may come to us" or "we may receive good things"

Their condemnation is just

God will be acting justly when he condemns these enemies of Paul for telling lies about what Paul has been teaching.

Romans 3:9

Connecting Statement:

Paul sums up that all are guilty of sin, none are righteous, and no one seeks God.

What then? Are we excusing ourselves?

Paul asks these questions to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "We Jews should not try to imagine we are going to escape God's judgment, just because we are Jewish!"

Not at all

These words are stronger than a simple "no," but not as strong as "absolutely not!"

Romans 3:10

This is as it is written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "This is as the prophets have written in the Scriptures"

Romans 3:11

there is no one who understands

There is no one who understands what is right. Alternate translation: "no one really understands what is right"

there is no one who seeks God

Here the phrase "seeks after God" means tries to have a relationship with God. Alternate translation: "no one sincerely tries to have a right relationship with God"

Romans 3:12

They have all turned away

This is an idiom that means the people do not even want to think about God. They want to avoid him. Alternate translation: "They have all turned away from God" together they have become useless

Since no one does what is good, they are useless to God. Alternate translation: "Everyone has become useless to God"

Romans 3:13

Their ... Their

The word "their" refers to the "Jews and Greeks" of Romans 3:9.

Their throat is an open grave

The word "throat" is a metonym for everything that people say. Here "open grave" is a metaphor that refers to the stench of dead bodies, a metaphor for the evil words of the people.

Their tongues have deceived

The word "tongues" is a metonym for the false words that people speak. Alternate translation: "People speak lies"

The poison of snakes is under their lips

Here "poison of snakes" is a metaphor that is used to represent the great harm of the evil words that the people speak. The word "lips" refers to the words of the people. Alternate translation: "Their evil words injure people just like the poison of a venomous snake"

Romans 3:14

Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness

Here "mouths" is a metonym that represents the evil words of the people. The word "full" exaggerates how often people speak bitterly and curse. Alternate translation: "They often speak curses and cruel words"

Romans 3:15

Their feet are swift to pour out blood

Here "feet" is a synecdoche that represents the people

themselves. The word "blood" is a metaphor that refers to killing people. Alternate translation: "They are in a hurry to harm and murder people"

Their feet

The word "their" refers to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.

Romans 3:16

their paths

The word "their" refers to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.

Destruction and suffering are in their paths

Here "destruction and suffering" are metonyms that represent the harm that these people cause others to suffer. Alternate translation: "They try to destroy others and cause them to suffer"

Romans 3:17

These people

These words refer to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9. a way of peace

"how to live at peace with others." A "way" is a road or path.

Romans 3:18

their

This word refers to the Jews and Greeks in Romans 3:9.

There is no fear of God before their eyes

Here "fear" is a metonym that represents respect for God and willingness to honor him. Alternate translation: "They refuse to give God the respect he deserves"

Romans 3:19

whatever the law says, it speaks to

Paul speaks of the law here as if it were alive and had its own voice. Alternate translation: "everything that the law says people should do is for" or "all the commands that Moses wrote in the law are for"

the ones who are under the law

"those who must obey the law"

so that every mouth may be shut

Here "mouth" is a synecdoche that means the words people speak. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that no people will be able to say anything valid to defend themselves"

the whole world held accountable to God

Here "world" is a synecdoche that represents all the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "that God can declare everyone in the world guilty"

Romans 3:20

flesh

Here "flesh" refers to all human beings.

For through the law

Possible meanings are 1) "Therefore, through the law" or 2) "This is because through the law"

through the law comes the knowledge of sin

"when someone knows God's law, he realizes that he has sinned"

Romans 3:21

Connecting Statement:

The word "but" here shows Paul has completed his introduction and is now beginning to make his main point. now

The word "now" refers to the time since Jesus came to the earth.

apart from the law the righteousness of God has been revealed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "God has made known a way to be right with him without obeying the law"

to which the Law and the Prophets bear witness

The words "the Law and the Prophets" refer to the parts of scripture that Moses and the prophets wrote. Paul describes them here as if they were people testifying in court.

Alternate translation: "What Moses and the prophets wrote confirms this"

Romans 3:22

the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ

Here "righteousness" means being right with God. Alternate translation: "being right with God through trusting Jesus Christ"

For there is no distinction

Paul implies that God accepts all people in the same way.

Alternate translation: "There is no difference at all between the Jews and the Gentiles"

Romans 3:23

come short of the glory of God

Here the "glory of God" is a metonym that refers to the image of God and his nature. Alternate translation: "have failed to be like God"

Romans 3:24

they are freely justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus

Here "justified" refers to being made right with God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God makes them right with himself as a free gift, because Christ Jesus sets them free"

they are freely justified

This means that they are justified without having to earn or merit being justified. God freely justifies them. Alternate translation: "they are made right with God without earning it"

Romans 3:25

in his blood

This is a metonym for the death of Jesus as a sacrifice for sins. Alternate translation: "in his death as a sacrifice for sins"

his disregard

Possible meanings are 1) his ignoring or 2) his forgiving.

Romans 3:26

This was to show his righteousness at this present time

"God did this to show at this present time that he is righteous"

so he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus

"By this he shows that he is both just and the the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus"

the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus

"the one who declares everyone righteous who has faith in Jesus"

Romans 3:27

Where then is boasting? It is excluded

Paul asks this question to show that there is no reason for people to boast about obeying the law. Alternate

translation: "So there is no way that we can boast that God favors us because we obeyed those laws. Boasting is excluded"

It is excluded

This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "God does not allow it"

Through what kind of law? Of works? No, but through a law of faith

You may need to fill in the words omitted in the ellipsis.

Alternate translation: "Through what kind of law is boasting excluded? Is it excluded through a law of works?"

No, it is excluded through a law of faith" You can also translate using active forms. Alternate translation: "On what grounds does God exclude boasting? Does he exclude it through a law of works? No, he excludes it through a law of faith" or "Why does God exclude boasting? Is it because of something that we have done? No, it is because we have believed"

Through what kind of law? ... through a law of

"On what grounds? ... on the grounds of"

Through what kind of law? Of works?

Paul asks these questions to get his readers ready to receive the point he is making. Alternate translation: "Let me tell you what kind of law he excludes it through. It is not through a law of works."

Romans 3:28

a person is justified by faith

This can be translated in active form. Here the words "by faith" refers to either 1) the means by which God justifies a person. Alternate translation: "God justifies a person through that person's faith" Or 2) the reason for which God justifies a person. Alternate translation: "God justifies a person because he has faith" Faith is not the actor that justifies a person.

without works of the law

"even if he has done no works of the law"

Romans 3:29

Or is God the God of Jews only?

Paul asks this question for emphasis. Alternate translation: "You who are Jews certainly should not think that you are the only ones whom God will accept!"

Is he not also the God of Gentiles? Yes, of Gentiles also

Paul asks this question to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "He will also accept non-Jews, that is, Gentiles"

Romans 3:30

he will justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith

Here "circumcision" is a metonym that refers to Jews and "uncircumcision" is a metonym that refers to non-Jews.

Alternate translation: "God will make both Jews and non-Jews right with himself through their faith in Christ"

Romans 3:31

Connecting Statement:

Paul confirms the law though faith.

Do we then nullify the law through faith?

Paul asks a question that one of his readers might have.

Alternate translation: "Someone might say that we can ignore the law because we have faith."

May it never be

This expression gives the strongest possible negative

answer to the preceding rhetorical question. You may have a similar express in your language that you could use here. Alternate translation: "This is certainly not true" or "Certainly not" we uphold the law

"we obey the law" we This pronoun refers to Paul, other believers, and the readers.

Chapter 4

Romans 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 7-8 of this chapter, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

The purpose of the law of Moses

Paul builds upon material from chapter 3. He explains how Abraham, the father of Israel, was justified. Even Abraham could not be justified by what he did. Obeying the law of Moses does not make a person right with God. Obeying God's commands is a way a person shows they believe in God. People have always been justified only by faith. (See: justice and lawofmoses and faith)

Circumcision

Circumcision was important to the Israelites. It identified a male as a descendant of Abraham. It was also a sign of the covenant between Abraham and Yahweh. However, no person was justified only by being circumcised. (See: circumcise and covenant)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: and guilt and sin)

Links:

[Romans 4:1 Notes](#)

Romans 4

4:1-12

How was Abraham "our forefather according to the flesh"?

[4:1]

Paul wrote that Abraham was their "forefather according to the flesh." Some scholars think Paul wanted to say that Abraham was the ancestor of every Jew. Other scholars think this was a metaphor. Paul wanted to say anyone who believed in God was a descendant of Abraham (see: Romans 4:11, 16).

See: Matthew 3:9; John 8:53, 56; Acts 13:26; 2 Corinthians 11:22

See: Flesh; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Metaphor

How did Abraham find something?

[4:1]

Paul wrote that Abraham found something. That is, Abraham found God's grace and mercy. This is a metaphor. God was gracious and merciful to Abraham.

See: Genesis 6:8; 18:3; 19:19

See: Grace; Mercy

What was a reason to boast?

[4:2]

Paul wrote about "boasting"(καύχημα/g2745). He was speaking about some who said they were righteous. This dishonored God because they were not righteous. Every person is a sinner. While Abraham did many good things, he could not be at peace with God by being righteous. Only God could give him righteousness and peace.

See: Romans 3:27; 1 Corinthians 1:29-31; Ephesians 2:8-9

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Sin

Why did Paul write the same thing as Genesis 15:6?

[4:3]

Abraham was written about in the Old Testament. Paul wanted people to know that the gospel agreed with the Old Testament. Abraham trusted God. Christians should also trust God.

See: Psalm 106:31; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Galatians 3:6-8; James 2:23

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Gospel; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Why did Paul write the same thing as Psalm 31:1-2?

[4:7, 4:8]

Paul wrote the same thing as David in Psalm 31:1-2. David was very happy God forgave him after his sin with Bathsheba. Paul was also very happy that God forgave him.

See: Psalm 51:4; Romans 3:4

How was someone blessed?

[4:7]

See: Bless (Blessing)

How were sins covered and not counted?

[4:8] David often sinned. God forgave him even though David didn't deserve it. In the Bible, sins were covered before Jesus died. This changed when Jesus died. God did not count people's sins. That is, people were at peace with God even though they sinned because Jesus died.

See: Mark 11:25; 1 John 1:9

See: Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

How was a blessing pronounced?

[4:9]

When David pronounced a blessing, he said a blessing to people.

See: Bless (Blessing)

What was the "seal of righteousness"?

[4:11]

Paul wrote that circumcision was a "seal of righteousness." That is, Abraham was circumcised because he believed in God and was at peace with God. He was not at peace with God because he was circumcised, but because he had faith in God. Advice to Translators: This might be translated as "circumcision was the physical proof that he was already righteous."

See: Genesis 17:11; 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; Revelations 9:4

See: Seal; Circumcise (Circumcision); Faith (Believe in); Righteous (Righteousness)

How was Abraham the father of all?

[4:11]

Paul wrote that Abraham was the father of all. He was not an ancestor of everyone who believes in Jesus. However, people who believe in Jesus do the same types of things Abraham did (see: Romans 4:1). They believe in God in the same way Abraham believed in God.

See: Luke 19:9

See: Family of God

How did someone walk in the footsteps as someone else?

[4:12]

Someone who walked in the footsteps of someone else did the same types of things the other person did. This was a metaphor. People did the same types of things Abraham did.

See: Proverbs 2:20; John 8:39-40; 2 Corinthians 12:18; 1 Peter 2:21

See: Walk; Metaphor

4:13-25

What was an heir of the world?

[4:13]

God promised Abraham that he would be the "heir" (κληρονόμος/g2818) of the world. That is, he and his descendants would eventually become the owners of the whole world.

See: Psalm 2:8; Galatians 3:16-18, 29

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

How was faith made empty and a promise made void?

[4:14]

Paul wrote about faith being made empty and a promise made void. He meant that having faith in God would not have any value, and God's promise would be broken. He was speaking about something as if it could happen, but it could not happen.

See: Isaiah 55:11; 1 Corinthians 15:17; Galatians 3:18-24; 5:4

See: Faith (Believe in)

How was there no transgression when there was no law?

[4:15]

Paul wrote that there is no transgression when there was no law. A "transgression" (παράβασις/g3847) was a certain type of sin, where someone disobeyed a command of God. If there was no Law of Moses, people would still sin, but they would not be disobeying God's commands because they did not know the Law of Moses.

See: Romans 5:13; 2 Corinthians 5:19; Galatians 3:10, 19; Ephesians 2:1

See: Sin; Law of Moses

How did the promise "rest on grace"?

[4:16]

Paul wrote that the promise rested on grace. That is God gives people what he promised through the grace that he gave to people, not through them obeying the Law of Moses.

See: Ephesians 2:8; Titus 3:7

See: Grace; Law of Moses

How was Abraham the father of many nations?

[4:17]

Paul wrote that Abraham was the father of many nations. This is something God promised to Abraham (see: Genesis 17:4). Some scholars think Paul was speaking about how all Christians inherit the promises God gave to Abraham. Other scholars think that Christians do not inherit these promises, but they do the same types of things Abraham did.

See: Genesis 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 17:4; 17:16; 22:17; 1 Peter 2:10

See: People of God; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Covenant with Abraham

How was Abraham in the presence of God?

[4:17]

Paul wrote that Abraham was in the presence of God. He wanted to say that Abraham obeyed God and did the things God wanted him to do.

See: Psalm 19:14; 142:2; 2 Corinthians 2:17; 12:19

See: Presence of God

How did God call things that do not exist into existence?

[4:17]

God called things that do not exist into existence. That is, God made things from nothing. He did this just by speaking. He made everything in the universe by speaking.

See: John 5:21; 1 Corinthians 1:28

How did Abraham believe in hope and against hope?

[4:18]

Abraham believed in him and against hope. He was confident that God would do everything he promised. He did this even when people did not think God could do the things he promised.

See: Ruth 1:12; Psalm 39:7; Romans 15:13; 1 Peter 1:3

See: Hope

Why did Paul write "so will your descendants be"?

[4:18]

God promised Abraham that he would have more descendants than the number of stars someone can see in the sky. This is hyperbole.

See: Genesis 15:5

See: Hyperbole

How was Abraham's body and Sarah's womb dead?

[4:19]

Paul wrote that Abraham's body and Sarah's womb were dead. They were not dead. This was a metaphor. They were too old to have children. Abraham was 99 years old (see: Genesis 17:1). Sarah was very old and past the age when she could have children (Genesis 18:11).

See: Hebrews 11:11-12

How did someone hesitate in unbelief?

[4:20]

Paul wrote that someone hesitated in unbelief. That is, they did not think that God would fulfill his promises. That is, they did not trust God.

See: Isaiah 7:9b; Matthew 6:30; 8:26; Mark 9:23-24; 1 Corinthians 16:13

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment)

How was Jesus "delivered up for our trespasses"?

[4:25]

Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses. That is, Jesus died so that people could be at peace with God.

See: Galatians 1:4; 1 John 4:9-10

See: Atone (Atonement)

How was Jesus "raised for our justification"?

[4:25]

Paul wrote that Jesus was raised for our justification. That is, Jesus was resurrected so that Christians can be at peace with God. Jesus needed to be resurrected (see: Romans 10:9-10; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Corinthians 15:45).

See: 1 Corinthians 15:17; Colossians 1:18

Romans 4:1

What then will we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, found?

Paul uses the question to catch the attention of the reader and to start talking about something new. Alternate translation: "This is what Abraham our physical ancestor found."

Romans 4:2

General Information:

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Romans 4:3

For what does the scripture say?

Paul uses this question to call attention to what he is about to say, not to receive an answer. He speaks of the Scriptures as if they were alive and could talk. Alternate translation: "For this is what is in the scripture:"

it was counted to him as righteousness

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God considered Abraham to be a righteous person because he believed"

Romans 4:4

his wage is not counted as a gift

"no one counts what his employer pays him as a gift from his employer"

but as what is owed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but as what his employer owes him"

Romans 4:5

in the one who justifies

"in God, who justifies"

his faith is counted as righteousness

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God considers that person's faith as righteousness" or "God considers that person righteous because of his faith"

Romans 4:6

David also pronounces blessing on the man to whom God counts righteousness without works

"David also wrote about how God blesses the man whom God makes righteous without works"

Romans 4:7

whose lawless deeds are forgiven ... whose sins are covered

The same concept is stated in two different ways. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "who have broken the law, but the Lord has forgiven ... whose sins the Lord has covered"

Romans 4:8

General Information:

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Romans 4:9

Then is this blessing pronounced only on those of the circumcision, or also on those of the uncircumcision?

This remark appears in the form of a question to show that Paul is beginning a discussion about the relationship between blessing and circumcision. Alternate translation: "I want to show you how it is that God blesses not only those who are circumcised, but also those who are not

circumcised"

those of the circumcision

This is a metonym that refers to the Jewish people.

Alternate translation: "the Jews"

those of the uncircumcision

This is a metonym that refers to the people who are not Jews. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles"

For we say

Paul is going to show that because God counted Abraham as righteous by faith, we can infer that it is people who have faith that God counts righteous.

Faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God considered the faith of Abraham as righteousness"

Romans 4:10

How was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before!

Paul asks two questions to introduce the third sentence. If your language does not allow speakers to use questions to introduce what they are talking about, you may need to translate these all as statements. Alternate translation: "This is when righteousness was counted to him: it was not after he had been circumcised, but before!"

How was it counted to him?

Paul is asking in a general way about the circumstances in which God considered Abraham righteous. He is not asking what procedure God followed to consider Abraham righteous. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "How did God consider Abraham to be righteous?"

It was not after, but before

This can be stated with the words that have been omitted in the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "It happened before he was circumcised, not after he was circumcised"

Romans 4:11

a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised

Here "righteousness that he had by faith" means that God considered him to be righteous because he had faith. Alternate translation: "a visible sign that God considered him righteous because he had believed in God before he was circumcised"

so that righteousness would be counted to them

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "so that God would consider them righteous"

Romans 4:12

General Information:

Paul is saying that circumcision alone does not make a man a descendant of Abraham, that is, a true Jew. A true Jew is one who has been circumcised and who lives by faith the way Abraham did.

He is also the father of the circumcised

Here "the circumcision" refers to Jews.

who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had

Here "walk in the footsteps of the faith" is an idiom that means to follow someone's example. Alternate translation:

"who follow our father Abraham's example in the faith that he had" or "who have faith as our father Abraham did"
Romans 4:13
Connecting Statement:
Paul confirms that even in the past believers were made right with God by faith and not by the law.
law but through the righteousness of faith
The words "the promise came" are understood from the first phrase. You can translate this by adding these implied words. Alternate translation: "law, but the promise came through faith, which God considers as righteousness"
Romans 4:14
heirs
The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.
if those who live by the law are to be the heirs
Here "live by the law" refers to obeying the law. Alternate translation: "if those who obey the law are the ones who will inherit the earth"
faith is made empty, and the promise does nothing
"faith has no value, and the promise is meaningless"
Romans 4:15
there is no transgression
This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "transgression." Alternate translation: "no one has disobeyed the law" or "it is impossible to disobey the law"
Romans 4:16
For this reason
"So"
it is by faith
The word "it" refers to receiving what God had promised. Alternate translation: "it is by faith that we receive the promise" or "we receive the promise by faith"
in order that the promise may rest on grace
Here "the promise may rest on grace" represents God giving what he promised because of his grace. Alternate translation: "so that what he promised might be a free gift" or "so that his promise would be because of his grace"
those who are under the law
This refers to the Jewish people, who were obligated to obey the law of Moses.
those who share the faith of Abraham
This refers to those who have faith as Abraham did before he was circumcised. Alternate translation: "those who believe as Abraham did"
father of us all
Here the word "us" refers to Paul and includes all Jewish and non-Jewish believers in Christ. Abraham is the physical ancestor of the Jewish people, but he is also the spiritual father of those who have faith.
Romans 4:17
as it is written
Where it is written can be made explicit. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "as someone has written in the Scriptures"
I have appointed you
Here the word "you" is singular and refers to Abraham. Abraham was in the presence of him whom he trusted, that is, God, who

gives life to the dead
Here "of him whom he trusted" refers to God. Alternate translation: "Abraham was in the presence of God whom he trusted, who gives life to those who have died"
calls the things that do not exist into existence
"creates everything from nothing"
Romans 4:18
In hope he believed against hope
This idiom means that Abraham hoped and believed even though what he hoped for seemed to be impossible. That is, Abraham trusted God to give him many descendants, even though it seemed to be impossible for him to have children. Alternate translation: "Even though it seemed that there was no reason to hope, Abraham hoped and believed" or "Even though it seemed to be impossible for him to have descendants, Abraham believed God and confidently expected"
according to what he had been told
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "just as God said to Abraham"
So will your descendants be
The full promise God gave to Abraham can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "You will have more descendants than you can count"
Romans 4:19
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
Romans 4:20
did not hesitate in unbelief. Instead, he
You can translate this double negative in a positive form. Alternate translation: "kept on acting in faith. He"
he was strengthened in faith
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "he became stronger in his faith"
Romans 4:21
He was fully convinced
"Abraham was completely sure"
he was also able to accomplish
"God was able to do"
Romans 4:22
Therefore this was also "counted to him as righteousness."
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Therefore God counted Abraham's belief as righteousness" or "Therefore God considered Abraham righteous because Abraham believed him"
also "counted to him as righteousness."
"also, as the scripture says, 'counted to him as righteousness.'"
Romans 4:23
for his sake alone
"for Abraham only"
it was counted to him
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God counted righteousness to him" or "God considered him righteous"
Romans 4:24
for us
The word "us" refers to Paul and includes all believers in Christ.

They were written also for us
You can translate this without the passive form "written."
Alternate translation: "Those words were also for us"
it will be counted to us who believe in him
The word "it" refers to righteousness. You can translate this with an active form. Alternate translation: "God will count righteousness to us who believe in him" or "God will consider us righteous if we believe in him"
him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead
"Raised ... from the dead" here is an idiom for "caused to

live again." Alternate translation: "him who caused Jesus our Lord to live again"
Romans 4:25
who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification
You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "whom God gave over to enemies for our trespasses and whom God brought back to life so he could make us right with him"

Chapter 5

Romans 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Many scholars view verses 12-17 as some of the most important, but difficult, verses in Scripture to understand. Some of their richness and meaning has likely been lost while being translated from how the original Greek was constructed.

Special concepts in this chapter

Results of justification

How Paul explains the results of our being justified is an important part of this chapter. These results include having peace with God, having access to God, being confident about our future, being able to rejoice when suffering, being eternally saved, and being reconciled with God. (See: justice)

"All sinned"

Scholars are divided over what Paul meant in verse 12: "And death spread to all people, because all sinned." Some believe that all of mankind was present in the "seed of Adam." So, as Adam is the father of all mankind, all of mankind was present when Adam sinned. Others believe that Adam served as a representative head for mankind. So when he sinned, all of mankind "fell" as a result. Whether people today played an active or passive role in Adam's original sin is one way these views differ. Other passages will help one decide.

The second Adam

Adam was the first man and the first "son" of God. He was created by God. He brought sin and death into the world by eating the forbidden fruit. Paul describes Jesus as the "second Adam" in this chapter and the true son of God. He brings life and overcame sin and death by dying on the cross. (See: sonofgod and death)

Links:

[Romans 5:1 Notes](#)

Romans 5

5:1-11

How was someone justified by faith?

[5:1]

See: Exodus 23:7; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 3:11-12; James 2:21-25

See: Justify (Justification)); Faith (Believe in)

What does "boast" mean?

[5:2]

In Romans 2-3, "boasting" (καυχᾶμαι/g2744) was when someone said or believed that he was righteous in himself and without needing God. This dishonored God. Here, Paul wrote about another type of boasting. This honored God because it was boasting about the things God did.

See: Romans 4:2; 1 Corinthians 1:29-31; Ephesians 2:8-9

What is the hope of the glory of God?

[5:2]

Paul wrote that mankind fell short of God's glory when Adam sinned (see: Romans 3:23). Christians know that they will be with God and have a glorious body in heaven.

See: Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 4:17

See: Glory (Glorify); Sin; Heaven

How does perseverance produce character?

[5:4]

Paul wanted Christians to know that the difficult parts of their life helped Christians to live in a way that honors God and to do the same types of things Jesus did.

See: Romans 8:18, 21; James 1:2-3; 1 Peter 1:6-7; 2 Peter 1:5-8

How does hope not make someone ashamed?

[5:5]

Christians are confident that God will do the things he promised to do. They will not be ashamed because God will do these things.

See: Isaiah 28:16; Philippians 1:20; Romans 9:33

How was the love of God poured into someone's hearts?

[5:5]

Paul wrote that the love of God was poured in people's hearts. This is a metaphor. God greatly loved Christians. The word "poured" (ἐκχέω/g1632) when used literally referred to freely pouring out a liquid. Here it was a metaphor, that God was generous in loving his people.

See: Galatians 4:6; Hebrews 6:18-19

See: Heart (Metaphor)

When were Christians weak?

[5:6]

Paul wrote about Christians being weak. This is a metaphor. They could not live in a way that honors God. They were not strong enough to be at peace with God. They needed God to help them.

See: Ephesians 2:1-5; Titus 3:3-5

Why did Paul use the words "much more" in verses 9, 10, 15, and 17?

[5:9, 5:10, 5:15, 5:17]

Paul used the words "much more" in verses 9, 10, 15, and 17. In ancient times, people often used these words when they wanted people to know if something happened, then something else would also happen (see: Romans 11:12; 11:24; 1 Corinthians 6:3; 2 Corinthians 3:7-11).

How were enemies reconciled?

5:10]

Paul said that people were enemies of God before they believed in Jesus. When they believed in Jesus, God reconciled them to himself. That is, people have peace with God after they believe in Jesus.

See: Romans 11:28; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians 2:16; Colossians 1:20-22

5:12-21

How did sin enter the world through one man?

[5:12]

Before Adam sinned, no one had ever sinned. Because of this, the world was perfect. After Adam sinned, things began to die and people were not at peace with God.

See: Genesis 2:16-17, 3:3, 4, 19; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

See: Sin

How was there no accounting for sin?

[5:13]

Paul wrote that there was no "accounting" (ἐλλογέω/g1677) for sin. Paul wanted to say that before the Law of Moses, people did not know what was a sin because they did not have the Law of Moses.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:56; 1 John 3:4

See: Sin; Law of Moses

How did death reign from Adam to Moses?

[5:14]

Paul wrote that death reigned from Adam to Moses. Sin ruled in the way a king reigned. This was a metaphor. People were controlled by their sins (see: Romans 5:14, 17, 21; 6:12).

See: Romans 8:17; 1 Corinthians 15:45

See: Metaphor

How was Adam a pattern of Jesus?

[5:14]

Paul spoke about a pattern of him who was to come. He was speaking about Adam was like Jesus in some way. However, Jesus was greater than Adam. Paul wanted people to learn about Jesus by learning how Jesus was greater than Adam.

What was the "gift of righteousness"?

[5:17]

The "gift of righteousness" was something God gave to people who believe in Jesus. That is, God made them righteous so they could live in heaven with him.

See: Isaiah 53:11; 2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 2:8; 1 John 4:9-10

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Heaven

How did sin reign in life?

[5:17]

Since Adam sinned, Paul wrote aht sin reigned over the people as if it were their king (see: 5:14). That is, people sinned because they wanted to sin. When Paul wrote about Christians reigning, he was writing about how Christians will rule over the world after they are resurrected (see: Romans 8:17).

See: Genesis 3; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 22:5

See: Sin; Resurrect (Resurrection)

How did the Law of Moses increase the trespass?

[5:20]

Paul wrote that the Law of Moses increased “trespasses”(παράπτωμα/g3900). That is, people broke the law more because of the Law of Moses. They did not sin more. They broke the law more because they had many laws to obey in the Law of Moses. Paul wanted people to know why God gave the Law of Moses to Israel. While people could not be at peace with God because they followed the Law of Moses, the Law of Moses helped them to know they were sinners (see: 4:15; 7:7-9). Then they would know that they needed Jesus to save them.

See: John 15:22; 2 Corinthians 3:7-9; Galatians 3:19-25

See: Law of Moses; Sin; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Paul write, “as sin reigned in death, grace might reign in righteousness”?

[5:21]

Paul wrote that “as sin reigned in death, grace might reign in righteousness.” He wanted to say that people obeyed their sinful desires. That is, they sinned because they wanted to sin. However, because of God’s grace, people can now live in a way that honors God.

See: John 1:16-17

See: Sin; Grace; Righteous (Righteousness)

Romans 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to tell many different things that happen when God makes believers right with him.

Since we are justified

"Because we are justified"

we ... our

All occurrences of "we" and "our" refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

through our Lord Jesus Christ

"because of our Lord Jesus Christ"

Lord

Here "Lord" means that Jesus is God.

Romans 5:2

Through him we also have our access by faith into this grace in which we stand

Here "by faith" refers to our trust in Jesus, which allows us to stand before God. Alternate translation: "Because we trust in Jesus, God allows us to come into his presence"

we boast in the hope of the glory of God

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "we rejoice because we confidently expect to share in the glory of God"

Romans 5:3

Not only this

The word "this" refers to the ideas described in [Romans 5:1-2](#).

we ... our ... We

These words refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

tribulation brings about perseverance

"suffering helps us learn to endure"

Romans 5:4

Perseverance produces character

Perseverance is an abstract noun that can be translated as a verb. Here it is a metonym for the person who endures. You may need to make explicit what it is that a person endures.

Alternate translation: "We develop character when we endure hardship"

character

the desire and ability to do what is right

character produces hope

"having characer helps us to hope." Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen, and it refers to the confident expectation that God will fulfill all his promises. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "wait confidently" or "trust". Alternate translation: "character helps us to wait confidently" or "character helps us to trust God"

Romans 5:5

our ... us

These words refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

hope does not make ashamed

Paul uses personification here as he speaks of "hope" as if it were alive. "Hope" is an abstract noun that can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "we are very confident that we will receive the things that we wait for" make ashamed

"make us ashamed"

because the love of God has been poured into our hearts

Here "hearts" represents a person's thoughts, feelings, or inner person. The phrase "the love of God has been poured into our hearts" is a metaphor for God showing love to his people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because he has loved us greatly" or "because God has shown us how much he loves us"

Romans 5:6

we

The word "we" here refers to all believers and so should be inclusive.

Romans 5:7

For one will hardly die for a righteous person

"It is hard to find someone who is willing to die, even for a righteous person"

though perhaps someone would dare to die for a good person

"but you might find someone who is willing to die for such a good person"

Romans 5:8

proves

You can translate this verb in past tense using

"demonstrated" or "showed."

us ... we

All occurrences of "us" and "we" refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

Romans 5:9

Much more, then, now that we are justified by his blood, we will be saved

Paul is saying that because we are justified by Christ's blood, we can be much more certain that Christ will save us. Alternate translation: "Now that we are justified by his blood, we will more certainly be saved"

now that we are justified by his blood

Here "justified" means that God puts us in a right relationship with himself. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "now that God has made us right with himself because of Christ's death"

blood

This is a metonym for the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross.

saved

God forgives us and rescues us from being punished in hell for our sin.

the wrath of God

Here "wrath" is a metonym that refers to God's punishment of those who have sinned against him. Alternate translation: "God's punishment"

Romans 5:10

we were

All occurrences of "we" refer to all believers and should be inclusive.

his Son ... his life

"God's Son ... the life of God's Son"

we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son

The death of the Son of the God has provided eternal forgiveness and made all who believe in Jesus friends with God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God allowed us to have a peaceful relationship with him because his Son died for us"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

after having been reconciled

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "now that God has made us his friends again"

Romans 5:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 5:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains why death happened even before God gave

the law to Moses.

through one man sin entered ... death entered through sin

Paul describes sin as a dangerous thing that came into the world through the actions of "one man," Adam. This sin then became an opening through which death, pictured here as another dangerous thing, also came into the world.

Romans 5:13

For until the law, sin was in the world

This means that the people sinned before God gave the law.

Alternate translation: "People in the world sinned before God gave his law to Moses"

but there is no accounting for sin when there is no law

This means that God did not charge the people with sinning before he gave the law. Alternate translation: "but God recorded no sin against the law before he gave the law"

Romans 5:14

Nevertheless, death

"Even though what I have just said is true, death" or "There was no written law from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, but death" (Romans 5:13).

death reigned from Adam until Moses

Paul is speaking of death as if it were a king who ruled.

Alternate translation: "people continued to die from the time of Adam until the time of Moses as a consequence of their sin"

Moses, even over those who did not sin like Adam's disobedience, who is

"Moses. Even people whose sins were different from Adam's continued to die, Adam being"

who is a pattern of him who was to come

Adam was a pattern of Christ, who appeared much later. He had much in common with him.

Romans 5:15

how much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound for the many

Here "grace" refers to God's free gift that he made available to everyone through Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "even more through the man Jesus Christ, who died for us all, did God kindly offer us this gift of everlasting life, although we do not deserve it"

Romans 5:16

For the gift is not like the outcome of that one man's sin

Here "the gift" refers to God's freely erasing the record of our sins. Alternate translation: "The gift is not like the result of Adam's sin"

The judgment followed one trespass and brought condemnation

The abstract nouns "judgment," "trespass," and

"condemnation," can be expressed with verbs. Alternate

translation: "After one man trespassed, God judged all

people and condemned them to be punished" or "God declared that all people deserved to have him punish them because one man committed one sin"

but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification

The abstract nouns "gift," "trespass," and "justification" can be expressed as verbs. It is implied that God's gift of justification is greater than his judgement. Alternate

translation: "but after people trespassed many times, God gave the gift and justified them" or "but the gift is greater

because he gave it after many people had committed many

sins, and by giving the gift he justified them"

Romans 5:17

trespass of the one

This refers to the sin of Adam.

death ruled

Here Paul speaks of "death" as a king who ruled. The "rule" of death causes everyone to die. Alternate translation: "everyone died"

Romans 5:18

as one trespass led to condemnation for all people

The abstract nouns "trespass" and "condemnation" can be expressed with the verbs "sin" and "condemn." Alternate translation: "as one trespass caused all people to be condemned" or "as all people are condemned because one person sinned against God"

one trespass

This refers to Adam's sin.

condemnation for all people

Here "condemnation" refers to God's punishment. Alternate translation: "all people deserve God's punishment for sin" through the one act of righteousness came justification and life for all people

The abstract nouns "justification" and "life" can be expressed with the verbs "justify" and "live." Alternate translation: "one act of righteousness allows all people to be justified and live" or "all people can be justified and live because one person did that one righteous act"

the one act of righteousness

This refers to Jesus's obedience to God in dying for our sins.

Romans 5:19

one man's disobedience

the disobedience of Adam

the many were made sinners

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "many people sinned"

the obedience of the one

the obedience of Jesus

of the one will the many be made righteous

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "of the one, God will make many people right with him"

Romans 5:20

the law came in

Here Paul speaks of the law as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "God gave his law to Moses"

sin abounded

"sin increased"

grace abounded even more

Here "grace" refers to God's undeserved blessings. Alternate translation: "God continued to act even more kindly toward them, in a way that they did not deserve"

Romans 5:21

sin reigned in death ... grace might reign through righteousness for everlasting life

Here Paul speaks of sin as if it were a king who ruled over people and made them unable to obey God and ultimately killing them, and he speaks of grace as if it were a king who might rule over people and enable them to be right with God. Alternate translation: "as people obeyed their desire to sin and therefore had to die ... God might show grace to people and allow them to be right with him, resulting in everlasting life"

our Lord

Paul includes himself, his readers, and all believers.

Chapter 6

Romans 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul begins this chapter by answering how someone might object to what he taught in Chapter 5.

Special concepts in this chapter

Against the Law

In this chapter, Paul refutes the teaching that Christians can live however they want after they are saved. Scholars call this "antinomianism" or being "against the law." To motivate godly living, Paul recalls the great price Jesus paid for a Christian to be saved. (See: save and godly)

Servants of sin

Before they believe in Jesus, people are servants of sin, that is, they are unable to resist their desire to sin. God frees Christians from serving sin. They are able to choose to serve Christ in their lives. Paul explains that when Christians choose to sin, they willingly choose to sin. (See: faith and sin)

Fruit

This chapter uses the imagery of fruit. The image of fruit usually refers to a person's faith producing good works in their life. (See: fruit and righteous)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. It appears the intent of these rhetorical questions is to make the readers see their sin so they will trust in Jesus. (See: and guilt and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Death

Paul uses "death" to refer to many different things in this chapter: physical death, spiritual death, sin reigning in the heart of man, and the end of something. He contrasts sin and death with the new life provided by Christ and the new way Christians are supposed to live after they are saved. (See: death)

Links:

[Romans 6:1 Notes](#)

Romans 6

6:1-11

How did grace abound?

[6:1]

Paul wrote that grace abounded. That is, it grew or increased. He was speaking as if someone was saying that sinning caused God to be more gracious. This is not true.

See: 1 Peter 2:16

See: Grace; Sin

Why did Paul write, “may it never be”?

[6:2]

Paul wrote, “may it never be.” He wrote this often. He wanted to say that something should never happen (see: Romans 3:4).

How did someone die to sin?

[6:2]

God said that Christians were dead in some way. Christians cannot be punished for their sins and they did not have to sin.

See: Galatians 5:24; Colossians 3:3; 1 Peter 2:24

See: Sin

How was someone baptized into Christ Jesus and into his death?

[6:3]

People who were “baptized”(βαπτίζω/g0907) by water were united with Christ. When they are baptized into his death, they are also joined with Jesus’ death in some way.

See: 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21

See: Baptize (Baptism)

How was someone buried with Jesus?

[6:3]

Paul wrote that a Christian is buried with Jesus. This is a metaphor. He wanted people to know that they did not need to live in the same way they used to live before believing in Jesus.

See: Matthew 27:57-61; 1 Corinthians 15:4

What was the newness of life?

[6:4]

See: Romans 7:6; 2 Corinthians 5:17

See: Baptize (Baptism)

How was someone united with Jesus?

[6:5]

Paul wrote about being united with Jesus. Here, he was speaking about people who were identified with Jesus. That is, people would know they believe in Jesus and followed him

See: John 15:5-6; Philippians 3:10-11

What was the old man?

[6:6]

See: Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14; Ephesians 4:21-24; Colossians 3:9-10

See: Old and New Self

What was the body of sin?

[6:6]

Paul wrote about the body of sin. He was writing about someone being controlled by their sin. That is, they sinned because they wanted to sin.

See: Romans 8:10; Ephesians 4:22

How was something destroyed?

[6:6]

Paul wrote about something being “destroyed”(καταργέω/g2673). It lost its power (see: Romans 3:3; Galatians 3:17). A person was no longer controlled by their desire to sin.

See: Sin

How was someone enslaved to sin?

[6:6]

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Sinful Nature

How was someone declared to be righteous?

[6:7]

Paul wrote that someone was “declared righteous” or justified.

See: Justify (Justification); Righteous (Righteousness)

How did someone live together with Jesus?

[6:8]

Paul wrote that Christians will live together with Jesus. Some scholars think Paul was writing about Christians being resurrected to be with Jesus (see: 1 Thessalonians 4:17). Other scholars think Christians already live together with Jesus. This is a metaphor. They are now joined together with Jesus and have the Holy Spirit living in them (see: Galatians 2:20).

See: John 14:19; Colossians 3:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:11-12

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Metaphor

Why did Paul write “consider yourselves”?

[6:11]

Paul wrote “consider yourselves.” He wanted Christians to think and to know that they did not need to sin.

See: Sin

6:12-23

What were members?

[6:13]

Members were parts of a person’s body.

See: Romans 12:4a; 1 Corinthians 12:12a; James 3:6; Matthew 5:29-30

What was a tool?

[6:13]

A tool was something that was used to help someone do something. Paul did not want sin to use Christians. This is a metaphor. If Christians allowed sin to use them, then sin could use a person to do evil things.

See: Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 6:15

See: Sin; Metaphor

How could people present themselves as slaves?

[6:16]

Someone who presents themselves as a slave to sin voluntarily submit himself to being controlled by someone or something.

See: Joshua 24:15; John 8:34; 2 Peter 2:19

See: Serve (Servant, Slave)

How did someone obey from the heart?

[6:17]

Someone who obeyed from the heart obeyed God’s command to believe the gospel.

See: Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:8

See: Heart (Metaphor); Gospel

What was a pattern of teaching?

[6:17]

Paul wrote about a pattern of teaching. He was writing about certain things Christians taught. The Roman Christians knew these things.

See: 2 Timothy 1:13

How was someone made free from sin?

[6:18]

Paul continued the metaphor of slavery. The term “made free”(ἐλευθερώ/g1659) was the normal term for freeing a slave from his master. Now Christians were freed from their old master, sin, and have become slaves of God. They do not need to sin and can now live in a way that honors God.

See: John 8:32; 1 Corinthians 7:21-23; Galatians 5:1; 1 Peter 2:16

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Sinful Nature; Fruit (Metaphor)

What is sanctification?

[6:19]

See: Sanctify (Sanctification)

How was someone free from righteousness?

[6:20]

Paul wrote that people were free from righteousness. Non-Christians are free from righteousness. That is, non-Christians do not live in a way that honors God. They cannot do things that honor God.

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

What was the fruit people had before they believe in Jesus?

[6:21]

In the Bible, people often spoke about doing good things as if they were fruit. Here, Paul was writing about evil things people did as if they were fruit.

See: Matthew 3:8; 7:15-20; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 1:11

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

What were the wages of sin?

[6:23]

Wages were the money people earned because they worked (see: Luke 3:14). Paul wrote about people earning something because they sinned. That is, a person deserves to be punished because they sinned.

See: Matthew 25:46; 2 Corinthians 5:10; James 1:17

See: Sin; Punish (Punishment)

What was the gift of eternal life?

[6:23]

Paul wrote about eternal life. This was something that God gave to people who believe in Jesus.

See: Eternal Life

Romans 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Under grace, Paul tells those who believe in Jesus to live a new life as though dead to sin and alive to God.

What then will we say? Should we continue in sin so that grace may abound?

Paul asks these rhetorical questions to get the attention of his readers. Alternate translation: "So, what should we say about all of this? We certainly should not keep on sinning so that God will give us more and more grace!

we say

The pronoun "we" refers to Paul, his readers, and other people.

Romans 6:2

We who died to sin, how can we still live in it?

Here "We who died to sin" refers to those who follow Jesus, who are now like dead people who cannot be affected by sin. Paul uses this rhetorical question to add emphasis.

Alternate translation: "We are now like dead people on whom sin has no effect! So we certainly should not keep on sinning!"

Romans 6:3

Do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Paul uses this question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "Remember, when someone baptized us to show that we have a relationship with Christ, this also shows that we died with Christ on the cross!

Romans 6:4

We were buried, then, with him through baptism into death

Here Paul speaks of a believer's baptism in water as if it were a death and burial. Alternate translation: "When someone baptized us, it is just like that person buried us with Christ in the tomb"

just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life

To raise from the dead is an idiom for causing a person to live again. This compares a believer's new spiritual life to Jesus coming back to life physically. The believer's new spiritual life enables that person to obey God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "just as the Father brought Jesus back to life after he died, we might have new spiritual life and obey God"

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To be raised from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

Romans 6:5

become united with him in the likeness of his death ... be united with his resurrection

Paul compares our union with Christ to death. Those who are joined with Christ in death will share in his resurrection. You can translate this in an active form.

Alternate translation: "died with him ... come back to life with him"

Romans 6:6

our old man was crucified with him

The "old man" is a metaphor that refers to the person before he believes in Jesus. Paul describes our old sinful person as dying on the cross with Jesus when we believe in Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "our sinful person died on the cross with Jesus"

old man

This means the person who once was, but who does not

exist now.

the body of sin

This is a metonym that refers to the whole sinful person.

Alternate translation: "our sinful nature"

might be destroyed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "might die"

we should no longer be enslaved to sin

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "sin should no longer enslave us" or "we should no longer be slaves to sin"

we should no longer be enslaved to sin

Slavery to sin is a metaphor meaning having such a strong desire to sin that one is unable to stop himself from sinning. It is as if sin controls the person. Alternate translation: "we should no longer be controlled by sin"

Romans 6:7

He who has died is declared righteous with respect to sin

Here "righteous" refers to being right with God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation:

"When God declares a person right with him, that person is no longer controlled by sin"

Romans 6:8

we have died with Christ

Here "died" refers to the fact that believers are no longer controlled by sin.

Romans 6:9

We know that since Christ has been raised from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "We know since God brought Christ back to life after he died"

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To be raised from among them is to become alive again.

death no longer rules over him

Here "death" is described as if it were a king or ruler that has power over people. Alternate translation: "He cannot ever die again"

Romans 6:10

he died once for all

Possible meanings are 1) he died once, and he will not die again, nor will anyone else need to die, or 2) it is true now and will be true for all time that he died.

Romans 6:11

In the same way, you also must consider

"For this reason consider"

consider yourselves to be

"think of yourselves as" or "see yourselves as"

dead to sin

Just as one cannot force a corpse to do anything, sin has no power to force believers to dishonor God. Alternate translation: "as if you were dead to the power of sin"

dead to sin, but alive to God

"dead to the power of sin, but living to honor God"

alive to God in Christ Jesus

"living to honor God through the power Christ Jesus gives you"

Romans 6:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds us that grace rules over us, not the law; we are not sin's slaves, but God's slaves.

do not let sin rule in your mortal body

Paul speaks of people sinning as if sin were their master or king that controlled them. Alternate translation: "Do not let sinful desires control you"

your mortal body

This phrase refers to the physical part of a person, which will die. Alternate translation: "you"

so that you obey its lusts

Obedying the mortal body's lusts would be the result of letting sin rule in the body. That is why Paul commands people not to let sin rule in their mortal body—so they they do not obey its lusts. Paul speaks of people doing the evil things they desire as if the body had evil desires and commanded people to do what it desires.

Romans 6:13

Do not present the members of your bodies to sin, to be tools used for unrighteousness

The picture is of the sinner offering his "members," the

parts of his body to his master or king. One's "members" are a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "Do not offer yourselves to sin so that you do what is not right"

But present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life

Here the words "brought ... to life" refer to the believer's new spiritual life. Alternate translation: "But offer yourselves to God because he has given you new spiritual life" or "But offer yourselves to God as those who had died and are now alive"

present the members of your bodies to God as tools to be used for righteousness

Here "members" is a synecdoche that refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "let God use you for what is pleasing to him"

Romans 6:14

Do not allow sin to rule over you

Paul speaks of "sin" here as if it were a king who rules over people. Alternate translation: "Do not let sinful desires control what you do" or "Do not allow yourselves to do the sinful things you want to do"

For you are not under law

To be "under law" means to be subject to its limitations and weaknesses. You can make the full meaning explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "For you are no longer bound to the law of Moses, which could not give you the power to stop sinning"

but under grace

To be "under grace" means that God's free gift provides the power to keep from sinning. You can make the full meaning explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "but you are bound to God's grace, which does give you the power to stop sinning"

Romans 6:15

What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law, but under grace? May it never be

Paul is using a question to emphasize that living under grace is not a reason to sin. Alternate translation:

"However, just because we are bound to grace instead of the law of Moses certainly does not mean we are allowed to sin"

May it never be

"We would never want that to happen!" or "May God help me not to do that!" This expression shows an extremely strong desire that this does not take place. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated it in Romans 3:31.

Romans 6:16

Do you not know that if you present yourselves as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey?

Paul uses a question to scold anyone who may think God's grace is a reason to keep sinning. You can translate this as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You should know that if you present yourselves as slaves to anyone, you are slaves to whomever you obey!"

which leads to death ... which leads to righteousness

"which results in death ... which results in righteousness"

Romans 6:17

But thanks be to God!

"But I thank God!"

For you were slaves of sin

Being "slaves of sin" is a metaphor meaning they have such a strong desire to sin that they are unable to keep from sinning. It is as if sin controls the person. Alternate translation: "you were like slaves of sin" or "you were unable to keep from sinning"

but you have obeyed from the heart

Here the word "heart" refers to having sincere or honest motives for doing something. Alternate translation: "but you truly obeyed"

the pattern of teaching that you were given

Here "pattern" refers to the way of living that leads to righteousness. The believers change their old way of living to match this new way of living that Christian leaders teach to them. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "the teaching that Christian leaders gave you" Romans 6:18

You have been made free from sin

Here "free from sin" is a metaphor for them no longer having a strong desire to sin and therefore being able to stop themselves from sinning. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Christ has freed you from sin" or "Your strong desire to sin has been taken away" or "You have been made free from sin's control over you" (See: and)

you have been made slaves of righteousness

Slavery of righteousness is a metaphor meaning having a strong desire to do what is right. It is as if righteousness controls the person. Alternate translation: "you have been made like slaves of righteousness" or "you are now controlled by righteousness"

you have been made slaves of righteousness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ has made you slaves of righteousness" or "Christ has changed you so that now you are controlled by righteousness"

Romans 6:19

I speak like a man

Paul may have expected his readers to wonder why he was speaking of slavery and freedom. Here he is saying that he is using these ideas from their everyday experience to help them understand that people are controlled either by sin or by righteousness. Alternate translation: "I am speaking about this in human terms" or "I am using examples from everyday life"

because of the weakness of your flesh

Often Paul uses the word "flesh" as the opposite of "spirit." Alternate translation: "because you do not fully understand spiritual things"

presented the members of your bodies as slaves to uncleanness and to lawlessness

Here, the word "members" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "offered yourselves as slaves to

everything that is evil and not pleasing to God"

present the members of your bodies as slaves to righteousness for sanctification

Here the word "members" refers to the whole person.

Alternate translation: "offer yourselves as slaves to what is right before God so that he might set you apart and give you the power to serve him"

Romans 6:20

you were free from righteousness

Here "free from righteousness" is a metaphor for not having to do what is righteous. The people were living as though they thought that they did not have to do what was right. Alternate translation: "it was as though you were free from righteousness" or "you behaved as though you did not have to do what was right" or

Romans 6:21

At that time, what fruit then did you have of the things of which you are now ashamed?

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome." Paul is using a question to emphasize that sinning results in nothing good. Alternate translation: "Nothing good came from those things that now cause you shame." or "You gained nothing by doing those things that now cause you shame."

Romans 6:22

But now that you have been made free from sin and are enslaved to God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But now that you have become free from sin and have become God's slaves" or "But now that God has freed you from sin and made you his slaves"

But now that you have been made free from sin

Being "free from sin" is a metaphor for being able not to sin. Alternate translation: "But now that God has made you able not to sin"

and are enslaved to God

Being "enslaved" to God is a metaphor for being able to serve and obey God. Alternate translation: "and God has made you able to serve him"

you have your fruit for sanctification

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for "result" or "benefit."

Alternate translation: "the benefit is your sanctification" or "the benefit is that you live in a holy way"

The result is eternal life

"The result of all of this is that you will live forever with God"

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin are death

The word "wages" refers to a payment given to someone for their work. "For if you serve sin, you will receive spiritual death as payment" or "For if you continue sinning, God will punish you with spiritual death"

but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord

"but God gives eternal life to those who belong to Christ Jesus our Lord"

Chapter 7

Romans 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"Or do you not know"

Paul uses this phrase to discuss a new topic and connects what follows with the previous teaching.

Special concepts in this chapter

"We have been released from the law"

Paul explains that the law of Moses is no longer in effect. While this is true, the timeless principles behind the law reflect the character of God. (See: lawofmoses)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Marriage

Scripture commonly uses marriage as a metaphor. Here Paul uses it to describe how the church relates to the law of Moses and now to Christ.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh and sin)

Links:

[Romans 7:1 Notes](#)

Romans 7

7:1-6

What law did Paul write about here?

[7:1]

When Paul wrote about the law, he often wrote about the Law of Moses. Here, he wrote about the laws made by people or the government.

See: Law of Moses

Why was bound by the law and released by the law?

[7:2]

Paul wrote about the law binding people. That is, people needed to obey these laws. Paul also wrote about people being released from the law. That is, they did not need to obey the laws.

How was someone made dead to the law?

[7:4]

Paul wrote that someone was made dead to the law. That is, people did not need to obey the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses

Why did Paul write about the body of Christ?

[7:4]

Paul wrote about Jesus' body. This is a metaphor. He was speaking about Jesus' body dying. Because Jesus died, people did not need to obey the Law of Moses.

See: Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 10:10

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses; Messiah (Christ)

How did someone "live with another" and become "joined to another"?

[7:4]

Paul wrote about someone living with another man or becoming joined to another man. Paul wanted to say that this woman was having sex with this man. Paul did not say if these two people were married.

See: Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 20:10; Matthew 5:32

See: Adultery

How did someone produce fruit for God or for death?

[7:4, 7:5]

"Fruit" was a metaphor for how a person lived. Paul wrote about people living in a way that honors God or living in an evil way that dishonors God (see: Romans 6:21).

See: Matthew 3:8; 7:15-20; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 1:11, 22

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

How did someone serve in newness of the Spirit?

[7:6]

Paul wrote about someone serving in the newness of the Spirit. They served God because God gave the new life which the Holy Spirit gave to them.

See: Ezekiel 36:26; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Galatians 2:19-20

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Holy Spirit

What was the oldness of the letter?

[7:6]

Paul wrote about the oldness of the letter. This is a metaphor. He was speaking about the way someone used to live. He was enslaved to sinning.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Sinful Nature; Law of Moses; Metaphor; Old and New Self

See: John 5:47; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 2 Timothy 3:15

7:7-13

Who was Paul talking about in this passage?

Some scholars think Paul was thinking about himself in this passage. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about all people. Other scholars think he was speaking about Adam.

What did Paul ask if the Law is sin?

[7:7]

People accused Paul of speaking against the Law of Moses. However, Paul did not do this. He wanted people to know that the Law of Moses is not evil. He also wanted them to know that they should not try to follow the Law of Moses anymore. However, the Law of Moses helped people to know that they sinned and needed God to save them.

See: Acts 21:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:56; Galatians 3:13; James 1:13-15

See: Law of Moses; Sin; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Paul write, "may it never be"?

[7:7]

See: Romans 3:4

How did sin regain life?

[7:9]

While the law of Moses was not sinful, people disobeyed the Law of Moses. Because of this, people sinned. They sinned more than they would have if they did not have the law.

See: Sin

Why did Paul write, "I died"?

[7:10]

Paul wrote, "I died" because he sinned and deserved to be punished and die because he sinned. He was also separated from God.

See: Sin; Punish (Punishment)

See: Galatians 3:10

How was someone sinful beyond measure?

[7:13]

Paul wrote about someone being sinful beyond measure. Because of the Law of Moses, people sinned much more.

See: Sin; Law of Moses

7:14-25

Who was the miserable man Paul spoke about in this passage?

Some scholars think Paul was writing about himself before he became a Christian. Other scholars think he was writing about a Jewish man who was not a Christian. This was not a certain people. Other scholars think Paul was writing about himself just after he became a Christian. Other scholars think Paul was writing about Adam, who was a leader of all people or all Israelites.

How was the Law spiritual?

[7:14]

When Paul wrote about something spiritual, he was speaking about something the Holy Spirit did (see: 1 Corinthians 2:15; 10:4; 12:1; 14:1). Paul wanted people to know that the Law of Moses came from God through the Spirit. Because of this, it was good.

See: Holy Spirit, Spirit (Spiritual); Law of Moses

Why did Paul write, "I am of the flesh"?

[7:14]

Paul wrote about the flesh. He was not speaking about his body. This was a metaphor. He was speaking about being separated from God and unable to do good things.

See: Romans 8:8; Galatians 5:19-21, 24; 1 John 2:16

See: Flesh

How was Paul sold under slavery to sin?

[7:14]

Paul wrote about being sold under slavery to sin. In ancient times, slaves were sold in a market. Here, Paul used a

metaphor. Paul was controlled by his desire to sin.

See: 1 Kings 21:20, 25; 2 Kings 17:17

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Sinful Nature

What is the inner person?

[7:22]

See: Inner Person

What was the body of death?

[7:24]

Paul spoke about the body of death. Some scholars think Paul was speaking about his body dying. He would die because of sin. Other scholars think this is a metaphor. Paul was speaking about having to die because of sin.

See: Metaphor; Sin

Romans 7:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how the law controls those who want to live under the law.

Or do you not know, brothers ... that the law rules over a person for whatever time he lives?

Paul asks this question to add emphasis. Alternate translation: "So you certainly know brothers ... that people have to obey laws only while they are alive"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

Romans 7:2

Connecting Statement:

This verse begins a description of what Paul means by "the law controls a person for as long as he lives" ([Romans 7:1](#)).

the married woman is bound by law to the husband

Here "bound by law to the husband" is a metaphor for a woman being united to her husband according to the law of marriage. Alternate translation: "according to the law, the married woman is united to the husband"

the married woman

This refers to any woman who is married.

Romans 7:3

Connecting Statement:

This verse ends a description of what Paul means by "the law controls a person for as long as he lives" ([Romans 7:1](#)).

she will be called an adulteress

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will consider her an adulteress" or "people will call her an adulteress"

she is free from the law

Here being free from the law means not having to obey the law. In this case, the woman does not have to obey the law that says that a married woman cannot marry another man. Alternate translation: "she does not have to obey that law"

Romans 7:4

Therefore, my brothers

This relates back to Romans 7:1.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

you were also made dead to the law through the body of Christ

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "you also died to the law when through Christ you died on the cross"

to him who was raised from the dead

"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to live again." This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "to him who was caused to live again" or "to him whom God raised from the dead" or "to him whom God caused to live again"

we might produce fruit for God

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for actions that please God.

Alternate translation: "we might be able to do things pleasing to God"

Romans 7:5

to bear fruit for death

Here "fruit" is a metaphor for a "result of one's actions" or "outcome of one's actions." Alternate translation: "which resulted in spiritual death" or "the outcome of which was our own spiritual death"

Romans 7:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds us that God does not make us holy by the law.

we have been released from the law

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has released us from the law"

we

This pronoun refers to Paul and the believers.

to that by which we were bound

This refers to the law. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "to the law, which bound us" the letter

This refers to the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "the law of Moses"

Romans 7:7

What will we say then?

Paul is introducing a new topic.

May it never be

"Of course that is not true!" This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated this in Romans 9:14.

I would never have known sin, if it were not through the law

Paul is speaking of sin as if it were a person who can act. sin

"my desire to sin"

Romans 7:8

But sin took the opportunity ... produced every kind of coveting

Paul continues comparing sin to a person who can act. coveting

This word includes both the desire to have what belongs to other people and wrong sexual desire.

apart from the law, sin was dead

"if there were no law, there would be no breaking of the law, so there would be no sin"

Romans 7:9

sin regained life

This can mean 1) "I realized that I was sinning" or 2) "I strongly desired to sin"

Romans 7:10

The commandment that was to bring life turned out to be death for me. Paul speaks of God's condemnation as if it resulted primarily in physical death. Alternate translation: "God gave me the commandment so I would live, but it killed me instead"

Romans 7:11

For sin took the opportunity through the commandment and deceived me. Through the commandment it killed me

As in [Romans 7:7-8]

sin

"my desire to sin"

took the opportunity through the commandment

Paul is comparing sin to a person who can act. See how you translated this in [Romans 7:8]

it killed me

Paul speaks of God's condemnation on sinners as if it resulted primarily in physical death. Alternate translation: "it separated me from God"

Romans 7:12

the law is holy

Possible meanings are that it is holy because 1) it comes from God or 2) it reveals God's true nature.

Romans 7:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks about the struggle inside his inner man between sin in his inner man and his mind with the law of God—between sin and good.

So

Paul is introducing a new topic.

did what is good become death to me?

Paul uses this question to add emphasis.

what is good

This refers to God's law.

become death to me

"cause me to die"

May it never be

This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. Alternate translation: "Of course that is not true"

sin ... brought about death in me

Paul speaks of sin as though it were a person who could act. brought about death in me

Paul speaks of being separated from God as if he were literally dead. Alternate translation: "separated me from God"

through the commandment

"because I disobeyed the commandment"

Romans 7:14

General Information:

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Romans 7:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks about the struggle inside his inner man between his flesh and the law of God—between sin and good.

For what I do, I do not really understand

"I am not sure why I do some of the things that I do"

For what I do

"Because what I do"

what I want to do, I do not do

The words "I do not do" are an exaggeration to emphasize that Paul does not do what he wants to do as often as he would like or that he does what he does not want to do too often. Alternate translation: "I do not always do what I want to do"

what I hate, I do

The words "I do," which implies that he always does what he hates to do, are an exaggeration to emphasize that Paul does what he does not want to do too often. Alternate translation: "the things that I know are not good are the things that I sometimes do"

Romans 7:16

But if I do

"However, if I do"

I agree with the law that the law is good

To agree with the law here is to agree with God about the law. Alternate translation: "I agree with God that the law is good"

Romans 7:17

the sin that lives in me

Paul describes sin as a living being that has the power to influence him.

Romans 7:18

my flesh

Here "flesh" is a metonym for the sinful nature. Alternate translation: "my sinful nature"

Romans 7:19

the good

"the good deeds" or "the good actions"

the evil

"the evil deeds" or "the evil actions"

Romans 7:20

rather sin that lives in me

Paul speaks of "sin" as if it were alive and living inside him.

Romans 7:21

this law: When I want to do good, evil is present with me

The words "this law" refer to the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.

evil is present with me

Paul speaks of evil here as if it were alive and living with him.

Romans 7:22

with my inner person

Here the phrase "inner person" refers to the personality, heart, or soul. Alternate translation: "with my heart" or "with my soul"

Romans 7:23

a different law in the members of my body ... fights against that new law in my mind

Paul has a desire to obey God, but at times he also has a desire to do things that God hates. He writes of the two desires he has as if they were two men fighting each other. a different law

These words refer to the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.

in the members of my body

The phrase "the members of my body" is another way of saying "my flesh"

that new law in my mind

These words refer to the law of Moses, which was God's commands in written form ([Romans 7:22](#)).

the law of sin that is in the members of my body

This "law of sin" is the same as the "different law," the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.

Romans 7:24

Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Paul uses this question to express great emotion. If your language has a way of showing great emotion through an exclamation or a question, use it here. Alternate

translation: "I want someone to set me free from the control of what my body desires!"

deliver me

"rescue me"

this body of death

This is a metaphor that means a body that will experience physical death.

Romans 7:25

But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord

This is the answer to the question in [7:24](#).

So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind. However, with the flesh I serve the law of sin

The law of God and the law of sin are spoken of as if they were masters whom Paul serves as a slave. With the mind or intellect Paul chooses to please and obey God, and with the flesh or physical nature he chooses to disobey God and to sin. Alternate translation: "My mind chooses to please God by obeying the law of Moses, but my flesh chooses to disobey God and sin"

the law of God

These words refer to the law of Moses, which was God's commands in written form.

the law of sin

These words refer to the natural human desire to rebel against God and disobey him. Paul calls this a law because he has observed that this is the way people live. It is not a collection of written commands.

Chapter 8

Romans 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first verse of this chapter is a transitional sentence. Paul concludes his teaching of Chapter 7 and leads into the words of Chapter 8.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with verse 36. Paul quotes these words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Indwelling of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is said to live inside a person or inside their heart. If the Spirit is present, this signifies that a person is saved. (See: save)

"These are sons of God"

Jesus is the Son of God in a unique way. God also adopts Christians to be his children. (See: sonofgod and adoption)

Predestination

Twice in verses 29-30 Paul uses the word "predestined." Some take this to indicate that God has, from before the foundation of the world, chosen his own people to be eternally saved. Christians have different views on what the Bible teaches on this subject. So translators need to take extra care when translating this chapter, especially with regards to elements of causation. (See: predestine and save)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul poetically presents his teaching in verses 38 and 39 in the form of an extended metaphor. He explains that nothing can separate a person from the love of God in Jesus.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

No condemnation

This phrase must be translated carefully to avoid doctrinal confusion. People are still guilty of their sin. God disapproves of sinful acts, even those that believers in Jesus commit. God still punishes the sins of believers, but Jesus has paid the punishment for their sin. This is what Paul expresses here. The word "condemn" has several possible meanings. Here Paul emphasizes that people who believe in Jesus are no longer punished eternally for their sin by being "condemned to hell." (See: guilt and faith and condemn)

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh)

Links:

[Romans 8:1 Notes](#)

Romans 8

8:1-17

How was there no condemnation?

[8:1]

Paul wrote that there was no condemnation. Paul wanted people to know that God would never condemn people who believe in Jesus.

See: John 3:17-18; Romans 1:18

See: Condemn (Condemnation)

What are the law of the spirit of life and the law of sin and death?

[8:2]

The first law of the spirit of life was the Holy Spirit's power to free people from sin (see: Romans 7:5, 7-11). Scholars disagree about what Paul was writing about when he wrote about the law of sin and death. Some scholars think he was writing about the Law of Moses. Other scholars think that non-Christians trying to obey the Law of Moses made the sin further and deserve to be punished for disobeying God.

See: 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 2:19

See: Holy Spirit; Serve (Servant, Slave); Law of Moses; Sin; Sinful Nature; Die (Death); Punish (Punishment)

How was the law weak through the flesh?

[8:3]

Paul wrote that the law was weak through the flesh. He was speaking about the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses could not make people righteous because they did not obey it. People have the ability to obey the Law of Moses, but they cannot because of sin. They did the things they wanted to do and did not do things that honor God.

See: Acts 13:39; Hebrews 7:18-19

See: Law of Moses; Flesh

How was the sin in the likeness of sinful flesh?

[8:3]

Jesus came to earth as a human. He had a body just like every other person and looked like every other person. However, he did not sin.

See: John 1:14; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:7

See: Incarnation; Flesh; Sin

Why did Paul write about an offering for sin and condemning sin in the flesh?

[8:3]

Paul wrote about an offering for sin and condemning sin in the flesh. Like the animals that were offered on the altar in the temple, Jesus was an offering for human sins. God punished the sins of human beings in the "flesh" or body of Jesus as he hung on the cross.

See: 2 Corinthians 5:21

See: Offer (Offering); Sin; Flesh; Condemn (Condemnation); Sinful Nature; Atonement (Atonement); Punish (Punishment); Cross

How did someone walk or live in the flesh or in the spirit?

[8:4]

Someone walked or lived in the flesh when they did things that were evil and did not honor God (See: Psalm 1:1; 119:1; Proverbs 4:14-15; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 5:8). Someone who walked or lived in the spirit obeyed the Holy Spirit. They lived in a way that honored God.

See: Galatians 5:16-25

See: Walk; Flesh; Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit

How did someone set their minds on something?

[8:5]

Paul wrote about people setting their minds on something. Paul was speaking about people who focused on sinning or doing the will of God.

See: Philippians 2:5; 3:19; Colossians 3:1-3; Mark 8:33

See: Mind; Sin; Will of God

How was the body dead to sin but the spirit alive?

[8:10]

Paul wrote that “the body is dead with respect to sin.” Some scholars think Paul was speaking about how a non-Christian’s body was dead. This is a metaphor. It was useless and could not serve God. Other scholars think Paul wanted to say the non-Christian would die soon. This was not a metaphor. Paul wrote that “the spirit is alive.” Some scholars think the spirit of the Christian was alive. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit gave Christians life. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit would make people alive when they are resurrected.

See: Galatians 6:8

See: Sin; Metaphor; Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Paul write, “give life also to your mortal bodies”?

[8:11]

When Paul wrote about a mortal body, he was saying that a person would die. When Paul spoke about life, he was writing about how the Holy Spirit would raise believers from the dead in the future and give them eternal life.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 2 Corinthians 4:11, 14; Philippians 3:21

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Eternal Life; Holy Spirit

How could people be debtors to the flesh?

[8:12]

A debtor was a person who needed to repay someone money or to do something for someone else. Paul alluded again to the metaphor of a slave, who had to obey whatever his master wanted.

See: 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Peter 4:2-3

See: Flesh; Serve (Servant, Slave); Sinful Nature; Metaphor

How did someone put to death the body’s actions?

[8:13]

Paul wrote about putting to death the body’s actions. Paul wanted Christians to stop sinning. They must stop doing the wrong things they used to do.

See: Colossians 3:5-10; Titus 2:12; 1 Peter 2:11

What were the spirits of slavery and adoption?

[8:15]

Paul used the word “spirit” in two ways in verse 15. When Paul wrote about the “spirit of adoption,” he was speaking about the Holy Spirit who came to live in the Christian. God adopted all Christians and made them his children. Paul wrote that the spirit of slavery. Non-Christians were slaves to their sin. That is, they were controlled by their desire to sin.

See: 1 Corinthians 2:12; Ephesians 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:7

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit; Serve (Servant, Slave); Sinful Nature; Adopt (Adoption); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Family of God; Sin

Why did Paul write, “Abba, Father”?

[8:15]

“Abba”(Ἀββᾶ/g0005) was an Aramaic word used by Christians. It means father.

See: John 20:17; Galatians 4:5-7

See: God the Father

How did the Spirit bear witness with the Christian’s spirit?

[8:16]

Paul wrote that the Spirit bore witness with the Christian’s spirit. The Holy Spirit helped Christians to know that they are at peace with God.

See: 2 Corinthians 1:22; Galatians 3:14; 1 John 4:13

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit

How were Christians heirs?

[8:17]

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir) How will Christians be glorified with Jesus? Paul wrote that Christians will be glorified with Jesus. He was thinking about when Christians will be resurrected.

See: 2 Corinthians 4:17-18; Colossians 3:4; 1 Peter 4:13; 1 John 3:2

See: Glory (Glorify); Resurrect (Resurrection)

8:18-30

What was the “eager expectation of the creation”?

[8:20, 8:21]

Paul wrote about the eager expectation of the creation. Paul was speaking about everything in the world, but not people. He was speaking about these things as if there were a person. He wanted people to know that God would make the whole world perfect in the future.

See: Create (Creation, Creature)

How was subjected to futility and decay?

[8:20]

Paul said that the world was subject to futility and decay. He was thinking about Genesis 3:17-19. Because Adam sinned, the world was not perfect. Everything dies or is destroyed. This is because Adam sinned. After this, the world did not the purpose God originally created it for.

See: Sin

How did someone groan in the pain of childbirth?

[8:22]

When a woman has a baby, it is very painful. Paul wrote about this as a metaphor. He was talking about suffering, but this suffering would end and something new would come.

See: Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; Matthew 24:8

What were the firstfruits of the Spirit?

[8:23]

Paul wrote about the firstfruits of the spirit. He was speaking about the Holy Spirit beginning to live in Christians was the first of God's blessings to come to Christians. Christians would also have more blessings.

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Bless (Blessing); Holy Spirit

When did Christians groan?

[8:23]

Paul wrote that Christians groan. Christians suffer while they wait for their future resurrection.

See: 2 Corinthians 5:2-5

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

What was adoption, the redemption of our body?

[8:23]

Paul wrote about adoption, the redemption of our body. Christians are adopted by God and children of God. This will completely happen when they are resurrected. When Paul wrote about the redemption of the body, he was speaking about the body after it is resurrected.

See: Ephesians 1:14

See: Adopt (Adoption); Redeem (Redemption)

How did the Holy Spirit intercede for Christians with inexpressible groans?

[8:26]

The Holy Spirit intercedes for Christians. He prays for Christians. Some scholars think Paul was speaking about the Holy Spirit giving Christians the gift of speaking in tongues. He helps Christians to pray for the right things (see: 1 Corinthians 14:2). Others scholars think the Holy Spirit prayed for people but he does not need to speak.

See: Ephesians 2:18

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Speaking in Tongues

How did the person who searches the hearts know the mind of spirit?

[8:27]

Paul wrote that the person who searches the hearts, knows the mind of the spirit. He was speaking about God knows what the Holy Spirit says was saying in prayer, even if the Christian does not. These prayers were always perfect and in agreement with God's will for people. Thus it was certain that God would respond to those prayers.

See: Jeremiah 17:10; Acts 1:24; 1 Corinthians 2:10-12

See: Heart (Metaphor); Will of God

How was someone called according to God's purpose?

[8:28]

See: Call (Calling)

What was foreknown?

[8:29]

God foreknows things. He knows that they are going to happen before they happen. Some scholars think God knows things about Christians (see: Acts 26:5; 2 Peter 3:17). Other scholars think God chose who would believe in Jesus (see: Jeremiah 1:5; Romans 11:2; 1 Peter 1:2; also 1 Peter 1:20).

See: Foreknow (Foreknowledge); Elect (Election)

How was someone predestined?

[8:29]

See: Predestine (Predestination)

How was someone conformed to the image of his son?

[8:29]

Paul wrote about people being conformed to the image of his son. Christians will be resurrected and will be changed to be like Jesus. Perhaps Paul was thinking about how Christians gradually become more like Jesus. That is, Christians begin to do more of the types of things that Jesus did.

See: Genesis 1:27; 1 Corinthians 15:49; Colossians 1:15

See: Image of God; God the Father; Son of God

Who was the firstborn?

[8:29]

See: Firstborn (Birthright)

How was someone justified?

[8:30]

See: Justify (Justification)

How are people glorified?

[8:30]

Paul wanted people to know that God returned people to the glory that Adam lost in Eden (see: Genesis 3; Romans 3:23). Some scholars think Paul was speaking about the future resurrection of Christians (see: Romans 5:2; 8:17, 18, 21; 2 Corinthians 4:17). Other scholars think Paul was speaking about Christians doing the types of things Jesus did after they believe in Jesus.

See: Glory (Glorify)

8:31-39

Why did Paul write, "God is for us"?

[8:31]

Paul wrote that God is for us. He wanted people to know that God blessed and favored people in many ways. Christians are not enemies of God.

See: 1 Samuel 14:6; Psalm 118:6; Jeremiah 1:19; John 10:28-30; 1 John 4:4

How did Jesus not spare his own son?

[8:32]

Paul wrote that God did not spare his own son. That is, he did not stop Jesus from dying. Perhaps Paul was also thinking about Abraham being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac (see: Genesis 22:1-14).

See: John 3:16; 1 John 4:10

See: Son of God; Atonement (Atonement); Sacrifice

Who were God's chosen people?

[8:33]

Paul wrote about God choosing Christians.

See: Elect (Election)

What was nakedness?

[8:35]

Paul wrote about nakedness. He was speaking about someone who did not have enough clothes on. They did not have enough clothes to protect them against the cold.

See: 1 Corinthians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 11:27

How were Christians like sheep for the slaughter?

[8:35]

Paul wrote the same thing as Psalm 44:22. This psalm was about how God abandoned Israel to being slaughtered like animals. Other verses in the Old Testament use the same metaphor (see: Jeremiah 11:19; 12:3; 51:40; Zechariah 11:4-5). Paul was not speaking about an animal sacrifice on an altar. He was speaking about animals that were butchered for their meat. Paul was speaking about Christians being persecuted as if they were animals.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:30-31; 2 Corinthians 4:8-12

See: Metaphor

What were things present and things to come?

[8:38]

Paul wrote about things present and things to come. Paul wanted Christians to know that nothing could separate Christians from God. In ancient Israel, people thought that all things could be divided into this age and the age to come (see: Matthew 12:32).

See: Ephesians 1:21; 2 Timothy 1:12

What were powers?

[8:38]

Paul wrote about certain powers. He was speaking about angels.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:24; Ephesians 1:21; Colossians 1:16; 1 Peter 3:22

See: Angel

Romans 8:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives the answer to the struggle he has with sin and good.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

Here "condemnation" refers to the punishment of people.
Alternate translation: "God will not condemn and punish

those who are joined to Christ Jesus"

There is therefore now

"For that reason, there is now" or "Because what I have just told you is true, there is now"

Romans 8:2

the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus

This refers to God's Spirit. Alternate translation: "God's Spirit in Christ Jesus"

has set you free from the law of sin and death

Being free from the law of sin and death is a metaphor for not being controlled by the law of sin and death. Alternate translation: "has caused the law of sin and death to no longer control you"

the law of sin and death

Possible meanings are that this refers to 1) the written law, which provokes people to sin, which in turn causes them to die. Alternate translation: "the law which causes sin and death" or 2) the "different law" (see Romans 7:23) that people sin and die.

Romans 8:3

For what the law was unable to do because it was weak through the flesh, God did

Here the law is described as a person who could not break the power of sin. Alternate translation: "For the law did not have the power to stop us from sinning, because the power of sin within us was too strong. But God did stop us from sinning"

through the flesh

"because of people's sinful nature"

He ... sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh ... an offering for sin ... he condemned sin

The Son of God forever satisfied God's holy anger against our sin by giving his own body and human life as the eternal sacrifice for sin.

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

in the likeness of sinful flesh

"who looked like a sinful human being"

to be an offering for sin

"so that he could die as a sacrifice for our sins"

he condemned sin in the flesh

Possible meanings are 1) "flesh" refers to our human nature or lives. Alternate translation: "he destroyed sin in our human nature" or 2) "flesh" refers to Christ's body, and "in the flesh" refers to Christ's death. Alternate translation: "in Christ's flesh God condemned sin" or "by Christ's death God condemned sin."

he condemned sin

In this verse, "condemned" is a metonym for "destroyed." Alternate translation: "he destroyed sin" or "he broke the power of the sin"

Romans 8:4

the requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "we might fulfill what the law requires"

we who walk not according to the flesh

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. The flesh is an idiom for sinful human nature.

Alternate translation: "we who do not obey our sinful

desires"

but according to the Spirit

"but who obey the Holy Spirit"

Romans 8:5

General Information:

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Romans 8:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to contrast the flesh with the Spirit we now have.

the mind set on the flesh ... the mind set on the Spirit

Here Paul speaks of both the "flesh" and the "spirit" as if they were living persons. Alternate translation: "the way sinful people think ... the way people who listen to the Holy Spirit think"

death

Here this means the separation of a person from God.

Romans 8:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 8:8

Those who are in the flesh

This refers to people who do what their sinful nature tells them to do.

Romans 8:9

in the flesh

"acting according to your sinful natures." See how "the flesh" was translated in Romans 8:5.

in the Spirit

"acting according to the Holy Spirit"

Spirit ... God's Spirit ... Spirit of Christ

These all refer to the Holy Spirit.

if indeed

This phrase does not mean Paul doubts that some of them have God's Spirit. Paul wants them to realize that they all have God's Spirit. Alternate translation: "since" or "because"

Romans 8:10

If Christ is in you

How Christ lives in a person could be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "If Christ lives in you through the Holy Spirit"

the body is dead with respect to sin

Possible meanings are 1) a person is spiritually dead to the power of sin or 2) the physical body will still die because of sin.

the spirit is alive with respect to righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) a person is spiritually alive because God has given him power to do what is right or 2) God will bring the person back to life after he dies because God is righteous and gives believers eternal life.

Romans 8:11

If the Spirit ... lives in you

Paul assumes that the Holy Spirit lives in his readers.

Alternate translation: "Since the Spirit ... lives in you"

of him who raised ... from the dead lives

"of God, who raised ... from the dead, lives"

raised Jesus

Here to raise is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "caused Jesus

to live again"

mortal bodies through his Spirit

"physical bodies through his Spirit" or "bodies, which will die someday, through his Spirit"

Romans 8:12

So then

"Because what I have just told you is true"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

we are debtors, but not to

Paul is speaking of obedience as if it were paying back a debt. Alternate translation: "we need to obey, but not"

but not to the flesh to live according to the flesh

Again Paul speaks of obedience as if it were paying back a debt. You can include the implied word "debtors." Alternate translation: "but we are not debtors to the flesh, and we do not have to obey our sinful desires"

Romans 8:13

For if you live according to the flesh

"Because if you live only to please your sinful desires"

you are about to die

"you will certainly be separated from God"

but if by the Spirit you put to death the body's actions

Paul speaks of the "old man," crucified with Christ, as the person who is responsible for his sinful desires. Alternate translation: "but if by the power of the Holy Spirit you stop obeying your sinful desires"

Romans 8:14

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For all the people whom the Spirit of God leads"

sons of God

Here this means all believers in Jesus and is often translated as "children of God."

Romans 8:15

by which we cry

"who causes us to cry out"

Abba, Father

"Abba" is "Father" in the Aramaic language.

Romans 8:16

General Information:

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Romans 8:17

heirs of God

Paul speaks of the Christian believers as if they will inherit property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "and we also will one day receive what God has promised us"

we are joint heirs with Christ

Paul speaks of the Christian believers as if they will inherit property and wealth from a family member. God will give to us what he gives to Christ. Alternate translation: "we will also receive what God has promised us and Christ together" that we may also be glorified with him

God will honor Christian believers when he honors Christ.

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "that God may glorify us along with him"

Romans 8:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

For

This emphasizes "I consider." It does not mean "because."

I consider that ... are not worthy to be compared with

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I cannot compare ... with"

will be revealed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "God will reveal" or "God will make known"

Romans 8:19

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

the eager expectation of the creation waits for

Paul describes everything that God created as a person who eagerly waits for something.

for the revealing of the sons of God

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "for the time when God will reveal his children"

sons of God

Here this means all believers in Jesus. You can also translate this as "children of God."

Romans 8:20

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

For the creation was subjected to futility

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "For God caused what he had created to be unable to achieve what he intended"

not of its own will, but because of him who subjected it

Here Paul describes "creation" as a person who can desire.

Alternate translation: "not because this is what the created things wanted, but because it is what God wanted"

in hope

Here the word "hope" is confident expectation that what one desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait." God could be absolutely sure that what he intended would happen. Alternate translation: "confidently expecting" or "confidently waiting"

Romans 8:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

the creation itself will be delivered

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "God will save creation"

from slavery to decay

Here being in slavery to decay is a metaphor for being

certain to decay. Alternate translation: "from being like a

slave to decay"

that it will be brought into the freedom of the glory of the children of God

"Freedom" here is in contrast with slavery to decay. It is a metaphor meaning that the creation will not decay.

Alternate translation: "that it will become gloriously free from decay like the children of God"

Romans 8:22

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors in pain together even now

The creation is compared to a woman groaning while giving birth to a baby. Alternate translation: "For we know that everything that God created wants to be free and groans for it the way a woman giving birth groans for her baby to be born"

Romans 8:23

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

as we wait eagerly for our adoption, the redemption of our body

The abstract nouns "adoption" and "redemption" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "as we wait eagerly for God to adopt us and redeem our bodies"

Romans 8:24

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

For in this hope we were saved

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "For God saved us so that we might have this hope" 2) "For God saved us because we have this hope"

in this hope we were saved

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "it was so that we might confidently wait for this that we were saved" or "we were saved that we might trust God to do this"

this hope

The phrase "this hope" refers to the hope of our adoption, the redemption of our bodies (8:23).

Now hope that is seen is not hope

"Hope that is seen" is hope that has already been fulfilled. Alternate translation: "If we already have what we hope for, that is not hope" or "If we have what we want, we would not say that we hope for it"

For who hopes for what he can see?

Paul uses a question to help his audience understand what "hope" is. Alternate translation: "No one hopes for what he already has." or "No one waits for what has already happened."

Romans 8:25

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes reminding the believers in Rome that sometime in the future, God will change their bodies in a glorious way.

if we hope for what we do not see

Here the word "hope" means confidently expect that what one desires will happen. The person who hopes in this way believes that what he desires will happen. Alternate translation: "If we confidently expect to receive what we do not see" or "if we trust God for what we do not see"

what we do not see

Not seeing what we hope for represents not yet having it or experiencing it. Alternate translation: "what we do not yet have" or "what has not yet happened"

we wait for it with patience

"we wait for it patiently"

Romans 8:26

Connecting Statement:

Though Paul has been emphasizing that there is a struggle in believers between the flesh and the Spirit, he affirms that the Spirit is aiding us.

inexpressible groans

"groanings that we cannot express in words"

Romans 8:27

He who searches out the hearts knows

Here "He" refers to God. Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's thoughts and emotions. The phrase "searches out the hearts" is a metaphor for examining thoughts and emotions. Alternate translation: "God, who knows what all our thoughts and feelings are, knows"

Romans 8:28

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers that nothing can separate them from God's love.

for those who are called

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "for those whom God chose"

Romans 8:29

those whom he foreknew

"those whom he knew before he even created them"

he also predestined to be conformed

"he also planned in advance that they would be conformed"

to be conformed to the image of his Son

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "that he would change them to be like his Son"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

that he might be the firstborn

"so that his Son would be the firstborn"

among many brothers

Here "brothers" refers to all believers, both male and female. Alternate translation: "among many brothers and sisters who belong to the family of God"

Romans 8:30

Those whom he predestined

"Those whom God made plans for in advance"

these he also justified

Here "justified" is in the past tense to emphasize that this will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "these he also

put right with himself"

these he also glorified

The word "glorified" is in the past tense to emphasize that this will certainly happen. Alternate translation: "these he will also glorify"

Romans 8:31

What, therefore, can we say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us?

Paul uses questions to emphasize the main point of what he said previously. Alternate translation: "This is what we should know from all of this: since God is helping us, no one can defeat us."

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son

God the Father sent the Son of God, Jesus Christ, to the cross as the holy, infinite sacrifice necessary to satisfy God's infinite, holy nature against the sin of humanity. Here "Son" is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

but delivered him up

"but put him under the control of his enemies"

how will he not also with him freely give us all things?

Paul is using a question for emphasis. Alternate translation: "he will certainly and freely give us all things!"

freely give us all things

"kindly give us all things"

Romans 8:33

Who will bring any accusation against God's chosen ones? God is the one who justifies

Paul uses a question for emphasis. Alternate translation: "No one can accuse us before God because he is the one who makes us right with him"

Romans 8:34

Who is the one who condemns?

Paul uses a question for emphasis. He does not expect an answer. Alternate translation: "No one will condemn us!" who is at the right hand of God

To be at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "who is at the place of honor beside God"

Romans 8:35

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Paul uses this question to teach that nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Alternate translation: "No one will ever separate us from the love of Christ!" or "Nothing will ever separate us from the love of Christ!"

Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

The words "shall separate us from the love of Christ" are understood from the previous question. Alternate translation: "Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword separate us from the love of Christ?"

Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that even these things cannot separate us from the love of Christ. Alternate translation: "Even tribulation, distress, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger, and sword cannot separate us from the love of Christ."

Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

The abstract nouns can be expressed with verb phrases. Here "sword" is a metonym that represents being killed violently. Alternate translation: "Even if people cause us trouble, hurt us, take away our clothes and food, or kill us, they cannot separate us from the love of Christ."

Tribulation, or distress

These words both mean the same thing.

Romans 8:36

For your benefit

Here "your" is singular and refers to God. Alternate translation: "For you"

we are killed all day long

Here "we" refers to the writer and to other people, but not his audience, who was God. The phrase "all day long" is an exaggeration to emphasize how much danger they are in. Paul uses this part of Scripture to show that all who belong to God should expect difficult times. This can be translated in an active form. Alternate translation: "our enemies continually seek to kill us"

We were considered as sheep for the slaughter

Here Paul compares to livestock those whom people kill because they are loyal to God. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Our lives have no more value to them than the sheep they kill"

Romans 8:37

we are more than conquerors

"we have complete victory"

through the one who loved us

You can make explicit the kind of love that Jesus showed. Alternate translation: "because of Jesus, who loved us so much he was willing to die for us"

Romans 8:38

I have been convinced

"I am convinced" or "I am confident"

governments

Possible meanings are 1) demons or 2) human kings and rulers.

nor powers

Possible meanings are 1) spiritual beings with power or 2) human beings with power.

Romans 8:39

General Information:

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Chapter 9

Romans 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul changes what he is teaching about. In Chapters 9-11, he focuses on the nation of Israel.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with

the poetry in verses 25-29 and 33 of this chapter. Paul quotes all of these words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Flesh

Paul uses the word "flesh" in this chapter only to refer to Israelites, people physically descending from Abraham through Jacob, whom God named Israel. (See: flesh)

In other chapters, Paul uses the word "brother" to mean fellow Christians. However, in this chapter, he uses "my brothers" to mean his kinsmen the Israelites.

Paul refers to those who believe in Jesus as "children of God" and "children of the promise."

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Stone of stumbling

Paul explains that while some Gentiles accepted Jesus as their savior by believing in him, most Jews were trying to earn their salvation and so rejected Jesus. Paul, quoting the Old Testament, describes Jesus as a stone that the Jews stumble over when walking. This "stone of stumbling" causes them to "fall."

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"It is not everyone in Israel who truly belongs to Israel"

Paul uses the word "Israel" in this verse with two different meanings. The first "Israel" means the physical descendants of Abraham through Jacob. The second "Israel" means those who are God's people through faith. The UDB reflects this.

Links:

[Romans 9:1 Notes](#)

Romans 9

9:1-5

Why did Paul speak in solemn oaths?

[9:1]

In ancient Israel, when people wanted to insist that they were telling the truth, they sometimes invited God or Jesus to be a witness of what they said. Paul often did this. Here he used a solemn oath in Jesus and the Holy Spirit and implied. He believed God would punish him if he lied. He also appealed to his own conscience.

See: Romans 1:9; 9:1; 2 Corinthians 1:23; 11:31; Galatians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 2:5, 10

See: Swear (Oath); Witness (Martyr); Holy Spirit; Punish (Punishment); Conscience

How was someone "cursed and set apart from Christ"?

[9:3]

Paul wrote about being "cursed and set apart from Christ." This could not happen to Paul. God would not condemn Paul to save Israel. Someone who is cursed is condemned by God and sent to be punished in hell forever (see: 1 Corinthians 16:22; Galatians 1:8-9; also 1 Corinthians 12:3). They were separated from Jesus forever (see: Romans 8:35).

See: Exodus 32:32; Galatians 1:8-9

See: Curse; Condemn (Condemnation)

Who were Paul's kinsmen according to the flesh?

[9:3]

Paul spoke his kinsmen according to the flesh. He was speaking about the Jews.

See: Esther 8:6; Acts 13:26; Romans 4:1

See: Flesh

How did Israel have adoption?

[9:4]

Paul wrote that God adopted Israel. They were God's people and that he was their Father.

See: Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 14:1-2; Hosea 11:1; Romans 8:15-17

See: Adopt (Adoption); God the Father; People of God

How did Israel have glory?

[9:4]

Israel had glory from God. Paul was speaking about how God could often be seen in Israel. He was in a pillar of fire and a cloud (see: Exodus 14:24), on Mount Sinai (see: Exodus 24:16), in an assembly (see: Numbers 16:19; 20:6), in the tabernacle (see: Exodus 40:34), in the temple (see: 1 Kings 8:10-11). In all these cases, the glory of God was a blessing only for Israel.

See: Glory (Glorify); Tabernacle; Temple; Bless (Blessing)

How did Israel have the "ministry in the temple"?

[9:4]

Paul wrote about the "ministry" (λατρεία/g2999), "worship", or "service" to God (see: John 16:2; Hebrews 9:1). Some scholars think that this was Israel's worship of God. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about the sacrifice Israel made according to the Law of Moses.

See: 1 Chronicles 6:31, 48, 49; Ezra 6:18; Luke 1:8-9; Hebrews 9:1

See: Worship; Temple

Who were the Israelite's patriarchs?

[9:5]

Paul wrote about the patriarchs or fathers of Israel. Some scholars think he was speaking about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about all the ancestors of the Israelites (see: Acts 2:29; 7:9).

See: Matthew 3:9-10; Romans 15:8; Hebrews 7:4

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

How did Jesus come with respect to the flesh?

[9:5]

Paul wrote about Jesus coming with respect to the flesh. He came to the earth as a person. He was an Israelite.

See: John 1:14; Romans 1:3; 8:3; 1 Timothy 3:16

See: Flesh

9:6-18

How was it that "it is not as though the Word of God has failed"?

[9:6]

People could say that the word of God failed in some way. That is, God lied. Paul disagreed with this. The things God said would happen did happen.

See: Numbers 23:19; Isaiah 55:10-11; Matthew 24:35; Romans 3:3; Hebrews 6:17-18

See: Word of God

Who were the children of the flesh?

[9:8]

Paul wrote about the children of the flesh. He was speaking about Abraham's descendants.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Flesh

Who were the children of promise?

[9:8]

Paul wrote about the children of promise. He was writing about the children who were born as a result of the promise God gave Abraham. Some scholars think Paul was speaking about Christians who were also Jews. Others scholars think that it referred to all Christians.

See: Galatians 3:26-29; 4:22-31

See: Family of God; Covenant with Abraham

What was "the purpose of God according to choice"?

[9:11]

Paul wrote about the "purpose of God according to choice." He was saying that God's plan that he made earlier would continue to be carried out, because it was based on the choice that God himself made.

See: Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2 Peter 1:10

See: Elect (Election)

How did God love Jacob and hate Esau?

[9:13]

Paul wrote that God loved Jacob, but God hated Esau. This was the same thing written in Malachi 1:3, God loved the nation of Israel and he hated the nation of Edom. Some scholars think God hates the people of Edom. Other scholars think Paul was just contrasting how God felt about these two nations (see: Genesis 29:30-33; Deuteronomy 21:15).

See: Matthew 10:37; Luke 14:26

Why did Paul use questions in this passage?

[9:14]

Paul used questions and answers as a way to help people. People often taught in this way. The teacher said what someone would say if they disagreed with the teacher. This person would ask questions of the teacher. The teacher then answered these questions. Here, Paul asked questions that a Jewish person would ask him if the Jewish person rejected the gospel.

See: Gospel

Is there unrighteousness with God?

[9:14]

God is perfectly righteous. There is no unrighteousness in him. Paul asked this question so that he could reject it.

See: Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Chronicles 19:7; Psalm 145:17; Revelation 16:7

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

Why did Paul write, "may it never be"?

[9:14]

See: Romans 3:4

How was Pharaoh raised up?

[9:17]

Paul wrote the same things as Exodus 9:16. God raised up Pharaoh. God gave Pharaoh permission to rule. He served God even though he did not want to serve God.

See: Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 45:1-3; Daniel 5:18-21

9:19-33

Why did Paul ask, “why does he still find fault”?

[9:19]

Paul imagined how someone might object to the gospel.

See: Daniel 4:35; James 1:13-14

See: Gospel

Why did Paul write about someone who makes pots?

[9:20]

Paul wrote the same thing as Isaiah 45:9. Paul spoke about someone who makes pots. This is a metaphor. He wanted people to know that people have no right to tell God how to treat them.

See: Job 33:13; 40:2; Isaiah 29:15-16; 45:9-11; 64:8-9; Jeremiah 18:1-6

See: Metaphor

What were containers for honorable and dishonorable uses?

[9:21]

Paul wrote about containers made of clay (see: Luke 8:16; John 4:28). One type was only used for specific reasons. The other type could be used for any reason. This was a metaphor. Paul wanted people to know that God had the right to use people as he desired.

See: Acts 9:15; 2 Timothy 2:20-21

Why did Paul write about containers of wrath prepared for destruction and containers of mercy?

[9:22, 9:23]

God's wrath was going to destroy container of wrath. Sometimes the metaphor of smashing a clay jar was a symbol of God's judgement in the last days (see: Psalm 2:9; Isaiah 30:14; Jeremiah 19:11; Revelation 2:27). God was already ready to show mercy to people.

See: Exodus 9:16; Proverbs 16:4; 1 Peter 2:8; Jude 4

See: Wrath; Metaphor; Judge (Judgment); Judge (Judgment); Last Days; Mercy

How were the riches of God's glory made known?

[9:23]

The riches of God's glory were made known. That is, God decided to show his glory to people.

See: Colossians 1:27; Ephesians 3:8; Titus 3:6-7

Why did Paul say the same thing Hosea wrote?

[9:25, 9:26]

Paul wrote the same thing Hosea wrote in Hosea 1:10 and 2:23. Hosea wrote about God restoring the northern kingdom of Israel. This kingdom rejected God. Paul wanted people to know that God's plans would now include Gentiles.

See: 1 Peter 2:10

See: Israel (Northern Kingdom) ; Gentile

Why did Paul write the same thing Isaiah wrote?

[9:27, 9:28, 9:29]

Paul wrote the same thing Isaiah wrote. Paul defended the gospel and wanted people to know that it was prophesied that only a few Israelites believed in Christ (see: Isaiah 1:9; 10:22-23).

Why did Paul write about the sands of the sea and the remnant?

[9:27]

God promised Abraham that his descendants would be like the sand of the sea (see: Genesis 22:17; 32:12). This is hyperbole. Abraham would have more descendants than he could count. However, Isaiah wrote that only “remnant” of his descendants would receive salvation. That is, only a few of his descendants would live forever with God in heaven.

See: Ezra 9:8, 14; Isaiah 11:11; Ezekiel 6:8

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Hyperbole; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Heaven

How did God execute his word?

[9:28]

Paul wrote that God executed the word of God. That is, God would do what he said and finish the things he wanted to do on the earth.

See: Isaiah 10:23; 28:22; Acts 17:31

Why did Paul write about Sodom and Gomorrah?

[9:29]

Paul wrote the same thing Isaiah wrote (see: Isaiah 1:9). He warned the Israelites that they would be like the people of

Sodom and Gomorrah if they rejected Jesus. They would be greatly punished (see: Genesis 18-19).

See: Deuteronomy 29:23; Isaiah 13:19; Jeremiah 49:18; 50:39-40; Amos 4:11; 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7

See Map: Sodom and Gomorrah

How did someone pursue a law of righteousness?

[9:31]

The Jews tried to be at peace with God by doing good things. Some scholars think this is what Paul was writing about when he wrote about the "law of righteousness." Other scholars think Paul was speaking about people trying to be at peace with God by obeying the Law of Moses (see: Romans 7:7, 12, 14). No one perfectly obeyed this law except Jesus.

See: Romans 8:3; 10:2; Galatians 3:21

Why did Paul write the same thing Isaiah wrote?

[9:33]

Isaiah wrote the same thing Isaih wrote (see: Isaiah 8:14; 28:16). He wrote about stumbling. This was a metaphor. People who believe in Jesus will live together with him in heaven. Those who reject Jesus will be punished forever in hell.

See: Romans 9:32-33; 11:9, 11; 14:13; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 1 Peter 2:8

See: Walk; Metaphor; Heaven; Punish (Punishment); Hell

Romans 9:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells of his personal desire that the people of the nation of Israel will be saved. Then he emphasizes the different ways in which God has prepared them to believe.

I tell the truth in Christ. I do not lie

These two expressions mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them to emphasize that he is telling the truth.

my conscience bears witness with me in the Holy Spirit

"the Holy Spirit controls my conscience and confirms what I say"

Romans 9:2

that for me there is great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart

Here "unceasing pain in my heart" is an idiom that Paul uses to share his emotional distress. Alternate translation: "that I grieve very greatly and deeply"

great sorrow and unceasing pain

These two expressions mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them together to emphasize how great his emotions are.

Romans 9:3

For I could wish that I myself would be cursed and set apart from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "I personally would be willing to let God curse me and keep me apart from Christ forever if that would help my fellow Israelites, my own people group, to believe in Christ"

Romans 9:4

They are Israelites

"They, like me, are Israelites. God chose them to be Jacob's descendants"

They have adoption, the glory

Here Paul uses the metaphor of "adoption" to indicate that the Israelites are like God's children. Alternate translation: "They have God as their father, and they have the glory"

Romans 9:5

General Information:

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Romans 9:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul emphasizes that those who are born in the family of Israel can really only be a true part of Israel through faith.

But it is not as though the word of God has failed

The word "word" is a metonym for the promise that God used the words to make. Alternate translation: "But we should not think that God has failed to keep his promises" or "We should know that God has kept his promises"

For it is not everyone in Israel who truly belongs to Israel

God did not make his promises to all the physical descendants of Israel (or Jacob), but to his spiritual descendants, that is, those who trust in Jesus.

Romans 9:7

Neither are all Abraham's descendants truly his children

"Nor are they all children of God just because they are Abraham's descendants"

Romans 9:8

the children of the flesh are not

Here "children of the flesh" is a metonym that refers to the physical descendants of Abraham. Alternate translation: "not all of Abraham's descendants are"

children of God

This is a metaphor that refers to people who are spiritual descendants, those who have faith in Jesus.

children of the promise

This refers to people who will inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham.

Romans 9:9

this is the word of promise

"these are the words God used when he made the promise" a son will be given to Sarah

You can translate this in an active form to express that God will give a son to Sarah. Alternate translation: "I will give Sarah a son"

Romans 9:10

our father

Paul refers to Isaac as "our father" because Isaac was the ancestor of Paul and of the Jewish believers in Rome.

had conceived

"had become pregnant"

Romans 9:11

for the children were not yet born and had not yet done anything good or bad

"before the children were born and before they had done anything, whether good or bad"

so that the purpose of God according to choice might stand

"so that what God wants to happen according to His choice will happen"

for the children were not yet born

"before the children were born"

Romans 9:12

Connecting Statement:

It may be necessary in your language to place this verse between verse 10 and verse 11: "... our father Isaac, it was said to her, 'The older will serve the younger.' For the children were not yet born and had not yet done anything good or bad, but so that the purpose of God according to choice might stand—not because of actions, but because of him who calls. It is just...."

because of him

because of God

it was said to her, "The older will serve the younger."

"God said to Rebekah, 'The older son will serve the younger son'"

Romans 9:13

Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated

The word "hated" is an exaggeration. God loved Jacob much more than he loved Esau. He did not literally hate Esau.

Romans 9:14

What then will we say?

Paul is using the question to get the attention of his readers.

Is there unrighteousness with God?

"Is God unrighteous?" or "Is God unjust?"

May it never be

"That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!" This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here.

Romans 9:15

For he says to Moses

Paul speaks about God's talking with Moses as if it is being done in the present time. Alternate translation: "For God said to Moses"

Romans 9:16

it is not because of him who wills, nor because of him who runs

"it is not because of what people want or because they try hard"

nor because of him who runs

Paul speaks of a person who does good things in order to gain God's favor as if that person were running a race.

Romans 9:17

For the scripture says

Here the scripture is personified as if God were talking to Pharaoh. Alternate translation: "The scripture records that God said"

I ... my

God is referring to himself.

you

The word "you" in this verse is singular.

I raised you up

"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused something to be what it is." Alternate translation: "I made you the powerful man that you are"

so that my name might be proclaimed

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "that people might proclaim my name"

my name

This metonym refers either 1) to God in all of his being.

Alternate translation: "who I am" or 2) To his reputation.

Alternate translation: "how great I am"

in all the earth

"wherever there are people"

Romans 9:18

whom he wishes, he makes stubborn

God makes stubborn whomever he wishes to make stubborn.

Romans 9:19

You will say then to me

Paul is talking to the critics of his teaching as though he were only talking to one person. You may need to use the plural here.

Why does he still find fault? For who has ever withstood his will?

These rhetorical questions are complaints against God. You can translate them as strong statements. Alternate translation: "He should not find fault with us. No one has ever been able to withstand his will."

he ... his

The words "he" and "his" here refer to God.

has ... withstood his will

"has ... stopped him from doing what he wanted to do"

Romans 9:20

Will what has been molded say to the one who molds it, "Why ... way?" Paul uses the potter's right to make any kind of container he wants from the clay as a metaphor for the creator's right to do whatever he wants with his creation. Paul asks questions to emphasize his point. This can be translated as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "What a person has molded should never say to the one who molds it, 'Why ... way?'"

Why did you make me this way?

This question is a rebuke and can be translated as a strong statement. Alternate translation: "You should not have made me this way!"

Romans 9:21

Does the potter not have the right ... for dishonorable use?

This rhetorical question is a rebuke. Alternate translation: "The potter certainly has the right ... for dishonorable use." honorable use ... dishonorable use

Some modern translations read, "special use ... daily use."

Romans 9:22

containers of wrath prepared for destruction

Paul speaks of people as if they were containers. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "people to whom he would show wrath and whom he will certainly destroy"

Romans 9:23

he ... his

The words "he" and "his" here refer to God.

containers of mercy, which

Paul speaks of people as if they were containers. Alternate translation: "those to whom he would show mercy, whom" the riches of his glory upon

Paul compares God's wonderful actions here to great

"riches." Alternate translation: "his glory, which is of great

value, upon"

which he had previously prepared for glory

Here "glory" refers to life in heaven with God. Alternate translation: "whom he prepared ahead of time in order that they might live with him"

Romans 9:24

also for us

The word "us" here refers to Paul and fellow believers.

called

Here "called" means God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to be his servants and proclaimers of his message of salvation through Jesus.

Romans 9:25

Connecting Statement:

In this section Paul explains how Israel's unbelief as a nation was told ahead of time by the prophet Hosea.

As he says also in Hosea

Here "he" refers to God. Alternate translation: "As God says also in the book that Hosea wrote"

Hosea

Hosea was a prophet.

I will call them 'my people' who were not my people

"I will choose those who were not my people to be my people"

her 'beloved' who was not beloved

Here "her" refers to Hosea's wife, Gomer, who represents the nation of Israel. You can translate this in an active form.

Alternate translation: "I will choose her whom I did not love to be one whom I love"

Romans 9:26

sons of the living God

The word "living" may refer to the fact that God is the only true God, and not like the false idols. Alternate translation: "children of the true God"

Romans 9:27

cries out

"calls out"

as the sand of the sea

Here Paul compares the number of the people of Israel to the number of grains of sand in the sea. Alternate translation: "too many to count"

will be saved

Paul uses the word "saved" in a spiritual sense. If God saves a person, it means that through believing in Jesus's death on the cross, God has forgiven him and rescued him from being punished for his sin. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will save"

Romans 9:28

the Lord will execute his word on the earth

"the Lord will punish people on the earth as he has said he will"

Romans 9:29

us ... we

Here the words "us" and "we" refer to Isaiah and those to whom he spoke.

we would be like Sodom, and we would have become like Gomorrah

God killed all of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their sin. Alternate translation: "we all would have been destroyed like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah" or "God would have destroyed all of us as he destroyed the people in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah"

Romans 9:30

What will we say then?

Paul uses this question to get the attention of his readers.

Alternate translation: "So this is what we must say."

That the Gentiles

"We will say that the Gentiles"

who were not pursuing righteousness

"who were not trying to get righteousness" or "who were not trying to be righteous"

righteousness, the righteousness by faith

Here "by faith" refers to placing one's trust in Christ. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "righteousness because God made them right with him when they trusted in Christ"

Romans 9:31

who did pursue a law of righteousness

"who tried to obey a law in order to get righteousness" or "who tried to be righteous by obeying a law"

did not arrive at that law

"could not keep that law" or "did not succeed at keeping that law"

Romans 9:32

Why not? Because they

You can translate this rhetorical question as a statement and include the words from the ellipsis in your translation. Paul asks this question to get the attention of his readers.

Alternate translation: "Why could they not attain righteousness? Because they" or "This is why they could not attain righteousness: they"

by works

This refers to things that people do to try to please God. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "by trying to do things that would please God" or "by keeping the Law"

Romans 9:33

as it has been written

You can indicate that Isaiah wrote this. You can also translate it in an active form. Alternate translation: "as Isaiah the prophet wrote"

in Zion

Here Zion is a metonym that represents Israel. Alternate translation: "in Israel"

stone of stumbling and a rock of offense

These phrases mean basically the same thing and are metaphors that refer to Jesus and his death on the cross. It was as if the people stumbled over a stone because they were disgusted when they considered Jesus's death on the cross.

believes in it

Because the words "stone" and "rock" are a metaphors for a person, you may need to translate this as "believes in him."

Romans 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 18-20 of this chapter. These lines of poetry are from the Old Testament.

Some translations also set prose quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words in verse 8.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's righteousness

Paul teaches here that while many Jews earnestly tried to be righteous, they did not succeed. We cannot earn God's righteousness. God gives us Jesus's righteousness when we believe in him. (See: righteous and faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses many rhetorical questions in this chapter. He does this to convince his readers that God does not save only the Hebrew people, so Christians must be ready to go and share the gospel with the whole world. (See: and save)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"I will provoke you to jealousy by what is not a nation"

Paul uses this prophecy to explain that God will use the church to make the Hebrew people jealous. This is so they will seek God and believe the gospel.

Links:

[Romans 10:1 Notes](#)

Romans 10

10:1-15

How did someone have zeal for God?

[10:2]

A person who had zeal really wanted to do something. This could be something good or something evil. Paul wrote that the Jews really wanted to do this that honor God.

See: Matthew 5:20; Acts 22:3; 2 Corinthians 7:7; Galatians 1:14; Philippians 3:6

What was "not according to knowledge?"

[10:2]

Paul wrote that the Jews did not serve God according to knowledge. He wanted to write that the Jews did not know how to honor God or be at peace with him. This was because they rejected Jesus and the gospel.

See: Psalm 14:4; Proverbs 19:2; Philippians 1:9

See: Gospel

What was righteousness that comes from God?

[10:3]

Paul wrote about a righteousness that comes from God. This is righteousness that God gives to Christians. He gives this to Christians as a gift. They need it to be at peace with God. This does not mean that Christians are perfect or do not sin.

See: Romans 1:17; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

How did Israel try to establish their own righteousness?

[10:3]

The Jews wanted to be at peace with God by obeying the law of Moses. They mistakenly thought they could do enough good things to be righteous.

See: Luke 16:15; 18:9-12

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

How was Jesus the fulfillment of the Law?

[10:4]

Paul wrote that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Law of Moses. Scholars disagree about why Paul wrote this. Some scholars think that God wanted the Law of Moses to lead people to believe in Jesus. Other scholars think he wanted to say that the Law of Moses ended when Jesus was resurrected. Other scholars think Jesus perfectly obeyed the Law of Moses.

See: Matthew 5:17-18; John 1:17; Galatians 3:23-24

See: Law of Moses; Fulfill (Fulfillment); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Paul write the same thing Moses wrote?

[10:5]

Paul wrote the same thing Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 30:11-14. Moses wanted the Jews to know that they knew what God wanted them to do because God gave them the Law of Moses. He wanted people to know the Law of Moses so they could know about God. Paul wanted people to what Jesus said and did so they can know about God.

See: Law of Moses; Heart (Metaphor)

What was the abyss?

[10:7]

See: Abyss (Bottomless Pit)

What was the word of faith?

[10:8]

When Moses wrote about the word in Deuteronomy 30:14. The word Paul wrote about was the gospel message. People needed to believe in the gospel.

See: Galatians 3:2; 1 Timothy 4:6

See: Faith (Believe in)

How did someone confess Jesus as lord?

[10:9] Someone confessed Jesus as Lord when acknowledged that Jesus rules everything.

See: Luke 12:8; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 John 4:2-3

See: Confess (Confession); Lord

How are Christians not going to be put to shame?

[10:11]

Paul wrote the same thing Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 28:16. He wanted people to know that he said the same types of things that Isaiah wrote about. The gospel does not contradict the Old Testament. to show that the Scriptures supported his gospel message. He also wanted Christians to know that God would do everything he promised.

See: Romans 1:16; Isaiah 49:23; 1 Peter 2:6

How is Jesus rich to all?

[10:12]

Paul wrote that Jesus is rich to all. Jesus had more than enough blessings to give to everyone. Jesus could bless any and all Christians.

See: Psalm 86:5; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 3:8; Philippians 4:19; Colossians 1:27; 2:2-3

See: Bless (Blessing)

Why did Paul write the same thing Joel wrote?

[10:13]

Paul wrote the same thing Joel wrote in Joel 2:32. The Jews did not think the Gentiles could be at peace with God. Paul wanted people to know that Joel taught that anyone could be at peace with God. Therefore, Gentiles could believe in the gospel and be at peace with Jesus.

See: Mark 1:3; John 12:41; 1 Corinthians 1:31; 10:4; 2 Corinthians 10:17; Acts 2:21

See: Gentile; Gospel; Jesus is God

Why did Paul write, how beautiful are the feet”?

[10:15]

In ancient times, people walked to the place where they delivered their message. In ancient Israel, people also thought feet were very dirty. Paul wrote that the people who told others about the gospel had beautiful feet. He wanted people to know that God sent these people. The gospel they taught was beautiful. This is a metaphor.

See: Isaiah 52:7; 53:1; Nahum 1:15; Ephesians 2:17; 6:15

See: Gospel; Metaphor

10:16-21

How did someone obey the good news?

[10:16]

When someone obeyed the good news, they believed the gospel. God commanded people to believe the gospel.

See: Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 2:8; 6:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; 1 Peter 2:8

See: Gospel

How did someone “believe our report”?

[10:16]

A “report”(ἀκοή/g0189) was a spoken message (see: Matthew 14:1). The report Paul wrote about was the gospel. Paul wrote the same thing Isaiah write in Isaiah 53:1. He wanted people to know that Isaiah prophesied that many of the Jews would not believe the message about Jesus (see: John 12:38).

See: Galatians 3:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 4:2

See: Gospel; Prophecy (Prophecy)

What was the word of Christ?

[10:17]

Some scholars think the word of Christ was the gospel. Other scholars think the word of Christ is the Bible.

See: Luke 8:11; 2 Corinthians 2:17; Colossians 3:16; Revelation 1:9

See: Messiah (Christ)

Why did Paul write the same thing that was written in Psalm 19:4?

[10:18]

Paul wrote the same thing that was written in Psalm 19:4. This psalm was about how the things God created helped people to know about God. They knew enough to believe in Jesus.

See: Romans 1:19-20

Why did Paul write the same thing Moses wrote?

[10:19]

Paul wrote the same thing Moses wrote in Deuteronomy 32:21. Moses wrote about the Gentiles. He said they were a nation and not a nation. This is because the Gentiles did not belong to God like the Israelites did. Paul wanted people to know that Moses prophesied that the Gentiles would believe God's message about Jesus. The Jews in Paul's day became angry and jealous because Paul taught that many Gentiles now belonged to God because they believe in Jesus.

See: Hosea 2:23

See: Gentile; Prophecy (Prophecy)

How did Paul understand the things Isaiah taught?

[10:20]

Paul wrote about certain things Isaiah taught (see: Isaiah 65:1-2). Isaiah wrote about Israel. Paul taught that the first part of this verse was about the Gentiles when Paul lived. He taught the second part of the verse was about the Jews who rejected Jesus.

See: Isaiah 52:15; 55:4-5; Matthew 22:1-10; Acts 13:46-47; 1 Thessalonians 2:16

Romans 10:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues stating his desire for Israel to believe but emphasizes that both those who are Jews and those who are not can only be saved by faith in Jesus.

Brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

my heart's desire

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions or inner being. Alternate translation: "my greatest desire"

is for them, for their salvation

"is that God will save the Jews"

Romans 10:2

I testify about them

"I declare truthfully about them"

Romans 10:3

For, failing to understand the righteousness that comes from God

Here "righteousness refers to the way God puts people right with himself. You can make this explicit in the translation.

Alternate translation: "For because they did not know how God puts people right with himself"

they did not submit to God's righteousness.

"they did not accept God's way of putting people right with himself"

Romans 10:4

For Christ is the fulfillment of the law

"For Christ completely fulfilled the law"

law for righteousness for everyone who believes

Here "believes" means "trusts." Alternate translation: "law, and he makes everyone who trusts in him right before God"

Romans 10:5

the righteousness that comes from the law

Paul speaks of "righteousness" as if it were alive and able to move. Alternate translation: "how the law makes a person

right before God"

"The man who does these things will live by them."

In order to be made right with God through the law, a person would have to keep the law perfectly, which is not possible. Alternate translation: "The person who perfectly obeys the law will live because the law will make him right before God"

will live

The words "will live" can refer to 1) eternal life or 2) mortal life in fellowship with God.

Romans 10:6

But the righteousness that comes from faith says this

Here "righteousness" is described as a person who can speak. Alternate translation: "But Moses writes this about how faith makes a person right before God"

Do not say in your heart

Moses was addressing the people as if he were speaking to only one person. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner being. Alternate translation: "Do not say to yourself"

Who will ascend into heaven?

Moses uses a question to teach his audience. His previous instruction of, "Do not say" requires a negative answer to this question. You can translate this question as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one is able to go up to heaven"

that is, to bring Christ down

"in order that they might have Christ come down to earth"

Romans 10:7

Who will descend into the abyss?

Moses uses a question to teach his audience. His previous instruction of, "Do not say" requires a negative answer to this question. You can translate this as a statement.

Alternate translation: "No person can go down and enter the place where the spirits of dead persons are."

the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To be brought up from among them is to become alive again.

dead

This word speaks of physical death.

Romans 10:8

But what does it say?

The word "it" refers to the scripture. Alternate translation: "But this is what Moses says"

The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart

Paul speaks of God's message as if it were a person who can move. The word "mouth" is a metonym that refers to what a person says. The phrase "in your heart" is metonym that refers to what a person thinks and believes. Alternate translation: "You have heard the message. You know how to speak it, and you know what it means"

the word of faith

"God's message that tells us that we must believe in him"

Romans 10:9

if with your mouth you confess Jesus as Lord

"if you confess that Jesus is Lord"

believe in your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or inner person. Alternate translation: "believe in your mind" or "truly believe"

raised him from the dead

"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to live again."

Alternate translation: "caused him to live again"

you will be saved

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will save you"

Romans 10:10

For with the heart one believes and has righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved

Here "heart" is a metonym that represents the mind or will. Alternate translation: "For it is with the mind that a person trusts and is right before God, and it is with the mouth that a person confesses so that God saves him"

with the mouth

Here "mouth" is a synecdoche that represents a person's capacity to speak.

Romans 10:11

For scripture says

Paul speaks of the scripture as if it were alive and had a voice. You can make explicit who wrote the scripture that Paul uses here. Alternate translation: "For Isaiah wrote in the scripture"

Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame

This is equivalent to: "If a person believes, then that person will not be shamed." The negative is used here for emphasis. You can translate this in an active form.

Alternate translation: "God will honor everyone who believes in him" or "God will shame only those who do not believe in Jesus"

Romans 10:12

For there is no difference between Jew and Greek

Paul implies that God will treat all people the same. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation:

"In this way, God treats the Jews and the non-Jews the same"

he is rich to all who call upon him

Here "he is rich" means that God blesses richly. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "he richly blesses all who trust in him"

Romans 10:13

For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved

Here the word "name" is a metonym for Jesus. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord will save everyone who trusts in him"

Romans 10:14

How then can they call on him in whom they have not believed?

Paul uses a question to emphasize the importance of taking the good news of Christ to those who have not heard. The word "they" refers to those who do not yet belong to God. Alternate translation: "Those who do not believe in God cannot call on him!"

How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?

Paul uses another question for the same reason. Alternate translation: "And they cannot believe in him if they have not heard his message!" or "And they cannot believe in him if they have not heard the message about him!"

believe in

trust and desire to obey

How can they hear without a preacher?

Paul uses another question for the same reason. Alternate translation: "And they cannot hear the message if someone does not tell them!"

Romans 10:15

How beautiful are the feet of those who proclaim good news

Paul uses "feet" to represent those who travel and take the message to those who have not heard it. The feet were considered a dirty and ugly part of the body, so the idea of beautiful feet would have seemed odd to Paul's readers.

Alternate translation: "How beautiful are even the feet of those who proclaim good news" or "It is wonderful when messengers go and tell others the good news"

Romans 10:16

not all of them obeyed

Here "they" refers to the Jews. "not all of the Jews obeyed"

Lord, who has believed our report?

Paul is using this question, which Isaiah prophesied in the Scriptures, to emphasize that many Jews would not believe in Jesus. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "Lord, so many of them do not believe our message!"

our report

Here, "our" refers to God and Isaiah and so is inclusive.

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing

The abstract noun "faith" can be stated as the verb

"believes." There are also words that Paul left out, but they are understood. Alternate translation: "So a person believes in Christ by hearing the message about Christ

and hearing by the word of Christ

Here "word" is a metonym that means "message." There are also words that Paul left out, but they are understood.

Alternate translation: "and a person hears the message by

someone preaching the message about Christ"

Romans 10:18

But I say, "Did they not hear?" Yes, most certainly

Paul uses a question for emphasis. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "But, I say the Jews certainly have heard the message about Christ"

Their sound has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

Both of these statements mean basically the same thing and Paul uses them for emphasis. The word "their" refers to the sun, moon, and stars. Here they are described as human messengers that tell people about God. This refers to how their existence shows God's power and glory. You can make explicit that Paul is quoting Scripture here. Alternate translation: "As the Scriptures record, 'The sun, moon, and the stars are proof of God's power and glory, and everyone in the world sees them and knows the truth about God.'"

Romans 10:19

Moreover, I say, "Did Israel not know?"

Paul uses a question for emphasis. The word "Israel" is a metonym for the people who lived in the nation of Israel. Alternate translation: "Again I tell you the people of Israel did know the message."

First Moses says, "I will provoke you ... I will stir you up

This means that Moses wrote down what God said. "I" refers to God, and "you" refers to the Israelites. Alternate translation: "First Moses says that God will provoke you ... God will stir you up"

by what is not a nation

"by those you do not consider to be a real nation" or "by people who do not belong to any nation"

By means of a nation without understanding

Here "without understanding" means that the people do not know God. Alternate translation: "By a nation with people who do not know me or my commands"

I will stir you up to anger

"I will make you angry" or "I will cause you to become angry"

you

This refers to the nation of Israel.

Romans 10:20

General Information:

Here the words "I" and "me" refer to God.

Then Isaiah was very bold when he says

This means the prophet Isaiah wrote what God had said.

I was found by those who did not seek me

Prophets often speak of things in the future as if they have already happened. This emphasizes that the prophecy will certainly come true. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Even though the Gentile people will not look for me, they will find me"

I appeared

"I made myself known"

he says

"He" refers to God, who is speaking through Isaiah.

Romans 10:21

General Information:

Here the word "my" refers to God.

All the day long I

This phrase is used to emphasize God's continual effort. "I continually"

I reached out my hands to a disobedient and stubborn people

"I tried to welcome you and to help you, but you refused my help and continued to disobey"

Chapter 11

Romans 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 9-10, 26-27, and 34-35, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Grafting

Paul uses the image of "grafting" to refer to the place of the Gentiles and Jews in the plans of God. Making one plant to be permanently part of another plant is called "grafting." Paul uses the picture of God grafting the Gentiles as a wild branch into his saving plans. But God has not forgotten about the Jews, who are spoken of as the natural plant. God will also save Jews who believe in Jesus.

Links:

[Romans 11:1 Notes](#)

Romans 11

11:1-10

Did God reject Israel?

[11:1]

When Paul wrote this, most of the Jews rejected Jesus. Therefore they were not at peace with God (see: Romans 10:1-4, 16-21). However, God saved some of the Jews, including Paul. Therefore, God did not reject the people of Israel. God still had a plan for Israel.

See: 1 Samuel 12:22; Psalm 94:14; Hosea 9:17

Why did Paul write, "may it never be"?

[11:1]

See: Romans 3:4

How did God foreknow Israel?

[11:2]

See: 1 Samuel 12:22; Psalm 94:14; Romans 8:29-30

See: Foreknow (Foreknowledge); Elect (Election)

Why did Paul write, “do you know”?

[11:2]

Paul wrote, “do you know.” He wanted to remind people of something they already knew.

See: Romans 6:3, 16; 7:1; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:2; James 4:4

How did Elijah plead against Israel?

[11:2]

Paul wrote the same thing that was written in 1 Kings 19:10, 14. In that passage, Elijah appealed to God to do something about Israel’s sin. Elijah felt like he was the only person in Israel who worshiped God. Paul talked about what happened to Elijah to show that God was doing the same thing in Paul’s day. There were not many Jews who believed in Jesus.

See: Numbers 16:15a; Jeremiah 2:30

See: Sin

Why did Paul write about breaking down God’s altars?

[11:3]

An altar was a stone platform on which people offered sacrificed animals. Israel was supposed to destroy altars to false gods (see: Exodus 34:13; Deuteronomy 7:5; Judges 2:2). However, Elijah wanted people to know that the Israelites destroyed the altars that served God.

See: Altar; Sacrifice; False gods

How did God reserve 7000 people for himself?

[11:4]

In Elijah’s day, God did not allow the entire nation of Israel to reject God. There were 7000 people who did not reject God.

He kept 7000 people who were dedicated to serve him.

See: Isaiah 10:20; 28:5; Micah 2:12; Zechariah 8:11

See: Remnant

How did someone bend their knee to Baal?

[11:4]

Paul wrote about people bending their knee to Baal. People knelt before a statue of Baal to worship Baal. They worshipped Baal.

See: 1 Kings 19:18; Isaiah 45:23; Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:10

See: False gods; Worship

How were the rest of the people hardened?

[11:7]

Paul wrote that the rest of the people were hardened. People could make themselves “hard” or stubborn. The term was sometimes also used when God made people to be more stubborn in their sin. This is a metaphor. They rejected God and it made it more difficult for them to believe in God. Some scholars think that Paul was writing about Jews who rejected Jesus. Other scholars think that Paul wrote about anyone who rejected Jesus.

See: Exodus 10:1-2; 14:17-18; Joshua 11:20; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

See: Heart (Metaphor); Sin; Metaphor

Why did Paul use metaphors in verses 8-10?

[11:8, 11:9, 11:10]

Paul wrote the same thing Isaiah wrote and David wrote (see: Isaiah 29:10; Psalm 69:22-23). When Paul wrote about the “spirit of dullness,” he was using a metaphor. He wanted people to know that non-Christians could not think clearly about God. When he spoke about people being blind and deaf, he wanted to say that they were not able to believe the gospel. When Paul wrote about a net and a trap, this was also a metaphor. People ate at a table and used nets to catch animals. Their enemies would defeat them.

See: Isaiah 6:9-10; John 12:39-40; Acts 28:25-27; 2 Corinthians 3:14; 4:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

See: Walk

11:11-24

How did someone stumble so as to fall?

[11:11]

Paul wrote about someone stumbling and falling. This is a metaphor. He wanted to write that Israel did not reject God forever.

See: Romans 9:32-33; 11:9, 11; 14:13; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 1 Peter 2:8

See: Walk; Fall (Fall Away, Stand); Stumble (Stumbling Block)

Why did Paul write about God rejecting and accepting Israel?

[11:12]

Paul wrote about God rejecting and accepting Israel in verse 15.

Why did Paul write, “how much greater”?

[11:12]

Paul wrote, “how much greater.” People often said this in ancient times. He wanted to say that if something is true, then something else must happen or something else must also be true.

See: Romans 5:9

How did Paul provoke the Jews to jealousy?

[11:14]

Paul wrote about provoking people of his own flesh to jealousy. He was speaking about the Jews (see: Romans 8:3; 9:3, 5, 8). He believed that if Gentiles believe in Jesus, then Israel would also believe in Jesus too (see: Deuteronomy 32:21).

See: Hosea 2:23

See: Flesh; Gentile

Why did Paul write, “their acceptance be but life from the dead”?

[11:15]

Paul wrote that “their acceptance be but life from the dead.” He was speaking about a time when Israel would no longer reject God. Some scholars think when Paul wrote “life from the dead,” he was writing about the final resurrection. At this time, Israel would be saved around the time of Jesus’ return to the earth. Others scholars think Paul was think Paul was writing about when God saved Israel. When this happens, many people around the world will believe in Jesus.

See: 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Ephesians 1:10

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Jesus’ Return to Earth

What is firstfruit?

[11:16]

See: Firstfruit (metaphor)

Why did Paul write about branches?

[11:17, 11:18]

Paul wrote about branches. This is a long metaphor. When Paul wrote about the branches that were cut off, he was writing about the Jews who did not believe in Jesus. The branches that were added were the Gentiles who believed in Jesus. Some scholars think Paul used the word “root” to talk about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Others think Paul was talking about the remnant of Israel. Others think Paul was talking about the Messiah.

See: Jeremiah 11:16; also Zechariah 4:11-14Psalm 52:8; Matthew 8:11-12; 21:43; John 10:16; 15:1-8

See: Metaphor; Remnant; Gentile; Messiah (Christ); People of God

How were the branches broken off?

[11:17]

Paul wrote about branches that were broken off. This was part of the metaphor of the olive tree. When God “broke off” branches, he rejected people who previously favored.

See: Jeremiah 11:16; Ezekiel 15:6-8; Matthew 21:43; 26:33

See: Metaphor

How did someone think too highly of himself?

[11:20]

Paul wrote about someone thinking too highly of himself. A proud person thought he was better than other people. He did not want the Gentile Christians to be proud or arrogant.

See: Proverbs 16:18; 1 Corinthians 10:12; Philippians 2:3-4

See: Pride

Why did Paul write that the wild branches were contrary to nature?

[11:24]

Paul wrote that the wild branches were contrary to nature. This was part of Pauls’ metaphor about the olive tree. A farmer who might take a branch from a wild tree and cut it so he could make it part of another tree on his farm. This did not happen naturally. Someone had to do this to make it happen. This is what God did with the Gentiles.

See: Metaphor; Gentile

Why did Paul wrote, “how much more”?

[11:24]

See: Romans 5:9

11:25-36

What was a mystery?

[11:25]

See: Mystery

What was the mystery Paul wrote about in verse 25? Paul wrote about a mystery in verse 25. This mystery had to do with Israel's hardness. That is, Israel rejected Jesus and this made it harder to believe in Jesus. Paul knew this because God revealed it to him. Paul knew that Israel would not reject God forever. After God saved a certain number of Gentiles, then God would help Israel to stop rejecting Jesus. All Israel would believe in Jesus.

See: Ezekiel 36:16-38; 2 Corinthians 3:14-16

See: Mystery

How would the full numbers of the Gentiles come in?

[11:25]

many Gentiles would be saved. Other scholars think was writing about God completely blessing the Gentiles.

See: Luke 21:24; Ephesians 1:9-10

See: Gentile; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Bless (Blessing)

Who is Israel in verse 26?

[11:26]

See: Israel; People of God

Why did Paul use the word "saved" in verse 26?

[11:26]

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Paul write the same thing Isaiah and Jeremiah wrote?

[11:26, 11:27]

Paul wrote the same thing Isaiah and Jeremiah wrote (see: Isaiah 59:20-21, 27:9, Jeremiah 31:33-34). He wanted people to know that the Bible proved that God would one day save Israel. In the Old Testament, God often saved Israel. Here, Paul wrote about Jesus.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Israel; Zion

What covenant did Paul write about in verse 27?

[11:27]

Paul wrote about a covenant in verse 27. Some scholars think Paul was writing about the new covenant (see: Jeremiah 31:33-34). Other scholars think that Paul was writing about the covenant God made with Abraham (see: Romans 11:28).

See: Jeremiah 31:31-34; 50:20; Ezekiel 36:25-29; 2 Corinthians 3:1-11; Hebrews 7:22; 8:6-12; 10:16; 12:24; 13:20

See: Covenant; New Covenant; Covenant with Abraham

How were the Israelites enemies for your sake?

[11:28]

Paul wrote that the Israelites were enemies for your sake. The Israelites who reject God were enemies of God. Because of this, they were also enemies of Christians. However, God wanted the Gentiles to be reconciled to himself.

See: Acts 14:2; 17:5-7, 13; 1 Thessalonians 2:15-16

How did God shut up all into disobedience?

[11:32]

Paul wrote that every person is a sinner (see: Romans 3:19). Paul wanted people to know that if Jews or Gentiles were saved, they were saved from being an enemy of God. They would stop fighting against God.

See: Galatians 3:22

See: Sin

Why did Paul write the same thing Isaiah wrote?

[11:24, 11:35]

Paul wrote the same thing Isaiah wrote (see: Isaiah 40:13). He wanted people to know that God was perfectly wise and knows everything. People could not understand God because they are people and not God. No person knows what God is thinking. No person can say that God owes them something.

See: Psalm 92:5; 1 Corinthians 2:16

Why did Paul write, "from him and through him and to him are all things"?

[11:36]

He wanted people to know that God created everything. God also keeps everything alive. If God wanted nothing to exist in the world, then everything would stop existing. Every was also created to honor God.

Romans 11:1

Connecting Statement:

Though Israel as a nation has rejected God, God wants them to understand salvation comes by grace without works.

I say then

"I, Paul, say then"

did God reject his people?

Paul asks this question so that he can answer the questions

of other Jews who are upset that God has included the Gentiles among his people, while the hearts of the Jewish people have been hardened.

May it never be.

"That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!" This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated this in Romans 9:14.

tribe of Benjamin

This refers to the tribe descended from Benjamin, one of the 12 tribes into which God divided the people of Israel.

Romans 11:2

whom he foreknew

"whom he knew ahead of time"

Do you not know what the scripture says about Elijah, how he pleaded with God against Israel?

You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation:

"Surely you know what the Scriptures record about when Elijah pleaded with God against Israel."

what the scripture says

Paul is referring to the scripture as if they were able to speak.

Romans 11:3

they have killed

"They" refers to the people of Israel.

I alone am left

The pronoun "I" here refers to Elijah.

seeking my life

"desiring to kill me"

Romans 11:4

But what does God's answer say to him?

Paul is using this question to bring the reader to his next point. Alternate translation: "But this is God's answer to him:"

him

The pronoun "him" refers to Elijah.

seven thousand men

"7,000 men"

Romans 11:5

remnant

Here this means a small part of people whom God chose to receive his grace.

Romans 11:6

But if it is by grace

Paul continues to explain how God's mercy works.

Alternate translation: "But since God's mercy works by grace"

Romans 11:7

What then?

"What should we conclude?" Paul asks this question to move his reader to his next point. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "This is what we need to remember" or "So"

Romans 11:8

God has given them a spirit of dullness, eyes so that they should not see, and ears so that they should not hear

This is a metaphor about the fact that the people are spiritually dull. They are not able to hear or receive spiritual truth.

spirit of

Here this means "having the characteristics of," such as the "spirit of wisdom."

eyes so that they should not see

The concept of seeing with one's eyes was considered to be equivalent to gaining understanding.

ears so that they should not hear

The concept of hearing with the ears was considered to be

equivalent to obedience.

Romans 11:9

Let their table become a snare and a trap

"Table" here is a metonym that represents feasting, and "snare" and "trap" are metaphors that represent punishment. You can translate this in an active form.

Alternate translation: "Please, God, make their feasts like a trap that catches them"

a stumbling block

A "stumbling block" is anything that causes a person to trip so that he falls down. Here it represents something that tempts a person to sin. Alternate translation: "something that tempts them to sin"

a retribution for them

"something that allows you to take revenge on them"

Romans 11:10

bend their backs continually

Here "bend their backs" is a metonym for forcing slaves to carry heavy loads on their backs. This is a metaphor for making them suffer. Alternate translation: "make them suffer like people carrying heavy loads"

Romans 11:11

Connecting Statement:

With Israel as a nation rejecting God, Paul warns the Gentiles to be careful they do not make the same mistake. Did they stumble so as to fall?

Paul uses this question to add introduce the next thing he wants to say. If your language uses a different way to introduce new topics, you can use it here. Here the words "stumble" and "fall" are metaphors for sinning and having God reject the sinner. Alternate translation: "Has God rejected them forever because they sinned?"

May it never be.

"That is not possible!" or "Certainly not!" This expression strongly denies that this could happen. You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here. See how you translated this in Romans 9:14.

provoke ... to jealousy

See how you translated this phrase in Romans 10:19.

Romans 11:12

if their trespass is the riches of the world, and if their loss is the riches of the Gentiles

Both of these phrases mean basically the same thing. If you need to, you can combine them in your translation.

Alternate translation: "when the Jews trespassed, the result was that God abundantly blessed the non-Jews"

the riches of the world

Because the Jews rejected Christ, God richly blessed the Gentiles by giving them the opportunity to receive Christ. the world

Here the "world" is a metonym that refers to the people who live in the world, especially the Gentiles.

how much greater will their fulfillment be?

This can be translated as a statement. The words "their fulfillment" refer to either 1) the time when God blesses the Jews 2) when the Jews believe in Jesus. Alternate translation: "their fulfillment will be much greater." or "how much better will it be for the non-Jews when all the Jews believe in Jesus?" or "how much better will it be for

the non-Jews when God fully blesses the Jews?"

Romans 11:13

General Information:

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Romans 11:14

provoke to jealousy

See how you translated this phrase in Romans 10:19.

those who are of my own flesh

This refers to "my fellow Jews."

Perhaps we will save some of them

God will save those who believe. Alternate translation:

"Perhaps some will believe and therefore God will save them"

Romans 11:15

For if their rejection means the reconciliation of the world

"For if because God rejected them, he will reconcile the rest of the world to himself"

their rejection

The pronoun "their" refers to Jewish unbelievers.

the world

Here "the world" is a metonym for the people who live in the world. Alternate translation: "the people in the world"

what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?

Paul asks this question to emphasize that when God accepts the Jews, it will be a wonderful thing. The abstract noun

"acceptance" can be translated as a verb. Alternate

translation: "how will it be when God accepts them? It will be like they have come back to life from among the dead!"

or "then when God accepts them, it will be like they have died and become alive again!"

the dead

These words speak of all dead people together in the underworld.

Romans 11:16

If the firstfruits are holy, so is the lump of dough

Paul is speaking of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Israelites' ancestors, as if they were the first grain or "firstfruits" to be harvested. He is also speaking of the Israelites who are descendants of those men as if they were a "lump of dough" made from the grain. Alternate translation: "If Abraham is counted as the first of what has been offered to God, all of our ancestors who followed should also be counted as God's possession"

firstfruits

The people always dedicated to God the first crops that they harvested. Here "firstfruits" stands for the first people to believe in Christ.

If the root is holy, so are the branches

Paul is speaking of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Israelites' ancestors, as if they were the root of a tree, and the Israelites, who are descendants of those men, as if they were the tree's "branches."

Romans 11:17

But if some of the branches were broken off

Here Paul refers to the Jews who rejected Jesus as "broken branches." You can translate this in an active form.

Alternate translation: "But if someone broke off some of the branches"

if you, a wild olive branch, were grafted in among them

Here Paul speaks of the Gentile Christians as if they were "grafted branches." You can translate this in an active form.

Alternate translation: "if God grafted you, a wild olive branch, among them"

if you, a wild olive branch

The pronoun "you" is singular. Here "you" and the phrase

"a wild olive branch," refer to a Gentile person, in general, who has accepted salvation through Jesus.

the rich root of the olive tree

Here "the rich root" is a metaphor that refers to the promises of God.

Romans 11:18

do not boast over the branches

Here "the branches" is a metaphor that stands for the Jewish people. Alternate translation: "do not say you are better than the Jewish people God has rejected"

it is not you who supports the root, but the root that supports you

Again Paul implies that the Gentile believers are branches.

God saves them only because of the covenant promises that he made to the Jews.

Romans 11:19

Branches were broken off

Here "branches" refers to the Jews who rejected Jesus and whom God has now rejected. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God broke branches off"

I might be grafted in

Paul uses this phrase to refer to the Gentile believers whom God has accepted. You can translate this in an active form.

Alternate translation: "he might attach me in"

Romans 11:20

their ... they

The pronouns "their" and "they" refer to the Jewish people who did not believe.

but you stand firm because of your faith

Paul speaks of the Gentile believers remaining faithful as if they were standing firm and no one could move them.

Alternate translation: "but you remain because of your faith"

be arrogant in your thoughts

"think that you are better than you are" or "be proud"

Romans 11:21

For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you

Here the "natural branches" refers to the Jewish people who rejected Jesus. Alternate translation: "Since God did not spare those unbelieving Jews, who grew up like a tree's natural branches that came from the root, then know that if you do not believe, he will not spare you either"

Romans 11:22

the kind actions and the severity of God

Paul is reminding the Gentile believers that although God may act very kindly toward them, he will not hesitate to judge and punish them.

severity came on the Jews who fell ... God's kindness comes on you

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns

"severity" and "kindness." Alternate translation: "God dealt harshly with the Jews who fell ... God acts kindly toward you"

the Jews who fell

Here "fell" is a metaphor that means to have done

something wrong. Alternate translation: "the Jews who have done wrong" or "the Jews who have refused to trust in Christ"

if you continue in his kindness

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "kindness." Alternate translation: "if you continue doing what is right so that he continues being kind to you"

Otherwise you also will be cut off

Paul again uses the metaphor of a branch, which God can "cut off" if he needs to. Here "cut off" is a metaphor for rejecting someone. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Otherwise God will also cut you off" or "Otherwise God will also reject you"

Romans 11:23

if they do not continue in their unbelief

The phrase "do not continue in their unbelief" is a double negative. You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "if they start believing"

will be grafted in

Paul speaks of the Jews as if they were branches that could be grafted back into a tree if they start to believe in Jesus.

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will graft back in"

graft

This is a common process in which the end of a live branch of one tree is inserted into another tree so that the new branch will continue to grow in that tree.

they ... them

All occurrences of "they" or "them" refer to the Jews.

Romans 11:24

For if you were cut out of what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature were grafted into a good olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree?

Paul continues speaking of the Gentile believers and Jews as if they were branches of a tree. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For if God had cut you out of what is by nature a wild olive tree, and contrary to nature had grafted you into a good olive tree, how much more will he graft these Jews, who are the natural branches, into their own olive tree?"

how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "then these Jews, who are the natural branches, will certainly be grafted back into their own olive tree."

branches

Paul is speaking of the Jews and Gentiles as if they were branches. The "natural branches" represent the Jews, and the "grafted branches" represent the Gentile believers.

Romans 11:25

I do not want you to be uninformed

Here Paul uses a double negative to emphasize the positive. You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "I very much want you to be informed"

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

I

The pronoun "I" refers to Paul.

you ... you ... your

The pronouns "you" and "your" refer to the Gentile believers.

so that you may not be wise in your own thinking

Paul does not want the Gentile believers to think they are wiser than the Jewish unbelievers. Alternate translation:

"so that you will not think you are wiser than you are"

A partial hardening has come upon Israel

This is the mystery that Paul referred to earlier in the sentence. This can be made explicit. "A partial hardening" is a metaphor for many of the people remaining stubborn. Paul said this because some of the Jews stubbornly refused to trust Jesus. Alternate translation: "This mystery is that a partial hardening has come upon Israel" or "Many people of Israel remain stubborn"

until the full number of the Gentiles

Here "full number" means the amount determined by God.

It does not mean all Gentiles. Alternate translation: "until the number of Gentiles determined by God"

comes in

This is a metaphor meaning to be saved or to become a Christian. Alternate translation: "is saved" or "believes in Christ"

Romans 11:26

Connecting Statement:

Paul says that, to the glory of God, a deliverer will come out of Israel.

Thus all Israel will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Thus God will save all Israel"

just as it is written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "just as the scriptures record"

Out of Zion

Here "Zion" is used as a metonym for the place where God dwells. Alternate translation: "From where God is among the Jews"

the Deliverer

"the one who brings his people to safety"

He will remove ungodliness

Paul speaks of ungodliness as if it were an object that someone could remove, such as a garment..

from Jacob

Here "Jacob" is used as a metonym for Israel. Alternate translation: "from the Israelite people"

Romans 11:27

I will take away their sins

Here Paul speaks of sins as if they were objects that someone could take away. Alternate translation: "I will remove the burden of their sins"

Romans 11:28

As far as the gospel is concerned

You can make explicit why Paul mentions the gospel.

Alternate translation: "Because the Jews rejected the gospel"

they are enemies for your sake

You can make explicit whose enemies they are, and how

this was for the Gentiles' sake. Alternate translation: "they are God's enemies for your sake" or "God has treated them as enemies in order that you also might hear the gospel" as far as election is concerned

You can make explicit why Paul mentions election.

Alternate translation: "because God has elected the Jews" or "because God has chosen the Jews"

they are beloved because of the patriarchs

You can make explicit who loves the Jews and why Paul mentions their forefathers. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God still loves them because of what he promised to do for their ancestors"

Romans 11:29

For the gifts and the call of God are irrevocable

Paul speaks of the spiritual and material blessings that God promised to give his people as if they were gifts. The call of God refers to the fact that God called the Jews to be his people. Alternate translation: "For God will never change his mind about what he has promised to give them, and about how he has called them to be his people" or "God will never take back his gifts or his call"

are irrevocable

"can never be taken back"

Romans 11:30

you were formerly disobedient to God

"you did not obey God in the past"

you have received mercy because of their disobedience

Here mercy means God's undeserved blessings. Alternate translation: "because the Jews have rejected Jesus, you have received blessings that you did not deserve"

you

This refers to Gentile believers, and is plural.

Romans 11:31

General Information:

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Romans 11:32

God has shut up all into disobedience

God has treated people who disobey him like prisoners who are unable to escape from prison. Alternate translation: "God has made prisoners of those who disobey him. Now they cannot stop disobeying God"

Romans 11:33

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God

Here "wisdom" and "knowledge" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "How amazing are the many benefits of both God's wisdom and knowledge"

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering

"We are completely unable to understand the things that he has decided and to find out the ways in which he acts toward us"

Romans 11:34

For who has known the mind of the Lord or who has become his advisor?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that no one is as wise as the Lord. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one has ever known the mind of the Lord, and no one has become his advisor."

the mind of the Lord

Here "mind" is a metonym for knowing things or thinking about things. Alternate translation: "all that the Lord knows" or "what the Lord thinks about"

Romans 11:35

Or who has first given anything to God, that God must repay him?"

Paul uses this question to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "No one has ever given anything to God that he did not first receive from God"

Romans 11:36

For from him ... through him ... to him

Here, all occurrences of "him" refers to God.

To him be the glory forever

This expresses Paul's desire for all people to honor God. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "May all people honor him forever"

Chapter 12

Romans 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 20, which is from the Old Testament.

Many scholars believe Paul uses the word "therefore" in [Romans 12:1](#) to refer back to all of Chapters 1-11. Having carefully explained the Christian gospel, Paul now explains how Christians should live in light of these great truths. Chapters 12-16 focus on living out one's Christian faith. Paul uses many different commands in these chapters to give these practical instructions. (See: faith)

Special concepts in this chapter

Christian living

Under the law of Moses, people were required to offer temple sacrifices of animals or grain. Now Christians are required to live their lives as a type of sacrifice to God. Physical sacrifices are no longer required. (See: lawofmoses)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Body of Christ

The body of Christ is an important metaphor or image used in Scripture to refer to the church. Each church member has a unique and important function. Christians need each other.

Links:

[Romans 12:1 Notes](#)

Romans 12

12:1-2

What was a living sacrifice?

[12:1]

In ancient Israel, people killed animals as sacrifices to God. When the priest offered these animals to God, the animals were already dead. When Paul wrote about a living sacrifice people were probably confused. However, he wanted Christians to know when they lived in a way that honored God, this was a type of sacrifice or offering to God.

See: Isaiah 56:7; Romans 6:13; 1 Peter 2:5

See: Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

What is a reasonable service?

[12:1]

Paul wrote about a reasonable service. Some scholars think Paul wanted people to know that it was right for them to serve God. This is because God was gracious and merciful to people. Other scholars think Paul wanted people to serve God completely.

See: Psalm 19:14; 1 Corinthians 5:7-8

See: Grace; Mercy

How was someone conformed to this world?

[12:2]

Someone who was conformed to this world did evil things. They did the same types of things non-Christians did.

See: John 15:19; Ephesians 4:22-24; 1 Peter 1:14; 1 John 2:15-17

See: World

How were Christians to be transformed by the renewal of their mind?

[12:2]

God wanted Christians to think in a different way than they thought about before they were Christians. God changed Christians so that they could think in a new way.

See: Ezekiel 36:26-27; Romans 13:14; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:10

See: Mind

What is the will of God?

[12:2]

See: Will of God

12:3-8

How did people think highly of themselves?

[12:3]

Paul wrote about people thinking highly of themselves. People often think they are greater than they are and deserve to be honored more than they should be honored. This was wrong. It is pride.

See: Proverbs 26:12; Micah 6:8; 2 Corinthians 12:7; Galatians 6:3; Philippians 2:3-4; James 4:6, 10

See: Pride

How did someone think with sober judgment?

[12:3]

Paul wrote about someone thinking with sober judgment. He wanted people to think carefully and wisely about the things they did.

See: 1 Peter 4:7; 5:8; Titus 2:2

See: Judge (Judgment)

What is the measure and proportion of faith?

[12:3]

Paul wrote about the measure (see: Romans 12:3) and proportion of faith (see: Romans 12:6). Some scholars think Paul was writing about the amount of faith that God gave to a person. Other scholars think that Paul was writing about the spiritual gift of faith that God gave to certain people.

See: John 3:34; Ephesians 4:7-13

See: Faith (Believe in); Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What were the body and its members?

[12:4]

Paul wrote about a person's body. A body has many different parts or "members" (μέλος/g3196). Each body part did something specific. Paul used this as a metaphor. He wanted every Christian to know that they each served God in a specific way.

See: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 5:30; Colossians 1:18

See: Body of Christ; Metaphor

How did people have different gifts?

[12:6]

Paul wrote that Christians have different gifts. He was writing about spiritual gifts.

See: 1 Corinthians 12:27-28; Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Peter 4:10-11

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the gift of prophecy?

[12:6]

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy)

12:9-21

How did someone hold on to something good?

[12:9]

Paul wrote about holding on to something good. This is a metaphor. Paul wanted Christians to always try to do good things.

See: Psalm 34:14; Amos 5:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:11

See: Metaphor

How did someone hesitate?

[12:11]

Someone hesitated when they thought too much about what they were going to do and did not do anything because of it. Perhaps they did this because they did not want to do anything or did not want to do something at a certain time. That is, they were lazy.

See: Proverbs 13:4; Matthew 25:5-6; Hebrews 6:11-12; 10:38; Revelation 3:15-16

How did Paul want people to be eager?

[12:11]

Paul wrote, "concerning the spirit, be eager." Some scholars think Paul wanted Christians to be eager or excited to do something. Other scholars think Paul wanted people to know that the Holy Spirit can help them be eager or excited to do something.

See: 1 Peter 1:22

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit

How did someone rejoice in hope?

[12:12]

Someone rejoiced in hope when they trusted God's plan for them. They knew God would favor them. Therefore, they should rejoice.

See: Psalm 16:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17; 1 Peter 4:13

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Hope

How does someone share in the needs of people?

[12:13]

Paul wrote about people sharing in the needs of other people. Paul wanted Christians to help poor people who need things to live.

See: Acts 11:27-30; 2 Corinthians 9:12; Galatians 2:10; Hebrews 6:10; 13:16

What is hospitality?

[12:13]

See: Hospitable (Hospitality)

How were people of the same mind toward one another?

[12:16]

Paul wrote about people being the same mind toward one another. He wanted Christians to be at peace with one another.

See: Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Peter 3:8

See: Mind

How did Paul want Christians to live?

[12:18]

Paul wrote about how Christians should live. He did not want them to repay evil for evil (see: Romans 12:17). He also did not want Christians to avenge themselves (see: Romans 12:19). He did not want Christians to do evil things to people because they did evil things to them.

See: Exodus 23:4-5; 1 Samuel 25:26, 31, 33-34; Proverbs 20:22; Matthew 5:39; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:9

How did someone give way to the wrath of God?

[12:19]

In the last days, God will punish people with his wrath. He will punish people for doing evil things. Paul did not want Christians to try to punish people. He knew God would punish people. This is something that God should do. People

should not do this because they do not know everything.

See: Ezekiel 25:12-14; Nahum 1:2-3; Romans 1:18; 1 Thessalonians 4:6; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8

See: Wrath; Last Days; Punish (Punishment)

Why did Paul write the same thing Moses wrote?

[12:19]

Paul wrote the same thing Moses wrote (see: Deuteronomy 32:35). He wanted people to know that he taught the same things Moses taught. He wanted people to trust that God would punish people.

See: Hebrews 10:30

See: Punish (Punishment)

Why did Paul write the same thing Solomon wrote?

[12:20]

Paul wrote the same thing Solomon wrote (see: Proverbs 25:21). Solomon wanted the Israelites to help their enemies and not take revenge on them. Paul wrote that this will heap coal of fire on their heads. This is a metaphor. Some scholars think the person will be ashamed if a Christians is kind to them after they do something evil to the Christian. Other scholars think Paul was writing about God punishing them. If Christians do not try to punish this person, then God will punish them more (see: Psalm 140:10).

See: 2 Kings 6:22; Matthew 5:43-45

See: Avenge (Vengeance, Revenge); Metaphor; Punish (Punishment); Fire

How was someone not overcome by evil or overcome evil with good?

[12:21]

Paul wrote about someone not being overcome by evil. He did not want people to get so angry that they tried to punish people. Instead, he wanted them to good things even though people did evil things to them.

See: Proverbs 16:32; Luke 6:27-30; 1 Peter 3:9

Romans 12:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells what the life of a believer should be and how believers should serve.

I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present
Here "brothers" refers to fellow believers, both male and female. Alternate translation: "Fellow believers, because of the great mercy that God has given you I very much want you to present"

to present your bodies a living sacrifice

Here Paul uses the word "bodies" to refer to the entire beings of all those he is addressing. Paul is comparing a believer in Christ who completely obeys God to the animals that the Jews killed and then offered to God. Alternate translation: "to offer yourselves completely to God while you are alive as if you were a dead sacrifice on a temple altar"

holy, acceptable to God

Possible meanings are 1) "a sacrifice that you give to God alone and that pleases him" or 2) "acceptable to God because it is morally pure"

This is your reasonable service

"This is the right way to worship God"

Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Do not behave as this world behaves" or "Do not do what this world does"

this world

This refers to unbelievers who live in the world.

but be transformed by the renewal of your mind

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but let God change the way you think and behave"

Romans 12:3

by the grace that was given to me I say

Here "grace" refers to God's choosing Paul to be an apostle and leader of the church. You can make this explicit in your translation. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "because God freely chose me to be an apostle, I can say"

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought

"Do not think you are better than other people"

rather, think with sober judgment

"instead, you should be wise in how you think about yourselves"

each according to the measure of faith that God has given you

Paul implies here that believers have different abilities that correspond to their faith in God. Alternate translation: "since God has given each of you different abilities because of your trust in him"

Romans 12:4

For

Paul uses this word to show that he will now explain why some Christians should not think they are better than others.

we have many members in one body

Paul refers to all the believers in Christ as if they were different parts of the human body. He does this to illustrate that although believers may serve Christ in different ways, each person belongs to Christ and serves in an important way.

members

Such parts of the body as eyes, ears, and hands.

Romans 12:5

are individually members of each other

Paul speaks of the believers as if God had physically joined them together like the parts of the human body. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God has joined each believer together with all other believers"

Romans 12:6

We have different gifts according to the grace that was given to us
Paul speaks of believers' different abilities as being free gifts from God. You can translate this in an active form.
Alternate translation: "God has freely given each of us different abilities to do things for him"

let it be done according to the proportion of his faith

Possible meanings are 1) "let him speak prophecies that do not go beyond the amount of faith God has given us" or 2) "let him speak prophecies that agree with the teachings of our faith."

Romans 12:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 12:8

If one's gift is giving, let him do it

Here "giving" refers to giving money and other things to people. You can make this meaning explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "If one has the gift of giving money or other goods to people in need, let him give"

Romans 12:9

Let love be without hypocrisy

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "You must love people sincerely and truly" love

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

Romans 12:10

Concerning love of the brothers, be affectionate

Here Paul begins a list of nine items, each of the form "Concerning ... be" to tell the believers what kind of people they should be. You may need to translate some of the items as "Concerning ... do." The list continues to Romans 12:13.

Concerning love of the brothers

"As for how you love your fellow believers"

love

In the original language a different word is used for "love" here than is used in 12:9. This word means brotherly love or love for a friend or family member. This is natural human love between friends or relatives.

be affectionate

"show affection"

Concerning honor, respect one another

"Honor and respect one another" or "Honor your fellow believers by respecting them"

Romans 12:11

Concerning diligence, do not be hesitant. Concerning the spirit, be eager. Concerning the Lord, serve him

"Do not be lazy in your duty, but be eager to follow the Spirit and to serve the Lord"

Romans 12:12

Rejoice in hope

"Rejoice because of your hope" or "Rejoice as you hope."

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate

translation: "Rejoice because of what you confidently wait for" or "Rejoice as you confidently wait"

endure tribulation

"be patient when you suffer" or "wait patiently whenever you have troubles"

be faithful in prayer

"pray faithfully"

Romans 12:13

General Information:

This is the last item in the list that began in [Romans 12:9](#).

Share in the needs of God's holy people

"When fellow Christians are in trouble, help them with what they need"

Find many ways to show hospitality

"Always welcome Christians into your home when they need a place to stay"

Romans 12:14

General Information:

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Romans 12:15

General Information:

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Romans 12:16

Be of the same mind toward one another

This is an idiom that means to live in unity. Alternate

translation: "Agree with one another" or "Live in unity with each other"

Do not think in proud ways

"Do not think that you are more important than others"

accept lowly people

"welcome people who do not seem important"

Do not be wise in your own thoughts

"Do not think of yourselves as having more wisdom than everyone else"

Romans 12:17

Repay no one evil for evil

"Do not do evil things to anyone who has done evil things to you"

Do good things in the sight of all people

"Do things that everyone considers to be good"

Romans 12:18

as far as it depends on you, live at peace with all people

"do whatever you can to live in peace with everyone"

Romans 12:19

give way to the wrath of God

Here "wrath" is a metonym for God's punishment. Alternate translation: "allow God to punish those who harm you"

For it is written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "For someone has written"

Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and

emphasize that God will avenge his people. Alternate

translation: "I will certainly avenge you"

Romans 12:20

your enemy ... feed him ... give him a drink ... if you do this, you will heap

All forms of "you" and "your" are addressed as to one person.

But "if your enemy is hungry ... his head."

Paul quotes another part of scripture. Alternate translation: "But the scripture also says, 'If your enemy is hungry ... his head.'"

feed him

"give him some food"

you will heap coals of fire on his head

Paul speaks of the blessings that the enemies will receive as if someone were pouring hot coals on their heads. Possible meanings are 1) "you will make the person who harmed you feel ashamed about how he has mistreated you" or 2)

"you will give God a reason to judge your enemy more harshly"

Romans 12:21

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good

Paul describes "evil" as though it were a person. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Do not let those who are evil defeat you, but defeat those who are evil by doing what is good"

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil

These verbs are addressed as to one person and so are singular.

Chapter 13

Romans 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In the first part of this chapter, Paul teaches Christians to obey rulers who govern them. At that time, ungodly Roman rulers governed the land. (See: godly)

Special concepts in this chapter

Ungodly rulers

Some readers will find it difficult to understand what Paul teaches about obeying rulers, especially if they are in places where rulers persecute the church. Christians must obey their rulers as well as obey God, unless the rulers do not allow Christians to do something God explicitly commands them to do. There are times when a believer must submit to these rulers and suffer at their hands. Christians understand that this world is temporary and they will ultimately be with God forever. (See: eternity)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh and sin)

Links:

[Romans 13:1 Notes](#)

ROMANS 13

13:1-7

What is the soul?

[13:1]

See: Soul

How was someone subject to their rulers?

[13:1]

See: Submit (Submission)

What were the higher authorities?

[13:1]

Paul wrote about higher authorities. These were the rulers of a city or country.

See: Proverbs 8:15-16; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17

How were the authorities a terror?

[13:3]

Paul wrote about rulers. These rulers caused someone to be afraid. If a person did something wrong, they would be afraid of being caught and punished.

See: Proverbs 20:2; 14:35; 1 Peter 3:13-14

See: Punish (Punishment)

Why did people receive praise from rulers?

[13:3]

If people obeyed those who ruled them, then the rulers might commend them for following their law.

See: Nehemiah 2:8b; Daniel 1:9; Acts 7:10

How was a ruler a servant of God to you for good?

[13:4]

Paul taught that God gave people permission to rule other people. Although God knew that rulers were not perfect, Paul taught that the rulers helped people to do the right things.

See: 2 Chronicles 19:6; Daniel 2:21

How did rulers carry the sword?

[13:4]

In ancient times, people carried sword when they fought in a war. This was a symbol that the rulers could punish people and kill them for doing the wrong things.

See: Symbol

What is an avenger for wrath?

[13:4]

God's wrath is his anger at sin. Paul said that Christians were to not take vengeance on their enemies (see: Romans 12:19-21), because God punishes every evil thing people do. Paul wanted people to know that God might use rulers to punish people.

See: 1 Thessalonians 4:6

See: Avenge (Vengeance, Revenge)); Wrath; Sin

What is a tax and a toll?

[13:6, 13:7]

See: Tax (Tax Collector, Toll)

13:8-10

Why did Paul not want Christian to owe people anything?

[13:8]

Paul did not want Christians to owe people anything. He did not want Christians to owe money to the government or to other people.

See: Proverbs 3:27-28; Matthew 22:21; James 5:4

How did love fulfill the law?

[13:8]

Paul wrote that love fulfilled the Law of Moses. A person who loves someone else would not harm that person in any way. Therefore, when a person truly loves others, that person has satisfied all the demands of the Law of Moses.

See: Exodus 20:13-15, 17; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:37-40; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8

See: Law of Moses; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

How was the Law of Moses summed up in Leviticus 19:18?

[13:9]

Paul wrote about love fulfilling the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses wrote about loving other people (see: Leviticus 19:18). If someone truly obeyed this one rule, they would follow all of the Law of Moses.

See: Mark 12:31; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8-10

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment) ; Law of Moses

13:11- 14

Why did Paul write about awakening out of sleep?

[13:11]

In the Bible, being asleep was sometimes used as a metaphor to talk about someone who does not want to try to live in a way that honors God or to learn about God. Paul did not want people to be lazy. Instead, people should do the things that God wants them to do.

See: Mark 13:35-37; Ephesians 5:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-7

See: Sleep (Metaphor)

Why did Paul write about the night and the day?

[13:12]

Paul wrote about the time, he was writing about the last days. When he wrote about the night because it was dark and the day because it was light. In the Bible, these were often metaphors about good and evil. Paul warn.

See: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; 1 Peter 4:7; 2 Peter 3:11

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Metaphor; Last Days

What were the works of darkness and the armor of light?

[13:12]

Paul wrote about works of darkness and the armor of light. This is a metaphor. He wanted people to live in a way that honors God and not do things that dishonor God. Christians should prepare in some way to do the right things.

See: Ephesians 5:11; Colossians 3:8-17; James 1:21

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Metaphor

How did someone walk appropriately?

[13:13]

Paul wrote that Christians should walk appropriately. This is a metaphor. He wanted Christians to live in a way that honors God.

See: Ephesians 5:15; Colossians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 4:12; 1 John 2:6; 2 John 4, 6; 3 John 4

See: Walk; Metaphor

How did someone put on Jesus?

[13:14]

Paul wrote that Christians should put on Jesus. This is a metaphor. Christians should completely obey Jesus and live in a way that honors God.

See: Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-12

How did someone not make provision for the flesh

[13:14]

Paul wanted Christians not to make provision for the flesh. He did not want Christians to do the evil things they wanted to do. This would only want to make them sin more.

See: Galatians 5:16-17, 24; 1 Peter 2:11

See: Flesh

Romans 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells believers how to live under their rulers.

Let every soul be subject to

Here "soul" is a synecdoche for the whole person. "Every Christian should obey" or "Everyone should obey"

higher authorities

"government officials"

for

because

there is no authority unless it comes from God

"all authority comes from God"

The authorities that exist have been appointed by God

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "And the people who are in authority are there because God put them there"

Romans 13:2

that authority

"that government authority" or "the authority that God placed in power"

those who oppose it will receive judgment on themselves

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate

translation: "God will judge those who oppose government authority"

Romans 13:3

For

Paul uses this word to begin his explanation of Romans 13:2 and to tell about what will result if the government condemns a person.

rulers are not a terror to those who do good deeds, but to those who do evil deeds

"rulers do not cause terror for those who do good deeds, but for those who do evil deeds"

Do you desire to have no fear of the one in authority?

Paul uses this question to get people to think about what they need to do in order not to be afraid of rulers. Alternate translation: "Let me tell you how you can be unafraid of the ruler."

you will receive his praise

"the one in authority will say good things about you"

Romans 13:4

he does not carry the sword for no reason

You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate

translation: "he carries the sword for a very good reason" or "he has the power to punish people, and he will punish people"

carry the sword

Roman governors carried a short sword as a symbol of their authority.

an avenger for wrath on the one who does evil

Here "wrath" represents the punishment people receive when they do evil deeds. Alternate translation: "a person who punishes, on God's behalf, those who do evil"

Romans 13:5

not only because of the wrath, but also because of conscience

"not only so the government will not punish you, but also so you will have a clear conscience before God"

Romans 13:6

Because of this

"Because the government punishes evildoers"

you pay

Paul is addressing the believers here, so this is plural.

For authorities

"This is why you should pay taxes: authorities"

attend to

"administer" or "work on"

Romans 13:7

Pay to everyone

Paul is addressing the believers here, so this is plural.

tax to whom tax is due, toll to whom toll is due, fear to whom fear is due, honor to whom honor is due

The word "pay" is understood from the previous phrase in the general sense of "give." Alternate translation: "pay tax to whom tax is due, pay toll to whom toll is due, pay fear to whom fear is due, and pay honor to him to whom honor is due"

fear to whom fear is due, honor to whom honor is due

Here paying fear and honor is a metaphor for fearing and honoring those who deserve to be feared and honored.

Alternate translation: "fear those who deserve to be feared, and honor those who deserved to be honored" or "respect those whom you ought to respect, and honor those whom you ought to honor"

toll

This is a kind of tax.

Romans 13:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells believers how to act toward neighbors.

Owe no one anything, except to love one another

This is a double negative. You can translate it in a positive form. Alternate translation: "Pay all you owe to everyone, and love one another"

Owe

This verb is plural and applies to all the Roman Christians. anything, except to love one another

This elliptical command includes the idea of "owe" from earlier in the sentence. Owing things or service to other people is a metaphor for the duty Christians have, in this case to love one another. Alternate translation: "anything, but remember that God has given you the duty to love one another"

love

The kind of love that comes from God is focused on having good things happen to others even when those good things do not happen to the one who loves.

Romans 13:9

covet

To covet is to desire to have or possess something that another person possesses.

Romans 13:10

Love does no harm to a neighbor

This phrase portrays love as a person who is being kind to other people. Alternate translation: "People who love their neighbors do not harm them"

Romans 13:11

you know the time, that it is already the hour for you to awake out of sleep

Paul speaks of the need for the Roman believers to change their behavior as if they needed to wake up from being asleep.

hour

"time"

Romans 13:12

The night has advanced

Paul speaks of the time when people do evil deeds as night. Alternate translation: "The sinful time is almost over" or "It is as though the night is almost finished"

the day is near

Paul speaks of the time when people do what is right as the

day. Alternate translation: "the time of righteousness will begin soon" or "it is as though it will soon be day"

Let us therefore put aside the works of darkness

Paul speaks of "works of darkness" as if they are clothing that a person puts aside. Here to "put aside" means to stop doing something. Here "darkness" is a metaphor for evil.

Alternate translation: "Let us therefore stop doing the evil things that people do in the dark"

let us put on the armor of light

Here "light" is a metaphor for what is good and right. Paul speaks of people who are doing what is right as if they were putting on armor to protect themselves. Alternate translation: "let us start doing what is right. Doing this will protect us from what is evil, like armor protects a soldier" Romans 13:13

Let us

Paul includes his readers and other believers with himself.

Let us walk appropriately, as in the day

Paul speaks of people living as true believers as if they were walking while it is day. Alternate translation: "Let us walk in a visible way knowing, that everyone can see us"

sexual immorality or in uncontrolled lust

These concepts mean basically the same thing. You can combine them in your translation. Alternate translation: "sexually immoral acts"

strife

This refers to plotting against and arguing with other people.

jealousy

This refers to negative feelings against another person's success or advantage over others.

Romans 13:14

put on the Lord Jesus Christ

Paul speaks of accepting the moral nature of Christ as if he were our outer clothing that people can see.

put on

If your language has a plural form for commands, use it here.

make no provision for the flesh

Here the "flesh" refers to the self-directed nature of people who oppose God. This is the sinful nature of human beings.

Alternate translation: "do not allow your old evil heart any opportunity at all for doing wicked things"

Chapter 14

Romans 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 11 of this chapter, which Paul quotes from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Weak in faith

Paul teaches that Christians can have real faith and at the same time be "weak in faith" in a given situation. This describes Christians whose faith is immature, not strong, or misunderstood. (See: faith)

Dietary restrictions

Many religions in the ancient Near East restricted what was eaten. Christians have freedom to eat what they want. But they need to use this freedom wisely, in a way that honors the Lord and does not cause others to sin. (See: sin)

The judgment seat of God

The judgment seat of God or Christ represents a time when all people, including Christians, will be held accountable for

the way they lived their lives.

Links:

[Romans 14:1 Notes](#)

Romans 14

14:1-12

How did someone receive or accept people?

[14:1]

Paul wrote about someone receiving or accepting people. He was speaking about Christians accepting other Christians. Paul wanted Christians to love other Christians and to treat all Christians well. This is because God accepted all Christians into his family.

See: Romans 15:7; 1 Corinthians 9:22; 2 John 10

See: Family of God

How was someone weak in faith?

[14:1]

Paul wrote about Christians who were weak in faith. These Christians believed all Christians should obey more rules than God really expected of them. For example, they believed they must only eat vegetables, must not drink any wine, and must celebrate special days in order to please God (see: Romans 14:2, 5, 21). However, the strong in faith did not feel the need to observe these kinds of rules (see: Romans 15:1).

Some scholars think that the weak in faith were Jewish Christians. Others think that they included both Jewish and gentile Christians.

See: Isaiah 35:3-5; Ezekiel 34:4, 16; Matthew 14:31

See: Faith (Believe in); Gentile

How did someone give judgment about arguments?

[14:1]

Paul wrote about someone giving judgment about arguments. Some scholars think Paul did not want Christians to argue about whether the strong or the weak were right in what they did. More scholars think Paul did not want the strong Christians to condemn the weak Christians.

See: 1 Timothy 1:6

What did Paul write about eating anything or everything?

[14:2]

Paul wrote about eating anything or everything. He was writing about Christians who did not think it was wrong to eat certain foods. However, the weak Christians believed that eating certain foods dishonored God.

See: 1 Corinthians 10:25, 29-30; Titus 1:15

How is someone despised?

[14:3]

A person who felt himself to be strong might “despise” (ἐξουθενέω/g1848) the weak Christians. These Christians did not hate other Christians. Instead, they were proud of themselves disrespect those who were different.

See: Proverbs 1:22; 3:34

How did someone judge?

[14:3]

See: Judge (Judgment)

How were people servants?

[14:4]

See: Serve (Servant, Slave)

How did someone stand or fall?

[14:4]

See: Fall (Fall Away, Stand)

How did someone value or observe a day?

[14:5]

When someone valued or observed a day, they thought this day was different than other days. They did this to honor God. Some scholars think Paul was writing about Christians resting on the Sabbath (see: Exodus 20:8-11). Other scholars think Paul was writing about special days of fasting (see: Ezra 8:21) or feasting (see: 1 Kings 8:65) or some other thing the Jews did. Other scholars think that the Gentile Christians believed that certain days were lucky or unlucky.

See: Galatians 4:10; Colossians 2:16-17

See: Sabbath; Fasting; Gentile

How was someone convinced in his own mind?

[14:5]

Someone who was convinced in his own mind knew that he honored God in the things he did.

See: 1 John 3:19-21

See: Mind

How did someone stand before the judgment seat of God.

[14:10]

See: Ecclesiastes 12:14; Matthew 25:31-32; Romans 2:16; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Jude 14-15; Revelation 20:11-15

See: Day of Judgment

Why did Paul write the same things Isaiah wrote?

[14:11]

Paul wrote the same thing Isaiah wrote (see: Isaiah 45:23). He did this to prove from the Scriptures that every person will have to stand before God and tell him what he did and why he did it.

Why did someone bend their knee?

[14:11]

When someone bent their knee, they did this to worship and submit to someone or something.

See: Romans 11:4; Philippians 2:10-11; Revelation 5:14

See: Worship; Submit (Submission)

What did every tongue confess to God?

[14:11]

Paul and Isaiah wrote about every tongue confessing to God. They wanted people to know that every person will worship God even if they rejected God.

See: Romans 10:9-10, 13; Philippians 2:11

See: Confess (Confession); Worship

How did someone give an account of himself to God?

[14:12]

When someone gave an account of himself to God, he explains why he did the things he did to God. He did this for every sin he committed.

See: Matthew 12:36; 18:23-35; 1 Peter 4:5

See: Sin

14:13-23

What was a stumbling block and a snare?

[14:13]

A snare was a metaphor like a stumbling block. He was writing about someone sinning.

See: Luke 17:2; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:32; 2 Corinthians 6:3; Revelation 2:14

See: Stumble (Stumbling Block); Metaphor; Sin

Why did Paul write, "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus?"

[14:14]

Paul wrote, "I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus. Paul knew the truth about the things the weak Christians believed. Paul knew it was not necessary to follow these rules. He knew that he was right, and knew that Jesus taught the same thing. Paul did not explain how he knew this.

See: Philippians 2:24; 1 John 3:21

How was nothing unclean by itself?

[14:14]

Paul wanted people to know that nothing was made unclean. According to the Law of Moses, certain foods were unclean. However, they were not unclean because they were made unclean.

See: Mark 7:2, 5; Acts 10:14, 28; 11:8; 1 Corinthians 8:7; 1 Timothy 4:4; Titus 1:15

See: Clean and Unclean

How was something unclean?

[14:14]

Paul wrote about things being "unclean" in two ways. Certain things were unclean because God said they were unclean (see: 2 Corinthians 12:21). Other things were unclean because someone thought they were unclean. If a person thought some food was unclean, and he ate it anyway, this was wrong.

See: 1 Corinthians 8:7

See: Clean and Unclean

How could a Christian hurt another Christian?

[14:15]

Paul wrote about Christians hurting other Christians. These Christians tempted or caused other Christians to sin.

See: 1 Corinthians 8:11-12

See: Tempt (Temptation); Sin
How was good spoken about as if it were evil?
[14:16]
Paul wrote about people speaking about good things as if they were evil things. Some scholars think Paul was speaking about certain foods. People said it was evil to eat these foods when it was not evil. Other scholars think Paul was teaching Christians that non-Christians would say bad things about them if they saw Christians fighting with one another.
What is the kingdom of God?
[14:17]
See: Kingdom of God
How was someone approved by people?
[14:18]
Paul wanted God's approval. He wanted God to say that he did the right thing, even if people thought Paul did the wrong thing.
See: Acts 24:16; 2 Corinthians 5:11; 8:21
How did Christians build up one another?
[14:19]
Paul wrote about Christians building up one another. This is a metaphor. They helped other Christians to live in a way that honors God.
See: 1 Corinthians 14:26; Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 5:11-12
How is something clean?
[14:20]
See: Clean and Unclean
What is wine?
[14:21]
See: Wine (Winepress)
What is faith?
[14:22]
Paul wrote about faith. He was not writing about believing in Jesus. Instead, he was writing about Christians being confident that they were free to eat what they wanted and did not need to follow the rules other people made.
See: Hebrews 11:6
See: Faith (Believe in)
How is someone who doubts condemned?
[14:23]
Paul wrote that people who doubted would be condemned. Some scholars think that the weak Christians who felt that they did something wrong condemned himself. They sinned because they thought they sinned. Other scholars think that on judgment day God would consider that person guilty of sinning.
See: Titus 1:15
See: Day of Judgment; Condemn (Condemnation); Sin
How was something not from faith?
[14:23]
Paul wrote about something that was not from faith. If a person did not think he did the right thing, then he did not do the right thing. It was then a sin for him to do it.
See: Faith (Believe in)

Romans 14:1
Connecting Statement:
Paul encourages believers to remember that they are answerable to God.
weak in faith
This refers to those who felt guilty over eating and drinking certain things.
without giving judgment about arguments
"and do not condemn them for their opinions"
Romans 14:2
One person has faith to eat anything
Here "faith" refers to doing what a person believes God is telling him to do.
another who is weak eats only vegetables
This describes a person who believes God does not want

him to eat meat.
Romans 14:3
General Information:
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Romans 14:4
Who are you, you who judge a servant belonging to someone else?
Paul is using a question to scold those who are judging others. You can translate this as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are not God, and you are not allowed to judge one of his servants!"
you, you
The form of "you" here is singular.
It is before his own master that he stands or falls
Paul speaks of God as if he were a master who owned servants. Alternate translation: "Only the master can decide

if he will accept the servant or not"

But he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand
Paul speaks of the servant who is acceptable to God as if he were being "made to stand" instead of falling. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "But the Lord will accept him because he is able to make the servant acceptable"

Romans 14:5

One person values one day above another. Another has concluded that every day is equal

"One person thinks one day is more important than some of the others, but another person thinks that all days are the same"

Let each person be convinced in his own mind

You can make the full meaning explicit. You can also translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Let each person be sure what he is doing is to honor the Lord"

Romans 14:6

He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord

Here "observes the day" refers to considering a day as a special day on which to worship the Lord. Alternate translation: "Whoever treats a day as special does so to honor the Lord" or "The person who worships on a certain day does it to honor the Lord"

he who eats

The word "everything" is understood from [Romans 14:3] eats for the Lord

"eats to honor the Lord" or "eats that way in order to honor the Lord"

He who does not eat

The word "everything" is understood from [Romans 14:3] refrains from eating for the Lord

His purpose in refraining from eating certain foods is to honor the Lord. Alternate translation: "refrains from eating certain foods in order to honor the Lord"

Romans 14:7

For none of us lives for himself

Here "lives for himself" means to live only to please oneself. Alternate translation: "None of us should live merely to please himself"

none of us

Paul is including his readers, so this is inclusive.

none dies for himself

Here "dies for himself" means to die only to please oneself. Alternate translation: "None of us should die merely to please himself"

Romans 14:8

General Information:

Paul is speaking of both himself and his readers, so all instances of "we" are inclusive.

Romans 14:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 14:10

why do you judge your brother? And you, why do you despise your brother?

By using these questions, Paul is demonstrating how he might need to scold individuals among his readers.

Alternate translation: "it is wrong for you to judge your

brother, and it is wrong for you to despise your brother!" or "stop judging and despising your brother!"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God

The "judgment seat" refers to God's authority to judge.

Alternate translation: "For God will judge us all"

Romans 14:11

For it is written, "As

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For someone has written in the Scriptures: 'As"

As I live

This phrase is used to start an oath or solemn promise.

Alternate translation: "You can be certain that this is true"

to me every knee will bend, and every tongue will confess to God

Paul uses the words "knee" and "tongue" to refer to the whole person. Also, the Lord uses the word "God" to refer to himself. Alternate translation: "every person will bow and give praise to me"

Romans 14:12

will give an account of himself to God

"will have to explain his actions to God"

Romans 14:13

but instead decide this, that no one will place a stumbling block or a snare for his brother

Here "stumbling block" and "snare" mean basically the same thing. Alternate translation: "but instead make it your goal not to do or say anything that might cause a fellow believer to sin"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

Romans 14:14

I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus

Here the words "know" and "am persuaded" mean basically the same thing; Paul uses them to emphasize his certainty.

Alternate translation: "I am certain because of my relationship with the Lord Jesus"

nothing is unclean by itself

You can translate this in a positive form. Alternate translation: "everything by itself is clean"

by itself

"by its nature" or "because of what it is"

Only for him who considers anything to be unclean, for him it is unclean

Paul implies here that a person should stay away from anything that he thinks is unclean. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "But if a person thinks something is unclean, then for that person it is unclean and he should stay away from it"

Romans 14:15

If because of food your brother is hurt

"If you hurt your fellow believer's faith over the matter of food." Here the word "your" refers to those who are strong in faith and "brother" refers to one who is weak in faith.

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

you are no longer walking in love

Paul speaks of the behavior of believers as if it were a walk.

Alternate translation: "then you are no longer showing

love"

Romans 14:16

So do not allow what you consider to be good to be spoken of as evil
"If someone thinks that something is evil, do not do it, even if you consider it to be good"

Romans 14:17

For the kingdom of God is not about food and drink, but about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit

Paul argues that God set up his kingdom so he could give us a right relationship with himself, and could provide peace and joy. Alternate translation: "For God did not set up his kingdom so that he could rule over what we eat and drink. He set up his kingdom so we could have a right relationship with him, and so he could give us peace and joy"

Romans 14:18

approved by people

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "people will approve of him" or "people will respect him"

Romans 14:19

let us pursue the things of peace and the things that build up one another

Here "build up one another" refers to helping each other grow in faith. Alternate translation: "let us seek to live peacefully together and help one another grow stronger in faith"

Romans 14:20

Do not destroy the work of God on account of food

You can make explicit the full meaning of this sentence. Alternate translation: "Do not undo what God has done for a fellow believer just because you want to eat a certain kind of food"

but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone to stumble

Here anything that "causes someone to stumble" means it causes a weaker brother to do something that is against his conscience. Alternate translation: "but it would be a sin for someone to eat food that another brother thinks is wrong to eat, if by eating this causes the weaker brother to do

something that is against his conscience"

Romans 14:21

It is good not to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything over which your brother stumbles

"It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that might cause your brother to sin"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, male or female.

your

This refers to the strong in faith and "brother" refers to the weak in faith.

Romans 14:22

The faith you have

This refers back to the beliefs about food and drink.

you ... yourself

singular. Because Paul is addressing the believers, you may have to translate this using plural.

Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves
"Blessed are those who do not feel guilty for what they decide to do"

Romans 14:23

He who doubts is condemned if he eats

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "God will say that a person does wrong if he is not sure if it is right to eat a certain food, but he eats it anyway" or "A person who is not sure if it is right to eat a certain food, but then eats it anyway, will have a troubled conscience"

because it is not from faith

Anything that is "not from faith" is something that God does not want you to do. You can make explicit the full meaning here. Alternate translation: "and God will say that he is wrong because he is eating something he believes God does not want him to eat"

whatever is not from faith is sin

Anything that is "not from faith" is something that God does not want you to do. You can make explicit the full meaning here. Alternate translation: "you are sinning if you do something that you do not believe God wants you to do"

Chapter 15

Romans 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 9-11 and 21 of this chapter. These lines of poetry are from the Old Testament.

Some translations also set prose quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words in verse 12.

In [Romans 15:14](#), Paul begins to speak more personally. He shifts from teaching to telling of his personal plans.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Strong/Weak

These terms are used to refer to people who are mature and immature in their faith. Paul teaches that those who are strong in faith need to help those who are weak in faith. (See: faith)

Links:

[Romans 15:1 Notes](#)

ROMANS 15

15:1-13

How was someone weak?

[15:1]

Paul wrote about Christians who were weak in faith. These Christians believed all Christians should obey more rules than God really expected of them. For example, they believed they must only eat vegetables, must not drink any wine, and must celebrate special days in order to please God (see: Romans 14:2, 5, 21). However, the strong in faith did not feel the need to observe these kinds of rules (see: Romans 15:1).

Some scholars think that the weak in faith were Jewish Christians. Others think that they included both Jewish and gentile Christians.

See: Isaiah 35:3-5; Ezekiel 34:4, 16; Matthew 14:31

See: Faith (Believe in); Gentile

How did someone bear the weakness of the weak?

[15:1]

Paul wanted the strong Christian not to judge, hate, or shame the weak in faith. Instead, the strong Christians should accept and love the weak Christians. To “bear” their weaknesses did not mean to agree that they were correct, but to tolerate them and try to help them.

See: 1 Corinthians 9:22; Galatians 6:1

How did a Christian please someone?

[15:2]

A Christian pleased someone when they considered the other person’s needs and tried to help the other person. Paul did not want Christians to focus on the things they wanted. Jesus served other people. How did Christians build one another up? Paul wanted Christians to build one another up. This is a metaphor. He wanted Christians to help one another to know more about God and to live in a way that honors God.

See: Acts 9:31; Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:6, 17

Why did Paul write the same thing David wrote?

[15:3]

Paul wrote the same thing David wrote (see Psalm 69:9). Christians know this is a prophecy about Jesus suffering (see: Matthew 27:34; John 15:25; 19:29). When Paul used the word “me,” he was writing about Jesus. When Paul used the word “you,” he was writing about God the Father. Jesus was willing to be reproached. That is, Jesus was willing to be dishonored and insulted by dying on a cross. He did this to glorify God and to help people be at peace with God.

See: John 5:30

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; God the Father; Cross; Atonement (Atonement); Glory (Glorify)

Why did Paul write about something previously written?

[15:4]

When Paul wrote about something that was previously written, he was writing about the Old Testament.

See: Romans 3:21; 15:9; 1 Corinthians 2:9; 2 Corinthians 9:9; Galatians 4:27

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

How could Christians have the same mind?

[15:5]

Paul wanted Christians to have the same mind. He wanted all Christians to think the same way and to agree because they know what is right.

See: 1 Corinthians 1:10; 10:11; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Peter 3:8

See: Mind

How could Christians glorify God with one mouth?

[15:6]

Paul wanted Christians to glorify God with one mouth. This is a metaphor. He wanted all Christians to worship God together because they were at peace with one another.

See: Zephaniah 3:9; Acts 4:32

See: Glory (Glorify); Metaphor; Worship

How did someone receive or accept people?

[15:7]

Paul wrote about someone receiving or accepting people. He was speaking about Christians accepting other Christians.

Paul wanted Christians to love other Christians and to treat all Christians well. This is because God accepted all Christians into his family.

See: Romans 15:7; 1 Corinthians 9:22; 2 John 10

See: Family of God

How was Jesus a servant of the circumcision?

[15:8]

Jesus was a servant of the circumcision. This is a metaphor. Jesus served the Jews. He wanted them to believe in him and know that he is the messiah.

See: Matthew 15:24; John 1:11; Acts 3:26; Galatians 4:4-5

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Messiah (Christ)

Why did Paul write the same things many other people wrote?

[15:9, 15:10, 15:11, 15:12]

Paul wrote the same things about the Gentiles that many other people wrote (see: Psalm 18:49, Deuteronomy 32:43, Psalm 117:1, and Isaiah 11:10). Paul wanted people to know that these people also taught that the Gentiles would glorify God.

Paul wanted the Gentile and Jewish Christians to be at peace with one another and to worship God together.

See: Romans 3:29; Ephesians 2:11-22; Revelation 7:9-17

See: Gentile; Glory (Glorify); Worship

What was the root of Jesse?

[15:12]

Paul wrote the same words Isaiah wrote (see: Isaiah 11:10). "Root of Jesse" was a metaphor about a descendant of Jesse.

Jesse was the father of king David, and Jesus was a descendant of David and Jesse. This ancestor of Jesse was the messiah.

See: Isaiah 11:1; Matthew 12:21; 2 Timothy 2:8; Revelation 5:5; 22:16

See: Metaphor; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Messiah (Christ)

15:14-22

How was Paul like a priest?

[15:16]

In the Old Testament, priests offered sacrifices to God to please him. Paul brought gentiles to God by teaching them the gospel. The gentiles who believed the gospel were pleasing to God. These Gentiles were like an offering God gave to God.

See: Acts 9:15; Philippians 2:17

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Offer (Offering); Sacrifice; Gentile; Gospel

How could Paul boast about serving God?

[15:17]

Paul could "boast" (καύχησις/g2746) of what he did for God, because he knew that it was God who did the work through him.

See: 2 Corinthians 12:1, 11-21

What was the obedience of the Gentiles?

[15:18]

When Paul wrote about the obedience of the Gentiles, he was writing about the Gentiles obeying his command to believe the gospel.

See: Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5

See: Gentile; Gospel

What were signs and wonders?

[15:19]

See: Sign

Where was Illyricum?

[15:19]

See Map: Illyricum

How did Paul fully carry out the gospel?

[15:19]

Paul fully carried out the gospel. That is, he carefully preached the gospel in the way that God wanted.

See: Colossians 1:25; 2 Timothy 4:17

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel

How did someone build on another man's foundation?

[15:20]

Paul did not want to build on another man's foundation. This is a metaphor. The foundation was to tell people about Jesus and the gospel. Paul did not want to work in a place where someone else had already done this. Instead, he wanted to go to a place where no one had heard about Jesus before.

See: 1 Corinthians 3:9-15; 2 Corinthians 10:13-16

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write the same thing Isaiah wrote?

[15:21]

Paul wrote the same thing Isaiah wrote (see: Isaiah 52:15). Isaiah 52-53 was a prophecy about the messiah. Paul used this verse to explain why he wanted to preach the gospel only in new places. He believed that this was how God wanted Paul

to serve him.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Messiah (Christ); Preach (Preacher); Gospel

15:23-33

How did Paul not have any place?

[15:23]

Paul wrote that he no longer had any place to go to tell people about Jesus. He wanted to find a new place to go to tell people about Jesus.

Where was Spain?

[15:23]

See Map: Spain

What was the contribution?

[15:26]

The churches with more Gentiles than Jews gave money to help the poor Christians in Jerusalem. When Paul left Corinth, he began to travel to Jerusalem in order to deliver it (see: Introduction).

How did the Gentile Christians owe help to the Jewish Christians?

[15:27]

Paul wanted the Gentile Christians to help the Jewish Christians. These Jewish Christians suffered greatly and they helped the Gentile Christians to know about Jesus.

See: Galatians 6:6; Philemon 19

What were material things?

[15:27]

Paul wrote about material things. He was writing about money. The Jerusalem Christians were persecuted and very poor. Paul wanted the Gentile Christians to send them money to help them.

See: 1 Corinthians 9:11

See: Persecute (Persecution); Gentile

Why did Paul write about sealing fruit?

[15:28] Paul wrote about sealing fruit. This was a metaphor. He wanted to bring this money to the Christians in Jerusalem.

See: Metaphor

How do Christians strive together?

[15:30]

When Christians strive together with Paul, they work hard together to serve God and to pray together.

See: Romans 1:10-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:1

See: Pray (Prayer)

Romans 15:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul concludes this section about believers' living for others by reminding them how Christ lived.

Now

Translate this using the words your language uses to introduce a new idea into an argument.

we who are strong

Here "strong" refers to the people who are strong in their faith. They believe that God allows them to eat any kind of food. Alternate translation: "we who are strong in faith"

we

This refers to Paul, his readers, and other believers.

the weak

Here "the weak" refers to the people who are weak in their faith. They believe that God does not allow them to eat some kinds of food. Alternate translation: "those who are weak in faith"

Romans 15:2

to build him up

By this, Paul means to strengthen someone's faith. Alternate translation: "to strengthen his faith"

Romans 15:3

it was just as it is written

Here Paul refers to a scripture where Christ

The insults of those who insulted you fell on me

Those who blasphemed God insulted Christ. This is an indirect way of saying that those who slandered Christ were blaspheming God.

Romans 15:4

For whatever was previously written was written for our instruction

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "For in times past, the prophets wrote everything in the Scriptures to teach us"

our ... we

Paul includes his readers and other believers.

in order that through patience and through encouragement of the scriptures

The meanings in the abstract nouns "patience" and "encouragement" can be expressed with the verbs "endure" and "encourage." Alternate translation "in order that by enduring and by being encouraged by the scriptures" or "in order that as we endure and as the scriptures encourage us"

we would have hope

Here the word "hope" is a person's confident expectation that what he desires really will happen. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." What the hope is about can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "we

would confidently wait for God" or "we would confidently expect that God will do what he has promised"

Romans 15:5

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Paul starts to tell a new part of the teaching.

may ... God ... grant

"I pray that ... God ... will grant"

to be of the same mind with each other

Here to be of the "same mind" is a metonym that means to be in agreement with each other. Alternate translation: "to be in agreement with each other" or "to be united"

Romans 15:6

with one mind you may glorify with one mouth

The phrases "one mind" and "one mouth" both represent people being united together. Alternate translation: "you may be united when you praise"

with one mind

This phrase translates a word that speaks of people who agree with each other and who work together to accomplish a common purpose.

Romans 15:7

receive one another ... received you

"accept one another ... accepted you"

Romans 15:8

For I say

The word "I" refers to Paul.

Christ has been made a servant of the circumcision

Here "the circumcision" is a metonym that refers to the Jews. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "Jesus Christ has become a servant of the Jews" in order to confirm the promises

This is one of the two purposes for which Christ became a servant of the circumcision.

the promises given to the patriarchs

Here "the fathers" refers to the ancestors of the Jewish people. You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "the promises that God gave to the ancestors of the Jews"

Romans 15:9

and for the Gentiles to glorify God for his mercy

This is the second reason for which Christ became a servant of the circumcision. Alternate translation: "and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy"

As it is written

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "As someone has written in the Scriptures" sing praise to your name

Here "your name" is a metonym that refers to God.

Alternate translation: "sing praise to you"

Romans 15:10

Again it says

"Again the scripture says"

with his people

This refers to God's people. You can make this explicit in your translation. Alternate translation: "with the people of God"

Romans 15:11

praise him

"praise the Lord"

Romans 15:12

root of Jesse

Jesse was the physical father of King David. Alternate translation: "descendant of Jesse"

in him the Gentiles will have hope

Here "him" refers to the descendant of Jesse and King David, the Messiah. The Gentiles will trust him to fulfill his promises. The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "trust" or "confidently wait" or confidently expect." Alternate translation: "the Gentiles will trust in him" or "the Gentiles will confidently wait for him to fulfill his promises"

Romans 15:13

the God of hope

"the God who gives hope" or "the God who causes us to hope." The abstract noun "hope" can be translated here with the verbs "confidently expect" or "confidently wait" or "trust." Alternate translation: "the God who causes us to confidently wait for him to fulfill his promises" or "the God who helps us to trust in him"

fill you with all joy and peace

Here "fill you" is a metaphor for "cause you to have."

Alternate translation: "cause you to have great joy and peace" or "give you great joy and peace"

in believing

"as you believe in him"

Romans 15:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers in Rome that God chose him to reach the Gentiles.

I myself am also convinced about you, my brothers

Paul is quite sure that the believers in Rome are honoring each other in their behavior. Alternate translation: "I myself am completely sure that you yourselves have acted toward others in a completely good way"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

filled with all knowledge

Paul exaggerates here to emphasize his point. Alternate translation: "filled with sufficient knowledge to follow God"

Romans 15:15

the grace given me by God

Paul speaks of grace as if it were a physical gift that God had given him. God had appointed Paul an apostle even though he had persecuted believers before he decided to follow Jesus. You can translate this in an active form.

Alternate translation: "the grace that God gave me"

Romans 15:16

the offering of the Gentiles might become acceptable

Paul speaks of the Gentiles as if they were an offering brought to God. Alternate translation: "the Gentiles might be like an offering that pleases God"

sanctified by the Holy Spirit

"having been made holy by the Holy Spirit." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which the Holy Spirit made holy" or "which the Holy Spirit dedicated to God"

Romans 15:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 15:18

I will not dare to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished

This double negative emphasizes that what Christ has accomplished is the only thing that Paul wants to speak about. Alternate translation: "I will dare to speak only of what Christ has accomplished"

for the obedience of the Gentiles

"so that the Gentiles will obey God"

These are things done by word and action

This can be translated in active form: Alternate translation:

Alternate translation: "These are things that Christ has accomplished through what I have said and done"

Romans 15:19

signs and wonders

These two words mean basically the same thing and refer to various kinds of miracles.

so that from Jerusalem, and round about as far as Illyricum

This is from the city of Jerusalem as far as the province of Illyricum, a region close to Italy.

Romans 15:20

In this way, my desire has been to proclaim the gospel, but not where Christ is known by name

Paul only wants to preach to people who have never heard of Christ. Alternate translation: "And so, my desire has been to preach the good news in places where people have never heard of Christ"

in order that I might not build upon another man's foundation

Paul speaks of his ministry work as if he were building a house on a foundation. Alternate translation: "in order that I might not be simply continuing the work that someone else already started. I do not want to be like a man who builds a house on someone else's foundation"

Romans 15:21

It is as it is written

Here Paul refers to what Isaiah wrote in the scriptures. You can translate this in an active form and make the meaning explicit. Alternate translation: "What is happening is like what Isaiah wrote in the scriptures"

Those to whom no report of him came

Here Paul speaks of the "report" or message about Christ as if it were alive and able to move by itself. Alternate translation: "Those whom no one had told the news about him"

Romans 15:22

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the believers in Rome about his personal plans to visit them and asks the believers to pray.

I was also hindered

You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "they also hindered me" or "people also hindered me"

Romans 15:23

I no longer have any place in these regions

Paul implies that the reason he no longer has any place is because the Gospel had been preached in all these regions.

Alternate translation: "there are no more places in these regions where people have not heard about Christ"

Romans 15:24

I hope to see you

Paul wanted to see the believers in Rome. He did not know if he actually would be able to see them. Alternate translation: "I want to see you" or "I plan to see you"

Spain

This is a roman province west of Rome that Paul desired to visit.

to be helped by you on my journey

Here Paul implies that he wants the Roman believers to provide some financial assistance to him for his journey to Spain. You may have to translate this in an active form.

Alternate translation: "that you will help me on my journey"

have enjoyed your company

"have enjoyed spending some time with you" or "have enjoyed visiting you"

Romans 15:25

serving God's holy people

You may need to make explicit how Paul was serving the people. Alternate translation: "bringing aid to God's holy people")

Romans 15:26

it was the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia

Here the words "Macedonia" and "Achaia" are synecdoches for the people who live in those areas. Alternate translation: "the believers in the provinces of Macedonia and Achaia were happy"

Romans 15:27

Yes, it was their good pleasure

"The believers in Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to do it"

and they owe it to them

"and the people of Macedonia and Achaia owe it to God's people in Jerusalem" or "and they are obligated to help them"

if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things

"since the Gentiles have shared in the spiritual things of the Jerusalem believers

minister to them

The word "minister" here means to serve in a formal way as part of their service to God, much like the priests offered sacrifices in the temple.

with their material things

"by giving them material things"

Romans 15:28

and have made sure that they receive all that was collected

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and have safely delivered this offering to them"

Romans 15:29

I know that when I come to you I will come in the fullness of the blessing of Christ

This phrase means that Christ will bless Paul and the Roman believers. Alternate translation: "And I know that when I visit you, Christ will abundantly bless us"

Romans 15:30

Now

If your language has a way to show that Paul has stopped talking about the good things he is confident of (Romans 15:29) and is now starting to talk about the dangers he faces, use it here.

I urge you

"I encourage you"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

you strive

"you work hard" or "you struggle"

Romans 15:31

I may be rescued from those who are disobedient

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God may rescue me from those who are disobedient" or

"God may keep those who are disobedient from harming

me"

that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to God's holy people

Here Paul expresses his desire that the believers in

Jerusalem will gladly accept the money from the believers

in Macedonia and Achaia. Alternate translation: "pray that the believers in Jerusalem will be glad to receive the money

that I am bringing them"

Romans 15:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Romans 15:33

May the God of peace

The "God of peace" means the God who causes believers to have inner peace. Alternate translation: "I pray that God,

who causes all of us to have inner peace, will"

Chapter 16

Romans 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul gives personal greetings to some of the Christians in Rome. It was common to end a letter in the ancient Near East with this type of personal greeting.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Because of the personal nature of this chapter, much of the context is unknown. This will make translation more difficult.

Links:

[Romans 16:1 Notes](#)

Romans 16

16:1-16

How did Paul commend Phoebe?

[16:1]

Paul commended Phoebe. That is, he spoke kindly about Phoebe. In ancient times, an author often commended the person who carried a letter for him to the place it was supposed to go.

See: Acts 18:27; Philippians 2:19-30; 3 John 12

How was Phoebe a servant of the church in Cenchrea?

[16:1]

Phoebe was a woman from Cenchrea. She was a serve of the church in this city. Some scholars think Phoebe helped other Christians. Other scholars think the Christians gathered together to worship God in her house. Other scholars think Phoebe was a deacon (see: Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8, 12; 4:6)..

See: Matthew 23:11-12; Romans 12:11; 2 Corinthians 4:5

See: Deacon; Worship; Church

See Map: Cenchrea

How were people to receive Phoebe in the lord?

[16:2]

Paul wanted the Roman Christians to receive Phoebe in the lord. Paul wanted these Christians to accept Phoebe as a Christian who represented Paul in some way.

See: Philippians 2:29; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 17; 2 John 10; 3 John 5-10

Why did Paul greet many people?

[16:3]

In ancient times, the person who wrote the letter would greet people at the end of the letter. Paul greeted people who were Jews and Gentiles. He greet men and he greeted women.

See: Philippians 4:21; Colossians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:19

See: Gentile

How was a church in someone's house?

[16:5]

In ancient times, Christians often gathered together to worship God in a person's house. In Rome, Christians gathered in the house of Aquila and Priscilla.

See: Acts 18:7; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2

See: Church; Worship

How was Epaphroditus the firstfruit of Asia to Christ?

[16:5]

Epaphroditus was the first person in Asia to believe in Jesus. After he believed in Jesus, many other people would also believe in Jesus.

See: 1 Corinthians 16:15; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; James 1:18; Revelation 14:4

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Messiah (Christ)

See Map: Asia

How were Andronicus and Junia Paul's kinsmen and fellow prisoners?

[16:7]

Andronicus and Junia were Paul's kinsmen and fellow prisoners. They were Jews and were also put into prison with Paul for being Christians.

See: Colossians 4:10; Philemon 23

How were Andronicus and Junia well known to the apostles?

[16:7]

Andronicus and Junia were well known to the apostles. Some scholars think that Andronicus and Junia had served God so well that even the apostles knew about and respected them. Other scholars think they both had the spiritual gift of apostle.

See: Apostle; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the household of Aristobulus and Narcissus?

[16:10, 16:11]

Paul wrote about people in the household of different families. Some scholars think he was greeting slaves who served these families. Other scholars think Paul greet Christians who met in the homes of these people.

See: Acts 16:31-34; 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:16; 16:15; Philippians 4:22

16:16-20

What was a holy kiss?

[16:16]

In ancient times, people only kissed people in their family. They kissed each other on the cheek. When Christians kissed one another, they did this because they are part of the family of God.

See: 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14

How were false teachers going beyond the teaching that the Romans learned?

[16:17]

Paul wrote that the false teacher went beyond the things the Roman Christians were taught. That is, they taught things that the Roman Christians knew was not true.

See: 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Timothy 6:3-5

See: False Teacher

How did someone stumble?

[16:17]

See: Stumble (Stumbling Block)

How did someone turn away from false teachers?

[16:17]

When someone turned away from false teachers, they rejected the things the false teachers taught.

See: 2 Timothy 3:5; Titus 3:10; 2 John 7-11

See: False Teacher

How did the false teachers serve their own stomachs?

[16:18]

Paul wrote that the false teachers served their own stomach. Some scholars think they ate too much food. Other scholars think they did the sinful things they wanted to do. Other scholars think they taught Christians not to eat certain foods because of the Law of Moses.

See: Philippians 3:19; Titus 1:10-12

See: False Teacher; Sin; Law of Moses

How was someone wise and innocent?

[16:19]

Paul wanted Christians to be wise in a certain way. He wanted them to know the right thing to do. Paul also wanted Christians to be innocent in a certain way. He did not want them to know about evil things because they did evil things. Perhaps Paul was thinking about Adam and Eve. They were innocent but Satan tempted them to become wise.

See: Genesis 3; Jeremiah 4:22; 1 Corinthians 14:20; Philippians 2:15

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Satan (The Devil); Tempt (Temptation)

How would God soon crush Satan under their feet?

[16:20]

Paul wrote about Satan being crushed. He was thinking about Genesis 3:15. Some scholars think Paul wanted them to know that God would help them to stop the false teachers very soon. Other scholars think Paul wanted them to know that Jesus would soon return to the earth (see: Revelation 20:7-10).

See: Luke 10:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-27; Hebrews 2:8

See: Satan (The Devil); False Teacher; Jesus' Return to Earth

16:21-24

Why did people greet the Roman Christians?

[16:21, 16:22]

In ancient times, it was common for other people to also send their greetings to the people of a letter. The people with Paul also sent greetings to the Roman Christians.

See: Romans 16:21-23; 1 Corinthians 16:19-20; Philippians 4:21-22; 2 Timothy 4:21

Who was Tertius?

[16:22]

Paul spoke the words written in this letter. When he did this, Tertius wrote it down.

See: Ancient Letters

16:25-27

Paul wrote about a mystery. What was this?

[16:25]

See: Reveal (Revelation); Mystery

What were the prophetic writings?

[16:26]

Paul wrote about the prophetic writings. He was writing about the prophecies about the Messiah in the Old Testament.

See: Luke 24:25-27, 44-47

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Messiah (Christ); Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What was the obedience of faith?

[16:26]

Paul wrote about the obedience of faith. Paul wanted to write that people who believe in Jesus try to obey God.

See: Faith (Believe in)

Romans 16:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul now greets many of the believers in Rome by name.

I commend to you Phoebe

"I want you to respect Phoebe"

Phoebe

This is a woman's name.

our sister

The word "our" refers to Paul and all believers. Alternate translation: "our sister in Christ"

Cenchreae

This was a town in Greece.

Romans 16:2

receive her in the Lord

Paul encourages the Roman believers to welcome Phoebe as a fellow believer. Alternate translation: "welcome her because we all belong to the Lord"

in a manner worthy of God's holy people

"in the way that believers should welcome other believers"

provide her with whatever help she may need from you

"help her by giving her whatever she needs"

has been a great help to many and to myself as well

"has supported many people, and she has also supported me"

Romans 16:3

Priscilla and Aquila

Priscilla was the wife of Aquila.

my fellow workers in Christ Jesus

Paul's "fellow workers" are people who also tell others about Jesus. Alternate translation: "who work with me to tell people about Christ Jesus"

Romans 16:4

General Information:

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Romans 16:5

Greet the church that is in their house

"Greet the believers who meet in their house to worship"

Epaenetus

This is the name of a man.

firstfruit of Asia to Christ

Paul speaks of Epaenetus as if he were a fruit that he harvested. Alternate translation: "first person in Asia to believe in Jesus"

Romans 16:6

Mary

This is a woman's name.

Romans 16:7

Andronicus

This is a man's name.

Junia

"Junia" is a woman's name. Some versions have "Junias," which would be a man's name.

They are well known among the apostles
 You can translate this in an active form. "The apostles
 Alternate translations: "The apostles know them very well"
 Romans 16:8
 Ampliatius
 This is a man's name.
 my beloved in the Lord
 "my dear friend and fellow believer"
 Romans 16:9
 Urbanus ... Stachys
 These are the names of men.
 Romans 16:10
 Apelles ... Aristobulus
 These are the names of men.
 the approved in Christ
 The word "approved" refers to someone who has been
 tested and proved to be genuine. Alternate translation:
 "whom Christ has approved"
 Romans 16:11
 Herodion ... Narcissus
 These are the names of men.
 who are in the Lord
 This refers to those who trust in Jesus. Alternate
 translation: "who are believers" or "who belong to the
 Lord"
 Romans 16:12
 Tryphaena ... Tryphosa ... Persis
 These are women's names.
 Romans 16:13
 Rufus
 This is a man's name.
 chosen in the Lord
 You can translate this in an active form. Alternate
 translation: "whom the Lord has chosen"
 his mother and mine
 Paul speaks of the mother of Rufus as if she were his own
 mother. Alternate translation: "his mother, whom I also
 think of as my mother"
 Romans 16:14
 Asyncritus ... Phlegon ... Hermes ... Patrobas ... Hermas
 These are men's names.
 brothers
 Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and
 women.
 Romans 16:15
 Philologus ... Nereus ... Olympas
 These are men's names.
 Julia
 The name of a woman. Julia was probably the wife of
 Philologus.
 Romans 16:16
 a holy kiss
 an expression of affection for fellow believers
 All the churches of Christ greet you
 Here Paul speaks in a general manner concerning the
 churches of Christ. Alternate translation: "The believers in
 all the churches in this area send their greetings to you"
 Romans 16:17
 Connecting Statement:

Paul gives one last warning to the believers about unity and
 living for God.
 brothers
 Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and
 women.
 who cause divisions and stumbling
 This refers to those who argue and cause others to stop
 trusting in Jesus. Alternate translation: "who cause
 believers to argue with one another and to stop having
 faith in God"
 contrary to the teaching that you have learned
 "teaching things that do not agree with the truth you have
 already learned"
 Turn away from them
 "Turn away" here is an metaphor for "refuse to listen."
 Alternate translation: "Do not listen to them"
 Romans 16:18
 Christ, but their own stomach
 The words "they serve" are understood from the previous
 phrase. This can be expressed as a separate sentence.
 Alternate translation: "Christ. Rather, they serve their own
 stomach"
 but their own stomach
 Here "stomach" is a metonym that refers to physical
 desires. Serving there stomach represents satisfying their
 desires. Alternate translation: "but they only want to satisfy
 their own selfish desires"
 By their smooth and flattering speech
 The words "smooth" and "flattering" mean basically the
 same thing. Paul is emphasizing how these people are
 deceiving believers. Alternate translation: "By saying things
 that seem to be good and true"
 they deceive the hearts of the innocent
 Here "hearts" is a metonym for the minds and inner beings
 of people. Alternate translation: "they deceive the innocent
 believers"
 innocent
 This refers to those who are simple, inexperienced, and
 naive. Alternate translation: "those who innocently trust
 them" or "those who do not know these teachers are fooling
 them"
 Romans 16:19
 For your example of obedience reaches everyone
 Here Paul speaks of the Roman believers' obedience as if it
 were a person who could go to people. Alternate
 translation: "For everyone has heard how you obey Jesus"
 innocent to that which is evil
 "not involved in doing evil things"
 Romans 16:20
 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet
 To say that a person will crush their enemy under their feet
 means that the person will have complete victory over their
 enemy. Here Paul speaks of the victory over Satan as if the
 Roman believers were trampling an enemy under their
 feet. Alternate translation: "Soon God will give you peace
 and complete victory over Satan"
 Romans 16:21
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul gives greetings from the believers who are with him.

Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater
These are men's names.
Romans 16:22
Tertius, who write this epistle down
Tertius is the man who wrote down what Paul spoke.
greet you in the Lord
"greet you as a fellow believer"
Romans 16:23
Gaius ... Erastus ... Quartus
These are men's names.
the host
This refers to Gaius, the person in whose house Paul and his fellow believers gathered for worship.
the treasurer
This is a person who takes care of the money for a group.
Romans 16:24
General Information:
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Romans 16:25
Connecting Statement:
Paul closes with a prayer of blessing.
Now
Here the word "now" marks the closing section of the letter.
If you have a way of doing this in your language, you can use it here.
to make you strong
"to make your faith strong"
according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ
"by the good news that I have preached about Jesus Christ"
according to the revelation of the mystery that had been kept secret for

long ages
Paul says that God has revealed previously hidden truths to the believers. He speaks of these truths as if they were a secret. You can translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "because God has revealed to us believers the secret that he was keeping for long ages"
for long ages
since the beginning of time
Romans 16:26
but now has been revealed and made known through the prophetic writings to all nations, by the command of the eternal God
The verbs "revealed" and "made known" mean basically the same thing. Paul uses both of them to emphasize his point. You can combine these words and translate this in an active form. Alternate translation: "but the eternal God has now made known to all the nations through the prophetic writings"
to bring about the obedience of faith
Here "obedience" and "faith" are abstract nouns. You can use the verbs "obey" and "trust" in your translation. You may need to make explicit who will obey and trust. Alternate translation: "so that all nations will obey God because they trust in him"
Romans 16:27
to the only wise God ... be glory forever. Amen
Here "through Jesus Christ" refers to what Jesus did. To give "glory" means to praise God. Alternate translation: "Because of what Jesus Christ has done for us, we will praise forever the one who alone is God and who alone is wise. Amen"

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 1 Corinthians

Divisions in the church (1:10-4:21) Moral sins and irregularities (5:1-13) Christians taking other Christians to court (6:1-20) Marriage and related matters (7:1-40) Misuse of Christian liberty; food sacrificed to idols; fleeing idolatry; women's head coverings (8:1-13; 10:1-11:16) Paul's rights as an apostle (9:1-27) The Lord's Supper (11:17-34) The gifts of the Holy Spirit (12:1-31) Love (13:1-13) The gifts of the Holy Spirit: prophecy and languages (14:1-40) The resurrection of believers and the resurrection of Christ (15:1-58) Closing: the contribution for Christians in Jerusalem, requests, and personal greetings (16:1-24)

Who wrote the Book of 1 Corinthians?

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul started the church that met in Corinth. He was staying in the city of Ephesus when he wrote this letter.

What is the Book of 1 Corinthians about?

1 Corinthians is a letter that Paul wrote to the believers who were in the city of Corinth. Paul had heard that there were problems among the believers there. They were arguing with each other. Some of them did not understand some of the Christian teachings. And some of them were behaving badly. In this letter, Paul responded to them and encouraged them to live in a way that pleased God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "First Corinthians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's First Letter to the Church in Corinth."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the city of Corinth like?

Corinth was a major city located in ancient Greece. Because it was near the Mediterranean Sea, many travelers and

traders came to buy and sell goods there. This resulted in the city having people from many different cultures. The city was famous for having people who lived in immoral ways. The people worshipped Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. As part of the ceremonies honoring Aphrodite, her worshipers had sexual intercourse with temple prostitutes.

What was the problem with meat sacrificed to idols?

Many animals were slaughtered and sacrificed to the false gods in Corinth. Priests and worshipers kept some of the meat. Much of the meat was sold in markets. Many Christians disagreed with each other over whether it was right for them to eat this meat, because it had been dedicated to a false god. Paul writes about this problem in 1 Corinthians.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in 1 Corinthians in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, 1 Corinthians ULB uses the following principles:

Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God considers Christians to be sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is perfect and faultless. A third fact is that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless, faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULB uses "holy," "holy God," "holy ones," or "holy people." (See: 1:2; 3:17) Sometimes the meaning in a passage indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 6:1, 2; 14:33; 16:1, 15) Sometimes the meaning in the passage implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "set apart," "dedicated to," "reserved for," or "sanctified." (See: 1:2; 6:11; 7:14, 34)

The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

What is the meaning of "flesh?"

Paul frequently used the terms "flesh" or "fleshly" to refer to Christians who did sinful things. However, it is not the physical world that is evil. Paul also described Christians who lived in a righteous way as "spiritual." This is because they did what the Holy Spirit taught them to do. (See: flesh and righteous and spirit)

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:2, 30, 31; 3:1; 4:10, 15, 17; 6:11, 19; 7:22; 9:1, 2; 11:11, 25; 12:3, 9, 13, 18, 25; 14:16; 15:18, 19, 22, 31, 58; 16:19, 24. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God. These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 1 Corinthians?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. Translators are advised to follow the modern versions of the Bible. However, if in the translators' region there are Bibles that read according to older versions of the Bible, the translators can follow those. If so, these verses should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they were probably not original to 1 Corinthians.

"Therefore glorify God with your body." Some older translations read "Therefore glorify God with your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (6:20) "I did this even though I myself was not under the law" (9:20). Some older versions leave this passage out. "for the sake of conscience—the conscience of the other man." Some older translations read "for the sake of conscience: for the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord: the conscience of the other man." (10:28) "and that I give my body to be burned" (13:3). Some older translations read, "and that I give my body so that I might boast." "But if anyone does not recognize this, let him not be recognized" (14:38). Some older translations read, "But if anyone is ignorant of this, let him be ignorant."

Chapter 1

1 Corinthians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first three verses are a greeting. In the ancient Near East, this was a common way of starting a letter.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 19, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Disunity

In this chapter, Paul scolds the church for being divided and for following different apostles. (See: apostle)

Spiritual gifts

Spiritual gifts are specific supernatural abilities to help the church. The Holy Spirit gives these gifts to Christians after they come to believe in Jesus. Paul lists spiritual gifts in Chapter 12. Some scholars believe the Holy Spirit gave some of these gifts only in the early church to help establish the developing church. Other scholars believe all the gifts of the Spirit are still available to help all Christians throughout the church history. (See: faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idioms

In this chapter, Paul refers to the return of Christ using two different phrases: "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions to scold the Corinthians for dividing into factions and for relying on human wisdom.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Stumbling block

A stumbling block is a rock people stumble over. Here it represents the difficulty Jews have in believing that God allowed his Messiah to be crucified.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 1:1 Notes](#) [1 Corinthians intro](#)

1 Corinthians 1 Commentary

1:1-9

Why does Paul use the word "called"?

[1:1]

Paul's wrote the word "called" (κλητός/g2822) twice in the first two verses because he wanted the Christians to know God was doing things in the lives of his people. Paul also used the word "called" to talk about himself. He said that God "called" him to be an apostle. That is, he planned for Paul to be an apostle before he was even born (see: Galatians 1:15). In the same way God called Paul, God called all Christians to himself and called all Christians to be his people before the world was created (see: Ephesians 1:4). God also calls all Christians to be "holy" (ἅγιος/g0040) and to be changed into the "image" of Jesus (see: Ephesians 1:4; Romans 8:29). That is, the things they do and think are to be more like the things Jesus did, said, and thought. They are the things Jesus told Christians to do.

See: Call (Calling); People of God; Apostle; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Image

What was the "church" of God in Corinth?

[1:2]

The "church" of God Paul wrote to Christians in Corinth who came together and worshiped God together in Corinth. Paul's wrote the word "church" to show that this Christians who come together, not about a certain building, house, or temple. He also said the words "of God" (see: 1:2) to say that the church is God's, did not belong to someone. The Christians in Corinth worshiped together in multiple homes.

See: Church; Worship

See Map: Corinth

How is the church "sanctified" in Christ Jesus?

[1:2]

When Paul wrote that the church in Corinth was "sanctified" (ἁγιάζω/g0037) in Christ Jesus because the church was set apart from other people for God because of Jesus (see 1:30). That is, Jesus made the Corinthian Christians pure and without guilt (see 1:8). This was not because of the good things they did. It was only because of Jesus' sacrifice (see 1:30). Paul that Jesus sanctified the church (see: 1 Corinthians 6:11).

See: Church; Sanctify (Sanctification); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Purify (Pure); Guilty; Sacrifice; Atonement (Atonement)

What did Paul mean when he wrote, "you were made rich in him"?

[1:5]

When Paul wrote that "you were made rich in him," it was a type of metaphor. He wanted people to know that God gave different gifts to the Corinthian Christians. Paul said God made the church rich in "all speech" and "all knowledge." These were very valuable gifts, but they were not money. Perhaps these are two of the spiritual gifts talked about later in the letter (see 1 Corinthians 12:8; 14:1-19; 2 Corinthians 8:7).

See: Metaphor; Church; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the "testimony about Christ"?

[1:6]

The testimony about Christ was the gospel. That is, the things Jesus said and did. He died for people's sins and was raised back to life. It was also about the kingdom of God and the things he did to save people (see: 15:1-11).

See: Testify (Testimony); Messiah (Christ); Gospel; Atonement (Atonement); Kingdom of God

What was meant by the phrase, "you lack no spiritual gift"?

[1:7]

Paul said “you lack no spiritual gift.” Some scholars think that God gave the Christians in Corinth every spiritual gift. Other scholars think the words meant that God gave the Christians in Corinth spiritual gifts in the same way he gave all other Christians in other parts of the world spiritual gifts. However, he did not give them every type of spiritual gift.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What is the “revealing” of Jesus?

[1:7]

When Paul talked about the “revealing”(ἀποκάλυψις/g0602) of Jesus, he was talking about a time when Jesus returns to the earth (see 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:7). Paul knew the Corinthians “eagerly waited” (ἀπεκδέχομαι/g0553) for this to happen.

See: Reveal (Revelation); Jesus' Return to Earth

What is the “day of our Lord Jesus Christ”?

[1:8]

The “day of our Lord Jesus Christ” is when Jesus returns to the earth to start the kingdom of God and judge people (see 1 Corinthians 3:13; 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14). The Old Testament prophets also spoke about the day of the Lord use similar phrases (see Joel 2:31; Amos 5:18-20).

See: Day of the Lord; Jesus' Return to Earth; Kingdom of God; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Prophet

What is the “fellowship of his Son”?

[1:9]

The “fellowship of his Son” Paul wrote about is how each Christian are connected and how all Christians are connected to each other. In other letters, Paul wrote about Christians being connected because they are children of God (see: Romans 8:29; Galatians 4:4-6). In this letter, Paul really wanted people to know that all Christians are connected because of the problems the Corinthian Christians were having with one another. This “fellowship” between Christians is through Jesus, and also a way for Christians to worship and obey Jesus (see Acts 2:42; Galatians 2:9).

See: Fellowship; Son of God; Children of God

1:10-17

Was the Christian church at Corinth divided?

[1:10]

Paul wrote this letter to the Corinthian church because they were not united. That is, they disagreed with one another and did not all want to do the same types of things. Some scholars think the church was very divided. They think the Christians divided over the things Paul talked about in this letter. Other scholars think the church was not divided, but Paul warned them because he wanted them to remain united.

Advice to translators: When people are united they think the same types of things, they want the same things, and they do the same types of things.

How can the Corinthians be of the same mind and purpose?

[1:10]

Paul wanted the Corinthians to be of the same mind and purpose. That is, they needed to agree with one another about the gospel which Paul taught them and teaching the same things that Jesus taught. Paul wanted the Christians at Corinth to obey the things written in Scripture not just do what they thought was right. Because Paul preached and taught the gospel to the Corinthians, he helped them to be unified.

See: Gospel; Preach (Preacher)

Who was Chloe?

[1:11]

Scripture does not say much about Chloe. Some scholars think she was a businesswoman in either Ephesus or Corinth. Some scholars think “Chloe’s people” were Chloe’s family, slaves, or business partners. Other scholars think that if Chloe lived in Corinth, she had friends in Ephesus who told Paul the news of the church of Corinth while Paul was in Ephesus.

See Map: Ephesus

Who were Apollos and Cephas?

[1:12]

Cephas was Peter’s name in the Aramaic language many people spoke at this time. Peter was one of Jesus’ apostles. Apollos was someone who became a Jew and was from the city of Alexandria who taught in Ephesus and later went to Corinth after Paul left (see Acts 18:24-19:1).

See: Languages in the New Testament; Apostle

See Map: Ephesus and Alexandria

What did Paul mean when he asked, “Is Christ divided”?

[1:13]

Paul asked, “Is Christ divided?” Scholars think the question expected a “no” answer because Jesus could not be divided into two parts. These scholars think that in the same way it was not possible to divide Christ, the body of Christ, the

church, must also not be divided.

See: Messiah (Christ); Body of Christ; Church

Who were Crispus, Gaius, and Stephanas?

[1:14, 1:16]

Crispus was the leader of the synagogue in Corinth. He became a Christian when Paul was in Corinth (see: Acts 18:8). Scholars think that Gaius was the man Paul wrote about as the “host of Paul and the whole church”(see: Romans 16:23). Those who lived in Stephanas’ household were the first to become Christians in Achaia (see: 1 Corinthians 16:15). The household was likely richer than most families in Corinth since the house was large enough to hold the entire church.

See: Synagogue

See Map: Achaia

What were “words of human wisdom”?

[1:17]

Paul spoke about “words of human wisdom.” Some scholars think that Paul spoke about ways of writing and speaking when he used the words “with words of human wisdom.” The word “wisdom”(σοφία/g4678), was sometimes used to speak about the way someone spoke and the way they argued for something. Paul wanted to say the power of the gospel is different than the power of good arguments. The first comes from God. The second comes from man. The Greeks respected people who spoke well when they spoke and argued in front of other people. Paul wanted the Corinthians to trust the gospel than “human words of wisdom.”

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Gospel

In what way can the cross be “emptied of its power”?

[1:17]

Paul said that the cross can be emptied of its power. Paul taught that the message of the cross does not give anything to those who try to come to God by human wisdom. The power of the cross helped people to know about God’s wisdom. That is, the death and resurrection of Jesus is the only way to come to God and be at peace with God. This means that Jesus alone is the only way to be saved from being punished for your sins.

See: Cross; Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Resurrect (Resurrection); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Atone (Atonement)

1:18-31

What was the “message about the cross”?

[1:18]

The “message”(λόγος/g3056) about the cross was the gospel story. That is, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (see: 15:1-4). The gospel is the message people need to be saved from the punished caused by their sins. However, it was foolishness to the people who did not believe in Jesus.

See: Cross; Gospel; Resurrect (Resurrection); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Atone (Atonement)

Who were “the ones perishing”?

[1:18]

“The ones perishing” were people who did not believe the gospel. They are judged, but they will be fully judged after the “day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (see: 1:9; Amos 5:18-20).

See: Gospel; Day of the Lord; Day of Judgment

Who were “the ones being saved”?

[1:18]

“The ones being saved” were people who believed in the gospel and believed in Jesus. A person who believed in Jesus was not only forgiven of their sins, but they were also given a promise that their bodies will be made new (see: 15:51-54). Christians bodies will be made new when Jesus comes back (see: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gospel; Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Paul quote Isaiah 29:14?

[1:19]

Paul quoted Isaiah 29:14 to say that God’s thoughts about wise and smart people on earth were the same even in the time of the Old Testament. It meant that God will show that those who are wise, by human standards, will ultimately die spiritually. That is, they will be separated from God forever. Also, God will destroy all the things that smart people thought they knew because these things only end in death.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Die (Death)

How did God say that the world’s wisdom is foolish?

[1:20]

God helped people to know that he controlled what happened after people died by raising Jesus after he died. The wise and smart thought this was foolish. God helped people to know that what people thought was wise in the world was foolish because it did not show anyone how to know God.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Resurrect (Resurrection); World; Cross; Atone (Atonement)

What is the “the wisdom of God”?

[1:24]

Paul talked about the “wisdom of God.” He meant God planned from the beginning of the world to save people through Jesus’ death on the cross. That is, he did not do what people thought was good and wise. By God’s wisdom, Jesus’ death and resurrection was preached to people around the world. The wisdom of the world did not teach it to people. The “wisdom of the world” only caused pride and did not help anyone know God. “The wisdom of God” does not have pride because it is pure, peaceable, and leads to righteousness (see: James 3:14-18).

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Atone(Atonement); Resurrect (Resurrection); Preach (Preacher); Pride; Righteous (Righteousness)
What is the “foolishness” and “weakness” of God?

[1:25]

When Paul wrote about the “foolishness” and “weakness” of God, he meant that non-Christians thought that what God did was foolishness and weakness. When Jesus died and came back to life to save people from sinning, God’s “foolishness” became the greatest act of wisdom and power. Jesus death and resurrection helped people to know that God’s power, at what men thought was very weak, it was stronger than the power of any man.

See: (Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Resurrect (Resurrection); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Atone(Atonement)

How do the foolish shame the wise?

[1:27]

Paul talked about the foolish shaming the wise. Scholars think Paul spoke about when God judges the world. When he does this, people will know that what God does is opposite to the “wise” things the world. Things the world thinks is right. These scholars think Paul told the wise that they will one day know great humiliation. That is, because their wisdom said to reject the Gospel.

See: Shame (Ashamed); Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Day of Judgment; World; Gospel

How do the weak shame the strong?

[1:27]

The weak people are saved from their sinning. That is, the weak are those who because of their humility and accepting of the gospel. The strong will not be saved from their sinning. That is, the strong are those who try to honor God by doing enough good on their own. They think they are strong enough and do not need God.

See: Shame (Ashamed); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What is boasting in God’s presence?

[1:29]

To boast in the presence of God was to say that a person made themselves righteous to God. That is, their own wisdom was able to find a way to save them from sinning. They were able to pay their own debt owed to God by doing enough good things. Paul said that no human wisdom or human strength is able to pay the debt owed to God because of sin. That is, no wisdom or strength can make someone righteous. Only Jesus’ death was able to pay this debt own to God and make people righteous. It was a gift from God (see: Ephesians 2:8-9).

See: Presence of God; Righteous (Righteousness); Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins);

Atone(Atonement)

How are Christians “in Christ Jesus”?

[1:30]

See: In Christ

How is Jesus wisdom to Christians?

[1:30]

Paul said that Jesus became wisdom to Christians when he died. After he died, people knew God’s wise plan to save Christians. People also knew God’s wise plan to judge those who do not believe Jesus. The greatest wisdom is to know and believe that Jesus died so that people could be at peace with God.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Atone(Atonement); Judge (Judgment)

How is Jesus righteousness to Christians?

[1:30]

Because Jesus completely obeyed God, People can now be at peace with God. They cannot be at peace with God without this or because of anything they do (see: 1 Corinthians 13:12; Galatians 3:1-9; Philippians 3:9-10).

How does Jesus sanctify Christians?

[1:30]

See: Sanctify (Sanctification)

How does Jesus redeem Christians?

[1:30]

See: Redeem (Redemption)

How do Christians “boast in the Lord”?

[1:31]

To “boast in the Lord” is to know that God is the only way to be saved from sinning and to honor him. Humans are not to boast of their own wisdom, strength, or riches. They are only to boast of God’s wisdom, strength, riches. They are to boast

about who God is and what he does (see: Jeremiah 9:23-24). Christians are also to boast because God saved them God (see: 1:26-30).

See: Lord; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

1 Corinthians 1:1

Paul

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. Alternate translation: "I, Paul"

Sosthenes our brother

This indicates that both Paul and the Corinthians knew Sosthenes. Alternate translation: "Sosthenes, the brother you and I know"

1 Corinthians 1:2

to the church of God at Corinth

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the intended audience. Alternate translation: "am writing this letter to you in Corinth who believe in God"

those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus

Here "sanctified" refers to people who have been set apart as God's people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to those whom Christ Jesus has set apart for God" or "to those whom God has set apart for himself because they belong to Christ Jesus"

called to be holy people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has called to be holy people"

together with all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Possible meanings are 1) this phrase tells who else is called to be holy, or 2) this phrase tells who else this letter is written to.

who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

The word "name" here is a metonym for person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "who call on the Lord Jesus Christ"

their Lord and ours

The word "ours" includes Paul's audience. Jesus is the Lord of Paul and the Corinthians and all the churches.

1 Corinthians 1:3

General Information:

Paul and Sosthenes wrote this letter to the Christians who belonged to the church in Corinth. Unless otherwise noted, such words as "you" and "your" refer to Paul's audience and so are plural.

1 Corinthians 1:4

Connecting Statement:

Paul describes the believers' position and fellowship in Christ as they wait for his coming.

because of the grace of God that Christ Jesus gave to you

Paul speaks of grace as though it were a physical object that Jesus gives Christians as a gift. Alternate translation: "because Christ Jesus has made it possible for God to be kind to you"

1 Corinthians 1:5

He has made you rich

Possible meanings are 1) "Christ has made you rich" or 2) "God has made you rich."

made you rich in every way

Paul is speaking in general terms. Alternate translation:

"made you rich with all kinds of spiritual blessings"

in all speech

God has enabled you to tell others about God's message in many ways.

all knowledge

God has enabled you to understand God's message in many ways.

1 Corinthians 1:6

the testimony about Christ has been confirmed as true among you

Possible meanings are 1) "you saw for yourselves that what we had said about Christ was true" or 2) "other people learned from seeing how you now live that what we and you say about Christ is true."

1 Corinthians 1:7

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true,"

you lack no spiritual gift

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "you have every spiritual gift"

the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ

Possible meanings are 1) "the time when God will reveal the Lord Jesus Christ" or 2) "the time when our Lord Jesus Christ will reveal himself."

1 Corinthians 1:8

you will be blameless

There will be no reason for God to condemn you.

1 Corinthians 1:9

God is faithful, who called ... our Lord

"God, who called ... our Lord, will do everything he has said he will do"

his Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 Corinthians 1:10

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that they are to live in unity with each other and that the message of the cross of Christ, not baptism by people, is what saves.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

"Name" here is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ.

Alternate translation: "by means of our Lord Jesus Christ"

that you all agree

"that you live in harmony with one another"

that there be no divisions among you

"that you do not divide into separate groups among yourselves"

be joined together with the same mind and by the same purpose

"live in unity, agree with other, and work together to accomplish the same things"

1 Corinthians 1:11

Chloe's people

This refers to family members, servants, and others who are part of the household of which Chloe, a woman, is the

head.

there are factions among you

"you are in groups that quarrel one with another"

1 Corinthians 1:12

Each one of you says

Paul is expressing a general attitude of division.

1 Corinthians 1:13

Is Christ divided?

Paul used a question to emphasize that there is only Christ, so it does not make sense for Christians to be divided among themselves. Alternate translation: "Christ is certainly not divided!" or "There is only one Christ!"

Was Paul crucified for you?

Paul used a question to emphasize that it was Christ, not Paul or Apollos, who was crucified. This can also be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "It certainly was not Paul whom they put to death on the cross for your salvation!"

Were you baptized into the name of Paul?

Paul used a question to emphasize that we all are baptized into the name of Christ. This can also be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "It was not into the name of Paul that people baptized you!"

into the name of Paul

"In the name of" here is a metonym for "by the authority of." Alternate translation: "by Paul's authority"

1 Corinthians 1:14

I baptized none of you, except

"among you I baptized only"

Crispus

He was a synagogue ruler who became a Christian.

Gaius

He traveled with the Apostle Paul.

1 Corinthians 1:15

This was so that no one would say that you were baptized into my name

Here "name" represents "authority." This means Paul did not baptize others because they may claim that they became Paul's disciples. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For some of you might have claimed that I baptized you to make you my disciples"

1 Corinthians 1:16

the household of Stephanas

This refers to the family members and slaves in the house where Stephanas, a man, was the head.

1 Corinthians 1:17

Christ did not send me to baptize

This means that baptism was not the primary goal of Paul's ministry.

not with clever speech, in order that the cross of Christ would not be emptied of its power

The phrase "in order ... would not" can be stated in positive form, and "be emptied" can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "not with clever speech, because clever speech would empty the cross of its power" or "not with clever speech, because this would cause the cross of Christ to lose its power"

in order that the cross of Christ would not be emptied of its power

Paul speaks of God's power to save people who trust in Christ as if the cross on which Christ died had power. The

cross being emptied of its power represents people not

recognizing God's power to save them through Christ's

death. If Paul were to use clever speech, people might pay

more attention to his clever speech than to Christ's death.

Alternate translation: "in order that people might recognize

God's power to save them through Jesus's death on the

cross" or "because clever speech would distract people

from God's power as shown in the cross"

1 Corinthians 1:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul emphasizes God's wisdom rather than man's wisdom.

the message about the cross

"the preaching about the crucifixion" or "the message of

Christ's dying on the cross"

is foolishness

"is senseless" or "is silly"

to those who are perishing

"dying." This refers to dying in rebellion against God.

it is the power of God

"it is God working powerfully in us"

1 Corinthians 1:19

I will set aside the understanding of the intelligent

"I will confuse intelligent people" or "I will make the plans that intelligent people make completely fail"

1 Corinthians 1:20

Where is the wise person? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this world?

Paul emphasizes that truly wise people are nowhere to be found. Alternate translation: "Compared with the wisdom of the gospel, there are no wise people, no scholars, no debaters!"

the scholar

a person who is recognized as someone who has studied a great deal

the debater

a person who argues about what he knows or who is skilled in such arguments

Has not God turned the wisdom of the world into foolishness?

Paul uses this question to emphasize what God has done to the wisdom of this world. Alternate translation: "God has

shown that everything they call wisdom is really

foolishness"

1 Corinthians 1:21

those who believe

Possible meanings are 1) "all who believe the message" or

2) "all who believe in Christ."

1 Corinthians 1:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 1:23

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and other Bible teachers.

Christ crucified

"about Christ, who died on a cross"

a stumbling block

Just as a person can stumble over a block on a road, so the message of salvation through the crucifixion of the Christ

keeps Jews from believing in Jesus. Alternate translation:

"not acceptable" or "very offensive"

1 Corinthians 1:24

to those whom God has called

"to the people God calls"

we preach Christ

"we teach about Christ" or "we tell all people about Christ"

we preach Christ as the power and the wisdom of God

Possible meanings are 1) "we preach that God acted

powerfully and wisely by sending Christ to die for us" or

"we preach that through Christ God has shown how strong and wise he is."

the power ... of God

Another possible meaning is that Christ is powerful and it is through Christ that God saves us.

the wisdom of God

Another possible meaning is that God shows the content of his wisdom through Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:25

the foolishness of God is wiser than people, and the weakness of God is stronger than people

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is speaking ironically about God's foolishness and weakness. Paul knows God is not foolish or weak. Alternate translation: "what seems to be the foolishness of God is wiser than people's wisdom, and what seems to be the weakness of God is stronger than the people's strength" or 2) Paul is speaking from the point of view of the Greek people who may think God is foolish or weak. Alternate translation: "what people call God's foolishness is really wiser than what people call wisdom, and what people call God's weakness is really stronger than people's strength"

1 Corinthians 1:26

Connecting Statement:

Paul emphasizes the believer's position before God.

Not many of you

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:

"Very few of you"

wise according to the flesh

"wise according to human standards" or "what most people would call wise"

of noble birth

"special because your family is important"

1 Corinthians 1:27

God chose ... wise. God chose ... strong

Paul repeats many of the same words in two sentences that mean almost the same thing to emphasize the difference between God's way of doing things and how people think God should do them.

God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise

"God chose to use the things that the world thinks are foolish to shame those whom the world thinks are wise"

God chose what is weak in the world to shame what is strong

"God chose to use things that the world thinks are weak to shame the things that the world thinks are strong"

1 Corinthians 1:28

what is low and despised

"the things that are humble and hated"

things that are regarded as nothing

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that which people usually regard as without value"

nothing, to bring to nothing things that are held as valuable

"nothing. He did this so he could show that the things that are held as valuable are really worthless"

things that are held as valuable

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"things that people think are worth money" or "things that people think are worth respect"

1 Corinthians 1:29

He did this

"God did this"

no flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for people, who are made of flesh. Alternate translation: "no people"

1 Corinthians 1:30

Because of what God did

This refers to the work of Christ on the cross.

us ... our

These words refer to Paul, those with him, and the Corinthians.

Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God

Possible meanings are 1) "Christ Jesus, who has made clear to us how wise God is" or 2) "Christ Jesus, who has given us God's wisdom."

1 Corinthians 1:31

Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord

"If a person boasts, he should boast about how great the Lord is"

Chapter 2

1 Corinthians 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 9 and 16. These poetic lines are from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Wisdom

Paul continues the discussion from the first chapter that contrasts human wisdom and God's wisdom. For Paul, human wisdom can be foolish. He says the wisdom from the Holy Spirit is the only true wisdom. Paul uses the phrase "hidden wisdom" when he refers to previously unknown truths. (See: wise and foolish)

Links:

[1 Corinthians 2:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 2

2:1-5

Why did Paul not speak with “eloquence or wisdom”?

[2:1]

Paul did not speak with “eloquence or wisdom.” Some scholars think Paul did not use eloquent speech or to speak in the way an educated person speaks. This is because human wisdom does not allow anyone to know God. People come to know God through the message of the gospel. Other scholars think Paul did not use eloquent speech because his own ability to speak with wisdom and to argue for the truth of the gospel. He was unable to bring anyone to know Jesus. Instead, he chose to preach the message of the gospel plainly (see: 1:17,21, 23-25).

Advice to translators: When someone speaks eloquently, they speak clearly and perhaps in a beautiful way.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Gospel; Preach (Preacher)

What is the “mystery” about which Paul wrote?

[2:1]

See: Mystery

Why did Paul say he wanted to know nothing but “Jesus Christ, and him crucified”?

[2:3]

Paul said that he only wanted to know “Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” Some scholars think Paul’s said he wanted to say that he only wanted to speak the message of the gospel. That is, there is no other way for people to be at peace with God except through believing in Jesus (see: 1:18-25). Paul did not want anything to keep the Christians in Corinth from the knowing Jesus.

See: Messiah (Christ); Crucify (Crucifixion); Gospel

Why did Paul speak of weakness, fear, and trembling?

[2:3]

Paul spoke about weakness, fear, and trembling. Some scholars think Paul was physically weak. This is because Paul came from Philippi. There, they beat him and put him in prison. However, Paul did not talk badly about his weakness. He knew God strengthened him because of this weakness (see: 2 Corinthians 12:10). Other scholars think Paul’s weakness was because of a physical illness.

Other scholars think Paul’s “fear and trembling” was because God made him a messenger of the gospel. This was not a message that came from human wisdom. So Paul did not try to use human wisdom to preach the gospel. Fear and trembling showed how careful Paul was to only preach the gospel he was taught (see: Galatians 1:11-12).

See: Gospel; Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Preach (Preacher)

Why did Paul not use “persuasive words of wisdom”?

[2:4]

Paul did not try to get people to believe the gospel because he used “persuasive words of wisdom.” That is, he did not use certain arguments to convince people the truth of the gospel. He chose only to preach the gospel. Only the Holy Spirit can truly convince people to believe the gospel. Paul knew it was the Holy Spirit who showed people their sin and their need to believe in Jesus in order to be at peace with God. Also, it is the Holy Spirit who leads people to believe in Jesus. Paul knew that if someone convinces a person to believe in Jesus, another person can get this same person to reject Jesus later.

See: Gospel; Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Preach (Preacher); Holy Spirit; Sin

2:6-16

Who were the “mature”?

[2:6]

Some scholars think Paul used the word “mature”(τέλειος/g5046) to talk about Christians in the same way he used the word spiritual. That is, the mature Christian is one who obeyed Holy Spirit who lived inside of them. Mature Christians want to know God more. They obey God. They want to know God’s wisdom and not human wisdom (see: Philippians 3:12-15).

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Grow in Faith; Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

Who were the “rulers of this age”?

[2:6]

Paul spoke about the “rulers of this age.” Some scholars think the “rulers of this age” were demons who influenced certain people. The New Testament writers sometimes use the word “ruler”(ἄρχων/g0758) when they wanted to talk about people who were given permission to rule but who also could not be seen (see: Ephesians 2:2). That is, they are demons and not humans. Other scholars think the “rulers of this age” were human rulers in the time of Paul. That is, the king and other political leaders when Paul was writing. Eventually, there will be no more rulers in the world because they die. And they die because the world is dying (see: 1 Corinthians 7:31).

See: Demon

How is God’s wisdom hidden?

[2:7]

Although God planned for Jesus to die for people's sins before he created the world, Jesus did not die until a certain time in history (see: Ephesians 3:4-6). God told the prophets and Jewish leaders to look for the Messiah's coming. However, God did not tell them when the coming of the Messiah would happen (see: 1 Peter 1:10-12). The hidden wisdom of God is that he offered to save all people. Also, this hidden wisdom is that Jesus will live within each Christian (see: Ephesians 3:5-7; Colossians 1:26-27).

See: Messiah (Christ); Prophet; Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit
How is God's wisdom "for our glory"?

[2:7]

Our glory means living together with God forever in heaven (see: Romans 8:29-30). Before God created the world, he planned that those who believed in Jesus will live together with him in heaven. This also means that Christians are given glorified bodies when Jesus comes back to earth.

See: Glory (Glorify); Heaven; Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Paul quote from the Book of Isaiah?

[2:9]

Paul quoted Isaiah so that people would know that God knew the people in Paul's time were not going to understand the gospel. Isaiah's words meant that the gospel was not imagined in the wisdom of man. Also, Paul used Isaiah's words to speak about how those who love God both understand and know God's wisdom. That is, the gospel.

See: Gospel; Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

How is God's words to Paul and others "through the spirit"?

[2:10]

God's words to Paul were "through the spirit." Scholars think the spirit of God helped people to know the plans of God. That is, because the Spirit truly knows the things of God, he can help people to know his plans. Only God's power shows people God's wisdom. That is, Paul wrote only "through the Spirit" can people know God's power (see 2:4-5).

See: Holy Spirit

What are the "deep things of God"?

[2:10]

Paul spoke about the "deep things of God." Scholars think that Paul wrote the "deep things of God" to talk about how Jesus death and resurrection saves people from sinning. Also, it was from the wisdom of God (see: Romans 11:33).

See: Atone(Atonement); Resurrect (Resurrection); Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

What is the difference between the "the spirit of the world" and "the spirit from God"?

[2:12]

"The spirit of the world" only knows the wisdom of the world and is unable to know the wisdom of God. "The spirit from God" knows the wisdom of God and knows that the wisdom of the world will not last. God gives "the spirit from God" to all Christians. Without "the spirit from God," no human is able to understand the gospel.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Holy Spirit; Gospel

What were the "things freely given to us by God"?

[2:12]

Paul spoke about "things freely given to us by God." Some scholars think that the "things freely given to us by God" is the gift of being saved by Jesus. Fewer scholars think Paul also wrote about the "spiritual gifts" that he wrote about later in the letter.

See: Atone(Atonement); Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What words did the spirit teach?

[2:13]

Paul wrote that he used words taught to him by the Holy Spirit (see: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21). That is, he did not speak about the things of God using only words taught by people. This is because human wisdom cannot teach the things of God.

See: Holy Spirit; Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

What are the "spiritual truths" that those who are "spiritual" know?

[2:14]

Paul talked about "spiritual truths" that those who are "spiritual" know. Scholars think Paul spoke about the things Old Testament said about the messiah. The Old Testament spoke about the messiah, but people did not know that they spoke about Jesus. Now, Christians knew those truths because God showed them his hidden truths.

Advice to Translators: Those who are "spiritual" are those who obey the Holy Spirit.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Messiah (Christ)

Who were the "unspiritual" people?

[2:14]

Some scholars think the "unspiritual" people were not Christian. They did not know or believe in Jesus. They thought the things of God were foolish. Paul wrote that unspiritual people do know the things from the Holy Spirit. Other scholars think the "unspiritual" people were Christians, but they were Christians who did not obey the Holy Spirit. That is, they did

things that did not honor God.

See: Spirit (Spiritual)); Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Holy Spirit

How does the one who is spiritual judge all things?

[2:15]

Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit searches into all things, even God (see: 2:10). That is, Christians have the Holy Spirit living inside them know God and what he wants them to do. The Holy Spirit gives Christians the ability to know the things that are holy, right and good from the things that are unholy, wrong, and bad. When Paul said Christians are judged by no one, he wanted to say that only God judges what each person does and says (see: Hebrews 4:12).

See: Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Judge (Judgment)

How do Christians have the mind of Jesus?

[2:16]

Christians have the mind of Jesus because the Holy Spirit shows them how to think about things. That is they are to focus on what Jesus' death meant for how they lived their lives (see: 2:12; Philippians 2:5). Christians are given the ability to know God's word. It is a gift from God through the "Word" (λόγος/g3056). That is, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. They allow a Christian to know the thoughts of God.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul contrasts human wisdom and God's wisdom. He emphasizes that spiritual wisdom comes from God.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

1 Corinthians 2:2

I decided to know nothing ... except Jesus Christ

When Paul said that he "decided to know nothing" he exaggerated to emphasize that he decided to focus on and teach about nothing other than Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "I decided to teach nothing ... except Jesus Christ" or "I decided not to teach anything ... except Jesus Christ"

to know nothing when I was among you except Jesus Christ

The double negative here emphasizes that Jesus Christ was the only thing Paul wanted to think about. Alternate translation: "when I was among you to know only Jesus Christ"

1 Corinthians 2:3

I was with you

"I was visiting with you"

in weakness

Possible meanings are: 1) "physically weak" or 2) "feeling like I could not do what I needed to do."

1 Corinthians 2:4

my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom

The ideas in the nouns "message" and "proclamation" can be expressed with the verbs "speak" and "preach."

Alternate translation: "I did not speak and preach with persuasive words of wisdom"

persuasive words of wisdom

These are words that sound wise and with which the speaker hopes to cause people to do or believe something. Alternate translation: "wise and persuasive words"

1 Corinthians 2:5

so that your faith might not be in the wisdom of humans

"so that you will not trust in human wisdom"

but in the power of God

"but your faith will be in the power of God" or "but you will

trust in the power of God"

1 Corinthians 2:6

General Information:

Paul interrupts his main argument to explain what he means by "wisdom" and to whom he desires to speak.

Now we do speak

The word "Now" is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Paul begins to explain that true wisdom is God's wisdom.

speak wisdom

The abstract noun "wisdom" can be stated as the adjective "wise." Alternate translation: "speak wise words" or "speak a wise message"

the mature

"mature believers"

1 Corinthians 2:7

before the ages

"before God created anything"

for our glory

"in order to ensure our future glory"

1 Corinthians 2:8

the Lord of glory

"Jesus, the glorious Lord"

1 Corinthians 2:9

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart has imagined

This is a triplet referring to all parts of a person to emphasize that no man has ever been aware of the things that God has prepared.

what God has prepared for those who love him

The Lord has created in heaven wonderful surprises for those who love him.

1 Corinthians 2:10

these things

the truths about Jesus and his death on the cross

the Spirit searches everything out

"the Spirit studies everything accurately" or "the Spirit investigates everything." This implies that the Spirit knows everything.

1 Corinthians 2:11

For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of the person in him?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that no one knows

what a person is thinking except the person himself.
Alternate translation: "No one knows what a person is thinking except that person's spirit"

spirit of the person

This refers to a person's inner being, his own spiritual nature.

no one knows the deep things of God except the Spirit of God
"only the Spirit of God knows the deep things of God"

1 Corinthians 2:12

General Information:

Here the word "we" includes both Paul and his audience.
freely given to us by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"that God freely gave to us" or "that God has kindly given us"

1 Corinthians 2:13

interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people

The meaning of the original language here is uncertain.

Other translations of the Bible translate this as

"interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words."

to spiritual people

Here "spiritual people" refers to those who are led by the

Holy Spirit to obey God.

1 Corinthians 2:14

General Information:

Here the word "we" includes both Paul and his audience.
unspiritual person

the non-Christian person, who has not received the Holy Spirit

because they are spiritually discerned

"because understanding these things requires the aid of the Spirit"

1 Corinthians 2:15

The one who is spiritual

"The believer who has received the Spirit"

he is not judged by others

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation:

"others cannot judge him" or "no one can judge him"

1 Corinthians 2:16

For who can know the mind of the Lord, that he can instruct him?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that no one knows the

mind of the Lord. No one is as wise as the Lord. Alternate

translation: "No one can know the mind of the Lord, so no

one can teach him anything he does not already know"

Chapter 3

1 Corinthians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page to make them easier to read. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verses 19 and 20.

Special concepts in this chapter

Fleshly people

The Corinthian believers were immature because of their unrighteous actions. He calls them "fleshly," meaning acting as nonbelievers. This term is used in opposition to those who are "spiritual." Christians following their "flesh" are acting foolishly. They are following the wisdom of the world. (See: righteous, flesh, spirit and foolish and wise)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

There are many metaphors in this chapter. Paul uses "little children" and "milk" to illustrate spiritual immaturity. He uses the metaphors of planting and watering to describe the roles he and Apollos played in growing the church in Corinth.

Paul uses other metaphors to help teach spiritual truths to the Corinthians and to help them to understand his teachings.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 3:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 3

3:1-9

Who are "fleshly people"?

[3:1]

Paul said the Christians in Corinth were "fleshly people." He wanted to say that the Christians tried to live as Christians by doing whatever they thought was right instead of doing the types of things taught in the Scriptures and the things Jesus taught. These Christians lived in the same way as people who were not Christians.

See: Flesh

What were the "milk" and "food" about which Paul wrote?

[3:2]

Some scholars think that the "milk" Paul wrote about was a metaphor about the gospel (see 1 Corinthians 1:17-18; 2:2; 15:3-4). That is, in the same way that milk is more digestible for babies so it is easy for people to know the gospel and to obey God. However, as Christians begin to act more and more like Jesus, they learn more about the different things they need to do to obey and to honor God. It is more difficult for them to live in a way that honors God. Paul used the metaphor of "food" (βρωμα/g1033) to talk about obeying God after Christians learn more about God and the things he wants them to

do.

Advice to translators: Many scholars think that Paul used the word “fleshly”(σάρκινος/g4560) in 3:1 to show that the Corinthians wanted to do things that non-Christians wanted to do. Paul used the word “fleshly”(σαρκικός/g4559) in 3:3 to show that the Corinthians wanted to do things they wanted to do. Some other scholars think there is little difference between the two words.

See 1 Corinthians 1:30

See: Metaphor; Gospel; Grow in Faith

In what way did Paul write about “jealousy and strife”?

[3:3]

Paul used the word “jealousy”(ζήλος/g2205) to write about the Corinthians' strong desire to do the things they wanted to do and the things they thought. Some scholars think division over leadership caused jealousy. That is, some of the Christians thought of Paul being the leader, while others thought Apollos was their leader. The jealousy caused “strife” among the Christians. That is, it caused arguments about who was their leader (see: 1:11). Paul said jealousy and strife showed that the Christians still lived in the flesh. That is, they lived in the same way as those who are not Christians. In the Book of Galatians, Paul called jealousy and strife “works of the flesh” (see Galatians 5:19-21).

See: Flesh

How did the Corinthians “walk by human standards”?

[3:3]

Some scholars think Paul used the words, “walking by human standards” to mean they lived in the same way as those who were not Christians. Living in this way is “fleshly” and is opposite of walking “by the spirit” (see: Galatians 5:16-18).

See: Walk; Flesh; Holy Spirit

What did Paul mean when he wrote, “as the Lord gave to each one”?

[3:5]

When Paul wrote “as the Lord gave to each one,” he wrote about the specific roles in the church that God gave to Paul and Apollos (see: 1:1; 3:6; 2 Corinthians 10:12-16). Later in the letter, Paul talks about the roles in the church God gave to the Christians in Corinth (see: 12:27-31).

See: Lord; Church

How is the growth of the church the same as the growth of a farm?

[3:6, 3:7, 3:8, 3:9]

Paul said he “planted”(φύτεύω/g5452). Some scholars think Paul spoke about his preaching the gospel to the Corinthians. Other scholars think Paul spoke about helping the Christians in Corinth to bring people together for prayer and to worship God. That is, he helped them begin a church. Paul said Apollos “watered”(ποτίζω/g4222). That is, after Paul preached the gospel to the Corinthians, Apollos came to the church in Corinth to help it to grow (see Acts 19:1). Most scholars think that Apollos taught and preached the scriptures. Paul wrote that God “gave growth”(αὐξάνω/g0837). That is, God caused the Christians to know more of the Word of God. God chose to use Paul and Apollos to cause God's work to happen(see 3:5). It was God's power that caused the Christians in Corinth to grow in their knowledge of God (see 1 Corinthians 2:4-5). Paul wrote that the planter and waterer “are one.” That is, there is no difference between one planting and the one watering. They are both equal. Both the planter and the waterer are God's servants and workers with one another (see 3:5; 3:9). They were one both through Jesus and in their purpose to work for him. Their purpose was to see Christians grow to know and obey God more. Paul said Christians were God's field. That is, Christians were not Paul's or Apollos'. They are only God's.

Advice to translators: In 3:6, the form of the Greek verb Paul used for “planted”(φύτεύω/g5452) and “watered”(ποτίζω/g4222) said that

Paul and Apollos did these actions at a particular time in the past. It was completed. The form of the Greek verb Paul used for “gave growth”(αὐξάνω/g0837) said that God did work while Paul and Apollos worked and God continued to work when they were finished.

See: Sow (Plant); Metaphor; Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Pray (Prayer); Worship; Church; Grow in Faith; Word of God; Serve (Servant, Slave)

3:10-17

What was “the grace of God given” to Paul?

[3:10]

When Paul wrote about “the grace of God given” to him, he wrote about a specific gift from God. He did not mean the message of the gospel in general (see: 1:4). Instead, Paul wrote about God making him an apostle, a “planter,” and a “wise builder” in the church (see: 3:6; 3:10).

See: Grace; Gospel; Apostle; Church

What was meant by the phrase, “skilled, master builder”?

[3:10]

A “skilled master builder” was a person who took someone else's design for a building or other project, drew up plans,

and watched over the building of the project. God showed Paul and the other apostles how he designed the church. God's planned this before the world began. However, he did not show all of his plan until Paul lived (see: Ephesians 1:3-5; 3:8-10).

See: Apostle; Church

How did Paul lay a "foundation"?

[3:10]

When Paul lived, people built large buildings on a solid rock "foundation"(θεμέλιος/g2310). In the same way, God's church is built upon a solid, unchanging rock. This is a metaphor for God. That is God's solid, unchanging plan. The scriptures show people God's plan, instructions on how to live and God's promises. Paul laid a foundation for the church by faithfully preaching and teaching the scriptures God showed to him.

See: Metaphor; Church; Preach (Preacher)

How is another "building" on the foundation Paul laid?

[3:10]

Paul spoke about someone "building" on the foundation Paul laid. Some scholars think Paul spoke about leaders who caused the church to be divided. Those leaders spoke about "being of Paul" or "being of Apollos" (see: 1:12).

See: Church; Metaphor

How is Jesus the foundation?

[3:11]

Jesus is the foundation because knowing about who Jesus is, and the things that he did, causes people to become Christians and then continue to live as Christians. The foundation is the unchanging truth about the things that Christians are given through Christ (see:1:30).

See: Metaphor; Messiah (Christ); Righteous (Righteousness); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Redeem (Redemption)

Why did Paul write about "gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw"?

[3:12]

Paul still spoke about the Christian leaders building on the foundation, which is Jesus. Some of them built by teaching about things that Christians believe. Others do this by helping Christians to live in a way that honors God.

See: Galatians 3:3; 5:1-6

See: Metaphor

What is the "day" about which Paul wrote?

[3:13]

Most scholars think the "day" about which Paul wrote will be the day when Christians come to the "judgment seat of Christ" (see: 2 Corinthians 5:10). Christians will be judged on how they lived their lives on earth. That is, they will be judged on whether they did what God wanted them to do or if they did not do what God wanted them to do. This is not when people will be judged for rejecting Jesus.

See: Day of Judgment

In what way will fire "test" each person's work?

[3:13]

Many times in the scriptures fire is a metaphor of judgment. In scripture, fire also meant something was being purified, tested, or even destroyed. Here, Paul used fire to speak about God judging the things each person does. God judges perfectly because he is able to judge the "purposes of the heart"(see 1 Corinthians 4:5). For example, silver and gold are purified by fire. The heat of the fire brings impurities to the surface area, and the impurities can be taken off. The testing of silver and gold was done in the same way. Fire tested the metals to show the impurities.

Advice to translators: When a metal is not all one thing, but has other metals in it that you do not want, then it is impure. These other metals are called impurities.

See: Test; Fire;Metaphor; Day of Judgment; Purify (Pure)

What was meant by the phrase, "he will suffer loss"?

[3:15]

Paul said that "he will suffer loss." Paul wanted to say that the person will not be rewarded for the things he does. Instead, the person whose work comes through the fire without being burned away will be given a reward (see: 3:8,14).

See: Reward; Fire

What did Paul mean by writing that "he himself will be saved, as though through fire"?

[3:15]

Fire tested something and proved its quality. Paul said clearly that the testing fire showed the quality of the things each person did for God (see: 3:13). This is a metaphor. If the things a person did were burned by fire, then he would still be saved. This is because Jesus saves Christians because of God's kindness (see: Ephesians 2:8-9).

Advice to translators: The phrase "do you not know" implies that the author expected the audience to know the following claim.

See: Metaphor; Fire; Test; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What did Paul mean by writing that "you are God's temple"?

[3:16]

Paul wrote that “you are God’s temple.” In this passage, Paul spoke about the temple being the place where the Holy Spirit lived. The Holy Spirit used to live in the temple, which was a building. Now, God’s Spirit lives inside of Christians. Christians are called his body or his “temple.” Later in the letter, Paul wrote that each person in the Corinthian church was also a temple of the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 6:19).

See: Temple; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How does someone “destroy” God’s temple?

[3:17]

Many scholars think Paul wrote about people in Corinth who tried to tell Christians to follow the Law of Moses in order to obey God. Trying to do the things in the law “destroys”(φθείρω/g5351) God’s temple. This is because God created the new temple, Christians, though his favor and not by people doing what the Law of Moses said to do (see: Galatians 2:16; 3:3). Paul warned those people trying to destroy God’s temple. He said God will destroy them. Some scholars think God will destroy those people on the day of judgment (see: Matthew 18:6). Other scholars think Paul spoke about a punishment that happened when he wrote.

See: Law of Moses; Temple; Day of Judgment; Punish (Punishment)

What is meant by the phrase, “God’s temple is holy”?

[3:17]

The temple of God is “set apart”(ἅγιος/g0040) because the Spirit of God lives there (see 3:16). In the Old Testament, the section of the temple where God’s spirit stayed was “set apart”(see: Exodus 26:33; Leviticus 16:2). Now, Christians have the Holy Spirit in them. Earlier in the letter, Paul wrote that the Corinthian church was “sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be holy”(see 1 Corinthians 1:2). This is because the Holy Spirit is in them.

See: Temple; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Old Testament (Law and Prophets) ; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Sanctify (Sanctification)

3:18-23

What does it mean to be “wise in this age”?

[3:18]

Paul talked about being “wise in this age.” Some scholars think Paul wrote to those people who tried to know the things of God by thinking about them and not by reading the scriptures. These scholars think Paul wanted people to accept the gospel, which was foolish to those who thought they were wise without God. Paul made it clear that no one knows certain about God except the Holy Spirit (see: 2:10; Psalm 139:6; Isaiah 55:8-9). Paul also made it clear that the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men (see: 1:25).

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Gospel; Holy Spirit

How does God “catch the wise in their craftiness”?

[3:19]

Paul said that God “catch the wise in their craftiness.” Some scholars think God does this by showing them that no human wisdom causes someone to be at peace with God. It does not help the church to grow. In other words, the craftiness of human wisdom only led people away from God and to be destroyed (see: 1:18-25). God helped them to know that using human wisdom, thoughts, and reasonings to speak about spiritual things was not possible.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Spirit (Spiritual)

What was meant by the phrase, “let no one boast in men”?

[3:21]

Paul said, “let no one boast in men.” Once again Paul told the Christians in Corinth that it is God who builds and grows his church. Neither Paul nor Apollos caused any of the growth in the church. Paul said “let no one boast in men” whether Paul, Apollos, or any other leader in the church (see: 3:5-6).

See: Church

How are “all things are yours”?

[3:21]

Paul said, “all things are yours.” Some scholars think Paul taught the Christians that they belonged to each other, not to him or Apollos. That is, Christians all have God’s love and kindness equally. In other words, for Christians to boast in Paul or Apollos was wrong because only God causes his church to grow.

Paul wrote a short list of the things all Christians shared. He said that they all shared life and death. Most scholars think when Paul spoke about life and death, he wanted to say that everyone lives and dies. For Christians, they know that after they die, they will live together with God in heaven forever. Some scholars think Paul also spoke about how none of their current problems were able to separate them from God (see: Romans 8:38-39).

See: Heaven

What did Paul mean when he wrote, “you are Christ’s”?

[3:23]

When Paul wrote, “you are Christ’s” he meant that all Christians belonged to Christ (see: 6:17-20). Instead of being

divided, Paul told Christians to live together as one. That is, not only did they belong to each other, they also all belonged to Christ (see: 6:19; Philipppians 2:1-4).

See: Messiah (Christ)

What was meant by the phrase, "Christ is God's"?

[3:23]

Paul used the phrase "Christ is God's." He spoke about Jesus saving people. Though completely God, Jesus submitted himself as a human to the things God the Father wanted him to do so that he could save those who believe in him (see: John 6:38-40).

See: Messiah (Christ); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Jesus is God; Submit (Submission); God the Father

1 Corinthians 3:1

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

spiritual people

people who obey the Spirit

fleshly people

people who follow their own desires

as to little children in Christ

The Corinthians are compared to children very young in age and understanding. Alternate translation: "as to very young believers in Christ"

1 Corinthians 3:2

I fed you milk, not solid food

Babies can only drink milk because they have not grown enough to eat solid food. Paul uses this image as a metaphor to mean that the Corinthians can only understand easy truths. They are not mature enough to understand greater truths.

you are not yet ready

It is implied that they are not ready to understand more difficult teachings. Alternate translation: "you still are not ready to understand the harder teachings about following Christ"

1 Corinthians 3:3

still fleshly

still behaving according to sinful or worldly desires

are you not living according to the flesh, and are you not walking by human standards?

Paul uses questions to rebuke the Corinthians for their sinful behavior. Here "walking" is a metaphor for how a person lives or behaves. Alternate translation: "you should be ashamed because you are behaving according to your sinful desires and you are living according to human standards!"

1 Corinthians 3:4

are you not merely human beings?

Paul uses a question to rebuke the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "you should be ashamed because you are living the same way that people who do not have the Spirit live."

1 Corinthians 3:5

Who then is Apollos? Who is Paul?

Paul is emphasizing that he and Apollos are not the original source of the gospel, and therefore the Corinthians should not follow them. Alternate translation: "It is wrong to form groups to follow Apollos or Paul!" or

Who is Paul?

Paul is speaking of himself as though he were speaking of someone else. Alternate translation: "I am not important!"

or "Who am I?"

Servants through whom you believed

Paul answers his own question by saying that he and Apollos are God's servants. Alternate translation: "Paul and Apollos are servants of Christ, and you believed in Christ because we served him"

Servants through whom you believed, just as the Lord gave tasks to each

This can be stated with the understood information.

Alternate translation: "We are servants through whom you believed, and to each of us the Lord gave different tasks"

1 Corinthians 3:6

I planted

The knowledge of God is compared to a seed which must be planted in order to grow. Alternate translation: "When I preached God's word to you, I was like one who plants seeds in a garden"

Apollos watered

As seeds need water, faith needs further teaching in order for it to grow. Alternate translation: "and when Apollos continued to teach you God's word, he was like one who waters a garden"

but God gave the growth

As plants grow and develop, so faith and knowledge in God also grow and become deeper and stronger. Alternate translation: "but God caused you to grow" or "but just as God causes plants to grow, he caused you to grow spiritually"

1 Corinthians 3:7

neither he who plants ... is anything. But it is God who gives the growth Paul stresses that neither he nor Apollos is responsible for the believers' spiritual growth, but it is God's doing.

it is God who gives the growth

Here to give growth means to cause growth. The abstract noun "growth" can be translated with a verbal phrase.

Alternate translation: "it is God who causes you to grow"

1 Corinthians 3:8

he who plants and he who waters are one

Paul speaks of telling people the good news and teaching those who have accepted it as if they were planting and watering plants.

are one

Possible meanings are "one" are 1) "united in purpose" or 2) "equal in importance."

wages

an amount of money that a worker receives for his work

1 Corinthians 3:9

we

This refers to Paul and Apollos but not the Corinthian

church.

God's fellow workers

Paul considers himself and Apollos as working together.

You are God's garden

Possible meanings are 1) being God's garden represents belonging to God. Alternate translation: "You are like a garden that belongs to God" or 2) being God's garden represents God causing us to grow. Alternate translation: "You are like a garden that God makes grow"

God's building

Possible meanings are 1) being God's building represents belonging to God. Alternate translation: "and you are like a building that belongs to God" or 2) being God's building represents God causing us to become what he wants.

Alternate translation: "and you are like a building that God is constructing"

1 Corinthians 3:10

According to the grace of God that was given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"According to the task that God freely gave me to do"

I laid a foundation

Paul equates his teaching of faith and salvation in Jesus Christ to laying a foundation for a building.

another is building on it

Paul is referring to the person or people who are teaching the Corinthians at that time as if they are carpenters who are constructing the building above the foundation.

let each man

This refers to God's workers in general. Alternate translation: "let each person who serves God"

1 Corinthians 3:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues his metaphor about a foundation.

no one can lay a foundation other than the one that has been laid

The phrase "has been laid" can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "no one can lay a foundation other than the one and only foundation"

1 Corinthians 3:12

General Information:

Paul speaks of what builders usually do when constructing a building to describe what the teachers in Corinth are actually doing. Builders usually only use gold, silver, or precious stones as decorations on buildings.

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw

The building materials used to build a new building are being compared to the spiritual values used to build a person's behavior and activities during his lifetime.

Alternate translation: "Whether a person builds with valuable materials that will last or with cheap materials that burn easily"

precious stones

"expensive stones"

1 Corinthians 3:13

his work will be revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will show everyone what the builder has done"

for the day will reveal it

The "day" refers to the time when God will judge everyone.

When God shows everyone what these teachers have done, it will be like the sun has come up to reveal what happened during the night.

For it will be revealed in fire. The fire will test the quality of what each one has done

Just as fire will reveal the strengths or destroy the weaknesses of a building, God's fire will judge man's efforts and activities. Alternate translation: "God will use fire to show the quality of his work"

1 Corinthians 3:14

work remains

"work lasts" or "work survives"

1 Corinthians 3:15

if anyone's work is burned up

This is a metaphor for a person's work being shown to have no value. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if the fire destroys anyone's work" or "if the judgement shows that a person's work has no value"

he will suffer loss

The abstract noun "loss" can be expressed with the verb

"lose." Alternate translation: "he will lose his reward"

but he himself will be saved, as though escaping through fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but God will save him as though through fire"

as though escaping through fire

This is a simile showing the danger that such a person is in if his works have no value. (See:

1 Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

Paul uses a question to rebuke the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "You act as though you do not know that you are God's temple and the Spirit of God lives in you!"

Do you ... you are ... in you

All instances of "you" in this verse are plural.

1 Corinthians 3:17

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 3:18

Let no one deceive himself

Nobody should believe the lie that he himself is wise in this world.

in this age

according to the way people who do not believe decide what is wise

let him become a "fool"

"that person should be willing to have people who do not believe call him a fool"

1 Corinthians 3:19

He catches the wise in their craftiness

God traps the people who think they are clever and uses their own schemes to trap them.

1 Corinthians 3:20

The Lord knows that the reasoning of the wise is futile

"The Lord knows that what people who think they are wise plan to do is futile"

futile

useless

1 Corinthians 3:21

General Information:
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1 Corinthians 3:22
General Information:

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1 Corinthians 3:23
you are Christ's, and Christ is God's
"you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God"

Chapter 4

1 Corinthians 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Pride

Paul contrasts the Corinthians' pride with the apostles' humility. The Corinthian believers had no reason to be proud. All that they had, and all they were, was a gift from God. (See: apostle)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Paul uses many metaphors in this chapter. He describes the apostles as servants. Paul speaks of a victory parade where the apostles are the prisoners who will be killed. He uses a rod to stand for punishment. He calls himself their father because he is their "spiritual father." (See: and spirit)

Irony

Paul uses irony to shame the Corinthians for being proud. The Corinthian believers are reigning but the apostles are suffering.

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 4:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 4

4:1-5

Who were the "us" about whom Paul wrote?

[4:1]

Some scholars think that when Paul wrote "let people consider us," he continued to write about Paul, Apollos, and Cephas (see: 1 Corinthians 3:22). Other scholars think he also wrote about leaders in the church.

See: Church

What did Paul mean when he wrote that they were "servants" of Christ?

[4:1]

Paul wrote that they were "servants" of Jesus. He wanted people to know that church leaders were servants (see: 1 Corinthians 3:5; 3:21-23). Paul did not want Christians to think certain Christians were greater than other Christians (see: 1 Corinthians 3:4-5; 12:12-20). Instead, Paul wanted to know it was God caused things to grow (see: 1 Corinthians 1:29-31; 3:6). This is a metaphor. He was writing about the church growing in some way.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Metaphor; Fruit (Metaphor); Church

What did it mean to be a "steward"?

[4:1]

In ancient times, masters gave "stewards" (οἰκονόμος/g3623) permission to care for their household. Stewards also did things to serve the household. They always had to please their master. In the same way, God wanted the apostles to care for the church (see: 2:1-5; 3:5-6,10). One day, God will judge how they served him.

See: Steward; Serve (Servant, Slave); Apostle; Discipline (To Disciple); Judge (Judgment)

What were the "mysteries" of God?

[4:1]

Paul spoke about the "mysteries of God" (μυστήριον/g3466). These were the hidden plans which God made before the world began. People Jesus died, people did not know about the gospel and the church (see: 2:7,10; Ephesians 3:1-6). God waited until the resurrection of Jesus to reveal these things.

See: Mystery; Gospel; Church; Resurrect (Resurrection); Reveal (Revelation)

What did Paul mean by writing "stewards are required to be found faithful"?

[4:2]

Paul wrote that "stewards are required to be found faithful." He wanted people to know that God did not judge stewards by how well they said something or how much they knew (see: 1 Corinthians 2:1; 3:8; 3:13-15). Since God is faithful, he required his "stewards" to be faithful (see: 1 Corinthians 1:9). He did not want people to add to or leave out parts of the

gospel (see: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Galatians 1:6-10).

See: Steward; Judge (Judgment); Gospel

Why was it a small thing for Paul to be “judged” by human courts?

[4:3]

Paul was not concerned if people “judged” him in a court. He was more concerned about the day God will judge him (see: Joel 1:15; 1 Corinthians 1:7-8; 3:13; 5:5).

See: Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment

Why did Paul not even judge himself?

[4:3]

Some scholars think Paul did not judge himself because he was a servant and steward of God. Because of this, he was not able to judge himself. Only God could rightly judge Paul. Only God could judge if Paul was a faithful apostle, servant, and steward of the word of God. Although Paul did not think he did wrong things, he still knew that God would judge him (see: 4:4-5). He also knew that he did some wrong things.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Steward; Judge (Judgment); Apostle; Word of God

When will “the Lord come”?

[4:5]

No one knows when “the Lord will come” (see: Matthew 24:36-44; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3).

See: Lord; Jesus' Return to Earth

What were the “hidden things of darkness”?

[4:5]

When Paul wrote about the “hidden things of darkness,” he was speaking about why people did certain things. Only God knows why people do what they do (see: Romans 2:16; Ephesians 5:11-13). God is not concerned only with what people do, but also why people do what they do (see: Matthew 6:16-18; 2 Corinthians 5:12).

What was the “praise” about which Paul wrote?

[4:5]

Some scholars think Paul was speaking about how God will give a test to each Christian on the day of judgment (see: 3:10-15). God will see everything the Christian has done. He will reward each Christian for the good things they have done.

See: Praise; Test; Day of Judgment; Reward

4:6-13

What “principles” were applied to both Paul and Apollos?

[4:6]

Scholars think Paul was speaking about the best ways to preach and teach the gospel. They think he was speaking about certain things he already wrote about (See: I Corinthians 3:5-15). Paul wanted the church leaders to learn from the things he and Apollos did.

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Church

What was meant by the words “do not go beyond what is written”?

[4:6]

Scholars think that when Paul wrote “do not go beyond what is written,” he wrote about the Old Testament. Perhaps Paul was writing about the things he wrote that were also written in the Old Testament (see: 1 Corinthians 1:19; 1:31; 2:9; 3:19; 3:20).

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What did Paul mean by writing “what do you have that you did not receive”?

[4:7]

Paul asked, “What do you have that you did not receive?” He was writing that a Christian’s gifts come from God (see: Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 1:4; 2:12; 3:10). Christians are only saved because of what God did (see: 1 Corinthians 1:30). Since Christians received all things from God, no one is able to boast because of the things they can do (see: 1 Corinthians 3:7; 4:6).

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What did Paul mean by writing “you already have enough,” “you are already rich,” and “you reign without us”?

[4:8]

Scholars think Paul rebuked the Christians in Corinth for acting like they had every spiritual thing they needed. They thought they no longer needed Paul. The Christians in Corinth also mistakenly thought that the kingdom of God had already arrived. They had forgotten how much Paul had taught them. Like the church in Laodicea, they thought they were rich, but were really poor (see: Revelation 3:17). This is a metaphor. They thought they had everything they wanted. However, they did not. They needed to learn more about what God wanted from them.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Kingdom of God; Church; Metaphor

See Map: Laodicea

Why did Paul write “I wish you did reign, so that we could reign with you”?

[4:8]

Paul wrote “I wish you did reign, so that we could reign with you.” He waited for the day when Christians would reign. This is something that he really wanted. However, that day had not come yet (see: 1 Corinthians 1:7-8; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-2).

See: Kingdom of God

How were the apostles “last in line... and like men sentenced to death”?

[4:9]

Some scholars say that Paul used a metaphor when he wrote about the apostles being “last in line...and like men sentenced to death.” He was thinking about a Roman parade. During a Roman parade, a general marched through the city with his army. The “last” ones in the parade were often slaves. These slaves followed the army to the arena. There the slaves would be “were sentenced to death.”

Other scholars think Paul was thinking about the Old Testament prophets. The apostles were waiting to die just like the prophets did. In those days, faithful people were killed because they believed in God and obeyed him. In the same way, the apostles were persecuted and killed because they believed in Jesus and obeyed him (see: 2 Corinthians 11:23-33).

See: Metaphor; Apostle; Serve (Servant, Slave); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Prophet; Persecute (Persecution)

How were the apostles a “spectacle”?

[4:9]

Some scholars think Paul described the apostles as a “spectacle”(θέατρον/g2302) because they lived in a different way than those who did not believe in Jesus. For this reason, many people thought the apostles were strange. They also thought they were men who taught strange things. The apostles may have spoken about mysteries which human beings could not always understand. Yet, the angels really wanted to know these mysteries (see: Ephesians 3:4-6; 1 Peter 1:10-12).

See: Apostle; Mystery; Angel

What did Paul mean when he wrote that the Corinthian Christians were “wise in Christ,” “strong,” and “honored”?

[4:10]

Some scholars think that when Paul wrote that the Corinthian Christians were “wise in Christ”, “strong,” and “honored,” he did not think they were these things. Paul had already stated how the Christians in Corinth were were not living in this way (see: 1 Corinthians 3:1-4). The apostles were preaching the gospel and living in a way that honored God. This was foolishness for the non-Christians who watched the apostles (see: 1 Corinthians 1:18). The non-Christians watching the apostles thought that the gospel was only for the foolish, weak, and despised (see: 1 Corinthians 1:26-28). Other scholars think the Corinthian Christians were proud of their great wisdom. Because of this, Paul scolded them for their wrong ways of thinking.

See: Messiah (Christ); Apostle; Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

What did Paul mean with the words, “up to this present hour”?

[4:11]

Despite their wrong ideas about the ways God does things, Paul told the Corinthian Christians that even “up to this present hour,” the gospel still needed to be preached. For this reason Paul and the apostles were willing to be persecuted to obey God and to finish the things God wanted them to do.

See: Kingdom of God; Gospel; Preach (Preacher); Apostle; Persecute (Persecution)

What did it mean to be “reviled”?

[4:12]

When someone was “reviled,” they were greatly insulted. They were insulted because someone hated them. People “reviled” the apostles by saying evil things about them.

See: Apostle

How were Paul and the apostles “persecuted”?

[4:12]

Paul and the apostles were persecuted. Scholars think Paul was speaking about when the apostles were beaten, imprisoned, or publicly shamed for preaching the gospel.

See: Apostle; Persecute (Persecution) ; Preach (Preacher); Gospel

What did Paul mean by writing that the apostles were “the refuse of the world and the filthiest of all things”?

[4:13]

Paul wrote that the apostles were “the refuse of the world and the filthiest of all things.” He wanted people to know what some non-Christians thought about the apostles. The gospel the apostles preached and the way they lived was different than the things non-Christians believed and the way they lived (see: 1 Corinthians 1:26-28).

See: Apostle; Gospel; Preach (Preacher)

4:14-21

What did Paul mean by writing “I do not write these things to shame you”?

[4:14]

Paul wrote “I do not write these things to shame you.” He wanted people to know that he was not insulting or disrespecting the Corinthian Christians. The Corinthian Christians were his “brothers and sisters” and his “beloved children” in the Lord (see: 1 Corinthians 1:10; 4:14).

See: Shame (Ashamed); Family of God

What did Paul mean by writing “I write these things to correct you”?

[4:14]

Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth to “correct” them. He wanted to warn them about their wrong ways of thinking. He loved them as if they were his own children.

Why did Paul call the Corinthian Christians his “children”?

[4:14]

Paul called the Corinthian Christians his “children.” He wrote this to tell them that he loved them. Paul described these Christians as infants. This was a metaphor. They were living in a way that did not honor God. They were living as if they just became Christians. However, they had been Christians for a long time. They should know how to live in a way that honors God and they should do this (see: 1 Corinthians 3:1; 3:6).

See: Family of God; Metaphor

What did Paul mean by writing “become imitators of me”?

[4:16]

When Paul wrote “become imitators of me,” he wanted Corinthian Christians to live in the same way he lived. He wanted them to think the right things when they were persecuted and suffering.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ;Suffer

Who was Timothy?

[4:17]

Timothy was served with Paul (see: Acts 16:1-4). When Paul preached the gospel in Corinth, Timothy helped him. Timothy was with Paul when he wrote some of his letters to the churches (see: 2 Corinthians 1:1; 1:19; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1). Timothy led the Christians in Ephesus.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Church

See Map: Ephesus

What did Paul mean by writing that Timothy was his beloved “child”?

[4:17]

When Paul wrote that Timothy was his beloved “child” he meant that Timothy was his spiritual son. He taught Timothy about God how to live in a way that honors God. Timothy did these same things for the Christians in Corinth. Timothy did this well (see: Philippians 2:22).

See: Family of God; Spirit (Spiritual)

What did Paul mean by writing that Timothy was faithful in the Lord”?

[4:17]

Paul also wrote that Timothy was “faithful in the Lord.” Paul wrote this so people would know that Timothy could serve the church in Corinth for Paul.

See: Lord; Serve (Servant, Slave); Church

See Map: Corinth

How were Paul’s “ways in Christ”?

[4:17]

Paul’s ways were in Christ because Paul lived in the same way that Jesus did (see: 1 Corinthians 11:1; 1 Thessalonians 1:6). Paul did this because Jesus taught Paul (see: Galatians 1:12). In this letter, Paul wrote that his ways “in Christ” meant that he must reject any way of living which did not focus on God. Paul wanted to live in a way that honored God, even if suffered for living in this way (see: 4:9-13; 2 Corinthians 2:1-5).

See: Messiah (Christ); In Christ

What did Paul mean by writing that some Corinthian Christians were “arrogant”?

[4:18]

When Paul wrote that some Corinthian Christians were “arrogant”(φουσιόω/g5448), he meant that some Christians in Corinth had rejected the things he taught before. These people thought Paul would never visit them again to correct them. However, Paul said that he would soon return (see: 4:19).

Why did Paul write “if the Lord wills”?

[4:19]

Paul wrote “if the Lord wills,” even though he fully intended to come to the Corinthian Christians. When he wrote these words, Paul knew that God could change his plans. If God wanted Paul to be somewhere else, he would go and be there.

See: Acts 18:21; James 4:15

See: Will of God

What did Paul mean by writing “I will see their power”?

[4:19]

Paul wrote "I will see their power." He wanted people to know that when he came to Corinth, he would listen to what those opposing him said. Then he would judge their "speech" by looking to see if the things they taught had the power to change people to live in a way that honors God (see: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5). Paul had already written about certain people who spoke well (see: 1 Corinthians 1:5). Scholars think that some Corinthian Christians wrongly claimed to possess a gift which helped them make great speeches. When Paul eventually visited the Corinthian church, he planned on listening to the speech of these people. He promised he would do this to make sure Corinthian Christians were encouraging other Christians. He would make sure that others in the Corinthian church were doing more than just speaking so people would honor them (see: 1 Corinthians 8:1).

See: Church

How was the kingdom of God about "power"?

[4:20]

Paul wrote that the kingdom of God was about "power." He was speaking about the power of God. He was speaking about Jesus delivering Christians from the power of sin and death (see: Colossians 1:13).

See: Kingdom of God; Sin; Die (Death)

What did Paul mean by writing "shall I come to you with a rod or with love and in a spirit of gentleness"?

[4:21]

When Paul lived, a rod was a staff or a stick that a teachers used to correct people. When Paul asked "shall I come to you with a rod or with love and in a spirit of gentleness," he was talking about he was the Corinthians' spiritual father, not their "teacher"(see: 4:15). Paul wanted them to know that he would correct them with the love of a father, not the rod of a teacher.

See: Family of God

1 Corinthians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Having just reminded the people not to be proud concerning who had taught them about the Lord and who had baptized them, Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that all believers are to be humble servants.

1 Corinthians 4:2

of stewards is that they

Paul is speaking of himself as if he were speaking about other people. Alternate translation: "of us stewards is that we"

1 Corinthians 4:3

it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you

Paul is comparing the difference between human judgment and God's judgment. Man's judgment is not important compared to God's true judgment upon man.

1 Corinthians 4:4

I am not aware of any charge being made against me

"I have not heard anyone accuse me of doing wrong"

that does not justify me

It would still be possible for Paul to be guilty even if there were no charge against him. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "that does not mean that God has declared me innocent"

The one who judges me is the Lord

"It is the Lord who will decide if I am innocent or guilty"

1 Corinthians 4:5

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true,"

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the purposes of the heart

Here "bring to light the hidden things of darkness" is a metaphor for making known to everyone things that were done in secret. Here "heart" is a metonym for people's thoughts and intentions. Alternate translation: "Like a light that shines on things in darkness, God will show what people have secretly done and what they secretly planned"

1 Corinthians 4:6

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

for your sakes

"for your welfare"

1 Corinthians 4:7

between you ... do you have that you did not receive ... you have received ... do you boast ... you did not

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so all instances of "you" here are singular.

For who sees any difference between you and others?

Paul is rebuking the Corinthians who think they are better than those who heard the gospel from someone else.

Alternate translation: "For there is no difference between you and others." or "For you are not superior to other people."

What do you have that you did not receive?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that they did not earn the things they have. Alternate translation: "Everything that you have is what you have received." or "God gave to you everything that you have!"

why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

Paul was rebuking them for boasting in what they had.

Alternate translation: "you should not boast as if you had not received it." or "you have no right to boast!"

1 Corinthians 4:8

General Information:

Paul uses irony here to shame the Corinthians and make them realize that they are sinning when they are proud of themselves and their teachers.

1 Corinthians 4:9

God has put us apostles on display

Paul expresses two ways that God has put his apostles on display for the world to see.

has put us apostles on display

God has displayed the apostles just like prisoners who are

at the end of a Roman military parade and who are humiliated before their execution.

like men sentenced to death

God put the apostles on display like men who are about to be executed.

to the world—to angels, and to human beings

Possible meanings are 1) "the world" consists of both supernatural

1 Corinthians 4:10

We are fools ... in dishonor

Paul uses irony to shame the Corinthians so they will think about what he is saying.

You are held in honor

"People treat you Corinthians as though you were important people"

we are held in dishonor

"people shame us apostles"

1 Corinthians 4:11

Up to this present hour

"Until now" or "Up to now"

we are beaten

This refers to hitting with the hand, not with whips or clubs. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people beat us"

we are homeless

Paul means that they have to move around from place to place. Although they have places to stay, they have no permanent home.

1 Corinthians 4:12

When we are slandered, we bless

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When people slander us, we bless them" or "When people scorn us, we bless them"

When we are persecuted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When people persecute us"

1 Corinthians 4:13

When we are slandered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When people slander us"

We have become as the refuse of the world

"People began to consider us—and they still consider us—to be the garbage of the world"

the refuse of the world

"the worst kind of garbage in the world"

1 Corinthians 4:14

I do not write these things to shame you, but to warn you

"I do not intend to shame you, but I want to correct you"

my beloved children

Because Paul had led the Corinthians to Christ, they are like

his spiritual children.

1 Corinthians 4:15

ten thousand guardians

This is an exaggeration of the number of people guiding them, to emphasize the importance of the one spiritual father. Alternate translation: "very many guardians" or "a large crowd of guardians"

I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel

Paul is emphasizing firstly that his relationship with the Corinthians is most importantly "in Christ," secondly that it came because he told them the good news, and thirdly that he is the one who is like a father to them. Alternate translation: "it was because God joined you to Christ when I told you the good news that I was the one who became your father"

I became your father

Because Paul had led the Corinthians to Christ, he is like a father to them.

1 Corinthians 4:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 4:17

my beloved and faithful child in the Lord

"whom I love and whom I teach about the Lord as if he were my own child"

1 Corinthians 4:18

Now

This word indicates that Paul is shifting his topic. Here he begins to rebuke the arrogant behavior of the Corinthian believers.

1 Corinthians 4:19

I will come to you

"I will visit you"

1 Corinthians 4:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 4:21

What do you want?

Paul was making a last appeal to the Corinthians, as he has been rebuking them for the errors they had made.

Alternate translation: "Tell me what you want to happen now."

Should I come to you with a rod or with love and in a spirit of gentleness?

Paul is offering the Corinthians two opposing attitudes he could use when approaching them. Alternate translation:

"If you want, I can come to punish you, or I can come to show you how much I love you by being gentle with you."

of gentleness

"of kindness" or "of tenderness"

Chapter 5

1 Corinthians 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page to make them easier to read. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 13.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Euphemisms

Paul uses euphemisms to describe sensitive topics. This chapter deals with sexual immorality of one church member. (See: and fornication)

Metaphor

Paul uses an extended comparison that contains many metaphors. Yeast represents evil. The loaf probably represents the whole congregation. The unleavened bread represents living purely. So the whole passage means: Don't you know that a little evil will affect the whole congregation? So get rid of the evil so you can live purely. Christ has been sacrificed for us. So let us be sincere and truthful and not wicked and behaving badly. (See: evil, unleavened bread, purify, and passover)

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 5:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 5

5:1-8

How did Paul hear about the sexual immorality in Corinth?

[5:1]

People told Paul about the things certain Christians did in Corinth. Some scholars think that Chloe's people told Paul. Other scholars think that Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, or other people told Paul (see: 1 Corinthians 1:11; 16:7).

See: Sexual Immorality

Why did Paul mean with the words, "not even permitted among the gentiles"?

[5:1]

Paul was shocked that the Corinthian Christians did not rebuke people for their certain things they did. Their sexual immorality was worse than the non-Christians. The non-Christians forbid people to do the things the Christians were doing. The Christians were supposed to honor God, but they did things more evil than the non-Christians

See: Leviticus 18:7-8

See: Gentile

How was a person "be removed" from among the church"?

[5:2]

When Paul said that a person was to be "removed" from the church, he wanted the person who sinned to not be allowed to join the other Christians when they gathered together. Scholars think this is because God required people to be holy and sanctified (see: 1:2; 3:16-17).

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Sanctify (Sanctification)

How was Paul "present in the spirit"?

[5:3]

When Paul wrote that he was "present in the spirit," some scholars think he wanted people to know he was with them in some way even though he was not in Corinth. Other scholars think Paul said this because all Christians have the Holy Spirit living inside of them.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Why did Paul write, "hand this man over to Satan"?

[5:5]

When Paul wrote "hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh," he wanted the Christians in Corinth to separate from this man (see: 1 Corinthians 5:13). He did not want them to allow this man to join the other Christians when they gathered together. He was not allowed to worship with them. He was not allowed to eat meals with the other Christians. These Christians were to hand this man over to Satan. This is a metaphor. This man wanted to obey Satan and not Jesus. Paul wanted them to do this so that the man would repent of his evil deed.

See: Satan (The Devil); Metaphor; Repent (Repentance)

What was "the destruction of the flesh"?

[5:5]

Paul commanded this sinning man to be separated from other Christians. Scholars think that "the destruction of the flesh" (σάρξ/g4561) was the same idea as that of "crucifying" the flesh (see: Galatians 5:24). When the Christians separated from this man, they did this so he would stop sinning in this way. He wanted the man to repent. If he did not stop sinning, God would punish him and he would die. Paul also did not want the things this man did to cause other Christians to start sinning.

See: Sin; Flesh

Why did Paul write about "leaven"?

[5:6]

Paul wrote here about the leaven and dough. This is a metaphor. When a small amount of leaven was placed into a lump

of bread dough, the leaven caused the dough to rise and grow. In the same way, if ignored a small amount of sin can grow and hurt other Christians. Therefore, Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to separate themselves from the wrong, sinful behavior of this man.

See: Yeast (Leaven); Metaphor; Sin

Why did Paul call Christ “our Passover lamb”?

[5:7]

In the Old Testament, the Jewish people sacrificed the Passover lamb for the forgiveness of their sins (see: Numbers 28:16-22; Ezekiel 45:21-22; Hebrews 10:1-4). This gave them peace with God. Paul called Jesus “our Passover lamb” because like the Old Testament sacrifices, Jesus death served as the sin offering for all Christians. What Jesus did was greater than all other sacrifices. Jesus’s sacrifice the final sacrifice for all Christians (see: Hebrews 10:1-12).

See: Passover; Lamb of God; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Sacrifice; Sin; Sin Offering ; Atonement (Atonement)

Why did Paul command the Corinthians to “celebrate the festival”?

[5:8]

Paul commanded the Corinthians to “celebrate the festival” because Jesus was the perfect Passover lamb (see: 1 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 10:12). Scholars think Paul wanted to say that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. Because of this, Christians can celebrate that the new life Jesus gives to them.

See: Passover; Lamb of God; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

Why were the Corinthians not to celebrate with leaven?

[5:8]

In the Bible, leaven was often used a metaphor. When it was used in this way, it was speaking about doing evil things. Paul wanted Christians to live in a way that honors God.

See: Yeast (Leaven); Metaphor; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

5:9-13

What was the letter about which Paul wrote?

[5:9]

Paul wrote another letter to the Christians in Corinth before he wrote this letter. That letter, however, is not in the Bible. Why did Paul explain that he did not ban the Corinthian Christians from “immoral people of this world”?

[5:10]

Paul wrote that the Corinthian Christians could not totally avoid non-Christians (see: 1 Corinthians 5:10). Yet, Christians could be “in the world” without “being of it” (see: 1 John 2:15-17). The Christians in Corinth were to live in a way that honored God. This would make the non-Christians also want to live in a way that honors God.

See: World

Why did Paul not want the Corinthian Christians to “associate” or “even to eat” with brothers or sisters involved in this list of sins?

[5:11]

Paul did not want people to think that the Christians in Corinth were evil (see: 1 Corinthians 1:2; 5:6-8). Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to remove the sexually immoral person from the church. He did not want these Christians to do evil things (see: 1 Corinthians 5:13). Paul wanted these people removed from the church, so they might also have had the opportunity for repentance and salvation (see: 1 Corinthians 5:5). Some scholars think Paul did not think people who sinned were Christians. Paul wanted them to be at peace with God. Other scholars think Paul knew they were Christians. If they kept sinning, God would punish them. They would die.

See: Church; Repent (Repentance; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin; Punish (Punishment)

What was a drunkard?

[5:11]

A drunkard was someone who constantly drank much alcohol.

A “drunkard”(μέθυστος/g3183) was someone who constantly drank excessive amounts of alcohol. In Greco-Roman and Jewish culture wine was a common part of life. A “drunkard” differed from most people in that time because a drunkard consistently drank a lot of alcohol.

How were Christians to “judge those who are inside the church”?

[5:12]

Paul wanted the Christians in Corinth to both separate from the sinning Christians and to the sinning Christian (see: 5:11; Galatians 6:1-4).

See: Judge (Judgment); Church; Sin

1 Corinthians 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul now specifically states about what sin of theirs he has heard, and how the Corinthian believers are proud of their acceptance of that man and his sin.

that is not even permitted among the pagans

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that not even the Gentiles permit"

A man has his father's wife

"A man among you is committing adultery with his father's

wife"

father's wife

the wife of his father, but probably not his own mother

1 Corinthians 5:2

Should you not mourn instead ... among you?

This rhetorical question is used to scold the Corinthians.

Alternate translation: "You should mourn over this instead ... among you!"

the one who did this deed might be removed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"you can remove from among you the one who did this deed"

1 Corinthians 5:3

I am present in spirit

"I am with you in spirit." Being with them in spirit represents caring about them or wanting to be with them.

Alternate translation: "I care about you" or "I want to be with you"

I have already passed judgment on the one who did this

Possible meanings are 1) "I have decided what you should do with the one who did this" or 2) "I have found the person who did this guilty"

1 Corinthians 5:4

When you are assembled

"When you are together" or "When you meet together"

in the name of our Lord Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) the name of the Lord Jesus is a metonym that represents his authority. Alternate

translation: "with the authority of our Lord Jesus" or 2)

being assembled in the Lord's name implies meeting together to worship him. Alternate translation: "to worship our Lord Jesus"

1 Corinthians 5:5

deliver this man over to Satan

This means make the man leave the Christian community so that he will no longer be protected from Satan. Alternate translation: "hand this man over to Satan by sending him away from the Christian community"

for the destruction of the flesh

Possible meanings are 1) "flesh" refers to his physical body.

Alternate translation: "so that Satan may harm his body" or

2) "flesh" is a metaphor for the sinful nature. Alternate

translation: "so that his sinful nature will be destroyed" or

"so that he will not continue to live according to his sinful nature"

so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God may save his spirit on the day of the Lord"

1 Corinthians 5:6

Your boasting is not good

"Your boasting is bad"

Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole loaf?

Paul uses this proverb to mean that a small part of something affects the whole thing. In this case, one person who is sinning can harm the entire Christian community.

Do you not know that a little yeast ... loaf?

Here Paul uses a rhetorical question to teach his audience.

Alternate translation: "You know that a little yeast ... loaf."

or "A little yeast ... loaf."

1 Corinthians 5:7

Cleanse yourselves of the old yeast so that you may be a new batch of dough, unleavened

Paul uses the proverb from 5:6 to teach his audience. Here "old yeast" is a metaphor for the sins that the people were committing. "Unleavened dough" is the type of bread that God told the Israelites was acceptable to eat when celebrating Passover. Paul is telling his audience to stop sinning so that they may be acceptable to God.

Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed

As the Passover lamb covered the sins of Israel by faith each year, so did Christ's death cover the sins of all who trust in Christ by faith for eternity. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord has sacrificed Christ, our Passover lamb"

1 Corinthians 5:8

not with the old yeast, the yeast of bad behavior and wickedness ... the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth

Paul continues using the proverb from 5:6 to teach his audience. Here "yeast" is a metaphor for sin, and "unleavened bread" is metaphor for behaviors acceptable to God.

1 Corinthians 5:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 5:10

the immoral people of this world

This means unbelievers who have chosen to live immoral lives.

the greedy

"those who are greedy" or "those who are willing to be dishonest to get what others have"

swindlers

This means people who cheat to get others' property.

you would need to go out of the world

"you would need to avoid all people"

1 Corinthians 5:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells them how to treat believers in the church who refuse to be corrected for their involvement in sexual immorality or other obvious sins.

anyone who is called

"anyone who calls himself"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, either a man or a woman.

1 Corinthians 5:12

how am I involved with judging those who are outside the church?

Paul uses a question to emphasize that he is not the one to judge people outside the church. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am not the one who should judge people who do not belong to the church."

are you not to judge those who are inside the church?

Paul is using a question to scold the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "you should know that you are the ones who should judge those who are inside the church."

1 Corinthians 5:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Lawsuits

Paul teaches that a Christian should not take another Christian to court before a non-Christian judge. It is better to be cheated. Christians will judge the angels. So they should be able to solve problems among themselves. (See: judge)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

The temple of the Holy Spirit is an important metaphor. It refers to the place where the Holy Spirit stays and is worshiped.

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 6:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 6

6:1-11

Why was Paul concerned about Christians going to a “civil court before an unbelieving judge”?

[6:1]

Paul did not want Christians to go to a court with a non-Christian judge. Paul wanted Christians to be at peace with one another. If they disagreed about something, they should not go to a non-Christian to help them. He wanted Christians to judge something in the right way (see: John 7:24). A judge who was not a Christian probably did not know about the ways God wanted Christians to solve their problems with each other. A civil judge would only have been able to judge the Christians case based on the laws the government made.

See: Judge (Judgment); Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

Advice to translators: In this context, having a “dispute”(πρῆγμα/g4229) was used when speaking about a lawsuits. A civil judge was someone the government paid to resolve a dispute between two people.

Who were the “saints”?

[6:1]

Paul used the word “saints”(ἅγιος/g0040) to write about the Christians in Corinth. Earlier in this letter to the Corinthians, Paul used the same word “saints” and said that the Corinthians were “sanctified” in Christ. He also used this word (ἅγιος/g0040) in 1 Corinthians 1:2 to further explain that the Corinthian “saints” were called to be God’s holy people (see: 1 Corinthians 1:2).

See: Holy Ones; Sanctify (Sanctification); People of God

How will “the saints judge the world”?

[6:2]

Jesus will finally judge the world. Scholars also think that Christians will also be asked to judge the world in some way (see: 4:1-5). Perhaps Paul was writing about the same judgment written about in Daniel 7:22.

See: Holy Ones; Judge (Judgment)

Why did Paul write that “we will judge the angels”?

[6:3]

Paul wrote that Christians “will judge angels.” He wanted the Christians in Corinth to know that they could settle their own disagreements.

See: Judge (Judgment); Angel

Why did Paul write “I say this to your shame”?

[6:5]

Paul did not write the Corinthians in order to shame them. He wrote so that they could avoid shaming themselves. When the Corinthian Christians went to non-Christians to settle their “disputes,” this shamed them (see: 1 Corinthians 4:14).

Paul wrote how it was a shame for the Corinthian church to seek out for themselves the rulings of non-Christian judges. Instead, Paul wrote how the Corinthian Church should do things that Jesus wants them to do and to do things that honor God (see: 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:16; 6:5).

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

How was the presence of lawsuits among Christians a “defeat” for the Corinthian church?

[6:7]

Paul wrote that the Corinthians use of lawsuits was a moral “defeat”(ἡττημα/g2275). Instead of doing what God wanted

them to do, the Corinthians wrongfully trusted in non-Christians to judge them. Paul wrote how it would be better for Christians to suffer wrongs done to them, than for them to seek out the decisions of a non-Christian judge.

See: Ancient Trials (Lawsuit)

How had the Christians “wronged and cheated” their own brothers?

[6:7]

Paul already spoke about Christians in Corinth who were sexually immoral, idolaters, and greedy. He wanted the Christians in Corinth to know that they “wronged and cheated” their own brothers.

See: Sexual Immorality; Idolatry (Idol); Family of God

Who were the “unrighteous”?

[6:9]

The “unrighteous”(ἄδικος/g0094) were all people who did not believe in Jesus. They did what they wanted to do and did not do things that God wanted them to do. Paul wrote that those chose to live in the wrong way would not experience the benefits of the kingdom of God.

See: Kingdom of God

What were “male prostitutes”?

[6:9]

Some scholars believe that when Paul wrote about “male prostitutes”(μαλακός/g3120). That is, he wrote about men who received money for having sex. Other scholars think Paul was writing about men who had sex with other men. They were not paid to do this.

See: Sexual Immorality

What did Paul mean when he used the words “those who practice homosexuality”?

[6:9]

Paul wrote about people who practice homosexuality. He was writing about men who had sex with other men. According to the Law of Moses, this is something God hates (see: Leviticus 18:22; 20:13). Paul said that God’s wrath would come upon those who practiced homosexuality (see: Romans 1:26-67)

See: Sexual Immorality; Law of Moses; Wrath

How were the Christians in Corinth “cleansed”?

[6:11]

Paul wrote about the Christians in Corinth being cleansed. Some scholars think Paul wrote about the blood of Jesus. This is a metaphor. Jesus’ blood “cleansed” Christians from all of their sin (see: 1 John 1:7-9). Because Jesus died, Christians are at peace with God. They are also made clean.

See: Clean and Unclean; Blood; Metaphor; Sin

How were the Christians in Corinth “sanctified”?

[6:11]

Paul wrote that through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, God “sanctified”(ἀγιάζω/g0037) the Corinthian Christians. That is, they were set apart for God’s purposes (see: 1 Corinthians 1:2). They do the things God wants them to do to serve him.

See: Sanctify (Sanctification); Atonement (Atonement); Resurrect (Resurrection)

How were Christians “made right” with God?

[6:11]

When Paul wrote that the Corinthian Christians were “made right”(δικαίωω/g1344), he wanted them to know that they were right with God. That is, they were at peace with God. Because they believed in Jesus, they were not “unrighteous” (see: Romans 5:18-21).

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

6:12-20

What did Paul mean by saying “everything is lawful for me”?

[6:12]

Paul wrote that everything is lawful for him. Some scholars think that when Paul wrote “everything is lawful for me” he wanted people to know it was not wrong for him to eat or drink certain things. He did not need to celebrate a feast on a certain day. Paul did not need to obey the Law of Moses. However, Paul did not say that he could sin.

See: Law of Moses; Sin

Why did Paul write “not everything is beneficial”?

[6:12]

Paul wrote “not everything is beneficial” because he wanted Christians to know that not everything someone does helps them or helps other people. He wanted them to do things that would help other Christians (see: 10:23-24). Paul wanted Christians to encourage them to love one another. Christians are free to do certain things, but it is sometimes wrong to do these things if they hurt other people in some way (see: Galatians 5:13).

Why did Paul write “I will not be mastered by anything”?

[6:12]

Paul wrote “I will not be mastered by anything. Paul wanted people to know that he was a servant of Jesus. He did not allow himself to be lead by anyone or anything other than Jesus. Paul also wrote that he often did not do what he wanted to do. This was because he did not want to stop anyone from believing in Jesus (see: 1 Corinthians 9:1-12).

See: Serve (Servant, Slave)

What did the words, “food is for the stomach and the stomach for food, but God will destroy them both” mean?

[6:13]

Paul wrote “food is for the stomach and the stomach for food, but God will destroy them both.” He wanted people to know that a person’s choice to eat or not eat certain foods should always be for the purpose of honoring God. When people die, they will not have a stomach and will not eat.

How was the body for the Lord?

[6:13]

Paul wrote that just as food was for the stomach, a Christian’s body was meant to be used to serve Jesus. The Christian’s body was the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Christians’s body was meant to be used to honor God (see: 1 Corinthians 6:17, 19-20).

See: Temple; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How were the bodies of Christians “members of Christ”?

[6:15]

Paul wrote that the bodies of Christians were members of Christ. Scholars think Paul wanted to write that the Christians’ body was joined to Jesus in some way. The Christian’s soul and spirit were also joined to Christ. Perhaps this is why Paul told Christians to offer their bodies to God as a living sacrifice (see: Romans 12:1). When Paul used the word “members” he was saying that each individual Christian was united with Jesus. This was possible because of the resurrection of Christ.

See: Messiah (Christ); Soul; Spirit (Spiritual); Offer (Offering); Sacrifice; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What did it mean that “he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him”?

[6:17]

After the resurrection of Jesus and his ascension back to heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within Christians (see: John 14:16-18; 16:12-15; Acts 1:8). Just as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are one, so Christians are one with Jesus.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Ascend (Ascension); Heaven; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; God the Father; Son of God; Holy Spirit; Trinity

How were the Christians’ bodies “the temple of the Holy Spirit”?

[6:19]

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians about the things the Holy Spirit did. He said that not only did God the Holy Spirit live within the church, the Holy Spirit also lived within each Christian (see: Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 3:16). At one time, God allowed Himself to be seen in a certain way in the temple in Jerusalem. However, God left the temple. God now lives in Christians through the Holy Spirit in some way. God can be seen in some way through the things Christians do. This is a metaphor.

See: Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Temple; Metaphor

Why did Paul say to the church, “you are not your own”?

[6:19]

God the Holy Spirit lives within all Christians. Christians belong to God in some way and a part of the body of Christ.

See: Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Body of Christ

What did Paul mean when he wrote that the Christians were “bought with a price”?

[6:20]

When Paul wrote that Christians were “bought with a price,” he reminded them that they were once slaves to sin but Jesus freed Christians from that slavery (see: Romans 6:17-18; 1 Corinthians 7:23). The price was the death of Jesus (see: Romans 6:3-12). This is a metaphor. Jesus redeemed Christians.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Sin; Sinful Nature; Free (Freedom); Metaphor; Redeem (Redemption)

What did Paul mean by saying, “glorify God with your body”?

[6:20]

Paul wrote that Christians are to glorify God with their bodies. Paul wanted Christians to do things that honor God. People should know about God because they have seen the way Christians live.

See: Glory (Glorify)

1 Corinthians 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how believers are to settle disagreements with other believers.

dispute

in this case a legal complaint, argument, or disagreement
does he dare ... holy people?

Paul is angry because the Corinthians are doing a great

wrong by taking their disputes with each other to the civil court. Alternate translation: "it is wrong for him to dare ... holy people." or "he should fear God and not ... God's holy people."

to bring a lawsuit before the unrighteous rather than before God's holy people
to ask unrighteous people, rather than God's holy people, to judge who is right and who is wrong

1 Corinthians 6:2

Do you not know that God's holy people will judge the world?

Paul uses a question to shame the Corinthians for their behavior. Alternate translation: "You act like you do not know that God's holy people will judge the world."

If then you will judge the world, are you not able to settle matters of little importance?

Because they will be given greater responsibility later, they should be responsible for lesser things now. Alternate translation: "You will judge the world in the future, so you should be able to settle this small matter now."

1 Corinthians 6:3

judge matters of this life

"stop arguments about things that have to do with this life"

Do you not know that we will judge the angels?

Paul is surprised that they do not seem to know. Alternate translation: "You know that we will judge the angels."

we

Paul includes himself and the Corinthians.

How much more, then, can we judge matters of this life?

Because they will be given greater responsibility later, they should be responsible for lesser things now. Alternate translation: "Because we know we will judge the angels, we can also be sure that God will enable us to judge matters in this life."

1 Corinthians 6:4

If then you have to make judgments that pertain to daily life

"If you are called upon to make decisions about daily life"
or "If you must settle matters that are important in this life"
do you lay such cases as these before those who have no standing in the church?

Possible meanings are that 1) this is a rhetorical question and Paul is rebuking the Corinthians for laying their cases before people of no standing in the church. Alternate translation: "you should not lay such cases as these before those who have no standing in the church." or 2) this is a command to lay their cases before even people of no standing in the church, rather than to people outside of the church. Alternate translation: "lay cases such as these even before people in the church who have no standing, not before people outside of the church."

1 Corinthians 6:5

to your shame

"to your dishonor" or "to show how you have failed in this matter"

Is there no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between brothers?

Paul is shaming the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "You should be ashamed that you cannot find a wise believer to settle arguments between brothers"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

dispute

argument or disagreement

1 Corinthians 6:6

But one brother brings a lawsuit against another brother—and this before unbelievers

"But brothers who have disputes with each other ask judges who do not believe in Christ to make decisions for them" or "It is bad that brothers have such bad disputes with each other that they go to court; it is even worse that those courts are run by unbelievers"

brother brings a lawsuit against another brother

Here "brother" means fellow Christian, including both men and women.

brings a lawsuit

asks the civil court to judge the matter

and this before unbelievers

Possible meanings are 1) "and the brothers have unbelieving judges make decisions for them" or 2) "and unbelievers in the community see brothers disputing with one another"

1 Corinthians 6:7

is already a defeat

"is already a failure"

Why not rather suffer the wrong? Why not rather allow yourselves to be cheated?

Paul continues to shame the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "It would be better to let others wrong you and cheat you than to take them to court."

1 Corinthians 6:8

your own brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

1 Corinthians 6:9

Do you not know that ... kingdom of God?

Paul emphasizes that they should already know this truth. Alternate translation: "You already know that ... kingdom of God."

inherit

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

inherit the kingdom of God

God will not judge them as righteous at the judgment, and they will not enter eternal life.

nor men who submit to homosexual acts, nor men who perform homosexual acts

Both of these phrases refer to men who have sex with other men.

1 Corinthians 6:10

thieves

people who steal from others

the greedy

people who are willing to use evil means to take others' property

1 Corinthians 6:11

you have been cleansed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has cleansed you"

you have been sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has set you apart for himself"

you have been justified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has made you right with him"

in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ

"Name" here is a metonym for the power and authority of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "by the power and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ"

1 Corinthians 6:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that God wants them pure because Christ has bought them with his death. Their bodies are now God's temple. He does so by saying what the Corinthians might say and then correcting them.

"Everything is lawful for me," but

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is saying what some

Corinthians might be thinking. Alternate translation:

"People say, 'I am allowed to do anything,' but" or 2) Paul is saying what he thinks is true. Alternate translation: "I am allowed to do anything, but"

but not everything is profitable

Paul is answering whoever says, "Everything is lawful for me." Alternate translation: "but not everything is good for me"

I will not be mastered by any of them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will not allow these things to rule over me like a master"

1 Corinthians 6:13

"Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," but God will do away with both of them

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is correcting what some Corinthians might be thinking, "food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," by answering that God will do away with both the stomach and food or 2) Paul actually agrees that "food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," but he is adding that God will do away with both of them.

Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food

One possible meanings is that the speaker is speaking indirectly of the body and sex, but you should translate this literally as "stomach" and "food."

do away with

"destroy"

1 Corinthians 6:14

raised the Lord

"caused the Lord to live again"

1 Corinthians 6:15

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

The word translated as "members" refers to parts of a body. Our belonging to Christ is spoken of as if we were parts of his body. We belong to him so much that even our bodies belong to him. Paul uses this question to remind the people of something they should already know. Alternate translation: "You should know that your bodies belong to Christ."

Should I then take the members of Christ and join them to a prostitute?

May it not be!

Paul uses this question to emphasize how wrong it is for someone who belongs to Christ to go to a prostitute.

Alternate translation: "I am part of Christ. I will not take my body and join myself to a prostitute!" or "We are parts of Christ's body. We must not take our bodies and join ourselves to prostitutes!"

May it not be!

"That should never happen!" or "We must never do that!"

1 Corinthians 6:16

Do you not know that ... her?

Paul begins to teach the Corinthians by emphasizing a truth that they already know. "I want to remind you that ... her."

he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her

This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"when a man joins his body to the body of a prostitute, it is as if their bodies become one body"

1 Corinthians 6:17

he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him

This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"when the Lord joins his spirit to the spirit of a person, it is as if their spirits become one spirit"

1 Corinthians 6:18

Run away from

Paul speaks of a person rejecting sexual sin as if that person were running away from danger. Alternate translation: "Get away from"

immorality! Every other sin that a person commits is outside the body, but

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is showing that sexual sin is especially bad because it is not only against others but against the sinner's own body or 2) Paul is quoting what some Corinthians were thinking. Alternate translation: "immorality! Some of you are saying, 'Every sin that a person commits is outside the body,' but I say that"

sin that a person commits

"evil deed that a person does"

1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know ... God? Do you not know that you are not your own?

Paul is continuing to teach the Corinthians by emphasizing what they already know. Alternate translation: "I want to remind you ... God and that you are not your own."

your body

the body of each individual Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit

temple of the Holy Spirit

A temple is dedicated to divine beings, and it is also where they dwell. In the same way, the bodies of believers are like temples because the Holy Spirit lives within them.

1 Corinthians 6:20

For you were bought with a price

God paid for the freedom of the Corinthians from the slavery of sin. This can be stated in an active form.

Alternate translation: "God paid for your freedom"

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true,"

1 Corinthians 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul begins to answer a series of questions that the Corinthians may have asked him. The first question is about marriage. The second question is about a slave trying to become free, a Gentile becoming a Jew, or a Jew becoming a Gentile.

Special concepts in this chapter

Divorce

Paul says married Christians should not divorce. A Christian married to an unbeliever should not leave their husband or wife. If the unbelieving husband or wife leaves, this is not a sin. Paul advises that, because of the difficult times and because it is near to the time that Jesus will return, it is good to remain unmarried. (See: believe and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Euphemisms

Paul uses many euphemisms to discreetly refer to sexual relations. This is often a sensitive topic. Many cultures do not wish to speak openly about these matters.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 7:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 7

7:1-9

Why did Paul say it was “good for a man not to touch a woman”?

[7:1]

Paul said it was good for a man not to “touch” a woman. He wanted people to know that a man must not have sex with a woman if they are not married.

See: Sexual Immorality

What were “temptations for many immoral acts”?

[7:2]

People thought the Corinthians did the wrong things and committed sexual immorality. The Christians in Corinth were tempted to commit sexual immorality. Paul did not want them to commit sexual immorality. God only wanted a husband and a wife to have sex (see: 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4; Hebrews 13:4).

See: Sexual Immorality

What was meant by Paul’s use of the word “authority”?

[7:4]

Some scholars think that Paul used the word “authority”(ἐξουσία/ζω/g1850) because he wanted people to know that both the husband and wife give themselves to each other in some way when they get married. They think people thought the wrong things and Paul wanted them to think about things in the right way.

What did Paul say was a concession?

[7:6]

Paul said something was a concession (συγγνώμη/g4774). Some scholars think Paul was speaking about the husband and wife agreeing to stop having sex with each other, so that they spend time praying to God. They think Paul wanted them to know he was not commanding them to do this. Instead, he gave them permission to do this if they wanted.

See: Pray (Prayer)

Why did Paul write “I wish that everyone were as I am”?

[7:7]

Paul wrote, “I wish that everyone were as I am.” Some scholars think Paul wanted everyone to not commit sexual immorality. Paul did not want to commit sexual immorality. Others scholars think Paul did not want to have sex. These scholars say Paul wished everyone to live in the same way he lived. He thought that not wanting to have sex was a gift from God. However, it was also a gift from God to marry and for a husband and wife to have sex together.

See: Sexual Immorality

What did the words “burn with passion” mean?

[7:9]

Some scholars think a person who burned with passion really wanted to have sex. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about the judgment that comes from God for the person who is sexually immoral (see: 6:9-10).

See: Sexual Immorality; Judge (Judgment)

7:10-16

Why did Paul write “not I, but the Lord”?

7:12]

When Paul wrote “not I, but the Lord,” scholars think he was reminding these Christians that Jesus spoke about divorce (see: Matthew 5:31-32; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18). Jesus gave permission to Paul to speak for him (see: 7:25; 7:40).

See: Divorce

Why did Paul write about Corinthian Christians married to unbelievers?

[7:12]

Paul wanted people to know that a Christian should not divorce their spouse if they were not a Christian. Jesus said a Christian can divorce their spouse if they committed adultery (see: Matthew 5:31-32). Paul also said that a Christian can divorce their spouse if their spouse is not a Christian and their spouse leaves them (see: 1 Corinthians 7:15-16). How were non-Christian spouses “set apart” by Christian spouses?

Paul wrote that non-Christians married to Christians were “set apart” (ἀγιάζω/g0026). Some scholars think Paul said that God helped non-Christian spouses to believe the gospel because they were married to a Christian. Other scholars think that the non-Christian spouse could believe in Jesus because they lived near people who lived in a way that honored God.

See: Gospel

How were the children “unclean” if their parents divorced?

[7:14]

Some scholars think that when Paul said children of divorce were “unclean” he wanted people to know that these children would not live with a Christian parent all of the time.

See: Divorce; Clean and Unclean

Why did Paul write “the brother or sister is not bound to their vows”?

[7:15]

Paul wrote “the brother or sister is not bound to their vows.” Some scholars think Paul wanted people to know that the Christian did not need to remain married if the non-Christian spouse wanted to divorce. The Christian did not need to do what Paul wrote before (see: 1 Corinthians 7:12-13). Other scholars think that the married Christian was free to remarry after the non-Christian spouse decided to divorce. In this way, the Christian did not need to be widowed to remarry (see 1 Corinthians 7:39).

See: Vow; Divorce

How had God called Christians to live in peace?

[7:15]

When an non-Christian spouse wanted a divorce, some scholars think Paul wanted Christians to be peaceful to their non-Christian spouse. Fewer scholars think Paul wanted people to know that they could get divorced for another reason. They could divorce if a Christian being married to a non-Christian caused them harm and they could not live at peace with one another.

Why did Paul ask if one person could save the other in a marriage?

[7:16]

Paul asked if one person could save the other in marriage. Some scholars think Paul was encouraging the Christian to remain married to the non-Christian. This was because the non-Christian might become a Christian because their Christian spouse lives in a way that honors God. Other scholars think Paul said that if a Christian allowed their non-Christian spouse to get a divorce, then the Christian should let the non-Christian go in peace. This was because there was no way to know if the non-Christian would become a Christian.

7:17-24

What things did God “assign” to the Christians?

[7:17]

God “assigned” (μερίζω/g3307) things to Christians. Some scholars think that God controlled the things that happened in a Christian’s life. God wanted some people to live without getting married. God also wanted some people who became Christians to stay married to a non-Christian (see: 1 Corinthians 7:1-16). Other scholars think that Paul wrote about specific gifts God “assigned” Christians (see: 1 Corinthians 7:7). Perhaps Paul wanted the Christians to focus on the ways God equipped them to serve God. In what way did God “call” each person?

See: Call (Calling)

Why did Paul write “all the churches”?

[7:17]

Paul wrote, “all the churches.” Some scholars think that “all the churches” meant every church which Paul started or every church where Paul taught. Fewer scholars think that “all the churches” meant every church, even if Paul did not teach there himself.

See: Church

How could a person “not try to appear circumcised”?

[7:18]

Paul wrote that a person should “not try to appear circumcised.” Scholars think Paul used circumcision as a metaphor.

The Jews who became Christians did not need to try to appear to be a non-Jew. In the same way, Gentiles who became Christians did not need to be circumcised, so that people would think they are Jews.

See: 1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Metaphor; Gentile

Why did Paul say "it is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision that matters"?

[7:19]

When Paul wrote "it is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision that matters," he wanted people to know both Jews and Gentiles could be at peace with God. This was because a person did not need to be circumcised (see: Galatians 5:6).

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Metaphor; Gentile

Why did Paul write that "what matters is obeying the commandments of God"?

[7:19]

Paul wrote that "what matters is obeying the commandments of God." Scholars think Paul was writing about the "commandments of God" spoken by Jesus in the New Testament (see: Matthew 22:36-40). Paul also wrote about love as fulfilling God's commandments (see: Galatians 5:14).

See: Command (Commandment); Fulfill (Fulfillment)

What did it mean to "remain in the calling"?

[7:20]

See: 1 Corinthians 7:17

Why did Paul write that Christians not be concerned if they were slaves when called?

[7:21]

Paul wrote that Christians not be concerned if they were slaves when called. That is, when they believed in Jesus. This is because a slave can be a Christian. Paul wanted Christians to realize that God valued every the same (see: Galatians 3:28).

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Call (Calling)

How was a Christian slave the "Lord's freeman"?

[7:22]

Paul wanted Christians to know that even if they were a slave to an earthly owner, Jesus had freed them from bondage to sin. He had completely forgiven them of their past sins. They were not freed to live in a different way, a way that honors God.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Free (Freedom); Sin; Sinful Nature

What did it mean to be "bought with a price"?

[7:23]

See: 1 Corinthians 6:20

7:25-40

Who were "those who never married"?

[7:25]

Some scholars think "those who never married" were both men and women who remained unmarried. Other scholars think "those who never married" were women who were not married and have never had sex.

See: Virgin

Why did Paul write "I have no commandment from the Lord"?

[7:25]

Some scholars think that Paul wrote, "I have no commandment from the Lord" because he was giving advice, not a command (see: 1 Corinthians 7:6). Other scholars think that Paul wanted people to know that Jesus did not talk about this. Therefore, Paul was expanding upon Jesus' teaching. That is, he was teaching more than Jesus taught.

See: Lord

What did Paul mean by saying he was "trustworthy"?

[7:25]

Some scholars think when Paul said he was "trustworthy" (πιστός/g4103) he wanted people to know that he obeyed God. Other scholars think Paul said that he was "trustworthy" because God was merciful to him.

See: Mercy

What was the "disaster" that was coming?

[7:26]

Some scholars think the "disaster" about which Paul wrote was the persecution and difficult times that Christians were experiencing at that time. Other scholars think Paul was writing about the persecution and difficult times that Christians experience in any time and place. Other scholars think Paul was writing about the persecution and difficult times just before Jesus returns to the earth

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Last Days; Jesus' Return to Earth

What did Paul mean by "worldly trouble"?

[7:28]

Some scholars think “worldly troubles” were the responsibilities that came with being married to someone. Married people have to focus on helping each other. They could not focus only on serving God.

What was meant by the words, “the time is short”?

[7:29]

Paul wrote that the time is short. Some scholars think Paul wanted people to know that Jesus was going to return in a short time (see: 1 Corinthians 7:31). Because of this, people needed to focus on serving God before they die or before Jesus returns.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

How were those who had wives supposed to live “as though they had none”?

7:29]

Paul wrote that wives were supposed to live as though they had nothing. Scholars think Paul was encouraging married Christians to live to serve God. He did not want them to work more serving God than in having a better life on the earth. Paul was not telling Christians to abandon their spouse.

How were those who weep not to weep and those who rejoice not to rejoice?

[7:30]

Paul wanted Christians to know that though they had to experience sorrows and joys on the earth, they had the promise to live together with God in heaven forever. Paul also wanted them to know that these things be replaced with a joy that lasts forever in heaven.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Heaven

How were those who bought not to “possess”?

[7:30]

Paul did not forbid Christians from buying things. Some scholars think that to “possess”(κατέχω/g2722) something was to cling to it, or to hold it tightly. That is, he did not Christians to want something too much. Some scholars think Paul wanted Christians to understand that it was God provided the things they bought. What they bought was a gift from God.

How were Christians not to use the world “to the full”?

[7:31]

Christians were not to use the world “to the full.” Christians were not to become so involved in the things happening in the world that they care more about these things than they cared about Jesus. Some scholars think Paul meant that Christians must not live as if the world was all there was.

What did Paul mean when he wrote “the world in its present form is coming to an end”?

[7:31]

Paul wrote that “the world in its present form is coming to an end.” Some scholars think that Paul wanted people to know that creation was passing away (see: Romans 8:19-22). Fewer scholars think Paul meant that the world's leaders were passing away (see: 1 Corinthians 2:6).

See: Create (Creation, Creature)

Why did Paul write, “not to put any constraint on you”?

[7:35]

Paul wrote “not to put any constraint on you.” Scholars think that Paul used the word “constraint”(βρόχος/g1029) as a metaphor. This word was also used when writing about a rope around an animal's neck. A person would use a rope to guide an animal. Therefore, when Paul wrote these words, he wanted to help people, not command people to do something.

What did it mean for a man not to “treat his fiance with respect”?

[7:36]

A man was to “treat his fiance with respect.” Some scholars think Paul was speaking about a man who did not treat his fiance with honor. He was referring to a man who did not honor his commitment to marry his fiance. This would have brought great dishonor to the girl's father. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about a man who had sex with his fiance before they were married. This dishonored the woman and the woman's father.

See: Marriage

What did it mean to be “beyond the age of marriage”?

[7:36]

Some scholars think that when Paul wrote about being “beyond the age”(υπερακιμος/g5230), he meant a person who was past the best age for marriage. In ancient times, a woman often got married at a certain age. Other scholars think Paul wanted people to get married if they could not control their desire to have sex.

See: Marriage

Why did Paul write “if he is not under pressure”?

[7:37]

Paul wrote “if he is not under pressure.” Some scholars think Paul was speaking about a man who had no marriage contract with the father of the girl. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about a man who had no pressure from the father of the girl. This pressure was from the girl's strong desire to marry right away.

What did it mean for a man to “keep his own fiance a virgin”?

[7:37]

When Paul wrote that a man should “keep his own fiance a virgin,” he wanted the man to do everything he could to protect and honor the virginity of the woman he was to marry. Scholars think that when Paul wrote this, he meant that if a Christian decided not to marry this woman, he still needed to guard her honor. He was not to try to have sex with her.

See: Virgin

Why did Paul write that “the one who chooses not to marry will do even better”?

[7:38]

When Paul wrote that “the one who does not marry does better,” he wanted to encourage Christians were not married. God gave them the gift of not being married. Earlier in this chapter, Paul had said that marriage was the best option for those without the gift of not being married (see: 1 Corinthians 7:2). Indeed, it was “good” (see: 1 Corinthians 7:38). However, if one was gifted to not be married, it was better to not be married.

See: Marriage

Why did Paul write “and I think I also have the Spirit of God”?

[7:40]

Paul wrote, “and I think I also have the Spirit of God.” Scholars think that Paul was speaking to Christians who opposed him in some way when he wrote this.

See: Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 7:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives the believers some specific instructions on marriage.

Now

Paul is introducing a new topic in his teaching.

the issues you wrote about

The Corinthians had written a letter to Paul to ask for answers to certain questions.

"It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is quoting what the Corinthians had written. Alternate translation: "you wrote, 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman.'" or 2) Paul is saying what he really thinks. Alternate translation: "my answer is that yes, it is good for a man not to touch a woman."

It is good

"It is most helpful"

for a man

Possible meanings are 1) "a man" refers to a married man. Alternate translation: "a husband" or 2) "a man" refers to any man.

not to touch a woman

Possible meanings are 1) "touch a woman" is a euphemism for having sexual relations. Alternate translation: "not to have sexual relations with his wife for a while" or 2) "touch a woman" is a metonym for marry. Alternate translation: "not to marry"

1 Corinthians 7:2

But because

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is responding to what the Corinthians had written. Alternate translation: "That is true, but because" or 2) Paul is saying what he really thinks.

But because of temptations for many immoral acts, each

"But because Satan tempts people to commit sexual sin, each" or "But we desire to commit sexual sin because of our sinful nature, so each"

1 Corinthians 7:3

fulfill his duty to have sexual relations with his wife

Husbands should regularly have sexual relations with their

wives. Alternate translation: "should give to his wife her sexual rights"

in the same way the wife to her husband

The words "should fulfill" and "duty to have sexual relations" are understood from the previous phrase, as is the meaning of the euphemism. Alternate translation: "in the same way, the wife should fulfill her duty to have sexual relations with her husband" or "in the same way, the wife should give to her husband his sexual rights"

1 Corinthians 7:4

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 7:5

Do not deprive each other, except by mutual agreement and for This double negative emphasizes that mutual agreement is necessary. Alternate translation: "Only if you both agree to deprive each other should you do so, and even then only do so for"

Do not deprive each other

The word "deprive" means to keep from someone something that the other person has the right to receive, in this case marital relations. "Do not refuse to have marital relations with your spouse"

so that you may devote yourselves to prayer

in order to have a period of especially deep prayer

devote yourselves

"commit yourselves"

come together again

"sleep together again"

because of your lack of self-control

"because after some days, your sexual desires will be harder to keep under control"

1 Corinthians 7:6

I say these things to you as a concession and not as a command

Possible meanings are Paul is telling the Corinthians that he is allowing them, but not commanding them, 1) to marry and sleep together or 2) to stop sleeping together for a time.

1 Corinthians 7:7

were as I am

Either Paul had never married or his wife had died. It is

unlikely that he had been through a divorce.
 But each one has his own gift from God. One has this kind of gift, and another that kind
 "But God enables people to do different things. He enables one person to do one thing and another person to do something different"
 1 Corinthians 7:8
 the unmarried
 "those who are not married"
 to widows
 "to women whose husbands have died"
 it is good
 See how you translated this in 1 Corinthians 7:1.
 1 Corinthians 7:9
 to burn with passion
 "to live with the constant desire to sleep with someone"
 1 Corinthians 7:10
 should not separate from
 Paul's readers knew no difference between separating and divorcing. To stop living with someone was to end the marriage. Alternate translation: "should not divorce"
 1 Corinthians 7:11
 be reconciled to her husband
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "she should make peace with her husband and return to him"
 should not divorce
 Paul's readers knew no difference between divorcing and simply separating. To do either was to end the marriage.
 Alternate translation: "should not separate from"
 1 Corinthians 7:12
 content
 willing or satisfied
 1 Corinthians 7:13
 General Information:
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 1 Corinthians 7:14
 For the unbelieving husband is set apart because of his wife
 Possible meanings are 1) "For God has set apart the unbelieving husband for himself because of his believing wife" or 2) "God treats the unbelieving husband as he would treat a son for the sake of his believing wife"
 the unbelieving wife is set apart because of the brother
 Possible meanings are 1) "God has set apart the unbelieving wife for himself because of her husband who believes" or 2) "God treats the unbelieving wife as he would treat a daughter for the sake of her husband who believes"
 the brother
 the believing man or husband
 they are set apart
 Possible meanings are 1) "God has set them apart for himself" or 2) "God treats them as he would treat his own children"
 1 Corinthians 7:15
 In such cases, the brother or sister is not bound to their vows
 Here "brother" and "sister" refers to a Christian husband or wife. Here "not bound to their vows" is a metaphor that mean the person is not obligated to do what they vowed to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "In such cases, God does not require the believing spouse to

continue to obey the marriage vow"
 1 Corinthians 7:16
 do you know, woman ... you will save your husband ... do you know, man ... you will save your wife
 Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so all instances of "you" and "your" here are singular.
 how do you know, woman, whether you will save your husband?
 Paul uses a question to cause women to think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: "you cannot know if you will save your unbelieving husband."
 how do you know, man, whether you will save your wife?
 Paul uses a question to cause men to think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: "you cannot know if you will save your unbelieving wife."
 1 Corinthians 7:17
 However
 No matter what is true for the people in any of the situations Paul has just been discussing, he addresses the following words to everyone.
 as the Lord has given each one his portion
 God giving people skills and work to do and guiding the events of their lives is spoken of as if he were dividing physical objects and giving parts out to them. Alternate translation: "as the Lord has assigned each one his life"
 each one
 "each believer"
 let each one walk as God has called him
 The word "walk" is a metaphor for "live." Possible meanings of the word "called" are 1) it refers to people responding to the gospel. Alternate translation: "each one should live as he was when he became a Christian." Or 2) it is a metaphor for "commanded" or "instructed." Alternate translation: "each one should live as God has instructed him to" or "each one should follow God's commands as he lives his life"
 This is my rule in all the churches
 Paul was teaching believers in all the churches to act in this manner.
 1 Corinthians 7:18
 Was anyone circumcised when he was called to believe? He
 Paul was addressing the circumcised ones
 Was anyone uncircumcised when he was called to faith? He
 Paul was now addressing the uncircumcised ones.
 Alternate translation: "If someone was uncircumcised when God called him to believe, he"
 1 Corinthians 7:19
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 1 Corinthians 7:20
 remain in the calling
 Here "calling" refers to the work or social position in which you were involved. Alternate translation: "live and work as you did"
 1 Corinthians 7:21
 Were you ... called you? Do not be ... you can become
 Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so all instances of "you" and the command "be" here are singular.

Were you a slave when God called you? Do not be concerned
This can be stated as a statement. Alternate translation: "To anyone who was a slave when God called you to believe, I say this: do not be concerned"

1 Corinthians 7:22

the Lord's freeman

This freeman is forgiven by God and therefore free from Satan and sin.

1 Corinthians 7:23

You have been bought with a price

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ bought you by dying for you"

1 Corinthians 7:24

Brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

whatever situation he was in when he was called

"whether he was married or unmarried, slave or free, when he was called"

he was called

You may need to make explicit who called and use an active verb. Alternate translation: "God called him"

called

called to believe in Christians

let each one remain

"each one should remain." That is, each one should remain slave, free, married, or unmarried, as he was when he first believed in Christ.

with God

"as a person responsible to God"

1 Corinthians 7:25

Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord
Paul knows no teaching of Jesus that speaks about this situation. Alternate translation: "The Lord has not commanded me to say anything to people who have never married"

virgins

This is probably a synecdoche for anyone who has never married. Alternate translation: "people who have never married"

I give my opinion

"I tell you what I think"

as one who, by the Lord's mercy, is trustworthy

"because, by the Lord's mercy, I am trustworthy"

1 Corinthians 7:26

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 7:27

General Information:

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if he were speaking to each person, so all these instances of "you" and the command "do not seek" here are singular.

Are you bound to a wife? Do not ...

Paul uses this question to introduce a possible condition.
The question can be translated as a phrase with "if."

Alternate translation: "If you are bound to a wife, do not"

bound

married

Do not seek a divorce

"Do not try to divorce her" or "Do try to separate from her"
do not seek a wife

"do not try to get married"

1 Corinthians 7:28

fleshly trouble

The word "fleshly" is a metonym for mortal life. Alternate translation: "trouble in this life"

I want to spare you from this

The word "this" refers to the kinds of worldly trouble that married people might have. Alternate translation: "I want to help you not to have worldly trouble"

virgin

This is probably a synecdoche for anyone who has never married. See how you translated "virgins" in [1 Corinthians 7:25]

1 Corinthians 7:29

The time is short

"There is little time" or "Time is almost gone"

1 Corinthians 7:30

weep

cry or grieve with tears

1 Corinthians 7:31

those who use the world

"those who deal every day with unbelievers"

should not act as though they are using it to the full

"should show by their actions that they have their hope in God"

1 Corinthians 7:32

free from worries

Being "free from" something is an idiom which means having the ability to live without it." Alternate translation: "without needing to worry"

concerned about

"focused on"

1 Corinthians 7:33

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 7:34

he is divided

"he is trying to please God and please his wife at the same time"

The unmarried woman or the virgin

Possible meanings are 1) "virgin" refers only to virgins, while "unmarried woman" could be a divorcée or any other unmarried non-virgin, and 2) "unmarried woman" explains what Paul means by "virgin."

1 Corinthians 7:35

constraint

restriction

may be devoted to

"can concentrate on"

1 Corinthians 7:36

not treating his virgin with respect

"not being kind to his virgin" or "not honoring his virgin"

his virgin

Possible meanings are 1) "the woman whom he promised to marry" or "his fiancée" or 2) "his virgin daughter."

They should marry

Possible meanings are 1) "He should marry his fiancée" or

2) "He should let his daughter get married."

1 Corinthians 7:37

But if he is standing firm in his heart

Here "standing firm" is a metaphor for deciding something with certainty. Here "heart" is metonym for a person's mind or thoughts. Alternate translation: "But if he has decided firmly in his own mind"

1 Corinthians 7:38

So the one who marries his virgin does well, and the one who chooses not to marry will do even better

Or "So the one who allows his virgin daughter to marry does well, and the one who chooses not to have her marry will do even better." See how you translated "virgin" and "He should marry" in [1 Corinthians 7:36](#).

1 Corinthians 7:39

A woman is bound to her husband

Here "bound" is a metaphor for a close relationship

between people in which they support each other emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Here it means the union of marriage. Alternate translation: "A woman is married to her husband" or "A woman is united with her husband"

while he lives

"for as long as he lives" or "until he dies"

in the Lord

"if the new husband is a believer"

1 Corinthians 7:40

my judgment

"my understanding of God's word"

happier

more contented, more joyful

lives as she is

"remains unmarried"

Chapter 8

1 Corinthians 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In Chapters 8-10, Paul answers the question: "Is it acceptable to eat meat that has been sacrificed to an idol?"

Special concepts in this chapter

Meat sacrificed to idols

Paul answers the question about eating meat sacrificed to idols by saying that idols are supposed to be gods but that those gods do not really exist. Therefore nothing is wrong with the meat. Christians are free to eat it. However, someone who does not understand this may see a Christian eating it. They may then be encouraged to eat the meat as an act of worship to the idol.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 8:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 8

8:1-6

What did the words "now concerning" mean?

[8:1]

Paul used the words "now concerning" to tell people he was going to write about something different (see: 1 Corinthians 7:1). Some scholars think he was writing about this new idea because the Corinthians had previously written him previously about this idea (see: 1 Corinthians 7:1). Other scholars do not think that the Corinthian church mentioned this idea in their letter to Paul.

What was food offered to idols?

[8:1]

See: Idolatry (Idol)

How do all Christians "have knowledge"?

[8:1]

Jesus came to the earth and taught people many new things about God. These were truths about how God was going to save people. However, people did not know about what God would do to save people before Jesus came to the earth. Paul also said that knowledge alone "puffs" (φουσιόω/g5448). That is, it can make people feel proud of what they know.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

How did Paul talk about "love"?

[8:1]

When Paul talked about "love" (ἀγάπη/g0026), he also talked about "edification." Edification was a word used when talking about building a house. Paul wanted the expression of "love" to be something that helped Christians to do and feel good. He wanted love to "build" people. This is a metaphor. When people loved each other in this way, they did things that made others feel better in some way

See: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

See: Love; Metaphor

Why did Paul write, "If anyone thinks he knows something, that person does not yet know as he should"?

[8:2]

Paul wrote "If anyone thinks he knows something, that person does not yet know as he should." He wrote about people who thought they knew how to live in the way God wants them to live. However, they did not do these things. That is, if they say they know something about what God wants them to do, but they do not love other people, then they really do not know what God wants them to do.

See: 1 Corinthians 13:12

How was someone known by God?

[8:3]

God truly knows every person because he created all people. Here Paul wrote about God knowing the Christian, By this he meant something very special. Some scholars think that when Paul wrote that God knew the Christian, he meant that God had a special relationship with the Christian. He told the Christian more about Himself. Other scholars think that when Paul wrote that God knew the Christian, he meant that God was at peace with the Christian. Of course, the Christian was also at peace with God.

How was an idol "nothing"?

[8:4]

Paul said that an idol was nothing. In other words, an idol is not real. Even though some people worshipped things that other people created, there was only one God. There were not many gods. This was why Paul said that these idols were "so-called gods." They were not gods at all, even though some people believed in them. There is only one God.

Advice to translators: Something that was not real never existed or lived.

See: Idolatry (Idol); Worship; False gods

How do all things exist through Jesus?

[8:6]

Paul wrote that through Jesus, "all things exist and through whom we exist." He wanted people to know that Jesus created everything. He also kept everything alive (see: John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17). If Jesus wanted everything to stop existing, everything would stop existing. That is, if Jesus did not want anything in the universe, then there would not be anything in the universe.

8:7-13

What knowledge was not in everyone?

[8:7]

Paul wrote about a certain knowledge that not every Christian had. When Paul wrote this, he wanted people to know that there were certain Christians in Corinth who did not know what to do about eating food which had previously been offered to idols. Perhaps these Christians had just recently believed in Jesus. Or, maybe these Christians had not not been taught about these things.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

How was someone's conscience corrupted?

[8:7]

Paul wrote about someone's conscience being "corrupted" (μολύνω/g3435), or being made unclean. When certain Corinthian Christians ate food offered to idols, they did not do anything wrong. They knew the idols were not real. However, there were other Christians in Corinth who still believed idols were real. These Christians thought that eating this type of food was doing something wrong. Paul wanted people to be careful about what they eat. If they ate certain foods that made other Christians think they were doing something evil, then they should not eat these things.

Advice to translators: Something that was not real never existed or lived.

See: Conscience; Clean and Unclean; Idolatry (Idol); Sin

Who was the weaker brother?

[8:9, 8:10]

Paul wrote about a weaker brother. This was a metaphor. He was writing about a certain type of Christians. Certain Christians were strong because they obeyed God more than other Christians. They often would not sin when they were tempted. However, in Corinth there were other Christians who did not obey God as often as these stronger Christians. When these weaker Christians were tempted, they sinned more. Paul wanted the stronger Christians to help the weaker Christians to do things that honored God.

See: Family of God; Metaphor; Sin; Tempt (Temptation)

How was a Christian destroyed?

[8:11]

When certain Christians ate food offered to idols, it dishonored God. When this happened, they could no longer tell other people about Jesus in the same way. People could not learn how to live in a way that honors God and believe in Jesus because these Christians were sinning.

See: Idolatry (Idol); Sin

What did Paul teach the Corinthians about eating meat?

[8:12]

Paul wrote that he did not want other Christians to stumble. He did not want to do anything that caused other Christians to do something that dishonored God. Instead, he would rather not eat any meat than to possibly cause another Christian to sin.

See: Walk; Sin

1 Corinthians 8:1

General Information:

"We" means Paul and, though specifically writing to the Corinthian believers, includes all believers.

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers that though idols have no power, believers must be careful not to affect the weaker believers who might think that the believers care about idols if the believers eat food that was sacrificed to idols. He tells believers to be careful with the freedom that they have in Christ.

Now concerning

Paul uses this phrase to move on to the next question the Corinthians had asked him.

food sacrificed to idols

Gentile worshipers would offer grain, fish, fowl, or meat to their gods. The priest would burn a portion of it on the altar. Paul is speaking of the portion the priest would give back for the worshiper to eat or sell in the market.

Knowledge puffs up

"Knowledge puffs people up." Here "puffs up" is a metaphor for making someone proud. The abstract noun "knowledge" can be expressed with the verb "know." Alternate translation: "Knowledge makes people proud" or "People who think that they know a lot become proud"

but love builds up

The abstract noun "love" can be expressed as a verb.

Alternate translation: "but when we love people, we build them up"

love builds up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. Alternate translation: "love strengthens people" or "when we love people, we strengthen them"

1 Corinthians 8:2

thinks he knows something

"believes he knows everything about something"

1 Corinthians 8:3

that person is known by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God knows that person"

1 Corinthians 8:4

General Information:

"We" here refers to all believers and include Paul's audience.

We know that an idol in this world is nothing and that there is no God but one

Paul is probably quoting phrases that some Corinthians used. Being "nothing" represents having no power.

Alternate translation: "We all know, as you yourselves like to say, that an idol in this world has no power and that there is no God but one"

1 Corinthians 8:5

so-called gods

"things that people call gods"

many "gods" and many "lords"

Paul does not believe that many gods and many lords exist, but he recognizes that the pagans believe they do.

1 Corinthians 8:6

General Information:

"Us" and "we" here refer to all believers and include Paul's audience.

yet for us there is only one God

"yet we know that there is only one God"

1 Corinthians 8:7

General Information:

Paul is speaking here of "weak" brothers, people who cannot separate food sacrificed to idols from the worship of those idols. If a Christian eats food that has been sacrificed to an idol, weak brothers might think that God will allow them to worship the idol by eating the food. Even if the eater has not worshiped the idol and is simply eating the food, he has still corrupted his weak brothers' conscience.

everyone ... some

"all people ... some people who are now Christians"

defiled

ruined or harmed, especially as regards the person's relationship with God

1 Corinthians 8:8

food will not present us to God

Paul speaks of food as though it were a person who could make God welcome us. Alternate translation: "food does not give us favor with God" or "the food we eat does not make God pleased with us"

We are not worse if we do not eat, nor better if we do eat it

"Some people might think that if we do not eat some things, God will love us less. But they are wrong. Those who think that God will love us more if we do eat those things are also wrong"

1 Corinthians 8:9

someone who is weak

believers not strong in their faith

1 Corinthians 8:10

sees you, who have

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so these words are singular.

his ... conscience

what he understands to be right and wrong

emboldened to eat

"encouraged to eat"

1 Corinthians 8:11

your understanding

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so the word "your" here is singular.

the weaker one ... is destroyed
The brother or sister who is not strong in his or her faith
will sin or lose his or her faith.
1 Corinthians 8:12
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
1 Corinthians 8:13

Therefore
"Because what I have just said is true"
if food causes
"Food" here is a metonym for the eating of food. Alternate
translation: "if by eating I cause" or "if I, because of what I
eat, cause"

Chapter 9

1 Corinthians 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul defends himself in this chapter. Some people claimed that he was trying to gain financially from the church.

Special concepts in this chapter

Earning money from the church

People accused Paul of just wanting money from the church. Paul answered that he rightfully could get money from the church. The Old Testament taught that those who worked should get their living from their work. He and Barnabas purposefully never used this right and earned their own living.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul uses many metaphors in this chapter. These metaphors teach complex truths.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Contextualization

This passage is important because Paul "contextualizes" ministering the gospel to different audiences. This means that Paul makes himself and the gospel understandable without his actions hindering the gospel being received. The translator should take extra care to preserve aspects of this "contextualization" if possible. (See: goodnews)

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses many rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize various points as he teaches the Corinthians.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 9:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 9

9:1-27

How did Paul expect people to answer his questions?

[9:1]

Paul asked four questions in these verses. He expected the Corinthians to answer "yes" to all of these questions.

How was Paul free?

[9:1]

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians that he was free. As a Christian, he did not need to follow the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses

When did Paul see Jesus?

[9:1]

Paul wrote that he had seen Jesus. When Paul was saying that he saw Jesus after Jesus was resurrected

See: Acts 9:1-6

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Paul write about being an apostle?

[9:1]

Scholars think that someone told the Corinthian Christians that Paul was not an apostle. However, the Corinthian Christians knew that Paul was an apostle. This was because Paul had helped to start the church in Corinth. The church in Corinth proved that Paul was an apostle.

See: Apostle; Church

How did Paul defend that he was an apostle?

[9:3]

In ancient times, people gave money to teachers who taught about God and the world. However, Paul worked and never asked for money for himself. He did this so that people would pay attention to the things he said. He did not want to preach the gospel and ask for money. Perhaps some people thought he was not an apostle or teacher because he did not

ask for money. When Paul wrote about eating and drinking, he was writing about receiving money so that he might eat and drink. He had the same rights that every apostle had. God gave the apostles those rights

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Apostle

When Paul wrote “we,” who was he talking about?

[9:4]

When Paul wrote “we,” he meant Barnabas and himself.

Why did Paul write about the Law of Moses?

[9:9]

According to the Law of Moses, God wanted people to care for the ox who served them. In the same way, God wanted people to care for those who preached and taught the Gospel to them. Paul also wrote about people plowing (see: 1 Corinthians 9:10). This is a metaphor. He was speaking about the ways people served God.

Paul wrote about planting spiritual things and harvesting material things. This was also a metaphor. He wanted to remind people that God did not think it was wrong for Paul to expect people to help him by giving him food, a place to live, or money.

See: Deuteronomy 25:4

See: Law of Moses; Metaphor

Why did Paul not want help from the Corinthians?

[9:12]

Paul had the right for the Corinthians to give him money. This is because he earned this money by teaching them.

However, Paul did not want anything from them. Paul only wanted people to think about the gospel and believe in Jesus.

He did not want people to think he was teaching them just so that he could get money. The only reason he taught them was this. He taught them so they could believe the gospel and be at peace with God.

See: Gospel

Why did Paul write about the people who served in the temple?

[9:13]

In ancient Israel, people provided for the priests who served them in the temple. God wanted this to happen. In the same way, Paul wrote that God wanted people to provide for those people who preached and taught the gospel to other people about Jesus (see: Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7). God wanted his preachers and teachers to be able to focus on serving Jesus.

See: Priest (Priesthood) ; Temple; Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Why did Paul write about boasting?

[9:15, 9:16]

Paul did not want people to say that he told people about Jesus just so he could get money. Instead, he wanted people to know that he trusted in God to provide him everything he needed. Paul preached the gospel to obey God. This was the only reason he preached the Gospel. If he did not preach the gospel, then God would punish him (see: 1 Corinthians 9:16). However, if he chose to preach the gospel then he would have a “reward” (See: I Corinthians 9:16).

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Woe; Reward; Punish (Punishment)

What was the responsibility entrusted to Paul?

[9:17]

God entrusted Paul to help the Corinthian Christians to live in a way that honors God. Scholars also think God wanted Paul to help them to do this.

How was Paul someone who was both free and a servant?

[9:19]

Paul was free and a servant. Some scholars think Paul meant he was free from the Law of Moses. He did not need to try to obey the Law of Moses. However, he served other people. This honored God. Fewer scholars think Paul wanted people to know that he did not serve a certain group of Christians.

See: Law of Moses

How did Paul win more?

[9:19]

Paul wrote about winning more people. This was a metaphor. He was writing about having more people come to believe in Jesus.

See: Metaphor

How did Paul become like a Jew to the Jews?

[9:20]

Paul wanted to tell the Jews about the gospel. He did not want to do anything that might prevent the Jews from believing in Jesus. When it was possible, he did the same things the Jews did when he was near the Jews. Paul did not do these things to obey the Law of Moses. However, he did many things the Law of Moses said to do. This was so that he would not offend the Jews. He wanted Jews to hear about Jesus.

See: Law of Moses

How did Paul become like one under the law?

[9:20]

When Paul wrote about becoming like one under the law, some scholars think he was writing about the Jews. They were under the Law of Moses. Other scholars think Paul wrote about those under the law of Moses, but were not born Jews.

See: Law of Moses

What did Paul write in 9:20?

[9:20]

Scholars think Paul wrote the words in verse 20. Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the words "I did this even though I myself was not under the law." Fewer ancient manuscripts do not have these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible)

Who were those outside of the law?

[9:21]

When Paul wrote about those outside of the law, he was writing about Gentiles. Gentiles did not follow the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses; Gentile

How did Paul become like one outside of the law?

[9:21]

Paul wrote that in order to present the gospel to the Gentiles, he refused to do anything that might prevent the Gentiles from believing in Jesus. He did not do the things written about in the Law of Moses because he did not want the Gentiles to think they needed to follow the Law of Moses to be at peace with God. He wanted Gentiles to hear about Jesus.

See: Law of Moses; Gentile

What law did Paul follow?

[9:21]

Paul did not try to obey the Law of Moses. However, he did try to obey God. This he called the law of God and the law of Christ. The law of Christ referred to the command to love God with all one's heart and to love other people.

See: Mark 12:28-31; Galatians 6:2

See: Law of Moses; Gentile

How did Paul win those outside of the law?

[9:21]

Paul wrote about winning those outside of the law. This was a metaphor. He was writing about having the Gentiles believe in Jesus.

See: Law of Moses; Metaphor

How did Paul become weak to those who were weak?

[9:22]

Paul wrote that he became weak to those who are weak. Scholars do not know why these people were weak. They had a weak conscience. Paul did not want to do anything that got in the way of them believing in Jesus.

See: 1 Corinthians 8:9-12

See: Conscience

Why did Paul become all things to all people?

[9:22]

Paul wrote that he became all things to all people. Paul did not want to do anything that got in the way of anyone believing in Jesus. This did not mean that Paul would do things that dishonored God. However, there were many things Paul would do to serve people so they would not reject the gospel because of something Paul did.

See: Gospel

How did Paul participate in the blessings of the gospel?

[9:23]

Everything Paul did was so that people could believe the gospel. He also did not want them to be distracted by the things he did. He wanted them to hear the gospel. He wanted to share with them in the blessings of the gospel. That is, he wanted to share with them in salvation and the promise of eternal life. Paul wanted to participate in the blessings of the gospel along with all those who believed in Jesus.

See: Gospel; Bless (Blessing); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Eternal Life

Why did Paul write about an athlete?

[9:24, 9:25, 9:26]

Paul wrote about an athlete running a race. This was a metaphor. He was writing about himself. He obeyed God to receive a prize. An athlete did things to prepare for his race. He trained. In the same way, Paul did things to honor God so that when his life was over, he like an athlete would be rewarded. An athlete might win a prize that would fade and perish, Paul's reward would be different. He would one day receive a reward that would never fade away.

Paul said he did not train as if he had no plan. Like a good athlete, he too had a plan. He planned to do things that honored God. When he told other people about Jesus, they would know that he lived in a way that honored God. The people would know that he did the things he taught other people to do. Because of this, people would be more willing to listen to him preach the gospel

See: Metaphor; Reward; Preach (Preacher); Gospel
How will Paul be disqualified?
[9:27]

Paul wrote about being disqualified. When an athlete ran a race in the wrong way, he was disqualified. He did not receive any prize. This was a metaphor. Paul wanted to be able to receive a prize. Some scholars think Paul was writing about getting to live with God in heaven forever. Other scholars think Paul was talking about some reward for living in a way that honored God.

See: Metaphor; Heaven; Reward

1 Corinthians 9:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how he uses the liberty he has in Christ.

Am I not free?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of the rights he has. Alternate translation: "I am a free person."

Am I not an apostle?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of who he is and the rights he has. Alternate translation: "I am an apostle."

Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of who he is. Alternate translation: "I have seen Jesus our Lord."

Are you not my work in the Lord?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of their relationship to him. Alternate translation: "You believe in Christ because I have worked the way the Lord wants me to."

my work

"the result of the work that I have done"

1 Corinthians 9:2

you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord

The word "seal" here is a metaphor for the evidence needed to prove something. Alternate translation: "you are evidence I can use to prove that the Lord has chosen me to be an apostle"

1 Corinthians 9:3

This is my defense ... me:

Possible meanings are 1) the words that follow are Paul's defense or 2) the words in 1 Corinthians 9:1-2 are Paul's defense. Alternate translation: "This is my defense ... me."

1 Corinthians 9:4

Do we not have the right to eat and drink?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to challenge what some people think about him and Barnabas. Alternate translation: "We have the right to receive food and drink from the churches."

we

Here "we" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

1 Corinthians 9:5

Do we not have the right ... Cephas?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to challenge what some people think about him and Barnabas. Alternate translation: "We certainly have the right ... Cephas."

a wife who is a believer

"a believing wife" or "a Christian wife"

1 Corinthians 9:6

Or do only I and Barnabas not have the right to not work at a trade?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to challenge what some people think about him and Barnabas. Alternate translation: "You seem to think that Barnabas and I are the only apostles who have no authority to not work at a trade" not have the right to not work at a trade

If this double negative causes confusion in your language, you can state it as a simple positive. Alternate translation: "have to work at a trade" or "have to have another job"

1 Corinthians 9:7

Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "We all know that no soldier has to buy his own supplies." or "We all know that every soldier receives his supplies from the government."

Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "We all know that the one who plants a vineyard will be allowed to eat its fruit." or "No one expects that someone who plants a vineyard will be forbidden to eat its fruit."

Or who shepherds a flock and does not drink milk from it?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "We all know that those who shepherd flocks may drink milk from the flocks"

1 Corinthians 9:8

Do I say these things based on human authority? Does not the law also say this?

Paul uses these rhetorical questions as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "I am not saying these things based on human authority. The law also says this."

1 Corinthians 9:9

Do not put

Moses was speaking to the Israelites as if they were one person, so this command is singular.

Is it really the oxen that God cares about?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "God does not only care about the oxen."

1 Corinthians 9:10

Is he not speaking about us?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument

to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "Instead, God was certainly speaking about us." should plow in hope
"should plow, expecting to receive something for his work" or "should plow, expecting to share in the harvest" should thresh in the hope of sharing in the harvest
"should thresh, expecting to share in the harvest" sharing in the harvest
"receiving some of the crop that is collected"

1 Corinthians 9:11

If we sowed spiritual things among you, is it too much for us to reap physical things from you?

Here "sowed spiritual things" and "reap physical things" are metaphors meaning Paul and Barnabas taught the Corinthians about Christ and spiritual things, so they deserve for the church to support them for their work. Alternate translation: "If we taught you about Christ and spiritual truths, is it too much for us to receive money from you for our work?"

is it too much for us to reap physical things from you?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "then it should not be too much for us to reap physical things from you."

1 Corinthians 9:12

If others exercised ... you, do we not have even more?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "If others exercised ... you, then we have that right even more."

If others exercised this right

Paul and the Corinthians both know that others exercised the right. Alternate translation: "Since others exercised this right"

others

other workers of the gospel

this right

the right to have the believers at Corinth provide for the living expenses of those who told them the good news

be a hindrance to

"be a burden to" or "stop the spread of"

1 Corinthians 9:13

Do you not know that those who perform sacred duties get their food from the temple?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of what they know so he can add new information. Alternate translation: "I want to remind you that those who perform sacred duties get their food from the temple."

perform sacred duties

"perform sacred duties in the temple" or "work in the temple"

Do you not know that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of what they know so he can add new information. Alternate translation: "I want to remind you that those who serve at

the altar get some of the foods and meat that people offer on the altar."

1 Corinthians 9:14

get their living from the gospel

The words "the gospel" here are a metonym for 1) the people to whom they tell the gospel, "receive their food and other things they need from those to whom they teach the good news," or 2) the result of working to tell the gospel, "receive their food and other things they need because they work to tell the good news."

1 Corinthians 9:15

these rights

"these things that I deserve"

so something might be done for me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so you will do something for me"

It would be better for me to die than—No one will make my boast empty!

Paul seems to have started a new sentence before finishing the first one. Some modern translations read, "It would be better for me to die than to have someone deprive me of this boast."

It would be better for me to

"I would rather." Paul is speaking of what he desires, not necessarily of what God thinks is best.

make my boast empty

"take away this opportunity I have to boast" or "make it so I have nothing to boast about"

1 Corinthians 9:16

I must do this

"I must preach the gospel"

woe be to me if

"may I suffer misfortune if"

1 Corinthians 9:17

if I do this willingly

"if I preach willingly" or "if I preach because I want to"

But if not willingly

The words "I do this" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "But if I do this unwillingly" or "But if I do this even though I do not want to" or "But if I do this because I was forced to do it"

I still have a stewardship that was entrusted to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I still must complete this work that God entrusted to me" or "I still must do this work that God gave me to complete"

1 Corinthians 9:18

What then is my reward?

Paul is preparing them for the new information he is going to give them. Alternate translation: "This is my reward."

That when I preach, I may offer the gospel without charge

"My reward for preaching is that I can preach without receiving payment"

offer the gospel

"preach the gospel"

so not take full use of my right in the gospel

"so not ask people to support me as I travel and preach"

1 Corinthians 9:19

I am free from all

Paul uses the image of freedom from slavery to talk about

not being obligated to others. Alternate translation: "I am free of obligation to all" or "Though I am not obligated to anyone"

I became a servant to all

Paul uses the image of slavery to talk about his willingness to meet others' needs. Alternate translation: "I became like a servant to all" or "I became willing to serve all"

win more

"persuade others to believe" or "help others trust in Christ"
1 Corinthians 9:20

I became like a Jew

"I acted like a Jew" or "I practiced Jewish customs"

I became like one under the law

"I became like one committed to following the demands of the Jewish leadership, accepting their understanding of the Jewish scriptures"

1 Corinthians 9:21

To those outside the law, I became like one outside the law

To be "outside the law" is a metaphor that means not to be obligated to obey the law. "The "law" refers to the law of Moses, and "those outside the law" refers to the Gentiles.

Alternate translation: "To Gentiles, who are not obligated to follow the law of Moses, I became like them"

although I was not outside the law of God myself, but under the law of Christ

The phrases "not outside the law" and "under the law" are metaphors that mean to be obligated to obey the law.

Alternate translation: "although I was not one of those who is not obligated to obey the law of God, but I was obligated to obey the law of Christ"

1 Corinthians 9:22

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 9:23

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 9:24

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains that he uses the liberty he has in Christ to discipline himself.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run the race, but that

only one receives the prize?

Paul is reminding the Corinthians of what they know so he can add new information. Alternate translation: "Let me remind you that although all runners run the race, only one runner receives the prize."

run the race

Paul compares living the Christian life and working for God to running a race and being an athlete. As in a race, the Christian life and work require strict discipline on the part of the runner, and, as in a race, the Christian has a specific goal.

run to win the prize

Paul is speaking of the reward God will give his faithful people as if it were a prize given for an athletic contest.

1 Corinthians 9:25

a wreath that is perishable ... one that is imperishable

A wreath is a bunch of leaves twisted together. Wreaths were given as prizes to athletes who won games and races. Paul speaks of eternal life as if it were a wreath that would never dry up.

1 Corinthians 9:26

run ... box

These are both metaphors for living the Christian life and serving God by working as hard as one can to succeed and so gain something good and to avoid failing and so losing something good.

run

This is running in a race to win a prize.

run, as not without purpose

If this double negative would confuse the reader in your language, you can state it as a simple positive. Alternate translation: "run: with purpose"

box

to beat another person with the fists in a sporting contest

1 Corinthians 9:27

I myself may not be disqualified

This passive sentence can be rephrased to an active form.

The judge of a race or competition is a metaphor for God.

Alternate translation: "the judge will not disqualify me" or "God will not say that I have failed to obey the rules"

Chapter 10

1 Corinthians 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 8-10 together answer the question: "Is it acceptable to eat meat that has been sacrificed to an idol?"

In this chapter, Paul uses the exodus to warn people not to sin. Then he returns to discussing meat offered to idols. He uses the Lord's Supper as an example. (See: sin)

Special concepts in this chapter

Exodus

Paul uses the experiences of Israel leaving Egypt and roaming the desert as a warning to the believers. Although the Israelites all followed Moses, God did not allow most of them to enter the Promised Land. Some worshiped an idol, some tested God, and some grumbled. Paul warns Christians not to sin. We can resist temptation because God provides a way of escape. (See: promisedland)

Eating meat sacrificed to idol

Paul discusses meat offered to idols. Christians are allowed to eat, but doing so may hurt others. So when buying meat or eating meat with a friend, do not ask if it has been offered to idols. But if someone tells you it has been offered to idols, don't eat it for the sake of that person. Do not offend anyone. Seek to save them instead. (See: save)

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses many rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 10:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 10

10:1-13

How were their fathers under the cloud?

[10:1]

Paul wrote about the history of some of the Jewish Corinthian Christians. He wanted to remind them of the dangers of disobeying God. Their Jewish ancestors had escaped their Egyptian enemies. At that time, God went before them and helped them pass through the Red Sea on dry land. Then God continued to lead the Israelites through the wilderness by appearing as a cloud.

See: Exodus 13-14

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

See Map: Egypt; Red Sea

How were people baptized into Moses?

[10:2]

Paul wrote that the Israelites committed themselves to being led by Moses. Scholars think that because the Israelites passed through the sea with Moses, they were joined to Moses in some way.

See: Baptize (Baptism)

What food did people eat?

[10:3]

Paul wrote about people eating spiritual food. This is a metaphor. He was talking about the time when the ancient Jews wandered in the wilderness. This happened right after they had been led by God and Moses out of Egypt. God though a miracle gave them food from heaven to eat. Jesus also called himself “the bread from heaven (see: John 6:51).

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Metaphor; Miracle; Heaven

See Map: Egypt

What did people drink?

[10:4]

Paul wrote about the ancient Jews wandering in the wilderness after they left Egypt. The Jewish people became very thirsty as they walked through the wilderness (see: Exodus 17:6)). Paul wrote how it was Jesus who gave them water. According to Paul, Jesus did more than give water to these people. Jesus also gave the people spiritual water. This is a metaphor. The Corinthians need Jesus like the ancient Israelites needed water while walking in hot desert. He gave life to the Corinthian Christians.

See: Metaphor; Spirit (Spiritual)

See Map: Egypt

Why were their corpses scattered in the wilderness?

[10:5]

Paul wrote about dead bodies being scattered in the wilderness. Some time after God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, some people chose not to trust God. They did not obey God and were punished and many people died. God did not allow them to enter into the Promised Land.

See: Exodus 32; Hebrews 3:7-19

See: Canaan (Promised Land); Punish (Punishment)

See Map: Egypt

What lessons were the Jews to learn from the ancient Israelites?

[10:6]

The Israelites tested God. They complained to God even though God did great things for them. They rejected God. Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to learn from the things the Israelites did wrong. They should not sin in the same way the Israelites did. Paul wrote that the Corinthian Christians should not worship idols and commit sexual immorality. In Corinth, the worship of idols and committing sexual immorality often happened together .

See: Numbers 21

See: Sexual Immorality; Test; Sin; Idolatry (Idol); Worship

Where was it written, “the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose to play”?

[10:7]

See: Exodus 32:6

How did 23000 people died in one day?

[10:8]

During the wilderness wanderings, many people worshipped idols and were sexually immoral. God punished 23000 people one day. God punished them and they died.

See: Numbers 25

See: Sexual Immorality; Idolatry (Idol); Punish (Punishment)

How were people destroyed by snakes?

[10:9]

See: Numbers 21:6

What was an angel of death?

[10:10]

Paul wrote about an angel of death. God sent an angel to punish the people and they died.

See: Angel

How had the end of the ages come?

[10:11]

Paul said that the end of the age had come. That is, God began doing something new. He began expecting different things from people. This end of the age came right at the time Jesus died and was resurrected.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

How does someone fall?

[10:12]

See: Walk; Fall (Fall Away, Stand)

What did Paul teach about temptation?

[10:13]

Paul said Christians were tempted, but this was not something new. When Christians were tempted, it was helpful for them to know that they were not alone. Other Christians were also tempted, too. God was able to keep all Christians from sinning when they were tempted. God would not allow Christians to be tempted in ways they could not overcome it. That is, a Christian is always able to not sin. God would not allow Christians to be tempted too much. God would also give Christians many ways to overcome their temptation.

See: Tempt (Temptation); Sin

Advice to translators: When someone overcomes a temptation, they are tempted but they do not sin.

10:14-22

How does someone run away from idolatry?

[10:14]

Paul wrote that he wanted the Corinthian Christians to avoid worshiping idols. To make his point stronger, he wrote that the Corinthian Christians should run away from idolatry. This was a metaphor.

See: Worship; Idolatry (Idol); Metaphor

What was the cup of blessing?

[10:16]

When Paul wrote about the cup of blessing, he wrote about the Corinthian Christians drank when they celebrated the Lord's supper.

See: Lord's Supper

What was the bread they broke?

[10:16]

When Paul wrote about the bread they broke, he was speaking about the bread the Corinthians ate when they celebrated the Lord's supper.

See: Lord's Supper

How did Christians share in the body of Christ?

[10:16]

Paul wrote that when Corinthian Christians celebrated the Lord's supper, they were joining together with other Christians who did the same thing. All Christians were called the body of Christ.

See: Lord's Supper; Body of Christ

Who was Israel according to the flesh?

[10:18]

When Paul wrote about Israel "according to the flesh," he was writing about people who were born Jews. He was not speaking about the Jews who became Christians.

See: Philippians 3:3

What did Paul teach about eating food offered to idols?

[10:19]

See: Idolatry (Idol)

What were the cup and the table of demons?

[10:21]

Paul wrote about the cup of the Lord and the table of demons. This was a metaphor. The cup and the table were part of the Lord's supper for Christians. Paul wrote that people cannot worship idols or demons and also worship God at the same time.

See: Metaphor; Lord's Supper; Idolatry (Idol); Demon; Worship

10:22-33

How was everything lawful?

[10:23]

Paul wrote that everything was lawful. He wanted people to know that it was not evil to eat foods that were once forbidden by the Law of Moses. Christians could eat any type of food, as long as it was not eaten as part of worshipping an idol.

See: Law of Moses; Idolatry (Idol)

Why was eating certain things not profitable?

[10:27, 10:28]

Paul wrote that Corinthian Christians could eat any kind of food they chose. However, Paul also wrote that there were times when it was wrong for the Corinthian Christians to eat certain foods. He did not want Christians to eat certain foods if it cause other Christians to think the wrong things about God. He did not want what they ate to hurt other Christians or cause them to sin.

See: Idolatry (Idol); Sin

What was a conscience?

[10:27, 10:28]

See: Conscience

Why were Christians not supposed to eat food offered to idols?

[10:28]

See: Idolatry (Idol)

What words did Paul write in verse 28?

[10:28]

Some of the ancient copies of the Greek New Testament contain the words, "For the earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord." More and older ancient copies of the Greek New Testament do not have these words. Scholars do not think Paul wrote these words.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible)

Why should Christians think about other people's consciences?

[10:29]

Paul wrote that when the Corinthian Christians ate with other people, they needed to think about what other people felt was right or wrong about food. The Corinthian Christians were to think about those around them. Did those around them think it was right or wrong to eat certain foods? Would the non-eating Christian think that the Christian was doing something that dishonored God if they ate a certain food?

See: Conscience

What is the glory of God?

[10:31]

See: Glory (Glorify)

How was someone blameless?

[10:32]

See: Blameless

How did Paul want people to be saved?

[10:33]

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

1 Corinthians 10:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthians of the example of their ancient Jewish fathers' experiences with immorality and idolatry.

our fathers

Paul is referring to the time of Moses in the book of Exodus when Israel fled through the Red Sea as the Egyptian army pursued them. Here "our" refers to Paul and includes the

Corinthians. The Corinthians were not actual descendants of the Israelites who escaped Egypt. Paul means that all Christians are spiritual descendants of Israel. Alternate translation: "our ancestors"

were all under the cloud

When the Israelites left Egypt, God traveled with them in a pillar of cloud. Alternate translation: "were all led by God who was in the cloud"

passed through the sea

This sea is known by two names, the Red Sea and the Sea of Reeds.

passed through

"walked through" or "traveled through"

1 Corinthians 10:2

All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea

To be "baptized into Moses" means to become united with or to become a follower of Moses through baptism. The Israelites were not baptized in the way that Christians were baptized in the New Testament. Paul is comparing Christian being baptized as followers of Christ with the Israelites, who became followers of Moses as they walked across the Red Sea with God leading them in the cloud. Alternate translation: "It was like all of them were baptized when they followed Moses across the sea as God led them in the cloud"

All were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "All received baptism"

1 Corinthians 10:3

all ate the same spiritual food

Here "spiritual food" refers to the manna that God supernaturally supplied to the Israelites while they traveled in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "All ate the same food that God supernaturally provided from heaven"

1 Corinthians 10:4

drank the same spiritual drink ... spiritual rock

Here "spiritual drink" refers to the water that God supernaturally caused to flow out of a rock. Alternate translation: "drank the same water that God supernaturally caused to come out of the rock ... supernatural rock"

that rock was Christ

The "rock" was a literal, physical rock, so it would be best to translate this literally. If your language cannot say that a rock "was" a person's name, treat the word "rock" as a metonym for the power of Christ that worked through the rock. Alternate translation: "it was Christ who worked through that rock"

1 Corinthians 10:5

not well pleased

"displeased" or "angry"

most of them

"most of the Israelite fathers" or "most of our ancestors"

their corpses were scattered about

"God scattered their dead bodies around" or "God killed them and scattered their bodies"

in the wilderness

the desert land between Egypt and Israel through which the Israelites wandered for 40 years

1 Corinthians 10:6

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 10:7

idolaters

people who worship idols

sat down to eat and drink

"sat down to eat a meal"

play

Paul is quoting the Jewish scriptures. His readers would

have understood from this one word that the people were worshiping an idol by singing and dancing and engaging in sexual activities, not simply enjoying innocent fun.

1 Corinthians 10:8

In one day, twenty-three thousand people died

"God killed 23,000 people in one day"

because of it

"because they committed those unlawful sexual acts"

1 Corinthians 10:9

as many of them tested him

or "as many of them did"

tested him and were destroyed by snakes

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"tested him. As a result, snakes destroyed them"

1 Corinthians 10:10

grumble

"complain"

did and were destroyed by an angel of death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"did. As a result, an angel of death destroyed them"

1 Corinthians 10:11

these things happened to them

"God punished our ancestors"

examples for us

Here "us" refers to all believers.

the end of the ages

"the last days"

1 Corinthians 10:12

does not fall

does not sin or reject God

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to all humanity

This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation:

"Every temptation that has overtaken you is common to all humanity" or "The temptations that affect you are temptations that all people experience"

He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability

"He will only allow you to be tempted in ways that you are strong enough to resist"

will not let you be tempted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"will not allow anyone to tempt you"

1 Corinthians 10:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind them to be pure and to stay away from idolatry and immorality as he talks about communion, which represents the blood and body of Christ.

run away from idolatry

Paul is speaking of the practice of worshiping idols as if it were a physical thing like a dangerous animal. Alternate translation: "do all you can to get away from worshiping idols"

1 Corinthians 10:15

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 10:16

The cup of blessing

Paul is speaking of God's blessing as though it were the

wine in the cup used in the ritual of the Lord's Supper.

that we bless

"for which we thank God"

is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?

Paul is reminding the Corinthians of what they already know, that the cup of wine that we share represents us sharing in the blood of Christ. Alternate translation: "we share in the blood of Christ."

The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?

Paul is reminding the Corinthians of what they already know. Alternate translation: "We share in the body of Christ when we share bread."

a sharing in

"taking part in" or "equally participating with others in"

1 Corinthians 10:17

loaf of bread

a single unit of baked bread that is sliced or broken into pieces before it is eaten

1 Corinthians 10:18

the Israel that is according to the flesh

This refers to people who belonged to Israel because they were descendants of Israel. Alternate translation: "the natural Israel" or "the physical Israel" or "the people of Israel"

Are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?

Paul uses a question to remind the Corinthians of what they already know so that he can give them new information.

Alternate translation: "Those who eat the sacrifices share in the activities and the blessings of the altar."

1 Corinthians 10:19

What am I saying then? That an idol is anything? Or that food sacrificed to an idol is anything?

Paul uses these rhetorical questions to clear up any confusion the Corinthians might have about what he meant. The second and third questions are elliptical, and the understood words can be provided. Alternate translation: "I am not saying that an idol is anything or that food sacrificed to an idol is anything." or "I am not saying that an idol is a real god or that food that has been sacrificed to idols has any power." or "What am I saying then? Am I saying that an idol is anything? Or am I saying that food sacrificed to an idol is anything?"

1 Corinthians 10:20

the things they sacrifice

You may need to make explicit that the word "they" refers to Gentile pagans. Alternate translation: "the things that the Gentile pagans sacrifice"

1 Corinthians 10:21

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons

Drinking from the cup of the Lord is a symbol of being united to the Lord, and drinking from the cup of demons is a symbol of being united to demons. It is impossible to be united to both the Lord and demons. Alternate translation: "You cannot be united to the Lord by drinking from his cup and also be united to demons by drinking from their cup"

You cannot drink the cup

Here "cup" is a metonym for the wine in the cup. Alternate translation: "You cannot drink from the cup" or "You cannot drink the wine from the cup"

the cup of the Lord

This refers to the cup of wine that people drink from when celebrating the Lord's supper.

the cup of demons

This refers to anything people might drink during a meal dedicated to demons.

You cannot participate at the table of the Lord and the table of demons

Here "participate at the table" refers to eating a meal together. The "table of the Lord" refers to a meal that people eat to honor the Lord. Alternate translation: "You cannot eat together at the table of the Lord and at the table of demons" or "You cannot join in eating to honor the Lord and join in eating to honor demons"

1 Corinthians 10:22

Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the people of what they already know. Alternate translation: "Surely you do not want to provoke the Lord to jealousy."

provoke

to anger or irritate

Are we stronger than he is?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the people of what they already know. Alternate translation: "You are not stronger than he is."

1 Corinthians 10:23

Connecting Statement:

In the rest of this chapter, Paul reminds the Corinthians that though they are free, they must care about others and not do things that could lead others to sin.

Everything is lawful

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is saying what some Corinthians might be thinking. Alternate translation: "People say, 'I am allowed to do anything'" or 2) Paul is saying what he thinks is true. Alternate translation: "I am allowed to do anything." This should be translated as in 1 Corinthians 6:12.

not everything is profitable

"some things are not profitable" or "some things do not help people"

not everything builds people up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

1 Corinthians 10:24

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 10:25

Eat everything sold in the market

Or "You may eat anything sold in the market." Paul is granting permission, not issuing a command.

without asking questions of conscience

Questions of conscience are questions that a person asks because he wants to know if something is sinful or not. In this case, a person might ask if the food at the market was offered to idols; if he thinks that it is sinful to eat food sacrificed to idols, he would feel guilty about eating it. Paul is saying that the person does not need to ask if the food has been sacrificed to an idol or not. Alternate translation: "without asking questions that could make the conscience

feel guilty" or "without asking questions about whether it is sinful to eat it"

1 Corinthians 10:26

General Information:

This quotation is from the Psalms in the Old Testament and the fullness of it

"and everything in it." This means that everything on the earth belongs to the Lord. By saying this, Paul shows that even meat at the market that was offered to idols belongs to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:27

without asking questions of conscience

See how you translated a similar phrase in 1 Corinthians 10:25.

1 Corinthians 10:28

General Information

Some translations put verse 28 and the first part of verse 29 in parentheses because the second part of verse 29 appears to give a reason for what Paul taught in verses 25-27 about not asking questions of conscience.

This has been offered in sacrifice

Here being offered in sacrifice means that it was offered to idols. This was the part of the meat that the worshiper was allowed to bring home after killing an animal as a sacrifice to an idol.

for the sake of the one who informed you

This is the first reason not to eat the meat. Alternate translation: "for the good of the one who informed you" and for the sake of conscience

This is the second reason not to eat the meat. Alternate translation: "and because of conscience" or "and in order not to cause concerns about whether or not it is sinful"

1 Corinthians 10:29

General Information

Some translations put verse 28 and the first part of verse 29 in parentheses because the second part of verse 29 appears to give a reason for what Paul taught in verses 25-27 about not asking questions of conscience.

the conscience of the other man, I mean, and not yours

Here Paul explains whose conscience he was writing about

in verse 28.

For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience?

This is a rhetorical question, and it can be expressed as a statement. The verb "be judged" can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "For another person's conscience should not judge my freedom."

my freedom

The abstract noun "freedom" can be expressed with the adjective "free." Alternate translation: "my being free" or "what I do because I am free"

1 Corinthians 10:30

If I partake of the meal with gratitude

The meaning of the abstract noun "gratitude" can be expressed with the phrase "give thanks." It can be made explicit that the thanksgiving is to God. Alternate translation: "If I give thanks to God for the food when I share in the meal"

why am I being insulted for that for which I gave thanks?

This is a rhetorical question, and it can be expressed as a statement. The verb "be insulted" can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "I should not be insulted for that for which I gave thanks." or "People should not be insult me for eating food that I have thanked God for." (See: and)

1 Corinthians 10:31

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 10:32

Be blameless both to Jews and to Greeks, and to the church of God

"Be blameless in the opinion of both Jews and Greeks, and of the church of God" or "Make sure that neither Jews nor Greeks nor the church of God can accuse you of doing wrong"

1 Corinthians 10:33

please all people

"make all people glad"

I do not seek my benefit, but that of the many

"I do not do things I desire for myself, but things that help as many people as possible"

Chapter 11

1 Corinthians 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the beginning of a new section of the letter (Chapters 11-14). Paul now talks about proper church services. In this chapter, he deals with two different problems: women in the church services (verses 1-16) and the Lord's Supper (verses 17-34).

Special concepts in this chapter

Proper conduct in a church service

Disorderly women

Paul's instructions here are debated among scholars. There may have been women who were abusing their Christian freedom and causing disorder in the church by going against established cultural customs. The disorder that their actions created would have caused him to be concerned.

The Lord's Supper

There were problems in how the Corinthians were handling the Lord's Supper. They did not act in a unified manner. During the feast celebrated along with the Lord's Supper, some of them ate their own food without sharing. Some of them got drunk while the poor people remained hungry. Paul taught that the believers dishonored Christ's death if they participated in the Lord's Supper while they were sinning or while they were in broken relationships with each other.

(See: sin and reconcile)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions to scold the people for their unwillingness to follow the rules for worship he has suggested.

The head

Paul uses "head" as a metonym for authority in verse 3 and also to refer to a person's actual head in verse 4 and following. Since the verses are so close together, it is likely that Paul intentionally used "head" in this way. This would show that the ideas in these verses are connected.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 11:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 11

11:1-16

How could someone imitate Paul and Jesus?

[11:1]

Paul wrote that he wanted people to imitate him in the same way that he imitated Jesus. That is, he wanted people to do the same types of things he did. However, he only wanted people to do the same types of things he did if they were the same types of things Jesus did. He wanted people to do things that honored God.

Why did Paul praise the Corinthians?

[11:2]

When Paul wrote that he praised the Corinthian Christians, he meant that he was thankful for them. He thanked God for them.

The Corinthian Christian "held firmly to the traditions." That is, the Corinthian Christians did the things Paul taught and the same type of things that he did.

See: Praise

Why did Paul write about the "head"?

[11:3]

Paul wrote about the head of someone. This was a metaphor. Some scholars think that the head was someone who led another person. God gave someone permission to lead another other person. Other scholars think the head was the source of something. The head brought life to the other person.

Some scholars think Paul taught that Jesus leads every man. Other scholars think Paul taught that Jesus gives a new type of life to people who believe in him. Some scholars think Paul taught that in a Christian home, a man leads his wife and family. Other scholars think Paul taught that women came to life because of man. That is, Eve came from Adam (see: Genesis 1-2). Some scholars think Paul taught that God the Father led Jesus while he was on the earth. Other scholars think Paul taught that God the Father gave life to Jesus after he died.

See: Colossians 1:18

See: Metaphor; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); God the Father; Roles of Men and Women

Why did Paul write about covering a person's head?

[11:4, 11:5]

Paul wrote that a man who prayed or prophesied with their head "covered" dishonored his head. Some scholars think this was a metaphor. Paul wanted Christians to know that this man dishonored Jesus. Other scholars think this man dishonored himself. These scholars think Paul was writing about a cloth covering. In ancient times, a man covered his head when he prayed. However, Christians did not do this. Perhaps this was something the Jewish leaders taught.

However, it was not part of the Law of Moses.

Some scholars think the covering over a woman's head was some form of a cloth covering. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about a woman's hair as her covering (see: 1 Corinthians 11:15). At that time, a woman with short hair did evil things. Therefore a woman who prayed or prophesied must look different from women who do evil things. Other scholars think this woman acted in the same way that men act and made people think she was a man. This dishonored Jesus or her husband.

See: Pray (Prayer); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Metaphor; Law of Moses

Why did Paul talk about women's hair?

[11:6]

In ancient Israel, only men had short hair. Woman had long hair. People expected women to have long hair. Some scholars think it was not evil for a woman to have short hair. However, Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to know that the Christian women in Corinth should not have short hair. Perhaps this was because it made people think that a woman with short hair was a man. This dishonored God. Or perhaps this was because some women with short hair had sex with other women. Therefore, people thought women with short hair practiced sexual immorality.

Scholars also think that women had a hood or shawl on the clothes they wore at this time. This covered their head when they went away from their house.

Christian women had the freedom to do many different things. However, Paul did not want them to do things that made other people think they dishonored God or stopped them from believing in Jesus.

See: Sexual Immorality

How was man the image and the glory of God?

[11:7]

Paul wrote that man was the image and glory of God. He was thinking about Genesis 1:26-27 when he wrote this. Some scholars think that God gave Adam permission to lead Eve. Eve was honored to help Adam in the same way Adam was honored to serve God. Other scholars think that Adam and Eve were both the image and glory of God.

See: Image; Glory (Glorify)

How was a woman made from a man?

[11:8]

Eve was a woman who God made from the rib of a man, Adam. This was what Paul was thinking about when he wrote these words.

See: Genesis 1-2

How was woman created for man?

[11:9]

When God created Eve. She was made to help Adam (see: Genesis 2:18).

See: Roles of Men and Women

Why did Paul write about angels?

[11:10]

Paul wrote that the woman was to have something on her head. This was a symbol showing she submitted to someone. He wrote that this was because of the angels. Some scholars think this was because the angels serve God by serving men in the same way women do. Other scholars think Paul wrote about how the angels see the things people do (see: 1 Corinthians 4:9). Some scholars think that because a woman dishonored God if she worshipped God with her head uncovered. This would even offend the angels.

See: Submit (Submission); Angel

How was someone “in the lord”?

[11:11]

When Paul wrote, “in the lord,” he was talking about Christians. Christians are joined together in Jesus.

See: In Christ

How were men and women not independent from each other?

[11:11]

Paul wrote that men and women were not independent from one another. Men and women need each other. God made each to serve each other in different ways.

See: Roles of Men and Women

How did men come from a woman?

[11:12]

Paul wrote that a man comes from a woman. A woman gives birth to a man. Paul also said that woman came from man. He was thinking about Eve being made from Adam. All things come from God who makes everything.

How did someone judge for themselves?

[11:13]

Paul wrote “judge for yourself.” He wanted people to think about what he said. He wanted them to make a decision according to what they knew to be right.

Should a woman pray to God with her head uncovered?

[11:13]

Paul asked if a woman should pray to God with her head uncovered. Some scholars think that when Paul lived, people thought it was wrong for a woman to pray in front of other people with her head uncovered. They thought it was wrong for her to do this because they thought she did something God only gave permission for men to do. They thought only men could speak to God by praying or prophesying when they gathered together to worship God.

See: Pray (Prayer); Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Worship

Why was it wrong for a man to have long hair?

[11:14]

When Paul lived, only women had long hair. Some scholars think that when a man had long hair, he looked like a woman. Therefore, it was wrong because it made him look like a woman. If they did this, it dishonored God. Other scholars think men who had sex with other men had long hair. Therefore, people thought men with long hair practiced sexual immorality. At this time, people would have thought the man with long hair was sexually immoral

Paul said this was “by nature.” Some scholars think this was because people thought it was natural for men to have short

hair. They were not born in a certain way that they needed to have short hair. However, almost every man had short hair at this time and place.

See: Sexual Immorality

11:17-34

What happened when the Corinthians Christians gathered together?

[11:17]

Paul said when the Christians in Corinth gathered together, it was not for the better, but for the worse. That is, when they gathered together they did many things that did not honor God.

How were there divisions and factions among the Christians in Corinth?

[11:18, 11:19]

Paul heard that the Christians in Corinth were fighting with one another. They often did this. They formed groups. Paul said this happened so that, "those who are approved may be recognized among you." When these Christians were divided, it helped people to know who obeyed God and who did not obey God. One group obeyed God, but the other group did not.

What was the Lord's supper?

[11:20]

See: Lord's Supper

How did the Christians not eat the Lord's supper?

[11:20]

The Christians in Corinth ate the Lord's supper in a way that dishonored God. By doing this, Paul said they did not eat the Lord's supper because the Lord's supper honored God. The rich Corinthians ate a lot of food and drank a lot. But the poor Corinthians were hungry and thirsty. The things the rich did humiliated the poor.

Paul said that it would be better for these rich people to eat in their own homes than to eat the Lord's supper in the wrong way.

See: Lord's Supper

What is the new covenant?

[11:25]

See: New Covenant

Why did Paul want the Corinthians to examine themselves before they ate the Lord's supper?

[11:28]

Paul told the Corinthian Christians to examine themselves before they ate the Lord's supper. If they sinned, then they needed to be at peace with one another and confess their sins to God. If they do not do this, God will punish them in some way. God disciplines Christians. God punished some of these Christians, they were sick or died. However, Christians are not punished by being sent to hell to live forever. This is how non-Christians are punished.

See: Lord's Supper; Confess (Confession)); Sin; Discipline (To Disciple); Hell; Punish (Punishment)

How did Paul want the Christians to eat the Lord's supper?

[11:33]

Paul wanted the Christians to wait for one another and to share with one another when they ate the Lord's supper.

See: Lord's Supper

1 Corinthians 11:1

Connecting Statement:

After reminding them to follow him in the same way that he follows Christ, Paul gives some specific instructions about how women and men are to live as believers.

1 Corinthians 11:2

you remember me in everything

"you think of me at all times" or "you always try act as I would want you to act" The Corinthians had not forgotten who Paul was or what he had taught them.

you hold firmly

Paul speaks of the Corinthians believing what he taught them and obeying his commands as if he had given them a solid object that they were holding on to while someone tried to take it away. Alternate translation: "you believe and practice"

1 Corinthians 11:3

Now I want

Possible meanings are 1) "Because of this, I want" or 2)

"However, I want."

is the head of

has authority over

a man is the head of a woman

Possible meanings are 1) "men are to have authority over women" or 2) "the husband is to have authority over the wife"

1 Corinthians 11:4

with his head covered

This means to have some kind of garment on his head that covers his hair.

dishonors his head

Possible meanings are 1) "brings disgrace on himself" or 2) "brings disgrace on Christ, who is his head."

1 Corinthians 11:5

woman who prays ... dishonors her head

Possible meanings are 1) "woman who prays ... brings disgrace on herself" or 2) "wife who prays ... brings disgrace on her husband."

with her head uncovered
That is, without the cloth that was worn on the top of the head and that covered the hair and shoulders.
as if her head were shaved
as if she had removed all the hair on her head with a razor
1 Corinthians 11:6
If it is disgraceful for a woman
It was a mark of disgrace or humiliation for a woman to have her hair shaved off or cut short.
cover her head
place on her head the cloth that was worn on the top of the head and that covered the hair and shoulders
1 Corinthians 11:7
should not have his head covered
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
Possible meanings are 1) "must not cover his head" or 2) "does not need to cover his head"
glory of the man
Just as man reflects God's greatness, the woman reflects the man's character.
1 Corinthians 11:8
For man was not made from woman. Instead, woman was made from man
God made the woman by taking a bone from the man and making the woman from that bone. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God did not make the man from the woman. Instead, he made the woman from the man"
1 Corinthians 11:9
For neither ... for man
These words and all of 1 Corinthians 11:8 could be put in parentheses so that the reader can see that the word "this" in "this is why ... the angels" clearly refers back to the words "the woman is the glory of the man" in 1 Corinthians 11:7.
1 Corinthians 11:10
have a symbol of authority on her head
Possible meanings are 1) "to symbolize that she has man as her head" or 2) "to symbolize that she has the authority to pray or prophesy."
1 Corinthians 11:11
Nevertheless, in the Lord
"While what I have just said is all true, the most important thing is this: in the Lord"
in the Lord
Possible meanings are 1) "among Christians, who belong to the Lord" or 2) "in the world as created by God."
the woman is not independent from the man, nor is the man independent from the woman
This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "the woman depends on the man, and the man depends on the woman"
1 Corinthians 11:12
For as the woman comes from the man, so does the man come from the woman
This means that the first woman, Eve, was made from the rib of the first man, Adam, and since then all men have been born by women.
all things come from God

"God created everyone and everything" or "God created all"
1 Corinthians 11:13
Judge for yourselves
"Judge this issue according to the local customs and church practices you know"
Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?
Paul expects the Corinthians to agree with him. This can be stated in active form. "To honor God as she prays to him, a woman should have a covering on her head."
1 Corinthians 11:14
Does not even nature itself teach you ... for him?
Paul expects the Corinthians to agree with him. Alternate translation: "Nature itself even teaches you ... for him."
Does not even nature itself teach you ... for him?
He is speaking of the way people in society normally act as if it were a person who teaches. Alternate translation: "You know just from looking at the way people normally act ... for him."
1 Corinthians 11:15
For her hair has been given to her
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God created woman with hair"
1 Corinthians 11:16
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
1 Corinthians 11:17
Connecting Statement:
As Paul talks about communion, the Lord's supper, he reminds them to have right attitudes as well as unity. He reminds them that if they fail in those things when taking communion, they will become sick and die, as has already happened to some of them.
in the following instructions, I do not praise you. For when
Another possible meaning is "as I give you these instructions, there is something for which I cannot praise you: when"
the following instructions
"the instructions I am about to talk about"
come together
"gather together" or "meet"
it is not for the better but for the worse
"you do not help each other; instead, you harm each other"
1 Corinthians 11:18
in the church
"as believers." Paul is not talking about being inside a building.
there are divisions among you
"you divide yourselves into opposing groups"
1 Corinthians 11:19
For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you
Possible meanings 1) Paul is being ironic to shame the Corinthians for dividing the people they thought were more important from those they thought were less important. Alternate translation: "For you seem to want to have factions among you so that everyone will know whom you consider to be most important" or 2) Paul means factions are necessary so that God can show those whom he approves. Alternate translation: "For it is necessary for

there to be factions among you so that you will know which people God has approved"

factions

opposing groups of people

1 Corinthians 11:20

come together

"gather together"

it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat

"you may believe you are eating the Lord's Supper, but you are not, because you do not treat it with respect"

1 Corinthians 11:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 11:22

to eat and to drink in

"in which to gather for a meal"

despise

hate or treat with dishonor and disrespect

humiliate

embarrass or cause to feel shame

What should I say to you? Should I praise you?

Paul is rebuking the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "I can say nothing good about this. I cannot praise you."

1 Corinthians 11:23

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, that the Lord "For it was from the Lord that I heard what I told you, and it was this: the Lord"

on the night when he was betrayed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "on the night that Judas Iscariot betrayed him"

1 Corinthians 11:24

he broke it

"he pulled pieces from it"

This is my body

"The bread I am holding is my body"

1 Corinthians 11:25

the cup

It is best to translate this literally. The Corinthians knew which cup he took, so it is not simply "a cup" or "some cup" or "any cup." Possible meanings are that it was 1) the cup of wine that one would expect him to use or 2) the third or fourth of the four cups of wine that the Jews drank at the Passover meal.

Do this as often as you drink it, to remember me

"Drink from this cup, and as often as you drink from it, remember me"

1 Corinthians 11:26

proclaim the Lord's death

teach about the crucifixion and resurrection

until he comes

Where Jesus comes to can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "until Jesus comes back to the earth"

1 Corinthians 11:27

eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord

"eats the bread of the Lord or drinks the cup of the Lord"

1 Corinthians 11:28

examine

Paul speaks of a person looking at his relationship to God and how he has been living his life as if that person is looking over something he wants to buy. See how "test the quality" is translated in [1 Corinthians 3:13]

1 Corinthians 11:29

without discerning the body

Possible meanings are 1) "and does not recognize that the church is the body of the Lord" or 2) "and does not consider that he is handling the Lord's body."

1 Corinthians 11:30

weak and ill

These words mean almost the same thing and can be combined, as in UDB.

and some of you have fallen asleep

"Sleep" here is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "and some of you have died" .

some of you

If this would sound like Paul is talking to those who have died, you may need to make explicit that he is not.

Alternate translation: "some of the members of your group" 1 Corinthians 11:31

examine

Paul speaks of a person looking at his relationship to God and how he has been living his life as if that person is looking over something he wants to buy. See how this is translated in [1 Corinthians 11:28]

we will not be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will not judge us"

1 Corinthians 11:32

we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined, so that we may not be condemned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord judges us, he disciplines us, so that he will not condemn us"

1 Corinthians 11:33

wait for one another

"allow the others to arrive before beginning the meal"

1 Corinthians 11:34

let him eat at home

"let him eat before attending this gathering"

it will not be for judgment

"it will not be an occasion for God to discipline you"

Chapter 12

1 Corinthians 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

This chapter begins a new section. Chapters 12-14 discuss spiritual gifts within the church.

Special concepts in this chapter

The church, the body of Christ

This is an important metaphor in Scripture. The church has many different parts. Each part has different functions. They combine to make one church. All of the different parts are necessary. Each part is to be concerned for all the other parts, even those that seem less important.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

In reading the Old Testament, the Jews would have substituted the word "Lord" for the word "Yahweh." This sentence probably means that no one can say that Jesus is Yahweh, God in the flesh, without the Holy Spirit's influence drawing them to accept this truth. If this statement is translated poorly, it can have unintended theological consequences.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 12:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 12

12:1-11

What were spiritual gifts?

[12:1]

Paul wrote that he wanted the Corinthian Christians to know about the gifts from the Holy Spirit.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Who were Paul's brothers?

[12:1]

Paul wrote that the Corinthian Christians were his brothers.

See: Family of God

What was a pagan?

[12:2]

See: Pagan

How did these Christians used to be led by idols?

[12:2]

Paul wrote that the Corinthian Christians used to follow idols. Before the Corinthian Christians believed in Jesus, they were pagans. Pagans could not tell what came from God because they were under the control of Satan. When someone worshipped an idol, they worshipped Satan.

See: Idolatry (Idol); Pagan; Satan (The Devil)

How did someone speak by the Spirit of God?

[12:3]

When someone spoke by the Spirit of God, they said the things the Holy Spirit wanted them to say. Christians speaking by the Spirit of God could not curse Jesus because the Holy Spirit would never curse Jesus. The Holy Spirit, however, could help people to say that Jesus was their God.

See: Holy Spirit; Curse

How were there different gifts, but the same Spirit?

[12:4]

The Holy Spirit gave the Corinthian Christians different spiritual gifts. However, all of those gifts came from the Holy Spirit.

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What were ministries?

[12:5]

Ministries were different ways people served God.

See: Minister (Ministry)

How did God work all in all?

[12:6]

Paul wrote that God worked all in all. He wanted people to know that God used all Christians in different ways. Christians serve God in many different ways. God gives Christians spiritual gifts so they can serve him and other people in a certain way.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

How was each Christian given an outward display of the Spirit for the benefit of all?

[12:7]

Paul wrote how the Holy Spirit gave each Corinthian Christian a spiritual gift. The Christian needed to use the gifts that the Holy Spirit gave to serve God and others. These gifts from the Holy Spirit were given so that the Corinthian Christians could help each other.

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the word of wisdom?

[12:8]

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the word of knowledge?

[12:8]

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the gift of faith?

[12:9]

See: Faith (Believe in); Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the gift of healing?

[12:9]

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the gift of miracles?

[12:10]

See: Miracle; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the gift of prophecy?

[12:10]

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ;Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the gift of distinguishing between spirits?

[12:10]

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the gift of tongues?

[12:10]

See: Speak in Tongues; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the gift of the interpretation of tongues?

[12:10]

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

12:12-31

What was the body of Christ?

[12:12]

See: Body of Christ

How were Christians baptized?

[12:13]

See: Baptize (Baptism)

How did all Christians drink of the Spirit?

[12:13]

Paul wrote about drinking of the Holy Spirit. This was a metaphor. Paul was writing about when a person believed in Jesus.

See: John 4:14

Why did Paul speak about the body of Christ?

[12:14]

Paul wrote about the body of Christ to teach the Corinthian Christians to serve God and others in a certain way. This was a metaphor. The Corinthian Christians were just like a person's body. Each Corinthian Christian was like a member of a physical body. Each Corinthian Christian was able to help other Corinthian Christians. Each Christian was to serve in a certain way depending on how God made them. The Corinthian Christians needed each other.

See: Body of Christ; Metaphor

Why did Paul list these gifts?

[12:28] Paul said that certain gifts were above other gifts in some way. Scholars think that when Paul listed the apostles, prophets, and teachers first because they led the church (see: Ephesians 4:11-15). Perhaps the Corinthian Christians watched other Christians use their gifts. This made people be in great awe of them. However, Paul said that there were other gifts. Maybe some gifts were not as amazing as some to see. Yet, all these gifts were given by God. They were meant to be used to serve God and other people.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Apostle; Prophet

What was the gift of apostle?

[12:28]

See: Apostle; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

What was the gift of administration?

[12:28]

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit
What were the greater gifts?
[12:31]

Paul wrote about a greater spiritual gift. Scholars think he was speaking about another gift. This was a gift that helped Christians to teach other people about Jesus.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit
What was the better way Paul will show to the Corinthians?
[12:31]

Paul promised to show the Corinthians a better way to serve God. Scholars think he was writing about serving God by loving other people. This was not a spiritual gift that only certain Christians. Instead, Paul meant that all Christians had a gift helping them love other people.

See: 1 Corinthians 14:1
See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 12:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul lets the Corinthians know that God has given special gifts to believers. These gifts are to help the body of believers.

I do not want you to be uninformed

This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "I want you to be informed"

1 Corinthians 12:2

you were led astray to idols who could not speak, in whatever ways you were led by them

Here "led astray" is a metaphor for being persuaded to do something wrong. Being led astray to idols represents being wrongly persuaded to worship idols. The phrases "were led astray" and "you were led by them" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you were persuaded in some way to worship idols who cannot speak" or "you believed lies somehow and so you worshiped idols who cannot speak"

1 Corinthians 12:3

no one who speaks by the Spirit of God can say

Possible meanings are 1) "no Christian who has the Spirit of God in him can say" or 2) "no one who is prophesying by the power of the Spirit of God can say."

Jesus is accursed

"God will punish Jesus" or "God will make Jesus suffer"

No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit

This double negative emphasizes that "by the Holy Spirit" is what makes it possible for one to say, "Jesus is Lord."

Alternate translation: "One can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' only by the Holy Spirit"

by the Holy Spirit

"with the help of the Holy Spirit" or "by the power that the Holy Spirit gives him"

1 Corinthians 12:4

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:5

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:6

works all in all

Possible meanings are 1) "makes active all the gifts in everyone who has received them" or 2) "works all things in all people."

1 Corinthians 12:7

to each one is given

This can be stated in active form. God is the one who does the giving

1 Corinthians 12:8

to one is given by the Spirit the word

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by means of the Spirit God gives to one person the word" the word

"the message"

by the Spirit

God gives the gifts through the work of the Spirit.

wisdom ... knowledge

The difference between these two words is not as important here as the fact that God gives them both by the same Spirit.

the word of wisdom

Paul is communicating one idea through two words.

Alternate translation: "wise words"

the word of knowledge

Paul is communicating one idea through two words.

Alternate translation: "words that show knowledge"

1 Corinthians 12:9

is given

This can be stated in active form. See how this is translated in [1 Corinthians 12:8]

to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit

The words "are given" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit are given"

1 Corinthians 12:10

to another prophecy

The phrase "is given by the same Spirit" is understood from the previous phrases. Alternate translation: "to another prophecy is given by the same Spirit"

to another various kinds of tongues

The phrase "are given by the same Spirit" is understood from the previous phrases. Alternate translation: "to another various kinds of tongues are given by the same Spirit"

various kinds of tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "the ability to speak different languages"

to another the interpretation of tongues

The phrase "is given by the same Spirit" is understood from

the previous phrases. Alternate translation: "to another the interpretation of tongues is given by the same Spirit"

the interpretation of tongues

This is the ability to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying. Alternate translation: "the ability to interpret what is said in other languages"

1 Corinthians 12:11

one and the same Spirit

God gives the gifts through the work of the one and only Holy Spirit. See how this is translated in 1 Corinthians 12:8. 1 Corinthians 12:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to talk of the variety of gifts God gives believers. God gives different gifts to different believers, but Paul wants them to know that all believers are made into one body, which is called the body of Christ. For this reason believers should have unity.

1 Corinthians 12:13

For by one Spirit we were all baptized

Possible meanings are 1) the Holy Spirit is the one who baptizes us, "For one Spirit baptized us" or 2) that the Spirit, like the water of baptism, is the medium through which we are baptized into the body, "For in one Spirit we were all baptized"

all were made to drink of one Spirit

This is a metaphor meaning everyone received and share in the same Spirit. The phrase "all were made" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave us all the same Spirit, which we share as people might share a drink"

1 Corinthians 12:14

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:15

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:16

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:17

where would the sense of hearing be? ... where would the sense of smell be?

This can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "you could not hear anything. ... you could not smell anything."

1 Corinthians 12:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 12:19

the same member

The word "member" is a general word for the parts of the body, like the head, arm, or knee. Alternate translation: "the same part of the body"

where would the body be?

This can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "there would be no body."

1 Corinthians 12:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 12:21

I have no need of you

"I do not need you"

1 Corinthians 12:22

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:23

less honorable

"less important"

our unrepresentable members

This probably refers to the private parts of the body, which people keep covered.

1 Corinthians 12:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 12:25

there may be no division within the body, but

"the body may be unified, and"

1 Corinthians 12:26

one member is honored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"someone gives honor to one member"

1 Corinthians 12:27

Now you are

Here the word "now" is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

1 Corinthians 12:28

first apostles

Possible meanings for "first" are 1) the first in the list or 2) the most important in the list.

those who provide helps

"those who provide help to other believers"

those who do the work of administration

"those who govern the church"

those who have various kinds of tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation:

"those who have the ability to speak different languages"

1 Corinthians 12:29

General Information:

Paul is reminding his readers of what they already know.

Are all of them apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all do miracles?

The answer Paul expects to all of these rhetorical questions is no. You may need to translate them as statements.

Alternate translation: "Not all of them are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all do miracles, do they?" or "You and I all know that not all of them are apostles, not all are prophets, not all are teachers, and not all do powerful deeds."

1 Corinthians 12:30

Do all of them have gifts of healing?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "Not all of them have gifts of healing."

Do all of them speak with tongues?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "Not all of them speak with tongues."

speak with tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation:

"speak different languages"

Do all of them interpret tongues?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "Not all of them interpret tongues."

interpret tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. To "interpret tongues" means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying. Alternate translation: "interpret what is said in

other languages"

1 Corinthians 12:31

Zealously seek the greater gifts.

Possible meanings are 1) "You must eagerly seek from God the gifts that best help the church." or 2) "You are eagerly looking for gifts that you think are greater because you think they are more exciting to have."

Chapter 13

1 Corinthians 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul seems to interrupt his teaching about spiritual gifts to speak about love.

Special concepts in this chapter

Love

Love is the most important characteristic of the believer. This chapter fully describes love. Paul tells why love is more important than the gifts of the Spirit. (See: love)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul uses many different metaphors in this chapter. He uses these metaphors to instruct the Corinthians, especially on difficult topics. Readers often need spiritual discernment to understand these teachings.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 13:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 13

13:1-13

What were the tongues of men and angels?

[13:1]

See: Speak in Tongues; Angel; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

How did someone have love?

[13:1]

In verses 13:1-4, Paul wrote about the ways the Corinthian Christians could love other people.

What was a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal?

[13:1]

A noisy gong or a clanging cymbal were musical instruments that made big noise. This was a metaphor. Some scholars think when Paul wanted to say that the way the Christians lived made people confused about who God is and how God wanted people to live. Paul wanted Christians to live in a way that honors God. If they do this, then people will know what God is like and how to live in a way that honors God.

See: Metaphor

What was the gift of prophecy?

[13:2]

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophesy)

How was Paul nothing?

[13:2] Paul wrote that if he did not love other people. Then everything he did was useless and did not honor God. If a Christian knows everything about God but does not love other people, then this does not help anyone. Why did Paul talk about gaining nothing?

Paul wrote about gaining nothing. He said that he could do many things to honor God, but if he did not do them because he loved God or other people, then the things he did would not honor God.

Paul wrote about gaining nothing. He said that he could do many things to honor God. Yet if he did not love other people, then the things he did would not honor God.

What did Paul write in verse 3?

[13:3]

Some ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the word "burn." Other ancient copies of the Greek New Testament have the word "boast." Because of this, some scholars think Paul wrote about giving his body to be burned. They think Paul wrote about dying for being a Christian. Other scholars, however, think Paul wrote about boasting. They say that Paul wrote here about suffering. They believe that Paul meant that if he did not love other people, then he should not be honored.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible)

Why did Paul write “love is”?

[13:4]

In this chapter, Paul wrote the words “love is” many times. Through these words he gave a description. Paul meant that “someone who loves is a certain way”. He meant that someone who loved other people did certain things.

See: Love

How was love not “self-serving”?

[13:5]

Someone who loved other people was believed to be a person who was not “self-serving.” That is, these people refused to serve themselves. They did not want to have everything turn out the way they wanted. Instead, these Christians served other people.

What was unrighteousness?

[13:6]

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

What did it mean that love “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things”?

[13:7]

Paul wrote that when the Corinthian Christians loved, they were able to endure things. Corinthian Christians who loved people did not want revenge against other people. These Christians also believed all things. That is, they trusted people. These Christians hoped in all things. They knew good things would happen because they trusted God. These Christians also endured all things. They loved others even when bad things happened.

When will prophecies and tongues stop?

[13:9, 13:10]

Paul wrote that one day the Corinthian Christians will not need of the gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues. Some scholars think this happened after the apostles died. Other scholars think Paul was writing about how these gifts were used for a short time. However, Paul, when people love other people, that love lasts forever. Other scholars think there is a time in the future when Christians will not need these spiritual gifts.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Speak in Tongues; Apostle; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

How did Christians know and prophesy in part?

[13:9]

Paul wrote that Corinthian Christians did not know everything. They could only tell other people part of something.

However, a time would come Christians would know more. This happens after Jesus returns to the earth.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

What was the perfect?

[13:10]

When Paul wrote about the perfect, he was writing about a perfect world. When Jesus returns to the earth, it will be a perfect time which never ends. Everyone will know the truth about God. People will no longer have an imperfect knowledge of God.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did people talk about being a child and an adult?

[13:11]

Paul wrote that people know certain spiritual things in the same way a child or adult knows things. This is a metaphor. When the Corinthian Christians were children, they only knew some things. When the Corinthian Christians were adults, they were able to know much more. Paul wanted the Christians in Corinth to know that they only knew some things about God. However, one day they would know more about God.

See: Metaphor

How will people know about God?

[13:12]

Paul wrote how that the Corinthian Christians understood God as if they were looking in a mirror. Ancient mirrors were like modern ones. However, ancient mirrors were not as clear as modern mirrors. The image in the mirror was not complete or clear. In the same way, the Corinthian Christians had an incomplete understanding of God. However, in the future, the Corinthian Christians would know much more about God.

How has Paul been fully known?

[13:12]

Paul was fully known. Some scholars think that Paul meant that God knew Paul completely even before the world began. God who knew everything there was to know, also knew everything there was to know about Paul. Why did Paul write about faith, hope, and love?

Paul wrote about the greatest gifts. Paul wrote that these were faith, hope, and love. However, Paul wrote that love was the greatest gift because it lasts forever.

See: Faith (Believe in); Hope; Love

1 Corinthians 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Having just talked about the gifts that God gives to believers, Paul emphasizes what is more important.

the tongues of ... angels

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is exaggerating for the sake of effect and does not believe that people speak the language that angels use or 2) Paul thinks that some who speak in tongues actually speak the language that angels use.

I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal

I have become like instruments that make loud, annoying sounds

gong

a large, thin, round metal plate that is hit with a padded stick to make a loud, low-pitched sound

a clanging cymbal

a thin, round metal plate that is hit with a padded stick to make a loud, high-pitched sound

1 Corinthians 13:2

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 13:3

I give my body to be burned

The phrase "to be burned" can be made active. Alternate translation: "I allow those who persecute me to burn me to death"

1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is ... Love is not ... It is not

Paul describes the characteristics of love by speaking about love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "Whoever loves is ... He is not ... He is not"

1 Corinthians 13:5

It does not ... It is not ... does it keep

Paul continues to describe the characteristics of love by speaking about love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "He does not ... He does not ... does he keep" seek its own

The word "seek" here means to desire and work for something. The person who loves wants and works for what is good for others as much as or more than what is good for himself.

It is not provoked

"It does not become angry easily." The person who loves controls his anger.

nor does it keep a count of wrongs

The person who loves others does not keep a record of the wrongs that people have done to him.

1 Corinthians 13:6

It does not ... it rejoices

Paul continues to describe the characteristics of love by speaking about love as if it were a person. Alternate

translation: "He does not ... he rejoices"

does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Instead, it rejoices in the truth

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "rejoices only in righteousness and truth"

1 Corinthians 13:7

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues speaking about love as if it were a person. bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things

The phrase "all things" here appears to be an idiom

meaning "always". Alternate translation: "always perseveres, always believes, always hopes, and always endures"

hopes all things

This means that whoever loves others always expects that what is good will happen.

1 Corinthians 13:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 13:9

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 13:10

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 13:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see indirectly in a mirror

Mirrors in Paul's day were made of polished metal rather than glass and provided a dim, vague reflection.

now we see

Possible meanings are 1) "now we see Christ" or 2) "now we see God."

but then face to face

The understood words "we will see" can be supplied. Seeing face to face is a metaphor or synecdoche for being physically present with the one we will see. Alternate translation: "but then we will see face to face"

I will know fully

The word "Christ" is understood. Alternate translation: "I will know Christ fully"

just as I have been fully known

This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: "just as Christ has known me fully"

1 Corinthians 13:13

faith, hope, and love

These abstract nouns can be expressed in phrases with verbs. Alternate translation: "we must trust the Lord, be confident that he will do what he has promised, and love him and others"

Chapter 14

1 Corinthians 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul returns to discussing spiritual gifts.

Some translations set what is quoted from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The

ULB does this with the words of verse 21.

Special concepts in this chapter

Tongues

Scholars disagree on the exact meaning of the gift of tongues. Paul describes the gift of tongues as a sign for unbelievers. It does not serve the whole church, unless someone interprets what is spoken. It is very important that the church uses this gift properly.

Prophecy

Scholars disagree on the exact meaning of prophecy as a spiritual gift. Paul says prophets can build up the entire church. He describes prophecy as a gift for believers. (See: prophet)

Links:

[1 Corinthians 14:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 14

14:1-19

How were the Corinthian Christians to pursue love?

[14:1]

Paul wanted the Christians in Corinth to pursue love. Paul wrote about spiritual gifts in the verses before this one. He insisted that spiritual gifts were to be used to love other people. Paul wanted Corinthian Christians to serve others because they loved them.

See: Love; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

How were the Christians to be “zealous for spiritual gifts”?

[14:1]

When Paul wrote that the Corinthian Christians should be “zealous”(ζηλόω/g2206) for spiritual gifts, Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to truly desire the Holy Spirit’s gifts to serve other Corinthian Christians. Scholars think that prophecy was greater in some way because it helped Christians to do things that honored God.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy)

How did someone who spoke in tongues speak to God?

[14:2]

Paul wrote that when Corinthian Christians spoke in tongues, they spoke to God. Some scholars think Paul was writing here about Corinthian Christians who spoke in a miraculous tongue. Paul wrote that when the Corinthian Christians did this, they were praying to God. This was a language only known to God. Other scholars think that when Paul wrote that Corinthian Christians spoke in tongues, he was describing how the Corinthian Christians spoke in languages other people in the world spoke. Other scholars say that when these Corinthian Christians spoke in tongues they did not have anyone to interpret what they said. Therefore, it did not help other Christians, as only God knew what the person said.

See: Speak in Tongues; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Mystery

Why does someone prophesy?

[14:3]

Paul wrote that when the Corinthian Christians prophesied, it encouraged and comforted them. When someone spoke to the Corinthian Christians about what God wanted them to say, it helped them. The person who prophesied to the Corinthian Christians made these Christians better.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Church

How did someone who spoke in tongues build himself up?

[14:4]

Paul wrote that when Corinthian Christians spoke in tongues, they were doing something that helped their faith. Corinthian Christians who did this only helped themselves. They were not helping others if there were no other Corinthian Christian there to interpret the tongues so others might understand. Paul said this did not happen when the Corinthian Christians prophesied.

See: Speak in Tongues; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Faith (Believe in)

Why did Paul want all the Christians in Corinth to speak in tongues?

[14:5]

Paul wrote that he wanted all Christians to speak in tongues. Some scholars think that Paul meant that Christians had the gift to speak in tongues. Other scholars think that Paul did not think all Christians had the gift to speak in tongues. Instead, this is why Paul wrote that he thought it would be better for Christians to prophesy than to speak in tongues.

See: Speak in Tongues; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

How was the person who prophesied greater than the one who spoke in tongues?

[14:5]

When Paul wrote that the Corinthian Christians who prophesied were greater than the person who spoke in tongues, he

was writing about those Corinthian Christians who spoke in tongues without an interpreter. These Corinthian Christians did not help other people. However, the Corinthian Christians who prophesied helped other people. This was why the person who prophesied was greater.

See: Speak in Tongues; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

How did someone speak with revelation, knowledge, prophecy, teaching?

[14:6]

See: Reveal (Revelation); Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Why did Paul write about musical instruments?

[14:7]

When Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians about the spiritual gift of tongues, he mentioned musical instruments. He was teaching people something. He wanted the Corinthian Christians to know that if they spoke in tongues and no one understood, it was like someone sounding an “uncertain” note on an instrument. That is, it would not help anyone because they could not understand it.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Speak in Tongues

What were the manifestations of the Spirit?

[14:12]

When Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians about the “manifestations of the Spirit,” he was writing about the things the Holy Spirit did to reveal Himself to the Corinthian Christians. Here Paul called these things the Holy Spirit’s gifts.

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Reveal (Revelation)

What did Paul desire Christians to want from the Holy Spirit?

[14:12]

Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to want to have things from the Holy Spirit which helped other people.

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Why did Paul want the Christians who spoke in tongues to also interpret those tongues?

[14:13]

Paul wrote that when Corinthian Christians spoke in tongues, they needed to have someone interpret those tongues. If the Corinthian Christians spoke in tongues, but gave no interpretation, it did not honor God. This was because it did not cause the church to grow (See: 1 Corinthians 14:28). Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to pray that they could interpret the tongues they spoke.

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Speak in Tongues

How did someone pray in a tongue?

[14:13]

Paul wrote about praying in a tongue. Some scholars think that Paul was writing about when people prayed in front of other people. Fewer scholars think Paul was writing about when someone was alone and prayed to God.

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Speak in Tongues; Pray (Prayer)

How did someone’s spirit pray?

[14:14]

Paul wrote about a Christian praying with his spirit. Some scholars think Paul was writing about the Holy Spirit using tongues when they prayed in front of other people who spoke different languages. They think Paul said that his own spirit prayed as the Holy Spirit gave him the ability to speak in prayer. Fewer scholars think the Holy Spirit gave people a special language when they prayed to God.

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Speak in Tongues; Spirit (Spiritual); Pray (Prayer)

How did Paul want people to pray?

[14:15]

Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to pray and think much as they prayed for their needs and those of other people.

See: Pray (Prayer)

Why did Paul want people to say “amen”?

[14:16]

Paul wrote that the Corinthian Church needed to use the gift of tongues in ways people could understand them. In ancient Israel, Jews and Christians often said “amen” when someone else spoke about God. When people said “amen”, they were asking God to make happen what that speaker said. If someone in the Corinthian church could not understand the meaning of what the speaker said, they could not say “amen”(ἀμήν/g0281).

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Speak in Tongues

Why did Paul thank God that he spoke in tongues more than any of the Christians in Corinth?

[14:18]

Paul thanked God that he spoke in tongues more than any of the Christians in Corinth. This was because he used tongues to help other people and to honor God. The Christians in the Corinthian did not use tongues in this way.

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Speak in Tongues

See Map: Corinth

Why did Paul want to teach other people instead of to speak in tongues?

[14:19]

When Paul spoke in tongues, it only helped him to trust God more. However, when he spoke in a language that members of the Corinthian Church could understand, he helped the Corinthian Christians, and not just himself.

14:20-25

How were the Christians in Corinth like children?

][14:20]

Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth and spoke to them as if they were children. This was a metaphor. They were not acting like adults were supposed to act. Adults often know the difference between right and wrong. Children do not always know what is right and wrong.

See: Metaphor; Grow in Faith

Why did Paul write about the Law of Moses?

[14:21]

Paul wrote that a prophecy about the gift of speaking in other tongues was written about in the Old Testament (see: Isaiah 28:11-12). When Isaiah spoke these words, God warned Israel that he was going to use Gentiles to judge Israel. This prophecy began to be fulfilled. Paul wrote how God was using these gifts of tongues to share the gospel with Gentiles. The tongues were used as a sign to the Gentiles. It helped Gentiles to believe in Jesus.

However, if there was someone speaking in tongues and no one to interpret what was being said, then people would think that Christians were crazy.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Law of Moses; Speak in Tongues; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Gentile; Sign; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Judge (Judgment); Gospel

How was prophecy a sign to Christians?

[14:22]

Paul wrote that prophecy was a sign to the Corinthian Christians, but not for non-Christians. Prophecy helped Christians to obey God and to live in a way that honored God. Tongues were a sign for the unbelieving (see: I Corinthians 14:22) living among the Corinthian Christians. Tongues were used so that people could understand the gospel.

See: Speak in Tongues; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Sign; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Gospel

What were the “secrets of the heart”?

[14:25]

The “secrets of the heart” were wrong things a person in the Corinthian Church had done. Only the person guilty of those evil things knew about them.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

14:26-33

What was a psalm?

[14:26]

A psalm was a song that was sung to worship God. The Old Testament has many psalms. (See: Psalms)

See: Psalm; Worship; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What was a revelation?

[14:26]

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Church about how some Christians used prophecy to reveal something other people.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Church; Reveal (Revelation)

Why did Paul not want many people to speak in tongues at the same time?

[14:27]

Paul wrote that it was wrong for many prophets to prophesy at the same time. This was because no one would understand them if more than one spoke the same time. They couldn't learn about God and how to obey God if more than one prophet was prophesying. No one could hear the messages clearly if many people were speaking. Paul wanted these spiritual gifts to be used in ways that honored God.

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophet

How were the spirits of the prophets subject to the prophet?

[14:32]

Paul wrote that the spirit of the prophets was subject to the prophet. That is, the prophet could control when he or she spoke. God did not want the prophets to all speak at the same time. God did not want people to be confused. Instead, the prophets were to wait for other prophets to be done prophesying before they began to prophesy.

See: Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophet

14:34-40

Why did Paul tell women to be silent in churches?

[14:34]

Paul wanted women to be silent when Christians gathered together to worship God. Some scholars think that when the Corinthian Christians gathered together to worship God, it was often very chaotic. Many people prophesied. Many people spoke in tongues. Also, some women were also causing problems in Corinth. Some scholars think Paul wrote about some married women who were speaking loudly to their husbands who were sitting across the room. When Paul lived, women sat on one side of the room and men sat on the other side of the room. Paul wanted to encourage the Corinthian church to respect God and others when they gathered together to worship God. Therefore, Paul wanted these women to wait and ask their husbands questions when everyone was not gathered together. Other scholars think that Paul did not want anyone to speak in a way that interrupted other people when they gathered together to worship God. Fewer scholars think Paul wrote that women were not to speak during the worship services simply because they were women.

See: Genesis 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:11-15

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Speak in Tongues; Worship
To whom were women to submit?

[14:34]

Some scholars think Paul wrote about women submitting to their husbands. Other scholars think Paul wrote this because the women were causing problems when the Corinthians gathered to worship God. Paul wrote this command for the women of that time and place. He wrote these words to correct a problem. By speaking out loudly and causing problems, they were not respecting other people or honoring God. They were not serving others or serving God.

See: Submit (Submission); Church

See: Genesis 3:16; 2 Timothy 2:11-15

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Speak in Tongues

How was someone considered to be "spiritual"?

[14:37]

See: Spirit (Spiritual)

Who should be recognized by the Christians in Corinth?

[14:38]

Paul wrote that Christians in Corinth should know that prophets always teach the same things Paul taught. They did not disagree with Paul because the things Paul taught were from God. If prophets did not do this, then these prophets were not speaking for God. The Christians in Corinth should reject these prophets and their prophecies.

See: Prophet; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy)

What lesson did Paul want the Corinthians to learn about prophecy and tongues?

[14:39, 14:40] Paul wanted the Corinthian Christians to learn that spiritual gifts must be used in the right way. Spiritual gifts should not create chaos when people are gathered together to worship God. This would dishonor God to use these gifts in this way.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Speak in Tongues

1 Corinthians 14:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants the Corinthians to know that though teaching is more important because it instructs people, it must be done with love.

Pursue love

Paul speaks of love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "Follow after love" or "Work hard to love people"

especially that you may prophesy

"and work especially hard to be able to prophesy"

1 Corinthians 14:2

in the Spirit

Possible meanings are 1) the person speaks by the power of the Holy Spirit or 2) he speaks in his own spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:3

to build them up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

to exhort them

or "to encourage them"

1 Corinthians 14:4

builds up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

1 Corinthians 14:5

spoke in tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "had the ability to speak different languages"

The one who prophesies is greater

Paul is emphasizing that the gift of prophecy is greater than the gift of speaking in tongues. Alternate translation: "The one who prophesies has a greater gift"

interprets

This means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.

the church may receive edification

The abstract noun "edification" can be translated using the verb "edify," which means to build something up. This is a metonym for the words through which the people in the church learn God's word and love God more, and the word "church" here is a metonym for the people who make up the church. Alternate translation: "the people in the church may become stronger" or "the one who prophesies may help the people know and love God better"

1 Corinthians 14:6

how will I benefit you?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "I will not benefit you." or "I will not have done anything that helps you."

1 Corinthians 14:7

they do not produce different tones

This refers to sounds of different pitch that make up the melody, not to the difference between a flute sound and a harp sound.

how will anyone know what tune the flute or harp is playing?

Paul wants the Corinthians to answer this themselves.

Alternate translation: "no one will know what tune the flute or harp is playing."

tune

melody or song

1 Corinthians 14:8

how will anyone know when it is time to prepare for battle?

Paul wants the Corinthians to answer this themselves.

Alternate translation: "no one would know when it is time to prepare for battle."

1 Corinthians 14:9

you with the tongue. If you utter speech

or "you. If with the tongue you utter speech"

with the tongue

The word "tongue" here is a synecdoche for all the parts of the body which a person uses in order to speak.

If you utter speech that is not clear

Clear speech is language that people can understand. Paul was talking about people speaking in other languages during church services. Alternate translation: "If you speak in a language that people do not know"

how will what is said be understood

These passive clauses can be translated in active form.

Alternate translation: "how will anyone understand what you have said"

1 Corinthians 14:10

none is without meaning

This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "they all have meaning"

1 Corinthians 14:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 14:12

General Information:

All instances of "you" and the imperatives are plural.

for the manifestations of the Spirit

"to do things that show that the Spirit controls you"

seek for the edification of the church so that you might abound

Some modern translations read, "seek that you might abound in those things that edify the church." Paul speaks of the church as if it were a house that one could build.

Alternate translation: "try to succeed greatly in making God's people more able to serve God so that things will go well with you"

1 Corinthians 14:13

interpret

This means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is

saying.

1 Corinthians 14:14

my mind is unfruitful

The mind not understanding what is being prayed and, therefore, receiving no benefit from the prayer is spoken of as if the "mind is unfruitful." Alternate translation: "I do not understand it in my mind" or "my mind does not benefit from the prayer, because I do not understand the words I am saying"

1 Corinthians 14:15

What am I to do?

Paul is introducing his conclusion. Alternate translation:

"This is what I will do."

pray with my spirit ... pray with my mind ... sing with my spirit ... sing with my mind

Prayers and songs must be in a language that the people present can understand.

with my mind

"with words that I understand"

1 Corinthians 14:16

you bless God ... you are giving thanks ... you are saying

Though "you" is singular here, Paul is addressing everyone who prays only in the spirit, but not with the mind.

how will the outsider say "Amen" ... saying?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "the outsider will never be able to say 'Amen' ... saying."

the outsider

Possible meanings are 1) "another person" or 2) "people who are new to your group."

say "Amen"

"agree"

1 Corinthians 14:17

you certainly give

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so the word "you" here is singular.

the other person is not built up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. This can be stated in active form. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

1 Corinthians 14:18

I speak in tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation:

"I speak different languages"

1 Corinthians 14:19

than ten thousand words in a tongue

Paul was not counting words, but used exaggeration to emphasize that a few understandable words are far more valuable than even a great number of words in a language that people cannot understand. Also, here "tongue" represents a language. Alternate translation: "10,000 words in a different language" or "a great many words in a different language"

1 Corinthians 14:20

General Information:

Paul tells the Corinthians that people being able to speak in different languages was told ahead of time by the prophet Isaiah, many years before such speaking happened at the start of Christ's church.

do not be children in your thinking

Here "children" is a metaphor for being spiritually immature. Alternate translation: "do not think like children"

1 Corinthians 14:21

In the law it is written,

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The prophet wrote these words in the law:"

By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are used together for emphasis.

1 Corinthians 14:22

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives specific instructions about an orderly way to use gifts in the church.

sign, not for unbelievers, but for believers

"sign only for believers"

1 Corinthians 14:23

would they not say that you are insane?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "they would say that you are insane."

1 Corinthians 14:24

he would be convicted by all he hears. He would be judged by all that is said

Paul says basically the same thing twice for emphasis.

Alternate translation: "he would realize that he is guilty of sin because he hears what you are saying"

1 Corinthians 14:25

The secrets of his heart would be revealed

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God would reveal to him the secrets of his heart" or "He would recognize his own private inner thoughts"

he would fall on his face and worship God

"Fall on his face" here is an idiom, meaning to bow down.

Alternate translation: "He would bow down and worship God"

1 Corinthians 14:26

What is next then, brothers?

Paul uses a question to introduce the next part of his message. Alternate translation: "Because everything I have just told you is true, this is what you need to do, my fellow believers."

interpretation

This is the ability to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.

1 Corinthians 14:27

speaks in a tongue

Here "tongue" represents a language. Alternate translation: "speaks in a different languages"

and each one in turn

"and they should speak one after another" or "and they should speak one at a time"

interpret what is said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "interpret what they said"

interpret

This means to listen to what someone says in one language

and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.

1 Corinthians 14:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 14:29

Let two or three prophets speak

Possible meanings are 1) only two or three prophets speak at any one meeting or 2) only two or three prophets take turns speaking at any one time.

to what is said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to what they say"

1 Corinthians 14:30

there is a revelation

"God reveals something" or "God speaks"

to one who is sitting

"to one of the people sitting there listening to the prophets" the first

the person who has been speaking

1 Corinthians 14:31

prophecy one by one

Only one person should prophecy at a time.

all may be exhorted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"you may exhort all"

1 Corinthians 14:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 14:33

God is not a God of confusion

God does not create confusing situations by making people all speak at the same time.

1 Corinthians 14:34

keep silent

Possible meanings are 1) stop speaking, 2) stop speaking when someone is prophesying, or 3) be absolutely silent during the church service.

1 Corinthians 14:35

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 14:36

Did the word of God come from you? Are you the only ones it has reached?

Paul emphasizes that the Corinthians are not the only ones who understand what God wants Christians to do.

Alternate translation: "The word of God did not come from you in Corinth; you are not the only people who understand God's will."

the word of God

"Word of God" here is a metonym for the message from God. Alternate translation: "God's message"

1 Corinthians 14:37

he should acknowledge

A true prophet or truly spiritual person will accept Paul's writings as coming from the Lord.

1 Corinthians 14:38

if anyone does not recognize this, let him not be recognized

"if anyone ignores this, let him be ignored"

let him not be recognized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"you should not recognize him"

1 Corinthians 14:39

do not forbid anyone from speaking in tongues

Paul makes it clear that speaking in tongues at a church gathering is permissible and acceptable.

1 Corinthians 14:40

But let all things be done properly and in order

Paul is stressing that church gatherings should be held in an orderly manner. Alternate translation: "But do all things properly and in order" or "But do everything in an orderly, appropriate way"

Chapter 15

1 Corinthians 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Resurrection

This chapter includes a very important teaching about the resurrection of Jesus. The Greek people did not believe that people could live after they died. Paul defends the resurrection of Jesus. He teaches why it is important to all believers. (See: resurrection and believe)

Special concepts in this chapter

Resurrection

Paul presents the resurrection as the ultimate proof that Jesus is God. Christ is the first of many whom God will raise to life. The resurrection is central to the gospel. Few doctrines are as important as this one. (See: goodnews and raise)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Paul uses many different figures of speech in this chapter. He uses them to express difficult theological teachings in a way that people can understand.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 15:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 15

15:1-11

What was the gospel?

[15:1]

Paul wrote about the gospel. He used several metaphors when writing about the Christians in Corinth and the gospel. It was the gospel he told them. It was the gospel they believed. It was the gospel on which they stood. That is, it was the gospel that gave them confidence that they were at peace with God. It was the gospel that was saving them. That is, it was the gospel that was making them different than they were before. They then began doing things that honored God.

See: Gospel; Metaphor

How did someone "hold firmly" to the word?

[15:2]

Paul told the Christians in Corinth to "hold firmly" to the word. Some scholars think he wanted to say that they needed to keep believing in Jesus. Other scholars think Paul wanted them to keep obeying the things he and the other apostles taught.

See: Apostle; Word of God

What was preaching?

[15:2]

See: Preach (Preacher)

How did someone believe in vain?

[15:2]

Paul wrote about believing in vain. This was when someone believed in something, but they still did the same evil things. What was the most important thing about which Paul wrote?

[15:3]

Paul wrote about something that was the most important thing. It was something that he was told by others and he told the Christians in Corinth. This was that Jesus died for people's sins. After this, Jesus was resurrected. After he was resurrected, he appeared to many people. That is, many people saw him and talked to him after he was raised from the dead.

See: Sin; Atone (Atonement); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Who were the twelve?

[15:5]

Paul wrote about the twelve. They were the twelve apostles.

See: Apostle

Who were the apostles?

[15:7]

Paul wrote about the apostles. Here, he also wrote about certain people other than the twelve apostles.

See: Apostle

How was Paul “unlike the other apostles”?

[15:8, 15:9]

Paul wrote that he was unlike the other apostles. That is, he was not born at the right time. This was a metaphor. He wanted people to know that, unlike the other apostles he was not with Jesus when Jesus was alive. Instead, he persecuted Christians at that time. Because of this, he did not think he was worthy of being called an apostle. He greatly dishonored God before he believed in Jesus. However, God still chose him to be an apostle.

See: Metaphor; Apostle; Persecute (Persecution)

How was God’s grace to Paul not in vain?

[15:10]

Paul wrote that God’s grace to him was not in vain. That is, God favored Paul. Therefore, Paul wanted to live in a way that honored God.

See: Grace

15:12-19

Who said there was no resurrection of the dead?

[15:12]

In Corinth, there were some Christians who did not think that people were made alive again after they died. They thought nothing happened after a person died. This confused Paul because they believed that Jesus was resurrected. If Jesus was not resurrected, then he could not have died for people’s sins. If this were true, then everything Paul and the other Christians did was useless and believing the gospel could not help anyone.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Sin; Atonement (Atonement); Gospel

How was someone still in their sins?

[15:17]

When Jesus died, he forgave the sins of those who believed in him. However, if Jesus was not resurrected, then he could not have forgiven the sins of those who believed in him. Therefore, they would still be guilty of sinning against God and deserved to be punished.

Paul wrote that if people died believing in Jesus and Jesus was not resurrected, then they died and did not live together with God in heaven forever. However, Jesus was resurrected, so this was not true.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Sin; Atonement (Atonement); Heaven; Punish (Punishment)

Why should Christians not have hope only in this life?

[15:19]

Paul wrote that it was sad if people only believed that Jesus could help them while they were alive. This was because they did not understand who Jesus is. He did help people when they were alive on the earth. However, Jesus did much more. He promised that those who believe in him will live together with God in heaven forever.

See: Heaven

15:20-28

How was Jesus the firstfruits of those who are asleep?

[15:20]

Paul wrote that Jesus was the firstfruit of those who have fallen asleep. This was a metaphor. Jesus was the first of many people who would be made alive again after they died. While Jesus was made alive again on the earth, other people will be made alive again and live in heaven with God.

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Heaven; Resurrect (Resurrection)

How did death come through one man?

[15:21]

Paul wrote that death came through one man. This was Adam (see: Genesis 3). Adam sinned and because he sinned all people died.

See: Romans 5:12-17

See: Sin; Die (Death)

How did resurrection come through one man?

[15:21]

Paul wrote that the resurrection came through one man. This was Jesus. Because of Jesus, Christians will be resurrected to live with God in heaven forever.

Christians will be resurrected when Jesus returns.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Heaven; Jesus’ Return to Earth

How is death the last enemy of God?

[15:26]

Paul wrote that death is the last enemy of God to be defeated. This is a metaphor. God did not want people and things to die. He wanted everything and everyone to live forever. Because Adam sinned, everything dies (see: Genesis 3). However, Paul talked about a time when things would not die anymore. This is what he was thinking about when he said that God would defeat his last enemy, death.

See: Sin; Die (Death); Metaphor

How did Paul write about things being ruled by God?

[15:28]

Paul wrote that God the Father gave Jesus the power to rule everything, but he will not rule God the Father. Some scholars God the Father will always rule Jesus in some way. Other scholars think Paul was writing about Jesus ruling on the earth for 1000 years (see: Revelation 20:1-7). At the end of this time, Jesus will give his kingdom to God the Father.

See: God the Father; Kingdom of God

15:29-34

Why were people baptized for the dead?

[15:29]

Some scholars think people in Corinth tried to be baptized for people who died. This did not honor God. These people also taught that people were not resurrected when they died. Paul did not understand why they believed these things. They should not have done this if they thought that people were not resurrected when they died. Other scholars think the Christians in Corinth were baptized for people who were dying and could not be baptized. Paul wanted them to know what they believed was not true.

See: Baptize (Baptism); Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Paul write about being in danger?

[15:30]

Paul wrote about being in danger because he told other people about Jesus. Paul explained to them that he was in danger so they would know that obeying God meant that their life on the earth may be in danger and they may have to die for Jesus. This is not what the Christians in Corinth taught.

Paul also wanted them to know that he served God to receive rewards in heaven, not rewards on earth.

See: Gospel; Reward; Heaven

How does bad company corrupts good morals?

[15:33]

Paul wrote that bad company corrupts good morals. He wanted these Christians to know that if they spend time with people who taught the wrong things, then they would also begin to believe wrong things and do wrong things, even if they were trying to do things that honor God. They must know how to honor God, and not just try to honor God by obeying these false teachers.

15:35-49

What did Paul teach about how people will look after they are resurrected?

[15:44]

Paul expected the Christians in Corinth to have questions about what they would look like after they were resurrected. However, he did not want people to think about this. It was not helpful and it was foolish. He told them that they will look different than they look now, but he did not tell them more than this. However, he did tell them their new body would be glorious. This is because it will last forever and it will be with God in heaven.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Heaven; Glory (Glorify)

How was the first Adam a living soul?

[15:45]

The first man was named Adam. He was the first man to live. This is why Paul called him the first living soul. The people who came after Adam did the things that he did. That is, they sinned and did the things they wanted to do.

See: Genesis 2-3

See: Soul; Sin

How was the second Adam a life-giving spirit?

[15:45]

Paul wrote about a second Adam. This was a metaphor. He was writing about Jesus who came from heaven. Jesus gave people a new type of life. The Christians who follow Jesus do the types of things Jesus did. That is, they honor God. They live in a way that they know they will see God in heaven.

See: Romans 5:12-17

See: Metaphor; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Heaven

15:50-58

Why will flesh and blood not inherit the kingdom of God?

[15:50]

Paul wrote that flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God. That is, Christians will not inherit the kingdom of God as they were. They need a new body to do this. The body they had was one that will perish and die. However, they will get a new body which will not perish or die. Jesus will do this when he returns to the earth.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Kingdom of God; Jesus' Return to Earth

What is a "secret truth" or mystery?

[15:51]

See: Mystery

What did Paul teach about death?

[15:54]

Paul wrote that dying was a type of enemy against God. God did not want things to die. Things died because of sin. Jesus will defeat dying. This is a metaphor. At some time, everything and everyone will stop dying. Because of this, no one should be afraid of dying.

See: Metaphor; Sin; Die (Death)

How is the law the power of sin?

[15:56]

Paul wrote that the "power of sin is the law." That is, the Law of Moses taught people that they sinned and disobeyed God. Because of this, they deserved to die.

See: Sin; Law of Moses

How is the work in the Lord not in vain?

[15:58]

Paul wrote that Christians do not serve God in vain. That is, when Christians serve God, they will be rewarded.

See: Reward

1 Corinthians 15:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthians that it is the gospel that saves them and he tells them again what the gospel is. Then he gives them a short history lesson which ends with what will yet happen.

make known to you, brothers, the gospel

Possible meanings are 1) Paul wants to remind them by making the gospel known again, "help you remember, brothers, the gospel" or 2) he wants to make sure they understand the gospel, "make clear to you, brothers, the gospel."

on which you stand

Paul is speaking of the Corinthians as if they were a house and the gospel as if it were the foundation on which the house was standing.

1 Corinthians 15:2

you are being saved

This can be stated in active form. "God will save you"

the word I preached to you

"the message I preached to you"

1 Corinthians 15:3

as of first importance

Possible meanings are 1) as the most important of many things or 2) as the first in time of important things.

for our sins

"to pay for our sins" or "so that God could forgive our sins"

according to the scriptures

"just as the propets predicted in the scriptures." Here

"scriptures" means the Old Testament.

1 Corinthians 15:4

he was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they buried him"

he was raised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God raised him"

was raised

"was caused to live again"

1 Corinthians 15:5

appeared to

"showed himself to"

and then to the twelve

The information that is understood here can be included.

Alternate translation: "and then he appeared to the twelve disciples"

to the twelve

Paul used the term "the twelve" to mean the original disciples, known as apostles, that followed Jesus. Although, when Jesus appeared to the apostles, Judas had already died, Paul still refers to the groups as "twelve." Alternate translation: "to the rest of the apostles"

1 Corinthians 15:6

five hundred

500

some have fallen asleep

"Sleep" here is a common euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "some have died"

1 Corinthians 15:7

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 15:8

Last of all

"Finally, after he had appeared to the others"

Last of all, he appeared to me, as if to one born prematurely

This is a simile, but its meaning is unclear. These words could refer to 1) a baby that is born unexpectedly early, in which case Paul means that he was unexpectedly called to

be an apostle, or 2) a baby who is born early and is very small, in which case Paul means that he had not learned from Christ and grown spiritually as the other apostles had, or 3) a baby who is born dead, in which case Paul means that Christ appeared to him when he was spiritually dead.

one born prematurely

"a baby born too early"

1 Corinthians 15:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 15:10

the grace of God I am what I am

God's grace or kindness has made Paul as he is now.

his grace in me was not in vain

Paul is emphasizing through litotes that God worked through Paul. Alternate translation: "because he was kind to me, I was able to do much good work"

the grace of God that is with me

Paul speaks of the work he was able to do because God was kind to him as if grace were actually doing the work.

Alternate translation: Possible meanings are 1) this is literally true, and God actually did the work and kindly used Paul as a tool or 2) Paul is using a metaphor and saying that God was kind to let Paul do the work and to make Paul's work have good results.

1 Corinthians 15:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 15:12

how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?

Paul is using this question to begin a new topic. Alternate translation: "you should not be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead!"

raised

made alive again

1 Corinthians 15:13

if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised

Paul uses this statement to argue that there is a resurrection of the dead. He knows that Christ has been raised and so infers that all who die will be resurrected. To say that there is no resurrection is to say that Christ has not been raised, but this is false because Paul has seen the resurrected Christ

not even Christ has been raised

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has not raised even Christ"

1 Corinthians 15:14

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 15:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants to assure the Corinthians that Christ rose from the dead.

we are found to be false witnesses about God

Paul is arguing that if Christ did not rise from the dead, then they are bearing false witness or lying about Christ's coming alive again.

we are found to be

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"everyone will realize that we are"

1 Corinthians 15:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 15:17

your faith is in vain and you are still in your sins

Their faith is based on Christ having risen from the dead, so if that did not happen, their faith will do them no good.

1 Corinthians 15:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 15:19

If only in this life we hope in Christ

Here to hope in Christ is to confidently expect good from him. Alternate translation: "If only in this life we can confidently expect Christ to help us" or "If we can trust in Christ to save us only in this life"

of all people we are most to be pitied

"people should feel sorry for us more than they do for anyone else"

1 Corinthians 15:20

now Christ

"as it is, Christ" or "this is the truth: Christ"

Christ has been raised from the dead

"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to live again." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has raised Christ from the dead"

dead as the firstfruits

Here "firstfruits" is a metaphor, comparing Christ to the first of the harvest, which would be followed by the rest of the harvest. Christ was the first to be raised from the dead, and all who believe in him will also be raised from the dead. Alternate translation: "dead, like the first part of the harvest" or "dead; he is like the first part of the harvest"

those who sleep

Sleep here is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "those who have died"

1 Corinthians 15:21

death came by a man

The abstract noun "death" can be expressed with the verb "die." Alternate translation: "people die because of what one man did"

by a man also came the resurrection of the dead

The abstract noun "resurrection" can be expressed with the verb "raise." Alternate translation: "people are raised from the dead because of another man" or "people will become alive again because of what one man did"

1 Corinthians 15:22

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 15:23

who is the firstfruits

Here "firstfruits" is a metaphor, comparing Christ to the first of the harvest, which would be followed by the rest of the harvest. Christ was the first to be raised from the dead. Alternate translation: "who is like the first part of the harvest"

1 Corinthians 15:24

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Christ.

he will abolish all rule and all authority and power

"he will stop those people who rule, who have authority, and who have power, from doing what they are doing"

1 Corinthians 15:25

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet

Possible meanings are 1) all occurrences of "he" and "his" refer to Christ or 2) "For Christ must reign until God the Father has put all Christ's enemies under Christ's feet"

until he has put all his enemies under his feet

Kings who won wars would put their feet on the necks of those whom they had defeated to their power over their enemies. Alternate translation: "until he has put all his enemies under his power"

1 Corinthians 15:26

The last enemy to be destroyed is death

Paul speaks of death here as if it were a person who will be killed. The passive verb can be stated as active. Possible meanings are 1) Christ will destroy death or 2) God the Father will destroy death. Alternate translation: "The final enemy that he will destroy is death itself"

1 Corinthians 15:27

he has put everything under his feet

Possible meanings are 1) "God the Father has put everything under Christ's feet" or 2) "Christ has put everything under his own feet"

put everything under his feet

Kings who won wars would put their feet on the necks of those whom they had defeated to show they have power over their enemies. See how "put ... under his feet" is translated in [1 Corinthians 15:25]

this does not include the one who put everything in subjection under him

"this does not include God the Father, who put everything in subjection under the Son"

1 Corinthians 15:28

all things are subjected under him

This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: "God the Father has made all things subject to the Son"

the Son himself will be subjected

This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: "the Son himself will become subject"

the Son himself

In the previous verses he was referred to as "Christ."

Alternate translation: "Christ, that is, the Son himself,"

Son

This is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God.

1 Corinthians 15:29

Or else what will those do who are baptized for the dead?

Paul uses this question to teach the Corinthians. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Otherwise it would be useless for Christians to receive baptism for the dead."

If the dead are not raised at all, why are they baptized for them?

Paul uses this question to argue that the dead are raised. Apparently some people, probably some members of the church in Corinth, were being baptized for the dead. Paul

infers that those people did so because they believed that the dead would be raised.

If the dead are not raised at all

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "If God does not raise the dead at all"

are not raised

"are not caused to live again"

why are they baptized for them?

Paul uses this question to teach the Corinthians. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "there would be no reason for them to have people baptize them on behalf of dead people."

1 Corinthians 15:30

Why then are we in danger every hour?

Paul uses this question to teach the Corinthians. The reason he and others were in danger is that some people were angry that they taught that Jesus will raise people from death. Alternate translation: "If people will not rise from the dead, we gain nothing by being in danger every hour for teaching that people will rise."

1 Corinthians 15:31

I die every day!

This exaggeration means he was in danger of dying. He knew that some people wanted to kill him because they did not like what he was teaching. Alternate translation: "Every day I am in danger of dying" or "Every day I risk my life!"

This is as sure as my boasting in you

Paul uses this statement as evidence that he faces death every day. Alternate translation: "You can know that this is true, because you know about my boasting in you" or "You can know that this is true, because you know about how much I boast in you"

my boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord

Paul boasted in them because of what Christ Jesus had done for them. Alternate translation: "my boasting in you, which I do because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done for you"

my boasting in you

"the way I tell other people how good you are"

1 Corinthians 15:32

What do I gain ... if I fought with beasts at Ephesus ... not raised?

Paul wants the Corinthians to understand without him having to tell them. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "I gained nothing ... by fighting with beasts at Ephesus ... not raised."

I fought with beasts at Ephesus

Paul is referring to something that he actually did. Possible meanings are 1) Paul was speaking figuratively about his arguments with learned pagans or other conflicts with people who wanted to kill him or 2) he was actually put into the arena to fight against dangerous animals.

Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die

Paul concludes that if there is no further life after death, it is better for us to enjoy this life as we can, for tomorrow our life will end without any further hope.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Bad company corrupts good morals

If you live with bad people, you will act like them. Paul is quoting a common saying.

1 Corinthians 15:34

Sober up

"You must think seriously about this"

1 Corinthians 15:35

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives some specifics about how the resurrection of the believers' bodies will take place. He gives a picture of natural and spiritual bodies (15:36-44) and compares the first man Adam with the last Adam, Christ (15:45-49).

But someone will say, "How are the dead raised, and with what kind of body will they come?"

Possible meanings are 1) The person is asking sincerely or 2) the person is using the question to mock the idea of a resurrection. Alternate translation: "But some will say that they cannot imagine how God will raise the dead, and what kind of body God would give them in the resurrection."

someone will say

"someone will ask"

with what kind of body will they come

That is, will it be a physical body or a spiritual body? What shape will the body have? What will the body be made of?

Translate using the most general question that someone who wants to know the answers to these questions would ask.

1 Corinthians 15:36

You fool! What you sow

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so both instances of "you" here are singular.

fool

"unthinking person." Paul is accusing them of not thinking carefully, He is not accusing them of moral error.

What you sow will not come to life unless it dies

A seed will not grow unless it is first buried underground.

In the same way, a person has to die before God can resurrect him.

1 Corinthians 15:37

What you sow is not the body that will be

Paul uses the metaphor of the seed again to say that God will resurrect the dead body of the believer, but that body will not appear as it was.

What you sow

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so the word "you" here is singular.

1 Corinthians 15:38

God will give it a body as he chooses

"God will decide what kind of body it will have"

1 Corinthians 15:39

Not all flesh is the same ... there is one flesh ... another flesh

"Not all kinds of bodies are the same ... there is one kind of body ... another kind of body"

1 Corinthians 15:40

heavenly bodies

"bodies in the sky"

earthly bodies

"bodies on the earth." This refers to the kinds of bodies mentioned in 15:41.

the glory of the heavenly body is one kind and the glory of the earthly is another

"the glory that the bodies in the sky have is different from

the glory that the bodies on the earth have"

glory

Possible meanings are 1) "brightness" or "radiance" or 2) "beauty" or "splendor"

1 Corinthians 15:41

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 15:42

What is sown ... what is raised

The writer speaks of a person's body being buried as if it were a seed that is planted in the ground. And he speaks of a person's body being raised from the dead as if it were a plant growing from the seed. The passive verbs can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "What goes into the ground ... what comes out of the ground" or "What people bury ... what God raises"

is raised

"is caused to live again"

is perishable ... is imperishable

"can rot ... cannot rot"

1 Corinthians 15:43

It is sown ... it is raised

The writer speaks of a person's body being buried as if it were a seed that is planted in the ground. And he speaks of a person's body being raised from the dead as if it were a plant growing from the seed. The passive verbs can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It goes into the ground ... it comes out of the ground" or "People bury it ... God raises it"

1 Corinthians 15:44

It is sown ... it is raised

The writer speaks of a person's body being buried as if it were a seed that is planted in the ground. And he speaks of a person's body being raised from the dead as if it were a plant growing from the seed. The passive verbs can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It goes into the ground ... it comes out of the ground" or "People bury it ... God raises it"

1 Corinthians 15:45

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 15:46

But the spiritual did not come first but the natural, and then the spiritual

"The natural being came first. The spiritual being is from God and came later."

natural

created by earthly processes, not yet connected to God

1 Corinthians 15:47

The first man is of the earth, made of dust

God made the first man, Adam, from the dust of the earth.

dust

dirt

1 Corinthians 15:48

the man of heaven

Jesus Christ

those who are of heaven

"those who belong to God"

1 Corinthians 15:49

we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven
"we have been just like the man of dust, we will also be just like the man of heaven"

1 Corinthians 15:50

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants the Corinthians to realize that some believers will not die physically but will still get a resurrected body through Christ's victory.

flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither does what is perishable inherit what is imperishable

Possible meanings are 1) the two sentences mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "human beings who will surely die cannot inherit the permanent kingdom of God" or 2) the second sentence finishes the thought begun by the first.

Alternate translation: "weak human beings cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither can those who will certainly die inherit a kingdom that will last forever"

flesh and blood

Those who inhabit a body that is doomed to die.

inherit

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if property and wealth were being inherited from a family member.

is perishable ... is imperishable

"can rot ... cannot rot." See how these words are translated in 1 Corinthians 15:42.

1 Corinthians 15:51

We will not all sleep

Sleep here is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "We will not all die"

we will all be changed

This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: "God will change us all"

1 Corinthians 15:52

We will be changed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will change us"

in the twinkling of an eye

It will happen as fast as it takes for a person to blink his or her eye.

at the last trumpet

"when the last trumpet sounds"

the dead will be raised

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will raise the dead"

raised

"caused to live again"

imperishable

"in a form that cannot rot." See how a similar phrase is translated in 1 Corinthians 15:42.

1 Corinthians 15:53

this perishable body ... is imperishable

"this body that can rot ... cannot rot." See how similar phrases are translated in 1 Corinthians 15:42.

must put on

Paul is speaking of God making our bodies so they will never die again as if God were putting new clothes on us.

1 Corinthians 15:54

when this perishable body has put on what is imperishable

Here the body is spoken of as if it were a person, and

becoming imperishable is spoken of as if being

imperishable were clothing that a body would wear.

Alternate translation: "when this perishable body has

become imperishable" or "when this body that can rot can no longer rot"

when this mortal body has put on immortality

Here the body is spoken of as if it were a person, and

becoming immortal is spoken of as if being immortal was

clothing that a body would wear. Alternate translation:

"when this mortal body has become immortal" or "when

this body that can die can no longer die"

1 Corinthians 15:55

Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?

Paul speaks as if death were a person, and he uses this

question to mock the power of death, which Christ has

defeated. Alternate translation: "Death has no victory.

Death has no sting."

your ... your

These are singular.

1 Corinthians 15:56

The sting of death is sin

It is through sin that we are destined to face death, that is, to die.

the power of sin is the law

God's law that was passed down by Moses defines sin and shows us how we sin before God.

1 Corinthians 15:57

gives us the victory

"has defeated death for us"

1 Corinthians 15:58

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants believers, while they work for the Lord, to

remember the changed, resurrected bodies that God is

going to give them.

be steadfast and immovable

Paul speaks of someone who lets nothing stop him from

doing what he has decided to do as if he could not be

physically moved. Alternate translation: "be determined"

Always abound in the work of the Lord

Paul speaks of efforts made in working for the Lord as if

they were objects that a person could acquire more of.

Alternate translation: "Always work for the Lord faithfully"

Chapter 16

1 Corinthians 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul briefly covers many topics in this chapter. It was common in the ancient Near East for the last part of letters to have personal greetings.

Special concepts in this chapter

Preparation for his coming

Paul gives practical instructions to help prepare the Corinthian church for his visit. He tells them to start collecting money every Sunday for the believers in Jerusalem. He hopes to come and spend the winter with them. He tells them to help Timothy when he comes. He had hopes Apollos would go to them, but Apollos did not think it was the right time. Paul also tells them to obey Stephanus. Finally, he sends his greetings to everyone.

Links:

[1 Corinthians 16:1 Notes](#)

1 Corinthians 16

16:1-9

What is the collection for God's holy people?

[16:1]

Paul wrote about the "collection for God's holy people." When he wrote about this, he was writing about the Christians in Corinth collecting money to help other Christians who needed it.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Holy Ones; People of God

Where was Galatia?

[16:1]

See Map: Galatia

When was the first day of the week?

[16:2]

The first day of the week was Sunday.

How did Paul want the Christians to prepare to give to the Christians who needed it?

[16:2]

Paul wanted the Christians to prepare to give money to the Christians who needed money. He wanted them to plan to give to others and not to give randomly. If they did this, they would be happy to give to others.

What were the letters about which Paul spoke?

[16:3]

In ancient times, people sent other people with letters of introduction. These letters introduced this person to other people and told them why they were coming. This letter helped the people in Jerusalem know that Paul had sent these people to give them this money.

See Map: Jerusalem

Where was Macedonia?

[16:5]

See Map: Macedonia

Where was Ephesus?

[16:8]

See Map: Ephesus

What was Passover?

[16:8]

See: Passover

How has a wide door opened for Paul?

[16:9]

Paul wrote about a wide door. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say that he was given the opportunity to teach other people about Jesus. However, there were many people who fought against him in some way.

See: Door (Metaphor)

16:10-24

Why did Paul not want Timothy to be afraid?

[16:10]

Paul wanted the Christians in Corinth to help protect Timothy. The Christians were persecuted. This is why he did not want Timothy to be afraid. Some scholars think Timothy might be treated badly because he was so young and the leaders in Corinth might not treat him well.

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Who were the brothers?

[16:11]

Paul wrote that Timothy was going to go to Corinth with the brothers. These were some other Christians.

See: Family of God

How were the Christians in Corinth to be watchful?

[16:13]

The Christians in Corinth were to be watchful. That is, they were to try to obey God. They were to see how they could do things that honored God. They were also to look out for false teachers and other things that could harm the Christians in Corinth.

See: False Teacher

How were the Christians in Corinth to stand fast in the faith?

[16:13]

Paul wrote that the Christians in Corinth were to stand fast in the faith. That is, Paul wanted them to keep trusting in God.

See: Faith (Believe in)

How were the Christians in Corinth to act like men?

[16:13]

Paul wrote that they Christians in Corinth were to act like men. That is, they should not act in the way children act. They were also to be strong. This was a metaphor. They were to do the things God wanted them to do, even if they were difficult.

What were the firstfruits, or first converts of Achaia?

[16:15]

Stephanas and his family were the firstfruits of Achaia. That is, they were the first people in Achaia to believe in Jesus.

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

See Map: Achaia

Who are God's holy people?

[16:15]

God's holy people are Christians.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Holy Ones; People of God

What is submission?

[16:16]

See: Submit (Submission)

How did people refresh Paul's spirit?

[16:18]

When certain people visited, it refreshed Paul's spirit. That is, it made Paul happy and helped him to keep serving God.

See: Spirit (Spiritual)

Where was Asia?

[16:19]

See Map: Asia

What was the church in the home of Aquila and Priscilla?

[16:19]

At this time, certain Christians met together to worship God in the home of Aquila and Priscilla.

See: Worship

How did Christians greet one another with a holy kiss?

[16:20]

In ancient times, people often greeted each other with a kiss of some sort. When people did this, they were at peace with one another. It meant that they were friends.

Why did Paul write with his own hand?

[16:21]

When Paul wrote, he often spoke and someone else wrote what he said. Here, Paul said that he wrote this himself. He wanted them to know that he really cared about them.

See: Ancient Letters

Why did Paul want certain people to be cursed?

[16:22]

There were some false teachers. He asked God to curse them. That is, he wanted God to judge them.

See: Galatians 1:6-10

See: False Teacher; Curse; Judge (Judgment)

Why did Paul say "Our Lord come"?

[16:22]

When Paul lived, many Christians said "our Lord come." This is because they wanted Jesus to return to the earth as he promised.

See: Lord; Jesus' Return to Earth

1 Corinthians 16:1

Connecting Statement:

In his closing notes, Paul reminds the Corinthian believers to collect money for the needy believers in Jerusalem.

for God's holy people

Paul was collecting money from his churches for the poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judea.

1 Corinthians 16:2

store it up

Possible meanings are: 1) "keep it at home" or 2) "leave it with the church"

as he may prosper

"according to how he prospers" or "according to how much he earns"

so that there will be no collections when I come

"so that you will not have to collect more money while I am with you"

1 Corinthians 16:3

to whomever you approve, I will give letters of introduction to them and will send them

Some modern translations read, "to whomever you have approved by letter of introduction, I will send"

1 Corinthians 16:4

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:5

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:6

you may help me on my way

This means they might give Paul money or other things he needs so that he and his ministry team could continue to travel.

1 Corinthians 16:7

I hope to spend more time with you, if the Lord permits

Paul wanted to see the believers in Corinth, but he did not know if he actually would be able to do that. Alternate translation: "I expect to spend more time with you, if the Lord permits" or "I plan to spend more time with you, if the Lord permits"

1 Corinthians 16:8

Pentecost

Paul would stay in Ephesus until this festival, which comes in May or June, 50 days after Passover. He would then travel through Macedonia, and later try to arrive in Corinth before winter started.

1 Corinthians 16:9

a wide door has opened

Paul speaks of the opportunity God has given him to win people to the gospel as if it were a door that God had opened so he could walk through it.

1 Corinthians 16:10

Now

"Now" here marks a change in topic. Here Paul begins to talk about Timothy's visit to Corinth.

see that he is with you unafraid

"see that he has no cause to fear being with you"

1 Corinthians 16:11

Let no one despise him

Because Timothy was much younger than Paul, sometimes he was not shown the respect he deserved as a minister of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 16:12

our brother Apollos

Here the word "our" refers to Paul and his readers, so it is inclusive.

1 Corinthians 16:13

Be watchful, stand fast in the faith, act like men, be strong

Paul is describing what he wants the Corinthians to do as if he were giving four commands to soldiers in war. These four commands mean almost the same thing and are used for emphasis.

Be watchful

Paul speaks of people being aware of what is happening as if they were guards keeping watch over a city or vineyard.

This can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "Be careful whom you trust" or "Watch out for danger"

stand fast in the faith

Paul speaks of people continuing to believe in Christ according to his teaching as if they were soldiers refusing to retreat when the enemy attacks. Possible meanings are 1) "keep strongly believing what we have taught you" or 2) "keep strongly trusting in Christ"

act like men

In the society in which Paul and his audience lived, men usually provided for families by doing the heavy work and fighting against invaders. This can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "be responsible"

1 Corinthians 16:14

Let all that you do be done in love

"Everything you do should show people that you love them"

1 Corinthians 16:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to close his letter and sends greetings from other churches, as well as from Prisca, Aquila, and Paul himself.

household of Stephanas

Stephanas was one of the first believers in the church at Corinth.

the firstfruits of Achaia

"the first people in Achaia to believe in Christ"

Achaia

This is the name of a province in Greece.

1 Corinthians 16:16

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:17

Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus

These men were either some of the first Corinthian believers or church elders who were co-workers with Paul.

Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus

These are men's names.

They have made up for your absence

"They made up for the fact that you were not here."

1 Corinthians 16:18

For they have refreshed my spirit

Paul is saying he was encouraged by their visit.

acknowledge people like them

The word "acknowledge" here might be an understatement. Paul wants the Corinthians to honor Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus

1 Corinthians 16:19

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:20

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:21

I, Paul, write this with my own hand

Paul was making it clear that the instructions in this letter are from him, even though one of his co-laborers wrote

what Paul was saying in the rest of the letter. Paul wrote this last part with his own hand.

1 Corinthians 16:22

may he be accursed

"may God curse him." See how "accursed" was translated in

1 Corinthians 12:3.

1 Corinthians 16:23

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:24

General Information:

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 Corinthians

Paul thanks God for the Corinthian Christians (1:1-11) Paul explains his conduct and his ministry (1:12-7:16) Paul speaks about contributing money for the Jerusalem church (8:1-9:15) Paul defends his authority as an apostle (10:1-13:10) Paul gives final greetings and encouragement (13:11-14)

Who wrote the Book of 2 Corinthians?

Paul was the author. He was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul started the church in Corinth. He was staying in the city of Ephesus when he wrote this letter.

What is the Book of 2 Corinthians about?

In 2 Corinthians, Paul continued to write about the conflicts among the Christians in the city of Corinth. It is clear in this letter that the Corinthians had obeyed his previous instructions to them. In 2 Corinthians, Paul encouraged them to live in a way that would please God.

Paul also wrote to assure them that Jesus Christ sent him as an apostle to preach the Gospel. Paul wanted them to understand this because a group of Jewish Christians opposed what he was doing. They claimed Paul was not sent by God and that he was teaching a false message. This group of Jewish Christians wanted Gentile Christians to obey the law of Moses.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Second Corinthians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Corinth."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the city of Corinth like?

Corinth was a major city located in ancient Greece. Because it was near the Mediterranean Sea, many travelers and traders came to buy and sell goods there. This resulted in the city having people from many different cultures. The city was famous for having people who lived in immoral ways. The people worshipped Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. As part of the ceremonies honoring Aphrodite, her worshipers had sexual intercourse with temple prostitutes.

What did Paul mean by "false apostles" (11:13)?

These were Jewish Christians. They taught that Gentile Christians had to obey the law of Moses in order to follow Christ. Christian leaders had met in Jerusalem and decided on the matter (See: Acts 15). However, it is clear that there were still some groups that disagreed with what the leaders in Jerusalem decided.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. Also, the word "you" is almost always plural and refers to the believers in Corinth. There are two exceptions to this: 6:2 and 12:9.

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in 2 Corinthians in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, the ULB uses the following principles:

Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God considers Christians to be sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is

perfect and faultless. A third fact is that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless, faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULB uses "holy," "holy God," "holy ones," or "holy people."

The meaning in most passages in 2 Corinthians is a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 1:1; 8:4; 9:1, 12; 13:13)

Sometimes the meaning in the passage implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "set apart," "dedicated to," "reserved for," or "sanctified."

The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:19, 20; 2:12, 17; 3:14; 5:17, 19, 21; 10:17; 12:2, 19; and 13:4. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." See, for example, "A door was opened for me in the Lord," (2:12) where Paul specifically meant that a door was opened for Paul by the Lord. The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What does it mean to be a "new creation" in Christ (5:17)?

Paul's message was that God makes Christians part of a "new world" when a person believes in Christ. God gives a new world of holiness, peace, and joy. In this new world, believers have a new nature that has been given them by the Holy Spirit. Translators should try to express this idea.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 2 Corinthians?

"and in your love for us" (8:7). Many versions, including the ULB and UDB, read this way. However, many other translations read, "and in our love for you." There is strong evidence that each reading is original. Translators should probably follow the reading preferred by other versions in their region.

Chapter 1

2 Corinthians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first paragraph reflects a common way to begin a letter in the ancient Near East.

Special Concepts

Paul's integrity

People were criticizing Paul and saying he was not sincere. He refutes them by explaining his motives for what he was doing.

Comfort

Comfort is a major theme of this chapter. The Holy Spirit comforts Christians. The Corinthians probably were afflicted and needed to be comforted.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical question

Paul uses two rhetorical questions to defend himself against a charge of not being sincere.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul uses the pronoun "we". This likely represents at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Guarantee

Paul says the Holy Spirit is the guarantee, which means pledge or down payment, of a Christian's eternal life. Christians are securely saved. But they will not experience all of God's given promises until after they die. The Holy Spirit is a personal guarantee that this will happen. This idea comes from a business term. A person gives some valuable item to another person as a "guarantee" that they will repay money. (See: eternity and save)

Links:

[2 Corinthians 1:1 Notes](#) [2 Corinthians intro](#)

2 Corinthians 1 Commentary

1:1-7

Why did Paul write about the "Father of mercies" and "God of all comfort"?

[1:3]

Christians showed mercy and gave comfort to others. These titles showed that all the “mercy”(οἰκτιρμός/g3628) and “comfort”(παράκλησις/g3874) they gave ultimately came from God himself.

See: Mercy

See: Exodus 34:6; Psalm 25:6; Isaiah 40:1; 1 Peter 1:3

What was the “affliction”?

[1:4]

As an apostle, Paul experienced many “afflictions”(θλίψις/g2347). That is, Paul was persecuted for teaching people about Jesus.

See: Apostle; Persecute (Persecution)

See: John 16:33; Romans 8:18

How did “the sufferings of Christ abound for our sake”?

[1:5]

Paul wrote about Jesus’ sufferings helping Christians. Some scholars think was writing about how Jesus suffered and died for sinners. Others think was writing about how Christians suffered for others, just as Christ did. They think Paul’s suffering helped to give the Corinthians’ “comfort and salvation” (1:6).

See: Atone (Atonement); Sin; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

See: Colossians 1:24-25; 2 Corinthians 4:10-11, 17

1:8-11

Where was “Asia”?

[1:8]

See Map: Asia

Why did Paul write, “beyond our strength”?

[1:8]

Paul wrote, “beyond our strength.” Scholars think Paul and those with him suffered more than they were physically capable of in their own human strength. That is, God provided them the strength to endure their suffering.

What was “despaired of life” and the “sentence of death”?

[1:8]

Some scholars think that to despair of life meant that Paul thought he was going to die. Whatever happened in Asia, Paul thought he was going to die. Some scholars think Paul was writing about being put into prison waiting to be killed as a punishment. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about a serious illness he had and that he was going to die.

See: Punish (Punishment)

See: 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

How does someone set their hope on God?

[1:10]

Paul wrote about setting hope on God. Scholars think Paul was confident that they would not die at this time, but that God would rescue them. That is, Paul had a confident expectation that God would rescue him and those with him.

See: Psalm 34:19; 1 Timothy 4:10

1:12-24

Why did Paul write, “We are proud of this”?

[1:12]

Paul was “proud” of how God’s favor helped these Christians to live in a way that honors God.

See: Boast

See: Psalm 44:8; Jeremiah 9:23-24

What is “conscience”?

[1:12]

See: Conscience

What was “fleshly wisdom”?

[1:12]

Scholars think that “fleshly wisdom” was the same as earthly wisdom, or the wisdom of this world. Paul wanted Christians should make decisions by the wisdom that came from the Holy Spirit.

See: 1 Corinthians 2:13

See: Holy Spirit; Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

What was the “day of our Lord Jesus”?

[1:14]

See: Day of the Lord

Why did Paul write, “that you might receive the benefit of two visits”?

[1:15]

Scholars think the words “that you might receive the benefit of two visits” meant that the church in Corinth would have the chance to visit with Paul and hear him teach a second time.

See: Church

What did “yes,yes” and “no, no” mean?

[1:18]

Jesus told people not to take oaths, but to simply do what they promised (see: Matthew 5:37). Scholars think Paul meant that the answers of “yes” or “no” must be clear. They think Paul wanted the church in Corinth to know that he was not changing his mind about visiting them.

See: James 5:12

See: Swear (Oath); Church

What did it mean that God “annointed” us?

[1:21]

When Paul said that God “annointed”(χρίω/g5548) us, he meant that God chose Paul, and those with him, for a special purpose. That is, God wanted Paul to tell people about Jesus (see: Galatians 1:15-16).

See: Romans 1:1-2; Jeremiah 1:4-5

How was the Spirit a “seal” and a “guarantee of what is to come”?

[1:22]

A “seal” was a mark which meant that something was owned by somebody. God owned Christians in some way. The Spirit was a “guarantee”(ἀρραβών/g0728), for the Christian. The Holy Spirit was a symbol that God would fulfill the things he promised. Christians would be resurrected and inherit the kingdom of God.

See: Seal; Holy Spirit; Symbol; Fulfill (Fulfillment); Resurrect (Resurrection); Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Kingdom of God

See: 2 Corinthians 5:5; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30

Why did Paul write, “I call God to bear witness for me”?

[1:23]

Some scholars think when Paul said, “I call God to bear witness for me,” he was asking God to show the people that what Paul was about to say was true. Other scholars think that when Paul called on “God to bear witness,” it meant that if Paul didn’t lied, God would witness against Paul and punish Paul.

See: 1 Thessalonians 2: 10

See: Witness (Martyr); Punish (Punishment)

What did Paul mean when he said, “that I might spare you”?

[1:23]

If the Corinthians repented, then Paul would not have to discipline and correct them for their sins .

See: 1 Corinthians 4:21; 2 Corinthians 13:2

See: Repent (Repentance); Discipline (To Disciple); Sin

2 Corinthians 1:1

Paul ... to the church of God that is in Corinth

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter and its intended audience. Alternate translation: "I, Paul ... wrote this letter to you, the church of God that is in Corinth"

Timothy our brother

This indicates that both Paul and the Corinthians knew Timothy and considered him to be their spiritual brother.

Achaia

This is the name of a Roman province in the southern part of modern-day Greece.

2 Corinthians 1:2

General Information:

The word "you" throughout this letter refers to the people of the church in Corinth and to the rest of the Christians in that area.

May grace be to you and peace

This is a common greeting that Paul uses in his letters.

2 Corinthians 1:3

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May we always praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"

the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort

These two phrases express the same idea in two different ways. Both phrases refer to God.

the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort

Possible meanings are 1) that the words "mercies" and "all comfort" describe the character of "Father" and "God" or 2) that the words "Father" and "God" refer to one who is the source of "mercies" and "all comfort."

2 Corinthians 1:4

comforts us in all our tribulation

Here "us" and "our" include the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 1:5

For just as the sufferings of Christ abound for our sake

Paul speaks of Christ's sufferings as if they were objects that could increase in number. Alternate translation: "For just as Christ suffered greatly for our sake"

the sufferings of Christ

Possible meanings are 1) that this refers to the suffering that Paul and Timothy experience because they preach the message about Christ or 2) that this refers to the suffering that Christ experienced on their behalf.

our comfort abounds

Paul speaks of comfort as if it were an object that could increase in size.

2 Corinthians 1:6

But if we are afflicted

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and Timothy, but not to the Corinthians. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But if people afflict us"

if we are comforted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if God comforts us"

Your comfort is working effectively

"You experience effective comfort"

2 Corinthians 1:7

Our hope concerning you is unshaken

Hope is spoken of here as if it were a building that could be shaken and destroyed. Paul means that his hope for the Corinthians is strong and he continues to have hope for them. Alternate translation: "Our hope concerning you is strong" or "We have not stopped having hope for you"

Our hope concerning you is unshaken

Paul was probably hoping that the Corinthian Christians would continue to have faith in God, even though they were suffering, and that they would be comforted.

Alternate translation: "We continue to be confident concerning you" or "We continue to confidently expect good for you"

2 Corinthians 1:8

we do not want you to be uninformed

This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "we want you to know"

We were utterly burdened beyond our strength

The word "burdened" is a metaphor for feeling stressed or overwhelmed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We felt so overwhelmed beyond our strength" or "The troubles we had caused us so much more stress than we could handle"

we despaired even of life

"we could not see any way we could stay alive" or "we were sure we would die"

2 Corinthians 1:9

we had the sentence of death on us

Paul and Timothy are comparing their feeling of despair to that of someone condemned to die. Alternate translation: "we were in despair like someone who is condemned to die"

but instead in God

The words "put our trust" are left out of this phrase.

Alternate translation: "but instead to put our trust in God" who raises the dead

Here to raise is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "who causes the dead to live again"

2 Corinthians 1:10

He rescued us from such a deadly peril

"He saved us from such a dangerous situation where we could have died"

On him we have set our hope that he will rescue us

Paul and those with him hoped firmly in God. Alternate translation: "We trust in him to rescue us" or "We confidently expect that he will rescue us"

2 Corinthians 1:11

He will do this as you also help us

"God will rescue us from danger as you, the people of the church of Corinth, also help us"

the favor given to us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the favor that God has given to us"

2 Corinthians 1:12

General Information:

In this verse Paul uses the words "we," "our," and

"ourselves" to refer to himself and Timothy and possibly others who served with them. These words do not include the people he was writing to.

Our boast is this

Paul uses the word "boast" ironically here. Boasting is usually a bad thing, but Paul is confident that he has lived "with integrity and godly sincerity," and he is telling the Corinthians so.

Our conscience testifies

Paul speaks of not being guilty as if his conscience were a person that could speak. Alternate translation: "We know by our conscience"

not relying on fleshly wisdom but on the grace of God

Here "fleshly" represents human. Alternate translation: "not relying on human wisdom but on the grace of God"

2 Corinthians 1:13

We write to you nothing that you cannot read and understand

The double negative here emphasizes the positive. This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation:

"Everything we write to you is something you can read and understand" or "You can read and understand everything we write to you"

I hope that you will fully understand

Paul wanted them to understand, and he expected that they should be able to understand, but he didn't know for sure if they would. Alternate translation: "I expect that you will fully understand" or "I trust you will fully understand"

2 Corinthians 1:14

General Information:

In this vers Paul uses the word "us" to refer to himself and Timothy and possibly others who served with them. This word does not include the people he was writing to.

you can boast

The word "boast" here is used in the positive sense of feeling great satisfaction and joy in something.

2 Corinthians 1:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains his sincere expectation with pure motives to come see the believers in Corinth after his first letter.

Because I was confident about this

The word "this" refers to Paul's previous comments about the Corinthians.

so that you might receive a second favor

Paul hoped to visit the Corinthians two times. Each visit would be a favor to the people. Alternate translation: "so that you might benefit from me visiting you twice"

2 Corinthians 1:16

send me on my way to Judea

"assist me on my way to Judea"

2 Corinthians 1:17

was I hesitating?

Paul uses this question to emphasize he was sure about his decision to visit the Corinthians. The expected answer to the question is no. Alternate translation: "I was not hesitating." or "I was confident in my decision."

Do I plan things according to the flesh ... at the same time?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that his plans to visit the Corinthians were sincere. Alternate translation: "I do not plan things according to the flesh ... at the same time" the flesh

This phrase is a metonym for the way mortal people do things. Alternate translation: "human standards" or "the way most people act"

Do I plan things ... so that I say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time?

This means that Paul did not say both that he would visit and that he would not visit at the same time. The words "yes" and "no" are repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: "I do not plan things ... so that I say 'Yes, I will certainly visit' and 'No, I will definitely not visit' at the same time!"

2 Corinthians 1:18

our word to you

"what we say to you"

2 Corinthians 1:19

For the Son of God ... is not "Yes" and "No." Instead, he is always "Yes."

Jesus says "Yes" concerning the promises of God, which means that he guarantees that they are true. Alternate translation: "For the Son of God ... does not say 'Yes' and 'No' concerning God's promises. Instead, he always says 'Yes.'" the Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

2 Corinthians 1:20

all the promises of God are "Yes" in him

This means that Jesus guarantees all of God's promises.

Alternate translation: "all the promises of God are guaranteed in Jesus Christ"

"Yes" in him ... through him we say

The word "him" refers to Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:21

God who confirms us with you

Possible meanings are 1) "God who confirms our relationship with each other because we are in Christ" or 2) "God who confirms both our and your relationship with Christ."

he anointed us

Possible meanings are 1) "he sent us to preach the gospel" or 2) "he chose us to be his people."

2 Corinthians 1:22

he set his seal on us

Paul speaks of God showing that we belong to him as if God had put a mark on us as a sign that we belong to him.

Alternate translation: "he has put his mark of ownership on us" or "he has shown that we belong to him"

gave us the Spirit in our hearts

The word "heart" is often used to refer to the innermost part of a person. Alternate translation: "gave us the Spirit to live within each of us"

the Spirit ... as a guarantee

The Spirit is spoken of as if he were a partial downpayment toward eternal life.

2 Corinthians 1:23

as witness to my soul

The word "soul" here is a metonym for the whole person. Alternate translation: "as witness for me" or "to testify for me"

so that I might spare you

"so that I might not cause you more suffering"

2 Corinthians 1:24

be lords over your faith

"control what your faith should be" or "control what you believe"

we are fellow laborers with you for your joy

"we are working with you so that you may have joy"

stand firm in your faith

The word "stand" can refer to not changing. Alternate translation: "remain firm in your faith"

Chapter 2

2 Corinthians 2 General Notes

Special Concepts

Harsh writing

In this chapter, Paul refers to a letter he previously wrote to the Corinthians. Some scholars believe this refers to the letter known as First Corinthians. Other scholars believe this refers to a letter Paul wrote after the letter known as First Corinthians and before this letter. In either case, Paul had told the church to rebuke an erring member. Paul is now encouraging them to be gracious to that person.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Aroma

A sweet aroma is a pleasing smell. Scripture often describes things that are pleasing to God as having a pleasing aroma.

Links:

[2 Corinthians 2:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 2

2:1-4

Why did Paul not want to go to Corinth in “painful circumstances”?

[2:1, 2:4]

During a previous visit, Paul had to discipline some Christians who were sinning. Some scholars think the Christians in Corinth were saddened because they should have disciplined the sinning Christians.

See: 2 Corinthians 7:8-9

See: Discipline (To Disciple); Sin

2:5-11

How did someone’s sin cause pain to both Paul and the Christians in Corinth?

[2:5]

The sins of certain Christians caused pain for Paul and the other Christians in Corinth. Scholars think that the sinning Christians caused great damage to the whole church.

See: Church; Sin

Why did Paul write that the punishment “by the majority is enough”?

[2:6]

Scholars think that when Paul said the punishment “by the majority is enough,” he was talking about a decision that most of the Christians in Corinth made. That is, the punishment was just. Scholars think the discipline and punishment was to encourage the sinful Christians to repent.

See: Matthew 18:15-17

See: Discipline (To Disciple); Punish (Punishment); Sin; Repent (Repentance)

Why did Paul write, “overwhelmed by too much sorrow”?

[2:7]

Scholars think that to be “overwhelmed”(καταπίνω/g2666) by too much sorrow meant to experience so much sadness that a person might stop obeying Jesus.

Why did Paul write “that I might test you”?

[2:9]

Paul encouraged the church in Corinth to publicly forgive the sinful man. This was the test about which Paul spoke. Paul wanted to know if the church would obey Paul.

See: Philippians 2: 22; Philemon 21

See: Church; Sin; Test

What was “the presence of Christ”?

[2:10]

Paul wrote about the presence of Christ. Scholars think Paul acted as if he were standing next to Jesus. See: 1 Corinthians 5:3-5

See: Messiah (Christ)

What were Satan’s “plans”?

[2:11]

Scholars think Paul and the Christians knew that Satan always tries to make people follow Satan. Satan has evil plans to cause people to live in the wrong way.

See: 1 Peter 5:8

See: Satan (The Devil)

2:12-13

Why did Paul write, “a door was opened to me by the Lord”?

[2:12]

When Paul said “a door was opened to me by the Lord,” this was a metaphor. Some scholars think the door that was opened referred to God making a way for Paul to preach the gospel in Troas. Other scholars think the door that was opened referred to the hearts of the people in Troas. These people were ready to hear and believe the gospel.

See: Door (Metaphor); Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Heart (Metaphor)

See Map: Troas

How did Paul have no relief in his spirit?

[2:13]

Scholars think Paul was hoping to see Titus in order to hear good news about Corinth. Paul loved the Christians in Corinth and worried about them.

See: 2 Corinthians 7:5-6

See: Spirit (Spiritual)

Who was Titus?

[2:13]

Titus was a Christian leader who helped Paul. Paul sent him to encourage the Christians in Corinth.

See: 2 Corinthians Introduction; Titus

See: Gospel

2:14-17

Why did Paul write “leads us in triumph”?

[2:14]

A “triumph” (θριαμβεύω/g2358) was a huge parade through the city of Rome that the government arranged to reward a successful general. Some scholars think that Paul was like the victorious general who rode in the chariot, because God gave him success in his preaching. Other scholars think that the general is God and that Paul was like one of the soldiers, since he obeyed God in all things.

See: Colossians 2:15

See: Preach (Preacher)

What was the “sweet aroma”?

[2:14, 2:15]

When Paul spoke about the “sweet aroma,” he used a metaphor. After a Roman victory in war, there was a parade with special smells. They burned sweet spices and people loved the smell. In the same way, when Paul preached the gospel, those who accepted it experienced delight and peace in a way that was pleasing. However, to those who rejected the gospel did not have peace and they were hopelessness.

See: 1 Corinthians 1:18; Ephesians 5:2

See: Fragrant Offering (Aroma); Metaphor; Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Why did Paul ask, “who is worthy of these things”?

[2:16]

Paul asked, “who is worthy of these things.” Some scholars think Paul was asking, “is anyone worthy to do the work God gives.” No one is worthy to serve God. However, scholars think that Paul wanted people to know is that God was the one who gave him the power to serve God

(see: 3:5; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10).

How did people “sell the word of God for profit”?

[2:17]

In ancient times, teachers charged money to their students. In the same way, the false teachers in Corinth also demanded money from the people when they taught about the wrong things about God.

See: Acts 20:33-35; 1 Corinthians 9:3-18

See: False Teacher

2 Corinthians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Because of his great love for them, Paul makes it clear that his rebuke in a previous letter to them caused him pain as well as pain to the church people in Corinth and the immoral man.

I decided for my own part

"I made the decision"

in sorrow

Possible meanings are 1) this is a metonym that refers to causing the Corinthians sorrow. Alternate translation: "in a way that would cause you sorrow" or 2) this refers to Paul's own sorrow. Alternate translation: "while I am sorrowful"

sorrow

great sadness

2 Corinthians 2:2

If I caused you sorrow, who could make me glad but the very one who was made sorrowful by me?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that neither he nor they would benefit if his coming to them would cause them pain. Alternate translation: "If I caused you sorrow, the only ones who could make me glad would be the very ones whom I had made sorrowful."

sorrow ... sorrowful

See how you translated "sorrow" in 2 Corinthians 2:1.

the very one who was made sorrowful by me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the very one whom I had hurt"

2 Corinthians 2:3

I wrote as I did

Paul is referring to a letter he wrote previously to the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "I wrote as I did in my previous letter"

I might not be hurt by those who should have made me rejoice

Paul is speaking about the behavior of certain Corinthian believers who caused him emotional pain. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those who should have made me rejoice might not hurt me"

my joy is the same joy you all have

"what gives me joy is what gives you joy, too"

2 Corinthians 2:4

from great tribulation

Here the word "tribulation" refers to emotional pain.

with anguish of heart

Here the word "heart" refers to the location of the emotions. Alternate translation: "with extreme sorrow"

with many tears

"with much crying"

2 Corinthians 2:5

not to burden you

The "burden" here is the message. Possible meanings are 1) Paul does not want to say words that will make the Corinthians sad. Alternate translation: "not to say this too harshly" Or 2) Paul does not want to say more than is true.

Alternate translation: "not to exaggerate"

2 Corinthians 2:6

This punishment of that person by the majority is enough
This can be stated in active form. The word "punishment" can be translated using a verb. Alternate translation: "The way that the majority has punished that person is enough is enough
"is sufficient"

2 Corinthians 2:7

he is not overwhelmed by too much sorrow

This means to have a strong emotional response of too much sorrow. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "too much sorrow does not overwhelm him"
2 Corinthians 2:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages the church in Corinth to show love and to forgive the person they have punished. He writes that he, also, has forgiven him.

confirm your love for him

"show him that you truly love him"

2 Corinthians 2:9

you are obedient in everything

Possible meanings are 1) "you are obedient to God in everything" or 2) "you are obedient in everything that I have taught you"

2 Corinthians 2:10

it is forgiven for your sake

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have forgiven it for your sake"

forgiven for your sake

Possible meanings are 1) "forgiven out of my love for you" or 2) "forgiven for your benefit."

2 Corinthians 2:11

For we are not ignorant of his schemes

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "For we know his schemes well"

2 Corinthians 2:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages the believers in Corinth by telling them of the opportunities he has had to preach the gospel in Troas and Macedonia.

A door was opened to me by the Lord ... to preach the gospel

Paul speaks of his opportunity to preach the gospel as if it were a door through which he was allowed to walk. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord opened a door to me ... to preach the gospel" or "The Lord gave me the opportunity ... to preach the gospel"

2 Corinthians 2:13

I had no relief in my spirit

"My mind was troubled" or "I was worried"

my brother Titus

Paul speaks of Titus as his spiritual brother.

So I left them

"So I left the people of Troas"

2 Corinthians 2:14

God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph

Paul speaks of God as if he were a victorious general leading a victory parade, and of himself and his coworkers as those who take part in that parade. Possible meanings are 1) Paul and his coworkers are being led as prisoners in the parade. Alternate translation: "God, who leads us as

prisoners in Christ's victory parade" or 2) Paul and his coworkers are led as victorious soldiers in the parade. Alternate translation: "God, who leads us as victorious soldiers in Christ's triumphal parade"

Through us he reveals the sweet aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere

Paul speaks of people learning about Christ from Paul and his companions as if they were smoke from incense that has a pleasing smell spreading around so people could smell it. He mixes his metaphor by saying that God "reveals" that pleasing smell. Alternate translation: "He causes the knowledge of Christ to spread to everyone who hears us, just as the sweet smell of burning incense spreads to everyone near it"

everywhere

"everywhere we go"

2 Corinthians 2:15

we are to God the sweet aroma of Christ

Paul speaks of his ministry as if it were an offering or incense that was being burned, creating a pleasant smell to God.

the sweet aroma of Christ

Possible meanings are 1) "the sweet aroma which is the knowledge of Christ" or 2) "the sweet aroma that Christ offers."

those who are saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those whom God has saved"

2 Corinthians 2:16

it is an aroma

"the knowledge of Christ is an aroma." This refers back to [2 Corinthians 2:14]

an aroma from death to death

Possible meanings are 1) that the word "death" is repeated for emphasis and the phrase means "an aroma that causes death" or 2) "an aroma of death that causes people to die"

the ones being saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the ones whom God is saving"

aroma from life to life

Possible meanings are 1) that the word "life" is repeated for emphasis and the phrase means "an aroma that gives life" or 2) "an aroma of life that gives people life"

Who is worthy of these things?

"Who is qualified to do these things?" The phrase "these things" refers to preaching God's message about Christ.

Paul uses a rhetorical question to express amazement that anyone could be worthy of doing this. Alternate translation: "Who is worthy to spread the knowledge of Christ?" or "It is amazing that anyone is worthy of these things!"

2 Corinthians 2:17

who sell the word of God

"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate translation: "who sell God's message"

purity of motives

"pure motives"

we speak in Christ

"we speak as people who are joined to Christ" or "we speak with the authority of Christ"

as we are sent from God
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as people whom God has sent"
in the sight of God

This represents the presence of God. Paul and his coworkers preach the gospel with the awareness that God is watching them. Alternate translation: "speaking in the presence of God"

Chapter 3

2 Corinthians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul continues his defense. Paul views the Corinthian Christians as the proof of his work.

Special concepts in this chapter

Law of Moses

Paul alludes to God giving the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. This represents the law of Moses. The law was good because it came from God. But God punished the Israelites because they disobeyed it. This chapter may be difficult for translators to understand if the Old Testament has not yet been translated. (See: lawofmoses and covenant and reveal)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Paul uses many metaphors in this chapter to explain complex spiritual truths. It is unclear whether this makes Paul's teachings easier or more difficult to understand.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"This is a covenant not of the letter but of the Spirit."

Paul contrasts the old and new covenants. The new covenant is not a system of rules and regulations. Here "Spirit" probably refers to the Holy Spirit. It may also refer to the new covenant being "spiritual" in nature. (See: spirit)

Links:

[2 Corinthians 3:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 3

3:1-6

What was a letter or recommendation?

[3:1]

In ancient times, people wrote short letters in order to introduce someone and say nice things about the person who carried the letter.

Why did Paul say, "written on our hearts" mean

[3:2]

When Paul wrote the words, "written on our hearts," this was a metaphor. Paul wanted to say that he loved the Christians in Corinth and was friends with them. Paul especially loved the Christians in Corinth because he saw how believing in Jesus change them.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

How did the Spirit write on "tablets of human hearts"?

[3:3]

The Law that God gave to Moses was written on tablets of stone. However, God promised that a day was coming when he would write his laws on the hearts of people (see: Jeremiah 31:33). This was a metaphor. The tablet of the human heart was the place from where people think, feel, and make choices.

See: Law of Moses; Heart (Metaphor)

Why did Paul write, "our competence is from God"?

[3:5]

When Paul said "our competence is from God," he meant that God caused him and those with him to have power from God. He also wanted to say that God gave them permission to serve God by doing the things they were doing.

What is the new covenant?

[3:6]

See: New Covenant

How did the letter kill and the Spirit give life?

[3:6]

Paul wrote that the letter killed and the Spirit gave life. The letter Paul wrote about the Law of Moses. People needed to perfectly obey the Law of Moses. However, no one did except Jesus. Because of this, everyone was punished for disobeying the Law of Moses. The punishment for not following the Law of Moses was death. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit gave a new type of life and changed people so they can follow Jesus.

See: John 6:63; Romans 7:6, 8:2

See: Holy Spirit; Law of Moses; Punish (Punishment); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

3:7-11

Why was it difficult for people to look directly at Moses' face?

[3:7]

When Moses returned from seeing God, Moses' face glowed (see: Exodus 33:18-23). Scholars think Moses' face shone so brightly that it hurt the eyes of the people who tried to look directly at his face.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

What did "glory" mean?

[3:7, 3:8, 3:9, 3:10, 3:11]

See: Glory (Glorify)

3:12-18

Why did Moses put a veil over his face?

[3:13]

Moses covered his face with a veil because the people could not bear to look at him. That is, the brightness of God's glory on his face was too much for the people to see. Paul also knew that the glory on Moses' face eventually faded. Paul said that the glory of the gospel was far more glorious and lasted forever.

See: Exodus 34:33-35

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Glory (Glorify); Gospel

How were the Israelites' minds closed?

[3:14]

Paul wrote that the minds of the Israelites were closed. Some scholars think that Satan made the minds of the people of Israel unable to hear the truth about God or that it was God who did great things (see: 2 Corinthians 4:3-4). Other scholars think that God closed the minds of the people of Israel (see: Romans 9:14). Other scholars think that the people themselves closed their minds to the truth about the Messiah.

See: John 12:40

See: Mind

How did a veil covers their hearts?

[3:15]

When Paul spoke about the veil that "covers their hearts," he used a metaphor. Paul said the people were unable to believe the gospel because their hearts and minds were blind to understanding the truth about the Messiah.

See: John 5:39-40

See: Metaphor; Messiah (Christ); Gospel; Heart (Metaphor); Mind

How is the Lord the Spirit?"

[3:17]

Most scholars think the Spirit about which Paul spoke was God. That is, God revealed himself through the Holy Spirit.

See: Holy Spirit; Spirit (Spiritual); Reveal (Revelation)

How were Christians "being transformed"?

[3:18]

Paul wrote that Christians were being changed. Scholars think that God, through the Holy Spirit, was changing the Christians to be made into the "likeness" (εἰκὼν/g1504) of Jesus (see: Romans 8:29). That is, Christians started thinking, saying, and doing the same way Jesus did.

See: Image of God

What did "one degree of glory into another" mean?

[3:18]

Scholars think various things about the meaning of "one degree of glory into another".

Some scholars think the words referred to how Christians change to be more like Jesus. As Christians learned more and more about Jesus, they saw more of his glory (see: 4:16) Some scholars think Paul was speaking about the resurrection of Christians at Christ's return. Christians experience some glory in this life, but will completely experience when Jesus returns (see: 4:17; Romans 8:18; Philippians 3:21) Some scholars think Paul was comparing covenants. The Old Covenant was glorious, but when someone believed in Jesus, they experienced the greater glory of the New Covenant.

See: Glory (Glorify); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Jesus' Return to Earth; New Covenant; Covenant; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant)

2 Corinthians 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthians that he is not boasting as he tells them about what he has done through Christ.

Are we beginning to praise ourselves again?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that they are not bragging about themselves. Alternate translation: "We are not beginning to praise ourselves again."

We do not need letters of recommendation to you or from you, like some people, do we?

Paul says this to express that the Corinthians already know about Paul and Timothy's good reputation. The question prompts a negative answer. Alternate translation: "We certainly do not need letters of recommendation to you or from you, like some people do."

letters of recommendation

This is a letter that a person writes to introduce and give their approval of someone else.

2 Corinthians 3:2

General Information:

Paul begins an extended metaphor that speaks of the way that the Corinthians have been obeying Christ as if it were a letter that Christ had written first to Paul and his companions and then to all the people in the world.

You yourselves are our letter of recommendation

Paul speaks of the Corinthians as if they are a letter of recommendation. That they have become believers serves to validate Paul's ministry to others. Alternate translation: "You yourselves are like our letter of recommendation"

written on our hearts

Here the word "hearts" refers to their thoughts and emotions. Possible meanings are 1) Paul and his coworkers are sure about the Corinthians being their letter of recommendation or 2) Paul and his coworkers care very deeply for the Corinthians.

written on our hearts

This can be stated in active form with "Christ" as the implied subject. Alternate translation: "which Christ has written on our hearts"

known and read by all people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that all people can know and read"

2 Corinthians 3:3

General Information:

Paul continues the extended metaphor that he began in [2 Corinthians 3:2]

you are a letter from Christ

Paul clarifies that Christ is the one who has written the letter. Alternate translation: "you are a letter that Christ has written"

the result of our ministry

Because of the work Paul and his companions had done, the world could look at the Corinthians and see how Christ blesses people in this life. Some modern translations read, "delivered by us."

It was written not with ink ... on tablets of human hearts

Paul clarifies that the Corinthians are like a spiritual letter, not like a letter that humans write with physical objects.

It was written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It was written not with ink but it was written by the Spirit of the living God" or "It is not a letter that people wrote with ink but a letter that the Spirit of the living God wrote"

It was not written on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It is not a letter that people engraved on stone tablets but a letter that the Spirit of the living God wrote on tablets of

human hearts"

tablets of human hearts

Paul speaks of their hearts as if they are flat pieces of stone or clay upon which people engraved letters.

2 Corinthians 3:4

this is the confidence

This refers to what Paul has just said. His confidence comes from knowing that the Corinthians are the validation of his ministry before God.

2 Corinthians 3:5

competent in ourselves

"qualified in ourselves" or "sufficient in ourselves"

to claim anything as coming from us

Here the word "anything" refers to anything pertaining to Paul's apostolic ministry. Alternate translation: "to claim that anything we have done in ministry comes from our own efforts"

our competence is from God

"God gives us our sufficiency"

2 Corinthians 3:6

a covenant not of the letter

Here the word "letter" means letters of the alphabet and refers to words that people write down. The phrase alludes to the Old Testament law. Alternate translation: "a covenant not based on commands that men have written"

but of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the one who establishes God's covenant with people. Alternate translation: "but a covenant of the Spirit" or "but a covenant based on what the Spirit does" the letter kills

Paul speaks of the Old Testament law as a person who kills. Following that law leads to spiritual death. Alternate translation: "the written law leads to death"

2 Corinthians 3:7

Connecting Statement:

Paul contrasts the fading glory of the old covenant with the superiority and freedom of the new covenant. He contrasts the veil of Moses with the clarity of present revelation. During the time of Moses there was a less clear picture of what is now revealed.

Now the ministry of death ... came in such glory

Paul emphasizes that although the law leads to death, it was still very glorious.

the ministry of death

This refers to the Old Testament law that God gave through Moses. Alternate translation: "the ministry that causes people to die because it is based on the law"

engraved in letters on stones

"carved in letters on stone." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God carved in letters on stone"

in such glory

"in so much glory"

This is because

"They could not look because"

2 Corinthians 3:8

How much more glorious will the ministry of the Spirit be?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that "the service that the ministry of the Spirit" must be more glorious than "the

ministry of death" [2 Corinthians 3:7]

the ministry of the Spirit

This refers to the new covenant, of which Paul is a minister. Alternate translation: "the ministry that gives life because it is based on the Spirit"

2 Corinthians 3:9

the ministry of condemnation

"the ministry of condemnation." This refers to the Old Testament law. Alternate translation: "the ministry that condemns people because it is based on the law"

how much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory! Here the word "how" marks this phrase as an exclamation, not as a question. Alternate translation: "then the ministry of righteousness must abound in so much more glory!"

the ministry of righteousness abound in glory

Paul speaks of "the ministry of righteousness" as if it were an object that could produce or multiply another object. He means that "the ministry of righteousness" is far more glorious than the law, which also had glory.

the ministry of righteousness

This refers to the new covenant, of which Paul is a minister. Alternate translation: "the ministry that makes people righteous because it is based on the Spirit"

2 Corinthians 3:10

that which was once made glorious is no longer glorious ... because of the glory that exceeds it

The Old Testament law no longer appears glorious when compared with the new covenant, which is much more glorious.

that which was once made glorious

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the law which God once made glorious"

in this respect

"in this way"

2 Corinthians 3:11

that which was passing away

This refers to "the service of condemnation," which Paul speaks of as if it were an object capable of disappearing. Alternate translation: "that which was becoming useless"

2 Corinthians 3:12

Since we have such a hope

This hope is a confident hope. It refers to what Paul has just said. His hope comes from knowing that the new covenant leads to an eternal glory. Alternate translation: "Since we confidently expect this" or "Since we confidently wait to receive this glory"

such a hope

"such confidence"

2 Corinthians 3:13

the ending of a glory that was passing away

The refers to the glory that shined on Moses's face.

Alternate translation: "the glory on Moses's face as it faded away completely"

2 Corinthians 3:14

But their minds were hardened

Paul speaks of the minds of the Israelite people as objects that could be made hard. This expression means that they were unable to understand what they saw. Alternate translation: "But the Israelites could not understand what

they saw"

For to this day

to the time at which Paul was writing to the Corinthians when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains Just as the Israelites could not see the glory on Moses's face because he covered his face with a veil, there is a spiritual veil that prevents people from understanding when they read the old covenant.

when they read the old covenant

"when they hear someone read the old covenant"

It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away

Here both occurrences of the word "it" refer to "the same veil." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one removes the veil, because only in Christ does God remove it"

2 Corinthians 3:15

But even today

This phrase refers to the time at which Paul was writing to the Corinthians.

whenever Moses is read

Here the word "Moses" refers to the Old Testament law.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whenever someone reads the Mosaic law"

a veil covers their hearts

Here the word "hearts" represents what people think, and the people being unable to understand the old covenant is spoken of as if they have a veil that covers their hearts the way a physical veil would cover their eyes. Alternate translation: "they are unable to understand what they are hearing"

2 Corinthians 3:16

when a person turns to the Lord

Here "turns to" is a metaphor that means to become loyal to someone. Alternate translation: "when a person starts to worship the Lord" or "when a person starts to trust in the Lord"

the veil is taken away

God gives them the ability to understand. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God lifts the veil away" or "God gives them the ability to understand"

2 Corinthians 3:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Corinthians 3:18

Now all of us

Here the word "us" refers to all believers, including Paul and the Corinthians.

with unveiled faces, see the glory of the Lord

Unlike the Israelites who could not see God's glory reflected on Moses's face because he had covered it with a veil, there is nothing to prevent believers from seeing and understanding God's glory.

We are being transformed into the same glorious likeness

The Spirit is changing believers to be glorious like him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord is transforming us into his same glorious likeness"

from one degree of glory into another

"from one amount of glory to another amount of glory."

This means that the Spirit is constantly increasing the glory

Chapter 4

2 Corinthians 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins with the word "therefore." This connects it to what the previous chapter teaches. How these chapters are divided may be confusing to the reader.

Special concepts in this chapter

Ministry

Paul ministers to people by telling them about Christ. He does not try to trick people into believing. If they do not understand the gospel, it is because the problem is ultimately spiritual. (See: spirit)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Life and death

Paul does not refer here to physical life and death. Life represents the new life a Christian has in Jesus. Death represents the old way of living before believing in Jesus. (See: life and death and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Hope

Paul uses a repeated pattern in a purposeful way. He makes a statement. Then he denies a seemingly opposite or contradictory statement or gives an exception. Together these give the reader hope in difficult circumstances. (See: hope)

Links:

[2 Corinthians 4:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 4

4:1-2

How did people live in secret and shameful ways?

[4:2]

Paul did not want Christians to live in secret and shameful ways. He did not want them to lie or to try to hide things from people.

See: 1 Thessalonians 2:3-6

How does someone mishandle the Word of God?

[4:2]

Paul did not want Christians to mishandle the Word of God. Some scholars think Paul did not want Christians to speak the wrong things about the Bible. Other scholars think Paul wanted Christians to teach people about the Bible so they can understand it.

See: Word of God

What is a conscience?

[4:2]

See: Conscience

4:3-6

How was the gospel veiled?

[4:3]

Paul wrote about the gospel being veiled. This is a metaphor. Scholars think Paul was writing about people who rejected the gospel. If they understood it, then they would believe it. However, their sin caused them not to be able to understand true things about God. Satan does not want people to know true things about God.

See: 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 3:14

See: Metaphor; Gospel; Sin; Satan (The Devil)

Who is the "god of this world"?

[4:4]

Scholars think Satan is the "god of this world." While Satan is not God, God gives Satan permission to rule the world in some way.

See: Acts 26:18; Ephesians 2:2

See: Satan (The Devil); World

How was Christ the “image of God”?

[4:4]

Jesus had divine glory, just as God had when Moses saw him. When people came to Jesus, they realized that he was the “image”(εἰκὼν/g1504) of God. That is, Jesus showed people what God is like.

See: John 1:14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:3

See: Glory (Glorify); Image of God; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

4:7-15

What were the jars of clay about which Paul spoke?

[4:7]

When Paul spoke about jars of clay, he used a metaphor. In ancient times, people often had clay jars in different sizes. They used them for many different purposes. Sometimes, people hid valuable things in them. However, they were inexpensive and easily broken. Paul wanted people to know that God would use people to tell other people about the gospel even though people were flawed.

See: Job 10:9; 2 Timothy 2:20-21

See: Metaphor; Gospel

Why did Paul write, “we always carry in our body the death of Jesus”?

[4:10]

Paul wrote that Christians always carry the death of Jesus in their body. This is a metaphor. Scholars think Paul wanted Christians to know they suffer in the same ways Jesus suffered. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about being persecuted for teaching people about Jesus.

See: Galatians 6:17; Philippians 3:10-11; Colossians 1:24-25

See: Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution)

How will Jesus bring people into his presence?

[4:14]

Paul wrote about Jesus bringing people into his presence. He wanted to say that people will live together with Jesus in heaven forever.

See: Romans 8:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17

See: Heaven

4:16-18

How are people outwardly wasting away?

[4:16]

Paul wrote that people are outwardly wasting away. He wanted people to know that their bodies were slowly dying as they got older.

Why did Paul think his problems were momentary and light?

[4:17]

Paul wrote that the things that caused him problems were momentary and light. This is a metaphor. That is, he thought serving God was greater than any problem. He also thought the promise to live together with God in heaven forever helped him when he was persecuted.

See: Romans 8:18; 1 Peter 1:6-9, 5:10

See: Metaphor; Heaven; Persecute (Persecution)

What is the eternal weight of glory?

[4:17]

Paul wrote about the eternal weight of glory. This is a metaphor. Scholars think Paul was willing to suffer because he knew he would be with God in heaven one day.

See: Romans 8:18; James 1:12

See: Glory (Glorify); Heaven

What were the things unseen?

[4:18]

Paul wrote about things that people could not see. Scholars think he was writing about things that happened in the spiritual world or in heaven. This is a place where angels and demons can be seen.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Heaven; Angel; Demon

2 Corinthians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul writes that he is honest in his ministry by preaching Christ, not praising himself. He shows the death and the life

of Jesus in how he lives so that life can work in the Corinthian believers.

we have this ministry

Here the word “we” refers to Paul and his coworker, but

not to the Corinthians.

and just as we have received mercy

This phrase explains how Paul and his coworkers "have this ministry." It is a gift that God has given to them through his mercy. Alternate translation: "because God has shown us mercy"

2 Corinthians 4:2

we have rejected secret and shameful ways

This means that Paul and his coworkers refuse to do "secret and shameful" things. It does not mean that they had done these things in the past.

secret and shameful ways

The word "secret" describes the things that people do secretly. Things that are shameful should cause people who do them to feel ashamed. Alternate translation: "the things that people do secretly because they cause shame"

walk in craftiness

The word "walk" is a metaphor for the way a person lives his life. Alternate translation: "live by deceiving people"

we do not mishandle the word of God

The phrase "word of God" here is a metonym for the message from God. The words "we do not mishandle" use two negative thoughts to express a positive thought. Alternate translation: "we handle God's message correctly" or "we use the word of God properly"

we recommend ourselves to everyone's conscience

This means that they provide enough evidence for each person who hears them to decide whether they are right or wrong.

in the sight of God

This refers to God's presence. God's understanding and approval of Paul's truthfulness is referred to as God being able to see them. Alternate translation: "before God" or "with God as witness"

2 Corinthians 4:3

But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing

This refers back to what Paul said starting in [2 Corinthians 3:14]

if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if a veil covers our gospel, that veil covers it"

our gospel

"the gospel that we preach"

2 Corinthians 4:4

the god of this world has blinded their unbelieving minds

Paul speaks of their minds as if they had eyes, and their inability to understand as their minds being unable to see. Alternate translation: "the god of this world has prevented unbelievers from understanding"

the god of this world

"the god who rules this world." This phrase refers to Satan.

they are not able to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ
As the Israelites could not see God's glory that shined on Moses's face because he covered it with a veil (2 Corinthians 3:13), unbelievers are not able to see Christ's glory that shines in the gospel. This means that they are unable to understand "the gospel of the glory of Christ"

the light of the gospel

"the light that comes from the gospel"

the gospel of the glory of Christ

"the gospel about Christ's glory"

2 Corinthians 4:5

but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants

You can supply the verb for these phrases. Alternate translation: "but we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord, and we proclaim ourselves as your servants"

for Jesus' sake

"because of Jesus"

2 Corinthians 4:6

Light will shine out of darkness

With this sentence, Paul refers to God creating light, as described in the book of Genesis.

He has shone ... to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God

Here the word "light" refers to the ability to understand.

Just as God created light, he also creates understanding for believers. Alternate translation: "He has shone ... to enable us to understand the glory of God"

in our hearts

Here the word "hearts" refers to the mind and thoughts.

Alternate translation: "in our minds"

the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the presence

"the light, which is the knowledge of the glory of God, in the presence"

the glory of God in the presence of Jesus Christ

"the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Just as God's

glory shone upon Moses's face (2 Corinthians 3:7), it also

shines upon Jesus's face. This means that when Paul

preaches the gospel, people are able to see and understand the message about God's glory.

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and his coworkers, but not to the Corinthians.

we have this treasure in jars of clay

Paul speaks of the gospel as if it were a treasure and their bodies as if they were breakable jars made out of clay. This emphasizes that they are of little value compared to the worth of the gospel that they preach.

so that it is clear

"so that it is clear to people" or "so that people clearly know"

2 Corinthians 4:8

We are afflicted in every way

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"People afflict us in every way"

2 Corinthians 4:9

We are persecuted but not abandoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"People persecute us, but God does not abandon us" or

"People persecute us, but God does not stop caring for us"

abandoned; struck down but not destroyed

This can be stated in active form and as a new sentence.

Alternate translation: "abandoned. People strike us down but do not destroy us"

struck down

"hurt badly"

2 Corinthians 4:10

always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus

Paul speaks of his sufferings as if they are an experience of the death of Jesus. Alternate translation: "often in danger of dying, as Jesus died" or "always suffering in such a way that we experience the death of Jesus"

the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "people can see that we will live in bodies again because Jesus is alive" or 2) "we can show other people in our bodies the spiritual life that Jesus gives."

2 Corinthians 4:11

we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake

Carrying the death of Jesus represents being in danger of dying because of being loyal to Jesus. Alternate translation: "God is always leading those of us who are alive to face death because we are joined to Jesus" or "People are always causing us who are alive to be in danger of dying because we are joined to Jesus"

so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal flesh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God may reveal the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh"

the life of Jesus may be revealed

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is referring to the life that Jesus lives. Alternate translation: "God may reveal that Jesus is alive" 2) Paul is referring to the life that Jesus gives to his people. Alternate translation: "God may reveal the life that Jesus gives to his people"

our mortal flesh

Paul is referring to our physical bodies, which will die someday.

2 Corinthians 4:12

death is at work in us, but life is at work in you

Paul speaks of death and life as if they are persons who can work. This means that they are always in danger of physical death so that the Corinthians can have spiritual life.

2 Corinthians 4:13

the same spirit of faith

"the same attitude of faith." Here the word "spirit" refers a person's attitude and temperament.

according to that which was written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as the one who wrote these words"

I believed, and so I spoke

This is a quote from the Psalms.

2 Corinthians 4:14

that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "that the one who caused the Lord Jesus to live again will" or "God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will"

2 Corinthians 4:15

For everything is for your sake

Here the word "everything" refers to all of the sufferings

that Paul has described in previous verses.

the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause

thanksgiving to increase to the glory of God

Paul speaks of more and more people experiencing God's grace as if grace were "reaching" people. And, Paul speaks of more and more people giving thanks to God as if thanksgiving were an object that could become larger by itself. Alternate translation: "God may show his grace to many people, causing more and more people to give thanks, to the glory of God"

2 Corinthians 4:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul writes that the Corinthian difficulties are minor and do not last long when compared to the unseen eternal things.

So we do not become discouraged

This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "So we remain confident"

outwardly we are wasting away

This refers to their physical bodies decaying and dying.

Alternate translation: "our physical bodies are getting weak and dying"

inwardly we are being renewed day by day

This refers to their inward, spiritual lives getting stronger.

Alternate translation: "our spiritual beings are being strengthened day by day"

inwardly we are being renewed day by day

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God is renewing our inward being more each day"

2 Corinthians 4:17

this momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal burden of glory

Paul speaks of his sufferings and the glory that God will give him as if they were objects that can be weighed. He uses irony to call affliction, which people usually think of as if it were a heavy burden, a light burden and glory, which people usually think of as relief from suffering, as if it were a heavy burden. Through this metaphor he is saying that the glory to come will be much greater than the affliction. that exceeds all measurement

The glory that Paul will experience is so great that no one can measure it. The abstract noun "measurement" can be translated as the verb "measure." Alternate translation: "that no one can measure"

2 Corinthians 4:18

things that are seen ... things that are unseen ... things that are unseen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"things that we can see ... things that we cannot see ... things that we cannot see"

but for things that are unseen

You can supply the verb for this phrase. Alternate

translation: "but we are watching for things that are unseen"

Chapter 5

2 Corinthians 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

New bodies in heaven

Paul knows that when he dies he will receive a much better body. Because of this, he is not afraid of being killed for preaching the gospel. So he tells others that they too can be reconciled to God. Christ will take away their sin and give them his righteousness. (See: goodnews, reconcile, sin, and righteous)

New creation

The old and new creation probably refer to how Paul illustrates the old and new self. These concepts are also the same as the old and new man. The term "old" probably does not refer to the sinful nature with which a person is born. It refers to the old way of living or the Christian formerly being bound to sin. The "new creation" is the new nature or new life that God gives a person after they come to believe in Christ. (See: faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Home

The Christian's home is no longer in the world. A Christian's real home is in heaven. By using this metaphor, Paul emphasizes that the Christian's circumstances in this world are temporary. It gives hope to those who are suffering. (See: heaven and hope)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The message of reconciliation"

This refers to the gospel. Paul calls for people who are hostile to God to repent and be reconciled to him. (See: repent and reconcile)

Links:

[2 Corinthians 5:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 5

5:1-10

What is the earthly dwelling?

[5:1]

When Paul spoke about the "earthly dwelling" (οἰκία/g3614), he used a metaphor. He was speaking about a person's body. It is a temporary place where a person lives. This body is destroyed when a person dies.

See: Job 19:25-27

See: Metaphor

What was the "building from God" or "house" or "heavenly dwelling"?

[5:1]

Paul wrote about a "building from God, house, and heavenly dwelling." This was a metaphor. Paul was writing about a person's new body after they are resurrected. This will never be destroyed.

See: John 14:2; 1 Corinthians 15:53-54

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Heaven; Metaphor

How was someone naked?

[5:3]

Paul wrote about being naked or unclothed. Scholars think he was using a metaphor. He was speaking about a person who did not have a body. Paul wanted to be resurrected and have his new resurrected body.

See: Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Paul write about something being swallowed up by life?

[5:4]

Paul wrote about something being swallowed up by life. He was writing about someone's body being replaced with a new resurrected body.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:54; Isaiah 25:8

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

How was the Holy Spirit a "guarantee"?

[5:5]

See: 2 Corinthians 1:22

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Seal

How is someone at home with the Lord?

[5:8]

When the Christian died, they are separated from their body. Then, they go to be with God in heaven. This is the true home of Christians.

See: Philippians 1:21-23

See: Heaven; Citizen

What is the "judgment seat of Christ"?

[5:10]

See: Day of Judgment

5:11-17

How did someone boast about appearances?

[5:12]

Paul wrote about someone boasting about appearances. He was speaking about boasting about doing certain things that other people saw. This caused other people to think good things about them.

See: 2 Corinthians 1:12-14; Galatians 6:12-14

See: Boast

How was someone out of the mind?

[5:13]

People thought Paul was out of his mind. That is, they thought he was insane or not thinking in the right way. Scholars think people insulted Paul because he had a vision of heaven, because he spoke in tongues, or because of the way Paul spoke.

See: 1 Samuel 21:10-15; Mark 3:21; Acts 26:24-25

See: Mind; Vision; Heaven; Speaking in Tongues

Why did Paul write, "all have died"?

[5:14]

Paul wrote, "all have died." When people believe in Jesus, he changed them in some way. He gave them a new life. When Paul wrote that all have died, he wanted Christians to know that they were not slaves to sin anymore.

See: Romans 6:1-14; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:3

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Sinful Nature; Serve (Servant, Slave)

What is a new creation?

[5:17] See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Create (Creation, Creature)

What is reconciliation?

[5:18]

Two people fighting against one another are reconciled when they are at peace with one another. Non-Christians were enemies of God and fought against God. However, Christians are at peace with God because Jesus reconciled people to God by dying.

See: Reconcile (Reconciliation); Atone (Atonement)

What are trespasses?

[5:19]

In the Bible, when someone sins, it is spoken about as if it were a trespass against God. This is a metaphor. When someone sins, they sin against God. They will be condemned because of their sins and punished. However, for Christians, Jesus was punished for the sins of Christians. Christians do not need to be condemned and punished.

See: Isaiah 44:22; Romans 3:23-26, 5:8-10, 18-19; 1 John 2:1-2

See: Condemn (Condemnation); Punish (Punishment); Sin; Metaphor; Atone (Atonement)

How did Jesus become the sacrifice for sin?

[5:21]

See: Sin; Atone (Atonement); Sacrifice

2 Corinthians 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues by contrasting believers' earthly bodies to the heavenly ones God will give.

if our earthly house—the tent—is destroyed, we have a building from God

Here a temporary "house" or "tent" is a metaphor for a person's physical body and a permanent "building from God" is a metaphor for the new body that God will give believers after they die.

if our earthly house—the tent—is destroyed, we have

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if people destroy our earthly house—the tent—we have" or "if people kill our bodies, we have"

if our earthly house—the tent—is destroyed

"if the tent that is our home on earth is destroyed"

It is a house not made by human hands

Here "house" means the same thing as "building from God."

Here "hands" is a synecdoche that represents the human as

a whole. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It is a house that humans did not make"

2 Corinthians 5:2

in this tent we groan

Here "this tent" means the same thing as "the earthly dwelling that we live in." A groan is a sound that a person makes when they eagerly desire to have something that is good.

longing to be clothed with our heavenly residence

The words "our heavenly residence" means the same thing as "the place God will give us to live in." Paul speaks of the new body that believers receive after they die as if it were both a house to live in and a piece of clothing that a person can put on.

2 Corinthians 5:3

by putting it on

"by putting on our heavenly dwelling"

we will not be found to be naked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we

will not be naked" or "God will not find us naked"

2 Corinthians 5:4

while we are in this tent

Paul speaks of the physical body as if it were a "tent."

in this tent, we groan

The word "tent" refers to "the earthly dwelling that we live in." The word groan is a sound that a person makes when they eagerly desire to have something that is good. See how you translated this in 2 Corinthians 5:2.

being burdened

Paul refers to the difficulties that the physical body experiences as if they were heavy objects that are difficult to carry.

We do not want to be unclothed ... we want to be clothed

Paul speaks of the body as if it were clothing. Here "to be unclothed" refers to the death of the physical body; "to be clothed" refers to having the resurrection body that God will give.

to be unclothed

"to be without clothes" or "to be naked"

so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life

Paul speaks of life as if it were an animal that eats "what is mortal." The physical body that will die will be replaced by a resurrection body that will live forever.

so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that life may swallow up what is mortal"

2 Corinthians 5:5

who gave us the Spirit as a guarantee of what is to come

The Spirit is spoken of as if he were a down payment toward eternal life. See how you translated a similar phrase in [2 Corinthians 1:22]

2 Corinthians 5:6

Connecting Statement:

Because believers will have a new body and have the Holy Spirit as a pledge, Paul reminds them to live by faith so that they may please the Lord.

while we are at home in the body

Paul speaks of the physical body as if it were a place where a person dwells. Alternate translation: "while we are living in this earthly body"

we are away from the Lord

"we are not at home with the Lord" or "we are not in heaven with the Lord"

2 Corinthians 5:7

we walk by faith, not by sight

Here "walk" is a metaphor for "live" or "behave." Alternate translation: "we live according to faith, not according to what we see"

2 Corinthians 5:8

We would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord

You may need to make explicit that they do not prefer to remain alive in this present world. Alternate translation: "We would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord than to remain in the body and away from the Lord"

We would prefer to be away from the body

Here the word "body" refers to the physical body.

at home with the Lord

"at home with the Lord in heaven"

2 Corinthians 5:9

whether we are at home or away

Possible meanings are 1) "whether we are at home in the body or away from it" or 2) "whether we are at home with the Lord or away from him." Either way, Paul means that, whether in this life or in the next life, believers should try to please the Lord.

to please him

"to please the Lord"

2 Corinthians 5:10

we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ

Here "judgment seat of Christ" represents Christ himself, who will judge all people. Alternate translation: "we all must stand in the presence of Christ to be judged" or "Christ will judge all of us"

appear

"go" or "be present" or "stand"

each one may receive what is due

"each person may receive what he deserves"

the things done in the body

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things he has done in the physical body"

whether for good or for bad

"whether those things were good or bad"

2 Corinthians 5:11

knowing the fear of the Lord

"knowing what it means to fear the Lord"

we persuade people

Possible meanings are 1) "we persuade people of the truth of the gospel" or 2) "we persuade people that we are legitimate apostles."

What we are is clearly seen by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God clearly sees what kind of people we are"

I hope that it is also clear to your conscience

Paul wanted the the Corinthians to know what kind of people he and those with him were. "I expect that it is also clear to your conscience" or "I trust that it is also clear to your conscience"

that it is also clear to your conscience

"that you are also convinced of it"

2 Corinthians 5:12

We are not commending ourselves to you again

"We are not recommending ourselves to you again" or "We are not trying to show you again that we are worthy"

so you may have an answer for those

"so you may have something to say to those"

those who boast about appearances but not about what is in the heart

Here the word "appearances" refers to outward expressions of things like ability and status. The word "heart" refers to the inward character of a person. Alternate translation: "those who praise their own actions, but do not care about what they really are in their inner being"

2 Corinthians 5:13

if we are out of our minds ... if we are in our right minds

Paul is speaking about the way others think of him and his coworkers. Alternate translation: "if people think we are crazy ... if people think we are sane"

2 Corinthians 5:14

the love of Christ

Possible meanings are 1) "our love for Christ" or 2) "Christ's love for us."

died for all

"died for all people"

2 Corinthians 5:15

him who for their sake died and was raised

"him who for their sake died and whom God caused to live again" or "Christ, who died for their sake and whom God raised"

for their sake

Possible meanings are 1) these words refer only to "died" or 2) these words refer to both "died" and "was raised."

2 Corinthians 5:16

Connecting Statement:

Because of Christ's love and death, we are not to judge by human standards. We are appointed to teach others how to be united with and have peace with God through Christ's death and to receive God's righteousness through Christ.

For this reason

This refers to what Paul has just said about living for Christ instead of living for self.

regard anyone

"judge anyone" or "think about anyone"

the flesh

This phrase is a metonym for the way mortal people do things. See how you translated it in [2 Corinthians 1:17]

2 Corinthians 5:17

he is a new creation

Paul speaks of the person who believes in Christ as if that person were a new person that God had created. Alternate translation: "he is a new person"

The old things have passed away

Here "the old things" refers to the things that characterized a person before he trusted in Christ.

See

The word "See" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

2 Corinthians 5:18

All these things are from God

"God has done all these things." This refers to what Paul has just said in the previous verse about new things replacing old things.

the ministry of reconciliation

This can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "the ministry of reconciling people to him"

2 Corinthians 5:19

That is, in Christ

"This means that in Christ"

in Christ God is reconciling the world to himself

Here the word "world" refers to people in the world.

Alternate translation: "in Christ, God is reconciling mankind to himself"

He is entrusting to us the message of reconciliation

God has given Paul the responsibility to spread the message that God is reconciling people to himself.

the message of reconciliation

"the message about reconciliation"

2 Corinthians 5:20

we are appointed as representatives of Christ

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has appointed us as Christ's representatives"

representatives of Christ

"those who speak for Christ"

Be reconciled to God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Let God reconcile you to himself"

2 Corinthians 5:21

General Information:

The words "us" and "we" refer to Paul and his readers and so are inclusive.

He made him who knew no sin to become sin for us

"Christ new no sin, but God made him to become sin for us"

knew no sin

"never sinned"

to become sin for us

The word "sin" is a metonym for the sacrifice that is offered so that God will forgive sin. Alternate translation: "to become the sacrifice for which God will forgive our sins"

us, so that

"us. He did this so that"

so that we might become the righteousness of God in him

The phrase "the righteousness of God" refers to the righteousness that God requires and that comes from God.

Alternate translation: "so that through Christ we might have the righteousness that God requires"

Chapter 6

2 Corinthians 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 2 and 16-18, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Servants

Paul refers to Christians as servants of God. God calls Christians to serve him in all circumstances. Paul describes some of the difficult circumstances in which he and his companions served God.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Contrasts

Paul uses four pairs of contrasts: righteousness versus lawlessness, light versus darkness, Christ versus Satan, and the temple of God versus idols. These contrasts show a difference between Christians and non-Christians. (See: righteous and

light and darkness)

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses a series of rhetorical questions to teach his readers. All of these questions make essentially the same point: Christians should not intimately fellowship with those who live in sin. Paul repeats these questions for emphasis. (See: and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul likely uses the pronoun "we" to represent at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Links:

[2 Corinthians 6:1](#)

2 Corinthians 6

6:1-10

How could people receive the grace of God in vain?

[6:1]

Paul wanted the Christians in Corinth to do things that honored God. If they did nothing to honor God, he said that they received the grace of God in vain. That is, God was gracious to them and it did not cause them to do good things.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:10

What are the favorable time and the day of salvation?

[6:2]

Paul wrote about a favorable time and the day of salvation. He was writing about the same time. At this time, God will save his people. Some scholars think Paul was writing about the time from when Jesus was born until the time when Jesus returns to the earth. Other scholars think Paul was writing about the time when Jesus returns.

See: Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:19

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Jesus' Return to Earth

What is a stumbling block?

[6:3]

See: Stumble (Stumbling Block)

What is the armor of righteousness?

[6:7]

The armor of righteousness is a metaphor. The weapons and protection that a soldier used in battle were his armor. Paul was writing about God helping Christians to live in a way that honors God.

See: Isaiah 59:17; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Ephesians 6:11-17

See: Metaphor; Righteous (Righteousness)

How did someone possess all things?

[6:10]

Paul wrote about possessing all things. Some scholars think Paul was writing about the blessings God gave to him. God promised certain things to people who believe in Jesus. However, these were not things that made Christians rich.

6:11-12

How was Paul's heart wide open?

[6:11]

Paul wrote that the heart of Christians is open. This is a metaphor. He was writing about the Christians who were with him. These people loved the Christians in Corinth.

See: Philippians 1:7-8

See: Heart (Metaphor); Metaphor

How did the Christians in Corinth restrain their own hearts?

[6:12]

Paul wrote that the Christians in Corinth were "restrained" (στενοχωρέω/g4729). He wanted to say that they did not love Paul. Perhaps some Christians in Corinth rejected Paul.

See: 2 Corinthians 7:2

See: Heart (Metaphor)

6:14-18

How were Christians tied together with non-Christians?

[6:14]

Paul spoke about being “tied together with unbelievers.” This was a metaphor. In ancient times, a person would tie two animals together using a yoke, a wooden frame. They were tied together to pull a plow or perhaps a heavy load. The Law of Moses prohibited plowing with two kinds of animals together (see: Leviticus 19:19). Paul did not want Christians and non-Christians to be joined together in some way.

See: 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 15:33; James 4:4

See: Metaphor

What is fellowship?

[6:14]

See: Fellowship

Why did Paul write about light and darkness? What was meant by the words, “light” and “darkness”?

[6:14]

Paul spoke about light and darkness. These were metaphors. Paul was speaking about two different kingdoms. The kingdom of God is described as light. The kingdom of Satan is described as dark.

See: Isaiah 42:6-7, 16; Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:12-13; 1 Peter 2:9

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Metaphor; Kingdom of God; Satan (The Devil)

Who was Belial?

[6:15]

In ancient Israel, some Jews called Satan Belial.

See: Satan (The Devil)

How are Christians the “temple of the living God”?

[6:16]

Christians are the temple of God because the Holy Spirit lives within them. When Paul wrote about the living God, he was speaking about God. False gods do not exist, and they are spoken about as if they are dead (see: Jeremiah 10:10; Acts 14:15; 1 Thessalonians 1:9).

See: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19; Ephesians 2:19-22

See: Temple; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How are Christians set apart?

[6:17]

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

How are Christians to not touch something that is unclean?

[6:17]

In ancient Israel, people worshipped idols. Sometimes this was spoken about as if it were touching something that is unclean. This is a metaphor. Paul did not want Christians to worship idols.

See: Worship; Idolatry (Idol); Clean and Unclean

2 Corinthians 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul summarizes how working together for God is supposed to be.

Working together with him

Paul is implying that he and Timothy are working with God.

Alternate translation: "Working together with God"

we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain

"we beg you to make use of the grace that you have received from God"

2 Corinthians 6:2

General Information:

In this verse, Paul quotes a portion from the prophet Isaiah.

For he says

"For God says." This introduces a quotation from the prophet Isaiah. Alternate translation: "For God says in scripture"

Look

The word "Look" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

2 Corinthians 6:3

We do not place a stumbling block in front of anyone

Paul speaks of anything that would prevent a person from trusting in Christ as if it were a physical object over which that person trips and falls. Alternate translation: "We do not want to do anything that will prevent people from believing our message"

we do not wish our ministry to be discredited

The word "discredited" refers to people speaking badly about Paul's ministry, and working against the message he proclaims. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we do not want anyone to be able to speak badly about our ministry"

2 Corinthians 6:4

General Information:

When Paul uses "we" here, he is referring to himself and Timothy.

in every way we commend ourselves as God's servants

Possible meanings are 1) "Because we are God's servants we recommend ourselves to you in every way" or 2) "in every way we show that we are God's servants"

in every way

This tells how they commend themselves. Alternate translation: "in everything we do"

in much endurance, in affliction, in distress, in hardship
 Paul mentions various difficult situations in which they commend themselves as God's servants.
 2 Corinthians 6:5
 in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in hard labor, in sleepless nights, in hunger
 Paul continues to mention various difficult situations in which they commend themselves as God's servants.
 2 Corinthians 6:6
 in purity ... in sincere love
 Paul lists several moral virtues that they maintained in difficult situations, commending themselves as God's servants.
 2 Corinthians 6:7
 in the word of truth
 "by speaking God's message about truth" or "by speaking God's true message"
 in the power of God
 "by showing God's power to people"
 with the armor of righteousness for the right hand and the left
 Paul speaks of their righteousness as if it were weapons that they use to fight spiritual battles.
 the armor of righteousness
 "righteousness as our armor" or "righteousness as our weapons"
 for the right hand and the left
 Possible meanings are 1) that there is a weapon in one hand and a shield in the other or 2) that they are completely equipped for battle, able to fend off attacks from any direction.
 2 Corinthians 6:8
 regarded as deceivers
 "people regard us as deceivers" or "people say that we are liars"
 and yet truthful
 You may need to fill in the words left out of the ellipsis.
 Alternate translation: "but we are truthful"
 2 Corinthians 6:9
 as if we were unknown, yet we are well known
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if people did not know us, and yet people know us well"
 as if we were being punished for our actions, yet we are not killed
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if people were punishing us for our actions, yet they have not killed us"
 2 Corinthians 6:10
 General Information:
 This page has intentionally been left blank.
 2 Corinthians 6:11
 spoken the whole truth to you
 "spoken honestly to you"
 our heart is wide open
 Paul speaks of his great affection for the Corinthians as having a heart that is open. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions. Alternate translation: "we love you very much"
 2 Corinthians 6:12
 You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own hearts
 Paul speaks of the Corinthians' lack of love for him as if

their hearts were squeezed into a tight space. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions.
 You are not restrained by us
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We have not restrained you" or "We have not given you any reason to stop loving us"
 you are restrained in your own hearts
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "your own hearts are restraining you" or "you have stopped loving us for your own reasons"
 2 Corinthians 6:13
 open yourselves wide also
 Paul urges the Corinthians to love him as he has loved them. Alternate translation: "love us back" or "love us much as we have loved you"
 2 Corinthians 6:14
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul encourages the believers at Corinth to be separated from idols and live clean lives for God.
 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers
 This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "Only be yoked together with believers"
 be yoked together with unbelievers
 Paul speaks of working together toward a common purpose as if it were two animals tied together to pull a plow or cart. Alternate translation: "team up with" or "have a close relationship with"
 For what association does righteousness have with lawlessness?
 This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "For righteousness can have no association with lawlessness."
 For what fellowship does light have with darkness?
 Paul asks this question to emphasize that light and darkness cannot coexist since light dispels darkness. The words "light" and "darkness" refer to the moral and spiritual qualities of believers and unbelievers. Alternate translation: "Light can have no fellowship with darkness."
 2 Corinthians 6:15
 What agreement can Christ have with Belial?
 This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "There is no agreement between Christ and Belial."
 Belial
 This is another name for the devil.
 Or what share does a believer have together with an unbeliever?
 This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "A believer shares nothing in common with an unbeliever."
 2 Corinthians 6:16
 General Information:
 Paul paraphrases portions from several Old Testament prophets: Moses, Zechariah, Amos, and possibly others.
 And what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?
 This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "There is no agreement between the temple of God and idols."
 we are the temple of the living God
 Paul refers to all Christians as forming a temple for God to dwell in. Alternate translation: "we are like a temple where

the living God dwells"

I will dwell among them and walk among them.

This is an Old Testament quotation that speaks of God being with the people in two different ways. The words "dwell among" speak of living where others live, while the words "walk among" speak of being with them as they go about their lives. Alternate translation: "I will be with them and help them"

2 Corinthians 6:17

General Information:

Paul quotes portions from the Old Testament prophets

Isaiah and Ezekiel.

be set apart

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "set yourselves apart" or "allow me to set you apart"

Touch no unclean thing

This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "Touch only things that are clean" or "Stay away from things that are unclean"

2 Corinthians 6:18

General Information:

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Chapter 7

2 Corinthians 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In verses 2-4, Paul finishes his defense. He then writes about Titus's return and the comfort it brought.

Special concepts in this chapter

Clean and unclean

Christians are "clean" in the sense that God has cleansed them from sin. They do not need to be concerned with being clean according to the law of Moses. Ungodly living can still make a Christian unclean. (See: clean and lawofmoses)

Sadness and sorrow

The words "sad" and "sorrow" in this chapter indicate that the Corinthians were upset to the point of repenting. (See: repent)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul likely uses the pronoun "we" to represent at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Original situation

This chapter discusses in detail a previous situation. We can figure out some aspects of this situation from the information in this chapter. But it is best not to include this type of implicit information in a translation.

Links:

[2 Corinthians 7:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 7

7:1

What makes a person unclean in their body and spirit?

[7:1]

Paul wrote about things that make a person unclean in body and spirit. Scholars think Paul was writing about any sin. Every sin makes a person unclean in body and spirit. That is, it makes them completely unclean.

See: 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 1 Peter 2:11

See: Sin; Clean and Unclean; Spirit (Spiritual)

How are Christians to pursue holiness in the fear of God?

[7:1]

Paul wanted Christians to live in a way that honors God. He wanted them to try to be holy because they feared God.

See: Proverbs 1:7, 8:13, 16:6; Matthew 10:28;

See: Fear of God; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

7:2-4

How did Paul want these Christians to make room for him?

[7:2]

See: 2 Corinthians 6:13

How did someone take advantage of another person?

[7:2]

When someone took advantage of another person, they cheated this person in some way. Often, they took money from someone (see: 2 Corinthians 12:17-18).

See: Acts 20:33-35; 1 Thessalonians 4:6

How did someone boast about people?

[7:4]

See: 2 Corinthians 1:12

7:5-13

Why was Paul in Macedonia?

[7:5]

See: Introduction to 2 Corinthians

See: Paul's Missionary Journeys

See Map: Macedonia

Why did Paul say, "our bodies had no rest"?

[7:5]

Paul said, "our bodies had no rest." Some scholars think Paul was speaking about their whole person, that is, body, soul, and spirit, when he said "our bodies had no rest." When he spoke about rest, he was speaking about people being free from troubles and conflicts.

See: 2 Corinthians 4:7-12

See: Soul; Spirit (Spiritual)

What was the letter that made them "sorrowful"?

[7:8]

See: 2 Corinthians 2:1-4

What were "godly sorrow" and "worldly sorrow"?

[7:9, 7:10]

There were two kinds of sorrow. "Godly" sorrow meant that people felt badly about their sins and later repented before God. "Worldly" sorrow meant that people tried to hide their sins by blaming others or making excuses. They did not truly repent.

See: Luke 18:9-13; 2 Timothy 2:22-26

See: Repent (Repentance); Sin; World

How was salvation without regret?

[7:10]

Paul wrote about salvation with regret. "Without regret" (ἀμεταμέλητος/g0278) meant that once the Corinthians repented of their sin and were at peace with God, they could be at peace. That is, it was a salvation that freed them from the judgment of God.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Repent (Repentance); Judge (Judgment)

How were the Corinthians innocent?

[7:11]

Paul wrote that the Corinthians were innocent. Scholars think that though the Corinthians did not immediately to correct someone who sinned. However, they did not sin in this way. Therefore, they were innocent of sinning in this way.

Who was the "wrongdoer"?

[7:12]

See: 2 Corinthians 2:5

7:14-16

How was Titus' spirit "refreshed"?

[7:13]

Titus went to Corinth in order to tell them to change their ways. The repentance of the Christians encouraged Titus. In this way Titus' spirit was "refreshed" (ἀναπαύω/g0373).

See: 2 Timothy 1:16; Philemon 20

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Repent (Repentance)

What was "fear and trembling"?

[7:15]

Paul wrote about "fear and trembling." He wanted people to honor, respect, and submit to Titus. Scholars think Paul was speaking about how the Christians in Corinth welcomed Titus with much honor and respect. That is, they knew Paul sent Titus to them. Because of this, God gave permission to Titus lead the Corinthians.

See: Mark 5:24-34; 1 Corinthians 2:2-5; Philippians 2:12

See: Fear of God

2 Corinthians 7:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the Corinthians to be separated from sin and to seek holiness purposefully.

Beloved

"You whom I love" or "Dear friends"

let us cleanse ourselves of all defilement of flesh and spirit

Here Paul is saying to stay away from any form of sin that would affect one's relationship with God.

of all defilement of flesh and spirit

"of all things that defile our body and spirit" or "of all things in our body and spirit that make us unacceptable to God"

Let us perfect holiness

"Let us do all we can to be perfectly holy"

in the fear of God

"out of deep respect for God" or "because we fear God"

2 Corinthians 7:2

Connecting Statement:

Having already warned the people of Corinth about other leaders who were striving to get these Corinthian believers to follow them, Paul reminds the people of the way he feels about them.

Make room for us

This refers back to what Paul said starting in [2 Corinthians 6:11]

2 Corinthians 7:3

It is not to condemn you that I say this

"I do not say this to accuse you of having done wrong." The word "this" refers to what Paul just said about not having wronged anyone.

you are in our hearts

Paul speaks of his and his associates' great love for the Corinthians as if they held them in their hearts. Alternate translation: "you are very dear to us"

for us to die together and to live together

This means that Paul and his associates will continue to love the Corinthians no matter what happens. Alternate translation: "whether we live or whether we die"

for us to die

"us" includes the Corinthian believers.

2 Corinthians 7:4

great is my boast about you

"I boast much about you" or "I am very proud of you"

I am filled with comfort

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"You fill me with comfort"

I overflow with joy

Paul speaks of joy as if it is a liquid that fills him until he overflows. Alternate translation: "I am extremely joyful"

even in all our tribulation

"even though we suffer greatly"

2 Corinthians 7:5

When we came to Macedonia

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and Timothy but not to the Corinthians or Titus.

our bodies had no rest

The word "body" often refers to the whole person.

Alternate translation: "we had no rest" or "we were very tired"

we were troubled in every way

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we experienced trouble in every way"

by conflicts on the outside and fears on the inside

Possible meanings for "outside" are 1) "outside of our bodies" or 2) "outside of the church." The word "inside" refers to their inward emotions. Alternate translation: "by conflicts with other people and by fears within ourselves"

2 Corinthians 7:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Corinthians 7:7

by the comfort that Titus had received from you

Paul received comfort from knowing that the Corinthians had comforted Titus. Alternate translation: "by learning about the comfort that Titus had received from you"

2 Corinthians 7:8

General Information:

This refers to Paul's previous letter to these Corinthian believers where he rebuked them for their acceptance of a believer's sexual immorality with his father's wife.

Connecting Statement:

Paul praises them for their godly sorrow, their zeal to do right, and the joy that it brought him and Titus.

when I saw that my letter

"when I learned that my letter"

2 Corinthians 7:9

not because you were sorrowful

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not because what I said in my letter made you sorrowful"

sorrowful ... sorrow ... sorrow

or "distressed ... distress ... distress"

so you suffered no loss because of us

"so you suffered no loss because we rebuked you." This means that although the letter caused them sorrow, they eventually benefited from the letter because it led them to repentance. Alternate translation: "so that we did not harm you in any way"

2 Corinthians 7:10

For godly sorrow brings about repentance that accomplishes salvation

The word "repentance" may be repeated to clarify its relationship to what precedes it and what follows it. "For godly sorrow produces repentance, and repentance leads to salvation"

without regret

Possible meanings are 1) Paul has no regret that he caused them sorrow because that sorrow led to their repentance and salvation or 2) the Corinthians will not regret experiencing sorrow because it led to their repentance and salvation.

Worldly sorrow, however, brings about death

This kind of sorrow leads to death instead of salvation

because it does not produce repentance. Alternate

translation: "Worldly sorrow, however, leads to spiritual death"

2 Corinthians 7:11

See what great diligence

"Look and see for yourselves what great diligence"

How great was the determination in you to prove you were innocent.

Here the word "How" makes this statement an exclamation.

Alternate translation: "Your determination to prove you were innocent was very great!"

your indignation

"your anger"

that justice should be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that someone should carry out justice"

2 Corinthians 7:12

the wrongdoer

"the one who did wrong"

your earnestness toward us should be made known to you in the sight of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that you would know in the sight of God your earnestness toward us"

earnestness

sincere, serious desire for what is good

in the sight of God

This represents God's presence. See how you translated this in [2 Corinthians 4:2]

2 Corinthians 7:13

It is by this that we are encouraged

Here the word "this" refers to the way the Corinthians responded to Paul's previous letter, as he described in the previous verse. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is what encourages us"

his spirit was refreshed by all of you

Here the word "spirit" refers to a person's temperament and disposition. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all of you refreshed his spirit" or "all of you made him stop worrying"

2 Corinthians 7:14

For if I boasted to him about you

"For although I boasted to him about you"

I was not put to shame

"you did not disappoint me"

our boasting about you to Titus proved to be true

"you proved that our boasting about you to Titus was true"

2 Corinthians 7:15

the obedience of all of you

This noun "obedience" can be stated with a verb, "obey."

Alternate translation: "how all of you obeyed"

you welcomed him with fear and trembling

Here "fear" and "trembling" share similar meanings and

emphasize the intensity of fear. Alternate translation: "you welcomed him with great reverence"

with fear and trembling

Possible meanings are 1) "with great reverence for God" or

2) "with great reverence for Titus."

2 Corinthians 7:16

General Information:

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Chapter 8

2 Corinthians 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 8 and 9 begin a new section. Paul writes about how churches in Greece helped needy believers in Jerusalem.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 15.

Special concepts in this chapter

Gift to the church in Jerusalem

The church in Corinth started preparing to give money to the poor believers in Jerusalem. The churches in Macedonia also had given generously. Paul sends Titus and two other believers to Corinth to encourage the Corinthians to give generously. Paul and the others will carry the money to Jerusalem. They want people to know it is being done honestly.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul likely uses the pronoun "we" to represent at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Paradox

A "paradox" is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. These words in verse 2 are a paradox: "the abundance of their joy and the extremity of their poverty have produced great riches of generosity." In verse 3 Paul explains how their poverty produced riches. Paul also uses riches and poverty in other paradoxes. ([2 Corinthians 8:2](#))

Links:

[2 Corinthians 8:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 8

8:1-8

How did the Macedonian church give beyond what they were able?

[8:2]

Paul commended the Christians in Macedonia because they not only gave as much as they were able, but many gave even more. That is, they even gave money they needed. Scholars think the Macedonian Christians gave this way and then trusted that God would take care of them.

See: Romans 15:26-27; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

See Map: Macedonia

How did people give of their own free will?

[8:3]

People gave of their own free will. The Macedonian Christians decided to help the Christians in Jerusalem. The

Macedonian chose to do this and were happy to do it.

See: Exodus 35:29; Acts 11:27-30

How did these Christians first give themselves to the Lord?

[8:5]

When Paul said that the Christians "first gave themselves to the Lord," he meant that the Christians were completely devoted to God. That is, they were committed to serve God in all ways. Scholars think these Christians, because of their desire to follow God, prepared themselves to give generously to the Christians in Jerusalem.

See: Psalm 116:12-14

See: Lord

What was the act of grace?

[8:6]

Paul wrote about an act of grace. He was writing about the money the Christians sent. They did this graciously.

See: Grace

What was Titus doing in Corinth?

[8:6]

Titus was in Corinth helping the Christians to finish collecting money that were to be sent to the Christians in Jerusalem.

See: Introduction to 2 Corinthians; Titus

How did Christians abound in everything?

[8:7]

Paul wrote about Christians abounding in everything. Some scholars think Christians had more than other people and more than they expected to have. God blessed them greatly. However, God did not make them rich. Since God blessed the Corinthian Christians, Paul wanted these Christians to give money to other Christians.

See: 1 Corinthians 1:4-7, 15:58; Colossians 2:6-7

8:9-15

What happened one year ago?

[8:10]

Paul wrote about something that happened one year ago. At this time, the Christians in Corinth promised that they would begin collecting money to give to the Christians in Jerusalem. See: 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Why did Paul want these Christians to give in fairness?

[8:13]

Paul wanted these Christians to give in fairness. Paul wanted the Christians in Corinth to give money to the poor Christians in Jerusalem. However, he did want them to give so much that the poor Christians in Corinth suffered.

Why did Paul write the same thing Moses wrote?

[8:15]

Paul wrote the same thing Moses wrote (see: Exodus 16). Some scholars think Moses wrote about how the people gathered manna. Some people gathered much manna and other people did not gather much manna. Then, they shared the manna (see: Exodus 16:14-18). Scholars think Paul wanted Christians to remember how God provides for everyone. He wanted Christians to share with people who needed help.

See: Manna

8:16-24

How did Titus go of his own free will?

[8:17]

Titus went to Corinth of his own free will. That is, he wanted to go to Corinth.

How was someone honorable before people?

[8:21]

Paul wrote about someone being honorable before people. Scholars think Paul was speaking about doing things that honored God and honored other people.

See: Romans 12:16-17; 1 Peter 2:12

2 Corinthians 8:1

Connecting Statement:

Having explained his changed plans and his ministry direction, Paul talks about giving.

the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the grace that God has given to the churches of Macedonia"

2 Corinthians 8:2

the abundance of their joy and the extremity of their poverty have

produced great riches of generosity

Paul speaks of "joy" and "poverty" as if they were living things that can produce generosity. Alternate translation: "because of the people's great joy and extreme poverty, they have become very generous"

the abundance of their joy

Paul speaks of joy as if it were a physical object that could increase in size or quantity.

extremity of their poverty ... riches of generosity

Though the churches of Macedonia have suffered testings of affliction and poverty, by God's grace they have been able to collect money for the believers in Jerusalem.

great riches of generosity

"a very great generosity." The words "great riches" emphasize the greatness of their generosity.

2 Corinthians 8:3

they gave

This refers to the churches in Macedonia.

of their own free will

"voluntarily"

2 Corinthians 8:4

this service to God's holy people

Paul is referring to providing money to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "this ministry of providing for the believers in Jerusalem"

2 Corinthians 8:5

This did not happen as we had hoped

The Macedonians did even more than Paul and those with him had hoped for. Alternate translation: "This did not happen merely as we had thought it might" or "But even more than we had expected"

2 Corinthians 8:6

who had already begun this task

Paul is referring to the collection of money from the Corinthians for the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "who had encouraged your giving in the first place"

to complete among you this act of grace

Titus was to help the Corinthians to complete the collection of money. Alternate translation: "to encourage you to finish collecting and giving your generous gift"

2 Corinthians 8:7

make sure that you excel in this act of grace

Here "this act of grace" refers the gift that the Corinthians were to give. Alternate translation: "make sure that you are very generous in your giving"

2 Corinthians 8:8

by comparing it to the eagerness of other people

Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to give generously by comparing their generosity with the generosity of the Macedonian churches.

2 Corinthians 8:9

the grace of our Lord

In this context, the word "grace" emphasizes the generosity with which Jesus had blessed the Corinthians.

Even though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor

Paul speaks of Jesus before his incarnation as being rich, and of his becoming human as becoming poor.

through his poverty you might become rich

Paul speaks of the Corinthians becoming spiritually rich as a result of Jesus becoming human.

2 Corinthians 8:10

In this matter

This refers to their collecting money to give to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "With regard to the collection"

2 Corinthians 8:11

there was an eagerness and desire to do it

This can be stated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "you were eager and desired to do it"

bring it to completion

"complete it" or "finish it"

2 Corinthians 8:12

a good and acceptable thing

Here the words "good" and "acceptable" share similar meanings and emphasize the goodness of the thing.

Alternate translation: "a very good thing"

It must be based on what a person has

"Giving must be based on what a person has"

2 Corinthians 8:13

For this is not to cause relief for others and tribulation for you

The word "this" refers to collecting money for the believers in Jerusalem. The abstract nouns "relief" and "tribulation" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "We are not asking you to give money to relieve others and make yourselves suffer"

but for fairness

"but so that there should be equality" or "but so that there might be equality between others and you." Paul is explaining why he is asking the Corinthians to give money to the believers in Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 8:14

This is also so that their abundance may supply your need

Since the Corinthians are acting in the present time, it is implied that the believers in Jerusalem will also help them at some time in the future. Alternate translation: "This is also so that in the future their abundance may supply your need"

2 Corinthians 8:15

as it is written

Here Paul quotes from Exodus. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as Moses wrote"

did not have any lack

"had all he needed"

2 Corinthians 8:16

who put into Titus' heart the same earnest care that I have for you

Here the word "heart" refers to the emotions. This means that God caused Titus to love them. Alternate translation: "who made Titus care for you as much as I do"

same earnest care

"the same enthusiasm" or "same deep concern"

2 Corinthians 8:17

For he not only accepted our appeal

Paul is referring to his asking Titus to return to Corinth and complete the collection. Alternate translation: "For he not only agreed to our request that he help you with the collection"

2 Corinthians 8:18

with him

"with Titus"

the brother who is praised among all of the churches

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the brother whom believers among all of the churches praise"

2 Corinthians 8:19

Not only this

"Not only do believers among all of the churches praise him"

he also was chosen by the churches
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the churches also chose him"
our traveling companion with this act of grace
"to travel with us as we carry out this act of generosity."
This refers to taking the offering to Jerusalem.
which is being administered by us
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "which we are taking care of"
for the glory of the Lord himself and our good will
You may need to fill in the ideas missing in the ellipsis.
Alternate translation: "so that people will praise the Lord and so that they will see how eager we are to help"
2 Corinthians 8:20
about this act of generosity that we are carrying out
This refers to taking the offering to Jerusalem. The abstract noun "generosity" can be translated with an adjective.
Alternate translation: "concerning the way we are handling this generous gift"
2 Corinthians 8:21
We take care to do what is good, not only before the Lord, but also before people.
"We are careful to do not only what the Lord thinks is good

but also what people think is good"
before the Lord ... before people
"in the Lord's opinion ... in people's opinion"
2 Corinthians 8:22
with them
The word "them" refers to Titus and the previously mentioned brother.
2 Corinthians 8:23
he is my partner and fellow worker for you
"he is my partner, who works with me to help you"
As for our brothers
This refers to the two other men who will accompany Titus. they are messengers from the churches
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the churches have sent them as their messengers"
They are a glory to Christ
This can be stated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "They will cause people to see Christ's glory" or "They will cause people to honor Christ"
2 Corinthians 8:24
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 9

2 Corinthians 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 9, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Paul uses three agricultural metaphors. He uses them to teach about giving to needy believers. The metaphors help Paul explain that God will reward those who give generously. Paul does not say how or when God will reward them. (See: and reward)

Links:

[2 Corinthians 9:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 9

9:1-5

What was the "ministry for the believers"?

[9:1]

Paul wrote about the "ministry" (διακονία/g1248) for the believers. He was writing about helping poor Christians in Jerusalem.

See: 2 Corinthians 8:1; Acts 11:29

How had Achaia been getting ready?

[9:2]

Paul wrote that the Christians in Achaia had been getting ready to help. The churches in the region of Achaia also planned to help to collect money for the poor Christians in Jerusalem.

See Map: Achaia

How was something futile?

[9:3]

Something was futile if someone tried to do something, but the thing they tried to do did not happen. Paul spoke well of the church in Corinth collecting money to give to the Christians in Jerusalem. But if they did not collect much money, this would not help these Christians. It would be a waste of time.

How is someone exhorted?

[9:5]

Paul exhorted the Christians in Corinth. That is, he did not make them give money to the Christians in Jerusalem. Instead, he wanted them to give money to these Christians.

See: 2 Corinthians 7:2

9:6-15

Why did Paul write about sowing and reaping?

[9:6]

When Paul used the words “sow” and “reap” he was using metaphors. To “sow”(σπείρω/g4687) seed was plant seeds in the ground. Just as a farmer cast out seed, so Paul wanted the church in Corinth to give generously to those who were poor. If a farmer sowed much seed he could expect to “reap”(θερίζω/g2325) a large harvest. In the same way, if the Christians in Corinth gave generously, they could expect the Christians in Jerusalem to be greatly blessed.

See: Sow (Plant); Metaphor; Bless (Blessing)

How did someone reap sparingly?

[9:6]

When Paul wrote about someone who reaped sparingly, this was a metaphor. A farmer who scattered very little seed could only expect to reap a small harvest. Scholars think Paul was speaking about Christians who gave only a little money to help out those who were poor. They think those Christians will only experience a small portion of God’s blessings (see: Galatians 6:7-10).

See: Proverbs 11:24-25; Luke 6:38; 1 John 3:17

See: Metaphor; Bless (Blessing)

Why did Paul write, “let each one give as he has planned in his heart”?

[9:7]

Paul wrote, “let each one give as he has planned in his heart.” Paul meant that each person think about what he wanted to give and to give that much.

See: 2 Corinthians 8:3; 1 Chronicles 29:9; Acts 11:27-30; Philemon 1:14

See: Heart (Metaphor)

How was someone a cheerful giver?

[9:7]

Paul wanted Christians to give cheerfully. He wanted Christians to give with joy, and to not hesitate when asked to help people (see: Romans 12:8).

See: Acts 20:35

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

Why did Paul write, “he has distributed his riches”?

[9:9]

Paul wrote the same thing that was written in Psalm 112:9. This psalm was about the righteous man who gives money to the poor. Some scholars think that Paul was writing about Christians who gave generously to poor people. Other scholars think that Paul was speaking about God giving blessings to Christians.

See: Proverbs 11:24-25; 19:17; 22:9; Luke 6:38

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Bless (Blessing)

What was “seed for sowing”?

[9:10]

When Paul wrote about “seed for sowing,” this was a metaphor. God makes plants grow well so that they produced seed for the following year’s crop. Therefore, God supplied the “seed for sowing”. In the same way, God allows Christians to sow “seed.” That is, Christians do good things for other Christians.

See: Isaiah 55:10-11; Hosea 10:12

See: Metaphor; Sow (Plant)

What did Paul write about “the harvest of your righteousness”?

[9:10]

When Paul wrote about the “harvest,” this was a metaphor. The harvest was when the farmer gathered in all fruit from which he had planted. In the same way there was also a harvest of righteousness. That is, when the Christians helped the poor Christians, this was good. When someone helped provide the needs of poor people, they obeyed God.

See: Philippians 4:14-19

See: Harvest; Righteous (Righteousness)

How were the Christians tested and proved?

[9:13]

Paul wrote that these Christians were tested and approved. Some scholars think Paul was saying the God approved of the things the Christians in Corinth did. That is, God wanted them to give to the Christians in Corinth. Other scholars think that Christians in Corinth will honor God because the Christian and Corinth honored God.

See: Test

What was the “confession of the gospel”?

[9:13]

Paul wrote about the confession of the gospel. He was writing about the Christians completely believing the teachings about Jesus, the messiah. Because they completely believed the gospel, they obeyed the things Jesus taught.

See: Hebrews 10:23

See: Confess (Confession); Gospel; Messiah (Christ)

2 Corinthians 9:1

General Information:

When Paul refers to Achaia, he is talking about a Roman province located in southern Greece where Corinth is located.

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues on the subject of giving. He wants to make sure that the collection of their offering for the needy believers in Jerusalem takes place before he comes so that it does not seem as though he takes advantage of them. He talks about how giving blesses the giver and glorifies God. the service for God's holy people

This refers to the collection of money to give to the believers in Jerusalem. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the ministry for the believers in Jerusalem"

2 Corinthians 9:2

Achaia has been getting ready

Here the word "Achaia" refers to the people who live in this province, and specifically to the people of the church in Corinth. Alternate translation: "the people of Achaia have been preparing"

2 Corinthians 9:3

the brothers

This refers to Titus and the two men who accompany him. our boasting about you may not be futile

Paul does not want others to think that the things that he had boasted about the Corinthians were false.

2 Corinthians 9:4

find you unprepared

"find you unprepared to give"

2 Corinthians 9:5

the brothers to come to you

From Paul's perspective, the brothers are going. Alternate translation: "the brothers to go to you"

not as something extorted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not as something that we have extorted from you" or "not as something that you gave us because we forced you to give it to us"

2 Corinthians 9:6

the one who sows ... reap a blessing

Paul uses the image of a farmer sowing seeds to describe the results of giving. As a farmer's harvest is based on how much he sows, so will God's blessings be little or much, based on how generously the Corinthians give.

2 Corinthians 9:7

give as he has planned in his heart

Here the word "heart" refers to the thoughts and emotions.

Alternate translation: "give as he has determined"

not reluctantly or under compulsion

This can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate

translation: "not because he feels guilty or because someone is forcing him to give"

for God loves a cheerful giver

God wants people to give gladly to help provide for fellow believers.

2 Corinthians 9:8

God is able to make all grace overflow for you

Grace is spoken of as if it were a physical object of which a person can have more than he can use. As a person gives financially to other believers, God also gives to the giver everything he needs. Alternate translation: "God is able to give you many things" or "God is able to give you very much"

grace

This refers here to the physical things a Christian needs, not to the need for God to save him from his sins.

so that you may multiply every good deed

"so that you may be able to do more and more good deeds"

2 Corinthians 9:9

It is as it is written

"This is just as it is written." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is just as the writer wrote"

2 Corinthians 9:10

He who supplies

"God who supplies"

bread for food

Here the word "bread" refers to food in general. Alternate translation: "food to eat"

will also supply and multiply your seed for sowing

Paul speaks of the Corinthians' possessions as if they were seeds and of giving to others as if they were sowing seeds. Alternate translation: "will also supply and multiply your possessions so that you can sow them by giving them to others"

He will increase the harvest of your righteousness

Paul compares the benefits that the Corinthians will receive from their generosity to that of a harvest. Alternate translation: "God will bless you even more for your righteousness"

the harvest of your righteousness

"the harvest that comes from your righteous actions." Here the word "righteousness" refers to the righteous actions of the Corinthians in giving their resources to the believers in Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 9:11

You will be enriched

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will enrich you"

This will bring about thanksgiving to God through us

The word this refers to the Corinthian's generosity.

Alternate translation: "Because of your generosity, those

who receive the gifts we bring them will thank God" or "When we give your gifts to those who need them, they will give thanks to God"

2 Corinthians 9:12

For carrying out this service

Here the word "service" refers to Paul and his companions bringing the contribution to the believers in Jerusalem.

Alternate translation: "For our carrying out this service for the believers in Jerusalem"

but it also is overflowing into many acts of thanksgiving to God

Paul speaks of the Corinthian believers' act of service as if it were a liquid of which there is more than a container can hold. Alternate translation: "It also causes people to do many deeds for which people will thank God"

2 Corinthians 9:13

Because of your being tested and proved by this service

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Because this service has tested and proven you"

you will also glorify God by obedience ... by the generosity of your contribution to them and to everyone

Paul says that the Corinthians will glorify God both by being faithful to Jesus and by giving generously to other believers who have need.

the generosity of your contribution

The abstract nouns "generosity" and "contribution" can be stated respectively as an adverb and a verb. Alternate translation: "what you have contributed generously" (contribution

This word refers here to a gift that is part of a larger gift that many people are giving.

2 Corinthians 9:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Corinthians 9:15

for his inexpressible gift

"for his gift, which words cannot describe." Possible meanings are 1) that this gift refers to "the very great grace" that God has given to the Corinthians, which has led them to be so generous or 2) that this gift refers to Jesus Christ, whom God gave to all believers.

Chapter 10

2 Corinthians 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 17.

In this chapter, Paul returns to defending his authority. He also compares the way he speaks and the way he writes.

Special concepts in this chapter

Boasting

"Boasting" is often thought of as bragging, which is not good. But in this letter "boasting" means confidently exulting or rejoicing.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

In verses 3-6, Paul uses many metaphors from war. He probably uses them as part of a larger metaphor about Christians being spiritually at war.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

"Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for a person's sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh)

Links:

[2 Corinthians 10:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 10

10:1-8

How did someone live according to the flesh?

[10:3]

Paul wrote about people living according to the flesh. Some scholars think Paul was writing about people doing the kinds of things that people who do not believe in God do. Other scholars think Paul was saying that even though he still has a body made of flesh, he did not have to do the sinful things he wanted to do. He did not live in the same way non-Christians live.

See: Romans 8:13

See: Flesh

How did someone wage war against the flesh?

[10:3]

When Paul used the words, "wage war according to the flesh," this was a metaphor. Paul wanted Christians to obey God.

He wanted Christians to fight against Satan and his demons, who tried to get Christians to sin.

See: Ephesians 6:11-17

See: Flesh; Satan (The Devil); Demon; Sin; Spiritual Warfare

What was a stronghold?

[10:4]

When Paul spoke about a “stronghold,” this was a metaphor. A stronghold was a place with high walls to protect against attack (see: Proverbs 21:22). In the same way, in spiritual warfare there were people and demons who opposed Christians as they tried to teach people about Jesus. These people and demons were stopped by believing in Jesus.

See: Hebrews 11:30

See: Metaphor; Spiritual Warfare; Demon

What was a high thing?

[10:5]

Scholars think that when Paul spoke about a “high thing” he was speaking about people who argued that people shouldn’t believe in Jesus. However, their arguments were not based on truth. Instead, their arguments were meant to deceive people into believing false teachings.

How does someone take every thought captive?

[10:5]

When Paul spoke about taking “every thought captive” he continued his use of the metaphor for warfare. Some scholars think that just like an army captured enemies, so Paul spoke the truth of God to those who were speaking lies. That is, he spoke truth to the crowds listening to the false teachers. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about making sure he thought the right things about the gospel.

See: 1 Corinthians 1:18-19; 3:19

See: Metaphor; Spiritual Warfare; Gospel

How was someone built up?

[10:8]

When Paul used the words, “build you up,” this was a metaphor. Paul was encouraging the Christians to know more about God, to love God more, and to obey God more. Paul wanted Christians to trust God more.

See: Romans 15:1-4; 1 Corinthians 14:12; 1 Thessalonians 5:11

10:9-11

Why did people say that Paul was weak?

[10:10]

Some people thought that Paul was weak. Some scholars think Paul was weak because he was often sick (see: Galatians 4:13-15). Others scholars think the people did not think Paul was a strong leader, and that he was not a powerful speaker (see: 2 Corinthians 11:6; Exodus 4:10).

10:12-18

Why did Paul write that he and those with him “will not boast beyond limits”?

[10:13]

God gave Paul permission to serve God in places where Paul was the first apostle to tell people about Jesus and begin churches. Since Paul told the Corinthians about Jesus, he lead them. Some scholars think Paul wanted to say that he would not boast about something another apostle did. That is, he would only boast about the things that God used him to do.

See: Romans 15:20

See: Apostle; Church

What were the regions beyond?

[10:16]

Corinth was the farthest west that Paul went to tell people about Jesus. He also wanted to go further west to Rome and Spain.

See: Acts 19:21; Romans 15:23-29

See Map: Rome; Spain

What was “another’s area”?

[10:16]

Paul wrote about another’s area. He did not want to go to place someone else had already told people the gospel.

See: Gospel

How did someone “boast in the Lord”?

[10:17]

See: 2 Corinthians 1:12

Why did Paul write, “one who recommends himself”?

[10:18]

Paul wrote, "one who recommends himself." He was writing about a person who praised himself for selfish reasons. That is, they told other people how great they were.
See: Proverbs 21:2; 27:2; John 12:42-43

2 Corinthians 10:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul shifts the subject from giving to affirming his authority to teach as he does.

by the humility and gentleness of Christ

The word "humility" and "gentleness" are abstract nouns, and can be expressed in another way. Alternate translation: "by Christ, who is humble and gentle"

2 Corinthians 10:2

we are walking

The word "walking" is a metaphor for the way a person lives his life. "we are acting"

according to the flesh

The word "flesh" is a metonym for the mortal body, which in turn is a metaphor for the person himself. See how you translated it in [2 Corinthians 1:17]

2 Corinthians 10:3

we walk in the flesh

Here "walk" is an metaphor for "live" and "flesh" is a metonym for physical life. Alternate translation: "we live our lives in physical bodies"

the flesh

This phrase is a metonym for the way mortal people do things. See how you translated it in [2 Corinthians 1:17]

we do not make war

Paul speaks of his trying to persuade the Corinthians to believe him and not the false teachers as if he were fighting a physical war. These words should be translated literally.

make war according to the flesh

Possible meanings are 1) the word "flesh" is a metonym for physical life. Alternate translation: "fight against our enemies using physical weapons" or 2) the word "flesh" is a metonym for sinful human nature. Alternate translation: "make war in sinful ways"

2 Corinthians 10:4

the weapons we fight with ... bring misleading arguments to nothing

Paul speaks of godly wisdom that shows human wisdom to be false as if it were a weapon with which he is destroying an enemy stronghold. Alternate translation: "the weapons we fight with ... show people that what our enemies say is completely wrong"

we fight

Paul speaks of his trying to persuade the Corinthians to believe him and not the false teachers as if he were fighting a physical war. These words should be translated literally.

are not fleshly

Possible meanings are 1) the word "fleshly" is a metonym for merely physical. Alternate translation: "are not physical" or 2) the word "fleshly" is a metonym for sinful human nature. Alternate translation: "are not sinful" or "do not enable us to do wrong"

2 Corinthians 10:5

every high thing that rises up

Paul is still speaking with the metaphor of a war, as if "the knowledge of God" were an army and "every high thing"

were a wall that people had made to keep the army out.

Alternate translation: "every false argument that proud people think of to protect themselves"

every high thing

"everything that proud people do"

rises up against the knowledge of God

Paul speaks of arguments as if they were a wall standing high against an army. The words "rises up" mean "stands tall," not that the "high thing" is floating up into the air.

Alternate translation: "people use so they will not have to know who God is"

We take every thought captive into obedience to Christ

Paul speaks of people's thoughts as if they were enemy soldiers whom he captures in battle. Alternate translation:

"We show how all the false ideas those people have are wrong and teach the people to obey Christ"

2 Corinthians 10:6

punish every act of disobedience

The words "act of disobedience" are a metonym for the people who commit those acts. Alternate translation: "punish every one of you who disobeys us"

2 Corinthians 10:7

Look at what is clearly in front of you.

Possible meanings are 1) this is a command or 2) this is a statement, "You are looking only at what you can see with your eyes." Some think this is a rhetorical question that may also be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Are you looking at what is clearly in front of you?" or "You seem unable to see what is clearly in front of you."

let him remind himself

"he needs to remember"

that just as he is Christ's, so also are we

"that we belong to Christ just as much as he does"

2 Corinthians 10:8

to build you up and not to destroy you

Paul speaks of helping the Corinthians to know Christ better as if he were constructing a building. Alternate translation: "to help you become better followers of Christ and not to discourage you so you stop following him"

2 Corinthians 10:9

I am terrifying you

"I am trying to frighten you"

2 Corinthians 10:10

serious and powerful

"demanding and forceful"

his bodily presence is weak

"when he is here physically, he is not impressive"

2 Corinthians 10:11

Let such people be aware

"I want such people to be aware"

what we are in the words of our letters when we are absent is what we will be in our actions when we are there

"we will do the same things when we are there with you that we have written about in our letters while we have been away from you"

we ... our

All instances of these words refer to Paul's ministry team but not the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 10:12

We are not so bold as to group ourselves ... praise ourselves

"Bold people would group themselves ... praise themselves, but we are not that bold, so we do not." Paul is using irony here: most people think of boldness as a good thing, but Paul is saying that those who have the boldness to praise themselves are doing wrong.

to group ourselves or compare ourselves with those

"to say we are as good as those"

they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with each other

Paul is saying much the same thing twice.

they measure themselves by one another

Paul is speaking of goodness as though it were something whose length people could measure. Alternate translation: "they look at each other and try to see who is better"

have no insight

"show everyone that they do not know anything"

2 Corinthians 10:13

General Information:

Paul speaks of the authority he has as if it were a land over which he rules, those things over which he has authority as being within the borders or "limits" of his land, and those things not under his authority as being beyond the "limits." will not boast beyond limits. Instead

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "will not boast about things over which we have no authority. Instead" or "will boast only about things over which we have authority. And" within the limits of what God

"about things under the authority that God"

limits that reach even as far as you

Paul speaks of the authority he has as if it were a land over which he rules. Alternate translation: "and you are within the border of our authority"

2 Corinthians 10:14

we are not overextending ourselves

"we are not doing more than we should." Possible meanings are 1) "we are not boasting more than we should" or 2) "we are not claiming to have more authority than we do."

2 Corinthians 10:15

We have not boasted beyond limits about the labors of others

This is an idiom. See how similar words were translated in [2 Corinthians 10:13]

our hope is that

"we hope that" or "we desire that" or "we trust that"

2 Corinthians 10:16

another's area

"an area God has assigned to someone else"

2 Corinthians 10:17

boast in the Lord

"boast about what the Lord has done"

2 Corinthians 10:18

recommends himself

This means that he provides enough evidence for each person who hears him to decide whether he is right or wrong. See how "recommend ourselves" is translated in 2 Corinthians 4:2.

who is approved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom the Lord approves"

but the one whom the Lord recommends

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "but it is the one whom the Lord recommends who is approved"

Chapter 11

2 Corinthians 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul continues defending his authority.

Special concepts in this chapter

False teaching

The Corinthians were quick to accept false teachers who taught things about Jesus and the gospel that were different from what Paul taught and that were not true. Unlike these false teachers, Paul sacrificially served the Corinthians. (See: goodnews)

Light

Light is commonly used in the New Testament as a metaphor. Paul here uses light to indicate the revealing of God and his righteousness. Darkness describes sin. Sin seeks to remain hidden from God. (See: light, righteous and darkness and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul begins this chapter with an extended metaphor. He compares himself to a father who is giving his daughter, a pure virgin, as a bride to her bridegroom. Wedding practices change depending on the cultural background. But the idea of helping to present someone as a grown and holy child is explicitly pictured in this passage.

Irony

This chapter is full of irony. Paul is hoping to shame the Corinthian believers with his irony.

"You tolerate these things well enough!" Paul thinks that they should not tolerate the way the false apostles treated them. Paul does not think they are really apostles at all.

The statement, "For you gladly put up with fools. You are wise yourselves!" means that the Corinthian believers think they were very wise but Paul does not agree.

"I will say to our shame that we were too weak to do that." Paul is speaking about behavior he thinks is very wrong in order to avoid it. He is speaking as if he thinks he is wrong for not doing it. He uses a rhetorical question also as irony. "Did I sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted?"

Rhetorical questions

In refuting the false apostles, who claim to be superior, Paul uses a series of rhetorical questions. Each question is coupled with an answer: "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as though I were out of my mind.) I am more."

He also uses a series of rhetorical questions to empathize with his converts: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who has been caused to stumble, and I do not burn?"

"Are they servants of Christ?"

This is sarcasm, a special type of irony used to mock or insult. Paul does not believe these false teachers actually serve Christ, only that they pretend to do so.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A "paradox" is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This sentence in verse 30 is a paradox: "If I must boast, I will boast about what shows my weaknesses." Paul does not explain why he would boast in his weakness until 2 Corinthians 12:9. ([2 Corinthians 11:30](#))

Links:

[2 Corinthians 11:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 11

11:1-15

How did Paul want people to put up with him?

[11:1]

The words, "put up with me" meant that Paul was asking the Christians to be patient with him as he spoke. That is, that they would tolerate what he was about to say.

What was foolishness?

[11:1]

Paul wrote about foolishness. Scholars think that Paul thought it necessary to speak in a silly and lighthearted way about his jealousy toward the Christians in Corinth.

What was "godly jealousy"?

[11:2]

Paul said he had a "godly jealousy" for the Christians in Corinth. Some scholars think he was feeling that same kind of feelings that God has for his children. Other scholars think Paul was expressing his great desire to guard the honor of the Christians in Corinth.

See: Godly (Godliness); Zeal (Zealous, Zealot); Jealous (Jealousy)

Why did Paul write, "I promised you in marriage to one husband"?

[11:2]

When Paul wrote about "marriage to one husband," he used a metaphor. In ancient Israel, parents often promised their daughter to be married to a man. She might wait a year or more to get married. In the Law of Moses, it was the duty of the father to ensure that his daughter was still a virgin when she got married (see: Deuteronomy 22:13-21). In the same way, Paul was needed to protect the church. He helped the church to do the right things and think the right things about God. He wanted the Christians in Corinth to live in the right way when Jesus returns to the earth.

See: Ephesians 5:25-33

See: Marriage; Metaphor; Law of Moses; Virgin; Church; Jesus' Return to Earth

How could the Corinthians' thoughts be "led astray"?

[11:3]

Paul wrote about the Christians in Corinth being led astray. Scholars think Paul that false teachers got some people to turn away from hearing the truth. That is, they began to believe the wrong things and separated themselves from being with other Christians.

See: 2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9

See: False Teacher

How did someone proclaim another Jesus?

[11:4]

Paul wrote about people proclaiming another Jesus. Scholars do not think Paul was speaking about another person named Jesus. These people were talking about Jesus but they said he taught different things than Jesus taught.

How did someone receive a different spirit?

[11:4]

Paul wrote about people receiving a different spirit. The word “spirit”(πνεῦμα/g4151) could refer to the Holy Spirit or another type of spirit. Some scholars think Paul was speaking about people receiving a “spirit” that was not from God. Other scholars think the “different spirit” was simply a way of living that was different from what Paul taught.

See: 1 Corinthians 12:3

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit

Who were the “super-apostles”?

[11:5]

Paul wrote about super apostles. Scholars do not think there were super apostles. Paul was using irony. They think Paul was talking about false teachers, those who thought they were better than the apostles. These false teachers thought they were far better than Paul.

See: Irony; Apostle

Why did Paul write that he was “untrained in giving speeches”?

[11:6]

Paul wrote that he was “untrained in giving speeches.”

Some scholars think Paul was not trained to speak to large groups of people. Some scholars think Paul was a good speaker, but he spoke in a simple way so that people could understand him (see: 1 Corinthians 2:4-5). Some scholars think Paul was not a good speaker and perhaps he could not speak clearly.

Why did Paul write, “I robbed other churches”?

[11:8]

Paul wrote, “I robbed other churches.” Some scholars think this is a metaphor. Paul wanted to say that he took money from other church so that he could serve the Christians in Corinth without being paid. Other scholars think that Paul accepted money from other churches that the Corinthian church should have given to him.

See: Philippians 4:15-16

How did Paul keep himself from being a burden to the Christians in Corinth?

[11:9]

Paul kept himself from being a burden to the Christians in Corinth. Paul meant that he did not want to cause problems by taking money from the Corinthians. He wanted to make sure the Corinthians had enough money for their own needs.

See: Acts 20:33-34; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9

How will Paul’s boasting of mine not be silenced?

[11:10]

Paul wrote that his boasting will not be silenced. Some scholars think Paul meant that just as he had received the message of the gospel at no cost, so he would preach the gospel at no charge to others. Other scholars think that Paul could not be stopped from telling others that God faithfully provided for all of his needs in the preaching of the gospel.

See: 1 Corinthians 9:15-18

See: Gospel; Preach (Preacher)

How did Satan disguise himself as an angel of light?

[11:14]

Satan disguised himself as an angel of light. Scholars think Paul was not writing about what Satan looks like. Rather, the things Satan taught through the false apostles were made to look and sound like the truth.

See: 1 Kings 22:19-23; Galatians 1:8

See: Angel; Satan (The Devil); Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Apostle

What was the “fate” of the false teachers?

[11:15]

God will judge the false teachers. He will condemn them and send them to hell to be punished.

See: Psalm 62:12; Romans 2:6-11; Philippians 3:18-19

See: False Teacher; Judge (Judgment); Condemn (Condemnation); Hell; Punish (Punishment)

11:16-31

What did it mean to “boast according to the flesh”?

[11:18]

To “boast according to the flesh” meant to boast according to human standards. That is, someone wanted to be honored because of the things he said or did. Scholars think Paul spoke in this way because this is the way these people would understand Paul.

See: Boast; Flesh

Why did Paul write, “you put up with someone if he enslaves you”?

[11:20]

When Paul said, “you put up with someone if he enslaves you”, he used a metaphor. Slaves needed to do everything their masters commanded them to do. Paul was speaking about false teachers who were forcing the Corinthians to obey the

things they taught and wanted money. However, Paul chose to be a servant to the church and not its master (see: 2 Corinthians 1:24; 4:5). Paul did not want to be served, he served others.

See: Galatians 2:4-5; 5:1

See: Metaphor; Serve; Church

What were slaps in the face?

[11:20]

A slap in the face is when someone hits a person on the side of their face as an insult. However, a slap in the face was also a metaphor. It meant to openly insult another person. Masters were known to slap their slaves. Some scholars think that false teachers literally hit their disciples in Corinth. Other scholars think that they insulted their disciples but they did not physically hit their disciples.

See: Disciple

What was meant by the words, “forty lashes minus one”?

[11:24]

This was a punishment of hitting someone across the back 39 times with a leather whip. It was considered to be the worst punishment the Jewish leaders used, other than death. This was a very severe punishment.

See: Deuteronomy 25:1-3

See: Law of Moses; Punish (Punishment)

How was someone “beaten with rods”?

[11:25]

The Roman government punished people by hitting people with rods. A rod was a straight stick about 60 centimeters long.

See: Acts 16:22-23

See: Punish (Punishment)

What did it mean to be “stoned”?

[11:25]

This was a type of execution. They killed the guilty person by throwing stones at him. In ancient Israel, only the worst criminals were punished in this way. Paul was thinking about what happened in Lystra during his first missionary journey (see: Acts 14:19).

Advice to translators: An execution is when the government kills someone to punish them for breaking the law.

See: Leviticus 20:2; Deuteronomy 13:10-11; 17:2-7; Acts 7:58-59

See: Paul's Missionary Journeys

See Map: Lystra

What was the “open sea”?

[11:25]

It is not known when this shipwreck happened. Paul wanted people to know that his ship sank out of sight of land and he survived by floating for a day and a night before being rescued. At a later time, Paul's ship sank within sight of land (see: Acts 27:41-44).

What was meant by the word “nakedness”?

[11:27]

Someone was naked when they did not have enough clothing to keep warm and covered in the cold weather.

See: 1 Corinthians 4:11

What did “stumble” mean?

[11:29]

See: Matthew 18:6-7; Revelation 2:14

See: Metaphor; Stumble (Stumbling Block)

What did it mean to “burn”?

[11:29]

When someone burned in this way, they felt a very strong emotion. This was a metaphor. Some scholars think Paul was very angry because false teachers caused his disciples to sin. Other scholars think Paul really wanted to help the Christians in Corinth, because of his love for them.

See: Nehemiah 5:6-13

See: Metaphor; Disciple; Sin

2 Corinthians 11:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to affirm his apostleship.

put up with me in some foolishness

"allow me to act like a fool"

2 Corinthians 11:2

jealous ... jealousy

These words speak of a good, strong desire that the Corinthians be faithful to Christ, and that no one should persuade them to leave him.

I promised you in marriage to one husband. I promised to present you as a pure virgin to Christ

Paul speaks of his care for the Corinthian believers as if he had promised another man that he would prepare his daughter to marry him and he is most concerned that he be able to keep his promise to the man. Alternate translation: "I was like a father who promised to present his daughter to one husband. I promised to keep you as a pure virgin so I could give you to Christ"

2 Corinthians 11:3

But I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts might be led astray, away from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ

"But I am afraid that somehow your thoughts might be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ just as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness"

your thoughts might be led astray, away from

Paul speaks of thoughts as if they were animals that people could lead along the wrong path. Alternate translation:

"someone might cause you to believe lies and not keep"

2 Corinthians 11:4

For suppose that ... preached. Or suppose that ... received. Or suppose that ... received. You put

Paul lists three situations that are likely to happen or may have actually happened. These sentences can be combined into one sentence. Alternate translation: "For when ... preached, or when ... received, or when ... received, you put"

a different spirit than what you received. Or suppose that you receive a different gospel than the one you received

"a different spirit than the Holy Spirit, or a different gospel than you received from us"

put up with these things

"deal with these things." See how these words were translated in 2 Corinthians 11:1.

2 Corinthians 11:5

those so-called super-apostles

Paul uses irony here to show that those teachers are less important than people say there are. Alternate translation: "those teachers whom some think are better than anyone else"

2 Corinthians 11:6

I am not untrained in knowledge

This negative phrase emphasizes the positive truth that he is trained in knowledge. The abstract noun "knowledge" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "I am certainly trained in knowledge" or "I am trained to know what they know"

2 Corinthians 11:7

Did I sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted?

Paul is beginning to claim that he treated the Corinthians well. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement, if necessary. Alternate translation: "I think we agree that I did not sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted"

freely preached the gospel of God to you

"preached the gospel of God to you without expecting anything from you in return"

2 Corinthians 11:8

I robbed other churches

This is an exaggeration to emphasize that Paul received

money from churches who were not obligated to give to him. Alternate translation: "In a way, I robbed other churches" or "It was as if I robbed other churches"

I could serve you

The full meaning of this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I could serve you at no cost"

2 Corinthians 11:9

In everything I have kept myself from being a burden to you

"I have never in any way been a financial burden to you."

Paul speaks of someone for whom one has to spend money as if they were heavy items that people have to carry. The full meaning of this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I have done all I can to make sure you do not have to spend money so that I can be with you"

the brothers who came

These "brothers" were probably all male.

I will continue to do that

"I never will be a burden to you"

2 Corinthians 11:10

As the truth of Christ is in me, this

Paul is emphasizing that because his readers know that he tells the truth about Christ, they can know that he is telling the truth here. "As surely as you know that I truly know and proclaim the truth about Christ, you can know that what I am about to say is true. This"

this boasting of mine will not be silenced

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will be able to make me stop boasting and stay silent"

this boasting of mine

This refers to what Paul spoke about starting in (2 Corinthians 11:7).

parts of Achaia

"regions of Achaia." The word "parts" speaks of areas of land, not political divisions.

2 Corinthians 11:11

Why? Because I do not love you?

Paul uses rhetorical questions to emphasize love for the Corinthians. These questions can be combined or made into a statement. Alternate translation: "Is it because I do not love you that I do not want to be a burden to you?" or "I will continue to keep you from paying for my needs because this shows others that I love you"

God knows

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "God knows I love you"

2 Corinthians 11:12

Connecting Statement:

As Paul continues to affirm his apostleship, he talks about false apostles.

so that I may cut off the opportunity of those who want an opportunity to be found to be like us in the things they boast about

Paul speaks of a false claim that his enemies state as if it were something that he can cut off. Alternate translation: "so that they have no reason to boast that they are doing the same work that we are doing"

to be found to be like us

"to appear to be like us" or "to appear to be doing the same work we are doing"

us in the things they boast about

"us, as they are boasting that they are"

2 Corinthians 11:13

For such people

"I do what I do because people like them"

deceitful workers

"dishonest workers"

disguise themselves as apostles

"are not apostles, but they try to make themselves look like apostles"

2 Corinthians 11:14

this is no surprise

By stating this in a negative form Paul is emphasizing that the Corinthians should expect to meet many "false apostles"

Satan disguises himself as an angel of light

"Satan is not an angel of light, but he tries to make himself look like an angel of light"

an angel of light

Here "light" is a metaphor for righteousness. Alternate translation: "an angel of righteousness"

2 Corinthians 11:15

It is no great surprise if

By stating this in a negative form Paul is emphasizing that the Corinthians should expect to meet many "false apostles" his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness

"his servants are not servants of righteousness, but they try to make themselves look like servants of righteousness"

2 Corinthians 11:16

receive me as a fool so I may boast a little

"receive me as you would receive a fool: let me talk, and consider my boasting the words of a fool"

2 Corinthians 11:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Corinthians 11:18

many people boast according to the flesh

These people "boast" in the bad sense of claiming to be better people than they really are.

according to the flesh

Here the metonym "flesh" refers to man in his sinful nature and his achievements. Alternate translation: "about their own human achievements"

I will also boast

Paul uses the word "boast" ironically. See how you translated "boasting" in [2 Corinthians 1:12]

2 Corinthians 11:19

put up with fools

"accept fools." See how a similar phrase was translated in 2 Corinthians 11:1.

You are wise yourselves!

Paul is shaming the Corinthians by using irony. Alternate translation: "You think you are wise, but you are not!"

2 Corinthians 11:20

enslaves you

Paul uses exaggeration when he speaks of someone forcing others to obey rules as if he were forcing them to be slaves. Alternate translation: "makes you follow rules he has thought of"

he devours you

Paul speaks of the super-apostles' taking people's material

resources as if they were eating the people themselves.

Alternate translation: "he takes all your property"

takes advantage of you

A person takes advantage of another person by knowing things that the other person does not and using that knowledge to help himself and harm the other person.

2 Corinthians 11:21

I will say to our shame that we were too weak to do that

"I shamefully admit that we were not bold enough to treat you like that." Paul is using irony to tell the Corinthians that it was not because he was weak that he treated them well.

Alternate translation: "I am not ashamed to say that we had the power to harm you, but we treated you well"

Yet if anyone is bold ... I too will be bold

"Whatever anyone boasts about ... I will dare to boast about it also." Paul's boldness here is the boldness to boast.

2 Corinthians 11:22

Are they Hebrews? ... Are they Israelites? ... Are they descendants of Abraham?

Paul is asking questions the Corinthians might be asking and then answering them to emphasize that he is as much a Jew as the super-apostles are. You should keep the question-and-answer form if possible. Alternate translation: "They want you to think they are important and to believe what they say because they are Hebrews and Israelites and descendants of Abraham. Well, so am I."

2 Corinthians 11:23

Connecting Statement:

As Paul continues to confirm his apostleship, he states specific things that have happened to him since he became a believer.

Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as though I were insane.) I am more

Paul is asking questions the Corinthians might be asking and then answering them to emphasize that he is as much a Jew as the super-apostles are. You should keep the question-and-answer form if possible. Alternate translation: "They say they are servants of Christ—I speak as though I were insane—but I am more"

as though I were insane

"as though I were unable to think well"

I am more

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "I am more a servant of Christ than they are" in harder labor

"I have worked harder than they have"

in more prisons

"I have been in prison more often"

in beatings beyond measure, in facing

This is an idiom, and is exaggerated to emphasize that he had been beaten many, many times. Alternate translation:

"I have been beaten very many times, and I have faced" or "I have been beaten too many times to bother counting, and I have faced"

in facing many deadly dangers

"and I have almost died many times"

2 Corinthians 11:24

forty lashes minus one

This was a common expression for being whipped 39 times.

In Jewish law the most they were allowed to whip a person at one time was forty lashes. So they commonly whipped a person thirty-nine times so that they would not be guilty of whipping someone too many times if they accidentally counted wrong.

2 Corinthians 11:25

I was beaten with rods

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people beat me with wooden rods"

I was stoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people threw stones at me until they thought I was dead"

I have spent a night and a day on the open sea

Paul was referring to floating in the water after the ship he was on sank.

2 Corinthians 11:26

in danger from false brothers

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "and in danger from people who claimed to be brothers in Christ, but who betrayed us"

2 Corinthians 11:27

I have served in labor

The words "I have served" have been added to shorten the sentence that begins in [2 Corinthians 11:24](#). You can end [2 Corinthians 11:26](#) with a comma and begin this verse with the words "in labor."

labor and toil

This hendiadys emphasizes how hard Paul worked.

Alternate translation: "extremely hard work"

nakedness

Here Paul exaggerates to show his need of clothing.

Alternate translation: "without enough clothing to keep me warm"

2 Corinthians 11:28

there is the daily pressure of my concern for all the churches

Here Paul's concern for the churches is spoken of as if it were a heavy object weighing him down. Alternate translation: "I am so concerned everyday for all the churches that I feel like I have a heavy object weighing me down"

2 Corinthians 11:29

Who is weak, and I am not weak?

The word "weak" may refer to a spiritual condition or to a

physical condition. No one is sure what Paul is speaking of, so it is best to use the same word here. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Whenever anyone is weak, I feel that weakness also." or "I am weak whenever anyone else is weak."

Who has been caused to stumble, and I do not burn?

Paul uses this question to express his anger when a fellow believer is caused to sin. Here his anger is spoken of as a burning inside him. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Whenever anyone causes a brother to sin, I am angry."

has been caused to stumble

Paul speaks of sin as if it were tripping over something and then falling. Alternate translation: "has been led to sin" or "has thought that God would permit him to sin because of something that someone else did"

I do not burn

Paul speaks of being angry about sin as if he had a fire inside his body. Alternate translation: "I am not angry about it"

2 Corinthians 11:30

what shows my weaknesses

"what shows how weak I am"

2 Corinthians 11:31

I am not lying

Paul is using litotes to emphasize that he is telling the truth. Alternate translation: "I am telling the absolute truth"

2 Corinthians 11:32

the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city

"the governor whom King Aretas had appointed had told men to guard the city"

to arrest me

"so that they might catch and arrest me"

2 Corinthians 11:33

I was lowered in a basket

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some people put me in a basket and lowered me to the ground"

from his hands

Paul uses the governor's hands as metonymy for the governor. Alternate translation: "from the governor"

Chapter 12

2 Corinthians 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul continues defending his authority in this chapter.

When Paul was with the Corinthians, he proved himself to be an apostle by his powerful deeds. He had not ever taken anything from them. Now that he is coming for the third time, he will still not take anything. He hopes that when he visits, he will not need to be harsh with them. (See: apostle)

Special concepts in this chapter

Paul's vision

Paul now defends his authority by telling about a wonderful vision of heaven. Although he speaks in the third person in verses 2-5, verse 7 indicates that he was the person who experienced the vision. It was so great a vision that God gave him a physical handicap to keep him humble. (See: heaven)

Third heaven

Many scholars believe the "third" heaven is the dwelling place of God. This is because Scripture also uses "heaven" to

refer to the sky (the "first" heaven) and the universe (the "second" heaven).

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses many rhetorical questions as he defends himself against his enemies who accused him: "For how were you less important than the rest of the churches, except that I was not a burden to you?" "Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same way? Did we not walk in the same steps?" and "Do you think all of this time we have been defending ourselves to you?"

Sarcasm

Paul uses sarcasm, a special type of irony, when he reminds them how he had helped them at no cost. He says, "Forgive me for this wrong!" He also uses regular irony when he says: "But, since I am so crafty, I am the one who caught you by deceit." He uses it to introduce his defense against this accusation by showing how impossible it was to be true.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A "paradox" is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This sentence in verse 5 is a paradox: "I will not boast, except about my weaknesses." Most people do not boast about being weak. This sentence in verse 10 is also a paradox: "For whenever I am weak, then I am strong." In verse 9, Paul explains why both of these statements are true.

([2 Corinthians 12:5](#))

Links:

[2 Corinthians 12:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 12

12:1-10

Why did Paul write that he must boast, "but nothing is gained by it"?

[12:1]

Scholars think that when Paul said, "but nothing is gained by it," he meant that boasting about the things he did would not help other Christians.

Why did Paul say, "I know a man"?

[12:2]

Scholars think when Paul wrote, "I know a man" he was speaking about himself. He did this so as not to take any credit for the visions and the things God reveal to him.

See: Vision; Reveal (Revelation)

He was someone in the body or out of the body?

[12:2]

When the Jews had visions of heaven, they often said that their bodies travelled to heaven. Paul did not know if his body went to heaven or whether his spirit left his body.

See: Revelation 4:1-2

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Vision; Heaven

How was Paul "caught up"?

[12:2]

When Paul was "caught up" (ἁρπάζω/g0726), he was suddenly picked up and moved.

See: Acts 8:39; 1 Thessalonians 4:17

What was the "third heaven"?

[12:2]

See: Heaven

What was "paradise"?

[12:4]

Some scholars think "paradise" (παράδεισος/g3857) originally meant a garden, and the word was applied by the Jews to the Garden of Eden (see: Genesis 2). Other scholars think that "paradise" is heaven.

See: Luke 23:43; Revelation 2:7

See: Heaven

What were "things too sacred for anyone to say"?

[12:4]

Some scholars think the "things too sacred for anyone to say" were holy things in heaven that were not permitted to be spoken about on earth. Other scholars think the "things too sacred for anyone to say" were things that could not be explained using human language.

See: Revelation 14:3

See: Mystery; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Heaven

What was the “thorn in the flesh”?

[12:7]

When Paul used the words “thorn in the flesh,” he used a metaphor. A “thorn”(σκόλοψ/g4647) was a small piece of plant or a wooden splinter. Scholars think Paul had an ongoing physical problem or illness (see: Galatians 4:13).

See: Metaphor

What was the “messenger from Satan”?

[12:7]

Paul wrote about a “messenger”(ἄγγελος/g0032) from Satan. Some scholars think that it was a demon. Other scholars think it was a person who opposed Paul and served Satan (see: 2 Corinthians 11:13-15).

See: Job 2:7; Luke 13:16

See: Satan (The Devil); Demon

12:11-13

Who were the “super-apostles”?

[12:11]

Paul wrote about “super-apostles.” These were false teachers who said they were greater than Paul (see: 2 Corinthians - Introduction; 11:5). Fewer scholars think Paul was speaking about the greatest apostles, that is, Peter, James, and John.

See: Apostle

What were the “true signs of an apostle”?

[12:12]

Scholars think there were a variety of “signs”(σημεῖον/g4592) that showed a person to be an apostle. They think a true apostle was one who taught the truth about Jesus and the things they taught helped people to live in a way that honors God (see: Acts 2:36-41). These signs also included healings and various miracles (see: Romans 15:17-19).

See: 1 Corinthians 2:4; 4:19-20

See: Apostle; Sign; Miracle

12:14-18

What was the “third time”?

[12:14]

Paul planned to visit Corinth a third time (see: 2 Corinthians - Introduction).

Why did Paul mean by saying he “will not be a burden”?

[12:14]

Paul wrote that he “will not be a burden” to the Christians in Corinth. That is, he would not ask them for money.

How was someone “crafty” and a man of “deceit”?

[12:16]

Scholars think Paul refuted people who opposed him. These people lied about Paul. They said he was “crafty” and a man of “deceit.” They said Paul lied and tried to trick people. This is irony.

See: 2 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:3-5

See: Irony

What was Titus doing?

[12:18]

See 2 Corinthians – Introduction.

Who was the “other brother”?

[12:18]

Paul did not name this man. This man was a Christian, but not someone who often helped Paul.

How did someone “take advantage” of another person?

[12:18]

When someone took advantage of another person, they cheated people and took their money.

See: 2 Corinthians 7:2; Colossians 2:8

12:19-21

What was “in the sight of God”?

[12:19]

Scholars think that “in the sight of God” meant that Paul lived his life as if God was watching him. God knew everything Paul said, thought, and how Paul lived his life.

See: Romans 1:9; Galatians 1:20; 1 Thessalonians 2:5, 10

What was “lustful indulgence”?

[12:21]

“Lustful indulgence”(ἀσέλγεια/g0766) was when someone did every sin they wanted to do. They did much sexual immorality. Scholars think that “lustful indulgence” also described a person who was totally selfish and did not care

about God or other people.

See: Galatians 5:19; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

See: Sexual Immorality

2 Corinthians 12:1

Connecting Statement:

In defending the apostleship that God gave him, Paul continues to state specific things that have happened to him since he became a believer.

even if it is unprofitable

"even if boasting is does not do any good"

I will go on to

"I will continue talking, but now about"

visions and revelations from the Lord

Possible meanings are 1) Paul uses the words "visions" and "revelations" to mean the same thing in hendiadys for emphasis. Alternate translation: "things that the Lord has allowed only me to see" or 2) Paul is speaking of two different things. Alternate translation: "secret things that the Lord has let me see with my eyes and other secrets that he has told me about"

2 Corinthians 12:2

I know a man in Christ

Paul is actually speaking of himself as if he were speaking of someone else, but this should be translated literally if possible.

whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know

Paul continues to describe himself as if this happened to another person. "I do not know if this man was in his physical body or in his spiritual body"

the third heaven

This refers to the dwelling place of God rather than the sky or outer space (the planets, stars, and the universe).

2 Corinthians 12:3

General Information:

Paul continues to speak of himself as though he were speaking of someone else.

2 Corinthians 12:4

was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words

This continues Paul's account of what happened to "this man"

caught up

suddenly and forcefully held and taken

paradise

Possible meanings are 1) heaven or 2) the third heaven or 3) a special place in heaven.

inexpressible words

Possible meanings of "inexpressible" are that 1) Paul means something other than "it is unlawful for people to speak" these words, and so people are unable to communicate the ideas expressed in the words or 2) Paul means the same thing as "it is unlawful for people to speak" these words, emphasizing that God does not permit people to speak the words.

2 Corinthians 12:5

of such a person

"of that person"

I will not boast, except about my weaknesses

This double negative emphasizes that Paul will boast only

about his weaknesses. It can be stated in positive form.

Alternate translation: "I will boast only of my weaknesses"

2 Corinthians 12:6

no one will think more of me than what he sees in me or hears from me

"no one will give me more credit than what he sees in me or hears from me"

2 Corinthians 12:7

General Information:

This verse reveals that Paul was speaking about himself beginning in 2 Corinthians 12:2.

Connecting Statement:

As Paul defends his apostleship, he tells of the weakness that God gave him to keep him humble.

because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations

"because those revelations were so much greater than anything anyone else had ever seen"

a thorn in the flesh was given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God gave me a thorn in the flesh" or "God allowed me to have a thorn in the flesh"

a thorn in the flesh

Here Paul's physical problems are compared to a thorn piercing his flesh. Alternate translation: "an affliction" or "a physical problem"

a messenger from Satan

"a servant of Satan"

2 Corinthians 12:8

Three times

Paul put these words at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize that he had prayed many times about his "thorn" (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Lord about this

"Lord about this thorn in the flesh," or "Lord about this affliction"

2 Corinthians 12:9

My grace is enough for you

"I will be kind to you, and that is all you need"

for power is made perfect in weakness

"for my power works best when you are weak"

the power of Christ might reside on me

Paul speaks of Christ's power as if it were a tent built over him. Possible meanings are 1) "people might see that I have the power of Christ" or 2) "I might truly have the power of Christ."

2 Corinthians 12:10

I am content for Christ's sake in weaknesses ... situations

Possible meanings are 1) "I am content in weakness ... situations if these things come because I belong to Christ" or 2) "I am content in weakness ... if these things cause more people to know Christ."

in weaknesses

"when I am weak"

in insults

"when people try to make me angry by saying that I am a bad person"

in troubles

"when I am suffering"

distressing situations

"when there is trouble"

For whenever I am weak, then I am strong

Paul is saying that when he is no longer strong enough to do what needs to be done, Christ, who is more powerful than Paul could ever be, will work through Paul to do what needs to be done. However, it would be best to translate these words literally, if your language allows.

2 Corinthians 12:11

Connecting Statement:

To strengthen them, Paul reminds the believers in Corinth of the true signs of an apostle and of his humility while before them.

I have become a fool

"I am acting like a fool"

You forced me to this

"You forced me to talk this way"

I should have been praised by you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it is praise that you should have given me"

praised

"commended"

For I was not at all inferior to

By using the negative form, Paul is saying strongly that those Corinthians who think that he is inferior are wrong. Alternate translation: "For I am just as good as"

super-apostles

Paul uses irony here to show that those teachers are less important than people say they are. See how this is translated in [2 Corinthians 11:5]

2 Corinthians 12:12

The true signs of an apostle were performed

This can be stated in active form, with emphasis on the "signs." Alternate translation: "It is the true signs of an apostle that I performed"

signs ... signs

Use the same word both times.

with all perseverance

"with as much perseverance as we had" or "with great perseverance"

signs and wonders and miracles

These are the "true signs of an apostle" that Paul performed "with complete perseverance."

2 Corinthians 12:13

how were you less important than the rest of the churches, except that ... you?

Paul is emphasizing that the Corinthians are wrong to accuse him of wanting to do them harm. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I treated you the same way I treated all the other churches, except that ... you."

I was not a burden to you

"I did not ask you for money or other things I needed"

Forgive me for this wrong!

Paul is being ironic to shame the Corinthians. Both he and they know that he has done them no wrong, but they have been treating him as though he has wronged them.

this wrong

not asking them for money and other things he needed

2 Corinthians 12:14

I want you

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "What I want is that you love and accept me"

children should not save up for the parents

Young children are not responsible for saving money or other goods to give to their healthy parents.

2 Corinthians 12:15

I will most gladly spend and be spent

Paul speaks of his work and his physical life as if they were money that he or God could spend. Alternate translation: "I will gladly do any work and gladly allow God to permit people to kill me"

for your souls

The word "souls" is a metonym for the people themselves.

Alternate translation: "for you" or "so you will live well"

If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement.

Alternate translation: "If I love you so much, you should not love me so little." or "If I love you so much, you should love me more than you do."

more

It is not clear what it is that Paul's love is "more" than. It is probably best to use "very much" or a "so much" that can be compared to "so little" later in the sentence.

2 Corinthians 12:16

But since I am so crafty, I am the one who caught you by deceit

Paul uses irony to shame the Corinthians who think he lied to them even if he did not ask them for money. Alternate translation: "But others think I was deceptive and used trickery"

2 Corinthians 12:17

Did I take advantage of you by anyone I sent to you?

Both Paul and the Corinthians know the answer is no. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement.

Alternate translation: "No one that I sent to you has taken advantage of you!"

2 Corinthians 12:18

Did Titus take advantage of you?

Both Paul and the Corinthians know the answer is no. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement.

Alternate translation: "Titus did not take advantage of you."

Did we not walk in the same spirit?

Paul speaks of living as if it were walking on a road.

Possible meanings of "spirit" are 1) Paul and his companions acted rightly with the Corinthians, as had Titus. Alternate translation: "We all had the same attitude and acted the same way" Or 2) Paul, his companions, and Titus all obeyed the Holy Spirit as they served the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "We all lived in obedience to the same Spirit" This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement.

Did we not walk in the same steps?

Paul speaks of living as if it were walking on a road. Both Paul and the Corinthians know the answer to the question is yes. This rhetorical question can be translated as a

statement. Alternate translation: "We all did things the same way."

2 Corinthians 12:19

Do you think all of this time we have been defending ourselves to you? Paul uses this question to acknowledge something that the people may have been thinking. He does this so that he can assure them that it is not true. Alternate translation: "Perhaps you think that all of this time we have been defending ourselves to you."

in the sight of God

This represents the presence of God. Paul and his coworkers are aware that God is watching them while they teach the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "before God" or "with God as witness" or "in the presence of God" and all for your strengthening

The reason Paul and his coworkers speak in Christ is so that the Corinthians might be strengthened. Paul speaks of knowing how to obey God and desiring to obey him as if it were physical growth. Alternate translation: "and we do all this in order to strengthen you" or "and we do all this so that you may know God and obey him better"

2 Corinthians 12:20

I may not find you as I wish

"I may not like what I find" or "I may not like what I see you doing"

you might not find me as you wish

"you might not like what you see in me"

there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalries, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder

The abstract nouns "quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalries, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder" can be translated using verbs. Possible meanings are 1) "some of you will be arguing with us, jealous of us,

suddenly becoming very angry with us, trying to take our places as leaders, speaking falsely about us, telling about our private lives, being proud, and opposing us as we try to lead you" or 2) "some of you will be arguing with each other, jealous of each other, suddenly becoming very angry with each other, quarreling with each other over who will be the leader, speaking falsely about each other, telling about each other's private lives, being proud, and opposing those whom God has chosen to lead you"

2 Corinthians 12:21

I might be grieved by many of those who have sinned before now and who did not repent ... that they practiced

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will grieve because many of you have sinned before now and have not repented ... that you have practiced"

did not repent of the uncleanness and sexual immorality and lustful indulgence

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is saying almost the same thing three times for emphasis. Alternate translation: "did not stop committing the sexual sins that they practiced" or 2) Paul is speaking of three different sins.

of the uncleanness

The abstract noun uncleanness can be translated as "things that do not please God." Alternate translation: "of secretly thinking about and desiring things that do not please God"

of the ... sexual immorality

The abstract noun "immorality" can be translated as "immoral deeds." Alternate translation: "of doing sexually immoral deeds"

of the ... lustful indulgence

The abstract noun "indulgence" can be translated using a verb phrase. Alternate translation: "of ... doing things that satisfy immoral sexual desire"

Chapter 13

2 Corinthians 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul finishes defending his authority. He then concludes the letter with a final greeting and blessing.

Special concepts in this chapter

Preparation

Paul instructs the Corinthians as he prepares to visit them. He is hoping to avoid needing to discipline anyone in the church so he can visit them joyfully. (See: disciple)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Power and weakness

Paul repeatedly uses the contrasting words "power" and "weakness" in this chapter. The translator should use words that are understood to be opposites of each other.

"Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Test yourselves."

Scholars are divided over what these sentences mean. Some scholars say that Christians are to test themselves to see whether their actions align with their Christian faith. The context favors this understanding. Others say these sentences mean that Christians should look at their actions and question whether they are genuinely saved. (See: faith and save)

Links:

[2 Corinthians 13:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 13

13:1-10

What was the "third time"?

[13:1]

Paul planned to visit Corinth a third time (see: 2 Corinthians - Introduction).

See: Paul's Missionary Journeys

Why did Paul speak about “two or three witnesses”?

[13:1]

Paul wrote the same thing Moses wrote (see: Deuteronomy 19:15). This was a part of the Law of Moses. Someone could only be judged if more than one person saw them do something wrong. They needed two or more witnesses.

Some scholars think Paul's third visit was like a third witness. Some scholars think Paul's visits and epistles were like witnesses. This is a metaphor. Some scholars think Paul would have other people be witnesses to the sins of the Christians in Corinth. Some scholars think Paul, God, and Jesus were witnesses (see: 2 Corinthians 1:23; John 8:17-18).

See: Hebrews 10:28; Matthew 18:16; 1 Timothy 5:19

See: Witness (Martyr); Law of Moses; Metaphor

What was the “second time”?

[13:2]

When Paul visited the Corinthians a second time, this was the “painful visit” (see: 2 Corinthians - Introduction; 2 Corinthians 2:1-4).

What did it mean to be “alive by God's power”?

[13:4]

Scholars think to be “alive by God's power” not only indicated that Jesus was resurrected, but that he continues to live and rules everything because he is God. They think Paul lived by the power of God in his life and that he would go to the church in Corinth in the power of God. That is, God gave Paul permission to lead the Christians in Corinth.

See: Ephesians 1:19-23

See: Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Jesus is God; Church

What was meant by the words, “examine” and “test”?

[13:5]

Paul wanted the Corinthians to examine the things they did and to test the genuineness of their faith. That is, Paul wanted the Christians in Corinth to live according to what they said they believed.

See: Psalm 26:2; Lamentations 3:40; 1 Corinthians 11:28, 31; Galatians 6:3-4

See: Faith (Believe in); Test

Why did Paul say, “we are not able to do anything against the truth”?

[13:8]

Paul said, “we are not able to do anything against the truth.” Some scholars think that the apostles were actually unable to act against the truth. This is something God did. Other scholars think that even if the apostles spoke in a wrong way, it would not change the truth of the gospel.

See: Apostle; Gospel

What was build up or tear down?

[13:10]

To build up meant to encourage the Christians to live in a way that honored Jesus. To tear down was to discourage Christians from living in a way that honored Jesus. Paul always served to “build up”(οικοδομή/g3619) the Corinthians. (see: 2 Corinthians 10:8).

13:11-14

What was “restoration”?

[13:11]

Paul encouraged the Christians to work for “restoration”(καταρτίζω/g2675). The Corinthians must allow God's ways to work in them, that is, to help them to live in a way that honors God. Perhaps Paul's greatest concern was to see the Christians in Corinth joined together and working together to serve God.

See: Galatians 6:1

What did it mean to “agree with one another”?

[13:11]

When Paul said he wanted the believers to “agree with one another,” he wanted them to be united in what they thought, did and taught about Jesus.

See: Romans 12:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Peter 3:8

See: Mind

What was a “holy kiss”?

[13:12]

In ancient Israel, people usually only kissed their family members. By kissing one another, the Christians signaled that they were members of the family of God. The “holy kiss” was probably a kiss on the cheek.

See: Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:26; 1 Peter 5:14

See: Sign; Family of God

What was the “fellowship of the Holy Spirit”?

[13:14]

Paul wrote about experiencing the “fellowship”(κοινωνία/g2842) of the Holy Spirit. This is doing the things the Holy Spirit wants them to do and to be joined with the Holy Spirit in some way. He wanted Christians to want to do things that honored God, just as the Holy Spirit honors God the Father (see: Philippians 2:1-4).

See: Fellowship; Holy Spirit; God the Father

2 Corinthians 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul establishes that Christ is speaking through him and that Paul is wanting to restore them, encourage them, and unify them.

Every matter must be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses

Here a "matter" is an accusation and "mouth" is a metonym for the testimony a person gives through his mouth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Believe that someone has done something wrong only after two or three people have given the same testimony"

2 Corinthians 13:2

all the rest

"all you other people"

2 Corinthians 13:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Corinthians 13:4

he was crucified

This can be made active. Alternate translation: "they crucified him"

but we will live with him by the power of God

God gives us the power and ability to live life in and with him.

2 Corinthians 13:5

in you

Possible meanings are 1) living inside each individual or 2) "among you," part of and the most important member of the group.

you have failed the test

"you have examined and tested yourself and found that you are not in the faith and Jesus Christ is not in you"

2 Corinthians 13:6

I hope that

"I desire that" or "I trust that"

2 Corinthians 13:7

that you may not do any wrong

"that you will not sin at all" or "that you will not refuse to listen to us when we correct you." Paul is emphasizing the opposite with his statement. Alternate translation: "that you will do everything right"

to have passed the test

"to be great teachers and live the truth"

2 Corinthians 13:8

we are not able to do anything against the truth

"we are not able to keep people from learning the truth"

truth, but only for the truth

"truth; everything we do will enable people to learn the truth"

2 Corinthians 13:9

may be made complete

"may become spiritually mature"

2 Corinthians 13:10

so that I may build you up, and not tear you down

Paul speaks of helping the Corinthians to know Christ better as if he were constructing a building. See how you translated a similar phrase in [2 Corinthians 10:8]

2 Corinthians 13:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes his letter to the Corinthian believers.

Work for restoration

"Work toward maturity"

think alike

"agree with one another" or "live in harmony with one another"

2 Corinthians 13:12

with a holy kiss

"with Christian love"

God's holy people

"those whom God has set apart for himself"

2 Corinthians 13:13

General Information:

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Introduction to Galatians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Galatians

Paul declares his authority as an apostle of Jesus Christ; he says that he is surprised by the false teachings that the Christians in Galatia have accepted from other people (1:1-10). Paul says that people are saved by trusting in Christ alone, not by keeping the law (1:11-2:21). God puts people right with himself only when they trust in Christ; the example of Abraham; the curse which the law brings (and not a means of salvation); slavery and freedom compared and illustrated by Hagar and Sarah (3:1-4:31). When people are joined to Christ, they become free from having to keep the law of Moses. They are also free to live as the Holy Spirit guides them. They are free to refuse the demands of sin. They are free to bear each other's burdens (5:1-6:10). Paul warns the Christians not to trust in being circumcised and in keeping the law of Moses. Instead, they must trust in Christ (6:11-18).

Who wrote the Book of Galatians?

Paul from the city of Tarsus was the author. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian,

Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he began to trust in Jesus Christ, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

It is uncertain when Paul wrote this letter and where he was when he wrote it. Some scholars think Paul was in the city of Ephesus and wrote this letter after the second time he traveled to tell people about Jesus. Other scholars think Paul was in the city of Antioch in Syria and wrote the letter soon after the first time he traveled.

What is the Book of Galatians about?

Paul wrote this letter to both Jewish and non-Jewish Christians in the region of Galatia. He wanted to write against the false teachers who said that Christians need to follow the law of Moses. Paul defended the gospel by explaining that a person is saved by believing in Jesus Christ. People are saved as result of God being kind and not as a result of people doing good works. No person can perfectly obey the law. Any attempt to please God by obeying the law of Moses will only result in God condemning them. (See: goodnews, save, faith and lawofmoses and works)

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Galatians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Galatia."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What does it mean to "live like Jews" (2:14)?

To "live like Jews" means to obey the law of Moses, even though one trusts in Christ. The people among the early Christians who taught that this was necessary were called "Judaizers."

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How did Paul use the terms "law" and "grace" in the Book of Galatians?

These terms are used in a unique way in Galatians. There is an important teaching in Galatians about Christian living. Under the law of Moses, righteous or holy living required a person to obey a set of rules and regulations. As Christians, holy living is now motivated by grace. This means that Christians have freedom in Christ and are not required to obey a specific set of rules. Instead, Christians are to live a holy life because they are thankful that God has been so kind to them. This is called "the law of Christ." (See: righteous and holy)

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:22; 2:4, 17; 3:14, 26, 28; 5:6, 10. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." See, for example, "when we seek for God to justify us in Christ" (2:17), where Paul spoke of being justified by means of Christ. The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Galatians?

"Foolish Galatians! Who has put a spell on you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly displayed as crucified"

Chapter 1

Galatians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul started this letter differently than his other letters. He adds that he was "not an apostle from men nor by human agency, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead ones." Paul probably included these words because false teachers were opposing him and trying to undermine his authority.

Special concepts in this chapter

Heresy

God eternally saves people only through the true, biblical gospel. God condemns any other version of the gospel. Paul asks God to curse those who teach a false gospel. They might not be saved. They should be treated as non-Christians. (See: save, eternity, goodnews and condemn and curse)

Paul's qualifications

Some people in the early church were teaching that Gentiles needed to obey the law of Moses. To refute this teaching, in verses 13-16 Paul explains how he was formerly a zealous Jew. But God still needed to save him and show him the true gospel. As a Jew, and the apostle to Gentile people, Paul was uniquely qualified to address this issue. (See: lawofmoses)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You are turning so quickly to a different gospel"

The Book of Galatians is one of Paul's earliest letters in Scripture. It shows that heresies troubled even the early church.

Links:

[Galatians 1:1 Notes](#) [Galatians intro](#)

Galatians 1 Commentary

1:1-5

How did Paul write this letter differently than his other letters?

[1:1]

In Galatians, Paul did not write in the same way he wrote at the beginning of his other letters. While he began this letter with a greeting he did not say that he was thankful for them.

When Paul lived, most letters were written in a specific order. Usually, the writer wrote his name. Then he wrote about the people to whom he wrote. Then he greeted those people. He normally finished the greeting by writing that he was thankful for him. Then he wrote the rest of the letter. Paul followed this pattern for all of his letters, but not Galatians.

How did Paul become an "apostle"?

[1:1]

Paul was an "apostle" because Jesus made him one. Paul lived at the same time as the other apostles. Paul once persecuted the church, but Jesus changed him. He went to Damascus to persecute Christians there. He saw a vision of Jesus risen from the dead. Jesus spoke to him and changed him. Then he told Paul what to do (see Acts 9). He believed in Jesus and became a Christian. Later, he began preaching and teaching as an apostle.

Advice to translators: "Risen from the dead" means that Jesus died and came back to life.

See: Apostle; Persecute (Persecution) ; Vision; Preach (Preacher)

See Map: Damascus

1:4

Why did Paul say the present time was evil?

[1:4]

Some scholars think Paul wrote that the present time is evil because the Jews thought the world was divided into two time periods. The time they lived in was the first period. This thought this was an evil period. The second period was a time to come. That is, the time when the Messiah returned. The Messiah makes everything right and good when he returns because he will remove evil from the world.

See: Messiah (Christ)

1:6-10

Why did Paul say there was a "different gospel"?

[1:6]

Some Jews called Judaizers taught a "different gospel." This is because they taught that Gentiles had to be circumcised and follow the Jewish Laws. Only then could they live together with God forever in heaven. These Jews said that Gentiles must live as if they were Jews. Paul taught that only believing in Jesus saved someone from their sins. Nothing else a person does can help people to live with God forever in heaven. Paul was angry because he heard that the Galatians began to believe in this "different gospel."

Paul preached the gospel to the Galatians and started churches in Galatia. Paul taught that someone only has to believe in Jesus in order to be a Christian. Paul told the Galatians that no one earned the ability to live together with God in heaven because of the things they did. This included following the Law of Moses.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Gospel; Gentile; Law of Moses; Judaizer

Why did Paul write that false teachers needed to be "cursed"?

[1:8]

When Paul wrote that the false teachers needed to be "cursed," he wanted to say that God was going to condemn and punish them. He wrote this to say that what the false teachers said was harmful to the true gospel. These things caused Christians to not understand how they were saved from their sins. Paul wanted Christians to know that these things were so bad that the people who taught them needed to go to hell.

Paul also used the word "cursed" in Romans 9:3, 1 Corinthians 12:3, and 1 Corinthians 16:22. Paul wanted his readers to understand that he spoke for God, and God was angry with those who did not follow what Paul told them to do.

See: Curse; Gospel; Hell; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

1:11-17

Why did Paul write these verses?

[1:11]

Paul wrote 1:11-17 so that the Galatians knew that nothing they did made God save them from their sins. Paul used himself as an example. Paul kept all of the Jewish laws. In fact, he followed the Law of Moses very well. He did that

because he thought the things he did or did not do pleased God. He was so good that he thought God forgave his sins and accepted him because of what he did.

Paul wanted the Galatians to know keeping the law in this way did not earn him God's favor. God saved Paul from his sins only because he believed in Jesus. God favored Paul because of Jesus, not because of what Paul had done. Paul wanted the Galatians to know that this was the only way for God to favor them.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Law of Moses

Why did Paul tell his readers he did not "consult flesh and blood" or the apostles?

[1:16]

Paul said that he did not get his commands from "flesh and blood" because he wanted Christians to know his commands were directly from God. They were not from another person. He wanted them to know God told him to give these commands. Although he spoke with other Christians, such as Ananias, he did not study Christian beliefs with anyone. He did not even talk with any of the first apostles about them. He only spoke with God.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Apostle

Why did Paul say he was going "up" to Jerusalem?

[1:17]

Jerusalem was a higher place on the earth than where Paul was. So when he traveled to Jerusalem, he was going "up" to get there.

1:18-24

Why did Paul write these verses?

Paul wrote these verses again so the Christians in Galatia knew that God gave him everything he taught. He did not go anywhere or talk to anybody to get his thoughts from other people. A few years after he saw Jesus and began to preach the gospel, he spoke with Peter and James. But they did not teach him the things he taught. He did not know anyone from the churches in Judea. God gave him everything he said and wrote.

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel

What did Paul do for "three years"?

[1:18]

The Bible does not say exactly what Paul did for those three years. Some scholars think Paul lived in the desert of Arabia while Jesus taught him.

Some scholars think Paul wrote about "three years" because he wanted his readers to think about the three years the disciples spent with Jesus while He was on earth. So Paul wanted to say that he had the same kind of training that the other apostles had.

See: Apostle

See Map: Arabia

Who is Cephas?

[1:18]

"Cephas" was one of Jesus' disciples and an apostle. The Bible normally calls him "Peter." Peter is his name in the Greek language. In Aramaic his name was Cephas. Both of the names mean "rock."

Who is James?

[1:19]

James was the half-brother of Jesus (see: Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3). This is not the disciple who was the brother of John. At first, James, the half-brother of Jesus, did not believe in Jesus (see: John 7:5). But later, he believed in Jesus and became a leader of the church.

Galatians 1:1

General Information:

Paul, an apostle, writes this letter to the churches in the area of Galatia. Unless noted otherwise, all instances of "you" and "your" in this letter refer to the Galatians and are plural.

who raised him

"who caused him to live again"

Galatians 1:2

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women, since all believers in Christ are members of one spiritual family, with God as their heavenly Father.

Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

Galatians 1:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Galatians 1:4

for our sins

"Sins" is a metonym the punishment for sin. Alternate translation: "to take the punishment we deserved because of our sins"

that he might deliver us from this present evil age

Here "this ... age" represents the powers at work in the age.

Alternate translation: "that he might bring us to a place of safety from the evil powers at work in the world today"

our God and Father

This refers to "God our Father." He is our God and our Father.

Galatians 1:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Galatians 1:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives his reason for writing this letter: he reminds them to continue to understand the gospel.

I am amazed

"I am surprised" or "I am shocked." Paul was disappointed that they were doing this.

you are turning away so quickly from him

Here "turning away ... from him" is a metaphor for started to doubt or no longer trust God. Alternate translation: "you are so quickly starting to doubt him"

him who called you

"God, who called you"

called

Here this means God has appointed or chosen people to be his children, to serve him, and to proclaim his message of salvation through Jesus.

by the grace of Christ

"because of Christ's grace" or "because of Christ's gracious sacrifice"

you are turning to a different gospel

Here "turning to" is a metaphor that means to start to believe something. Alternate translation: "you are instead starting to believe a different gospel"

Galatians 1:7

some men

"some people"

Galatians 1:8

But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim ... let him be cursed

Paul said this to show how strongly he felt about anyone who might proclaim a gospel other than the one he had proclaimed. If anyone would do that, that person should be cursed. Alternate translation: "But even if we or an angel from heaven were to proclaim ... let him be cursed"

But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim

The word "even" shows that Paul did not believe that they or an angel from heaven would ever proclaim a different gospel. But he includes himself and angels in his statement to emphasize how wrong it would be for anyone to proclaim a different gospel.

other than the one

"different from the gospel" or "different from the message"

let him be cursed

"God should punish that person forever." If your language has a common way of calling a curse down on someone, you should use that.

Galatians 1:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Galatians 1:10

For am I now seeking the favor of men or of God? Am I seeking to please men?

These rhetorical questions expect the answer "no."

Alternate translation: "I do not seek the favor of men, but instead I seek the favor of God. I am not seeking to please men."

If I am still trying to please men, I am not a servant of Christ

Both the "if" phrase and the "then" phrase are contrary to

fact. "I am not still trying to please men; I am a servant of Christ" or "If I were still trying to please men, then I would not be a servant of Christ"

Galatians 1:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains that he did not learn the gospel from others; he learned it from Jesus Christ.

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

is not man's gospel

By using this phrase, Paul was not trying to say that Jesus Christ is not himself human. Because Christ is both man and God, however, he is not a sinful human being. Paul is writing about where the gospel came from; it did not come from sinful human beings, but it came from Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:12

it was by revelation of Jesus Christ to me

Possible meanings are 1) "Jesus Christ himself revealed the gospel to me" or 2) "God made me know the gospel when he showed me who Jesus Christ was."

Galatians 1:13

former life

"behavior at one time" or "prior life" or "earlier life"

Galatians 1:14

I advanced

This metaphor pictures Paul as being ahead of other Jews his age in their goal to be perfect Jews.

those who were my own age

"the Jewish people who are the same age as I am"

my fathers

"my ancestors"

Galatians 1:15

and who called me through his grace

Possible meanings of "through his grace" are 1) this tells why God called Paul. Alternate translation: "and who called me to serve him because he is gracious" or 2) this tells how God called Paul. Alternate translation: "and who called me by means of his grace."

Galatians 1:16

to reveal his Son in me

Possible meanings are 1) "to allow me to know his Son" or 2) "to show the world through me that Jesus is God's Son."

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

preach him

"proclaim that he is God's Son" or "preach the good news about God's Son"

consult with flesh and blood

This is an expression that means talking with other people.

Alternate translation: "ask people to help me understand the message"

Galatians 1:17

go up to Jerusalem

"go to Jerusalem." Jerusalem was in a region of high hills, making it necessary to climb many hills in order to get there, and so it was common to describe travel to Jerusalem as "going up to Jerusalem."

Galatians 1:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Galatians 1:19

I saw none of the other apostles except James

This double negative emphasizes that James was the only apostle whom Paul saw. Alternate translation: "I saw only one of the other apostles, and that was James" or "the only other apostle I saw was James"

Galatians 1:20

before God

Paul wants the Galatians to understand that Paul is completely serious and that he knows that God hears what he says and will judge him if he does not tell the truth.

In what I write to you, I assure you before God that I am not lying

Paul uses litotes to emphasize that he is telling the truth.

Alternate translation: "I am not lying to you in the messages I write to you" or "in the things I write to you I am telling

you the truth"

Galatians 1:21

the regions of Syria and Cilicia

"the parts of the world called Syria and Cilicia"

Galatians 1:22

I was still not known by face to the churches of Judea that are in Christ

"No one in the churches of Judea that are in Christ knew what I looked like" or "None of the people in the churches of Judea that are in Christ had ever met me"

Galatians 1:23

They only heard it being said

"They only knew what they heard others saying about me"

Galatians 1:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 2

Galatians 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul continues to defend the true gospel. This began in [Galatians 1:11](#).

Special concepts in this chapter

Circumcised and uncircumcised

The law of Moses required Jewish males to be circumcised. The Jews called Gentiles "the uncircumcised."

Slavery and freedom

Paul introduces these ideas in Galatians 2:4. He uses the metaphor of slavery for people who are obligated to obey the law of Moses. He uses the metaphor of freedom, or liberty, for people who are not obligated to obey the law of Moses because they trust in Jesus Christ to make them righteous.

The false brothers

When Paul says that false brothers wanted to make the believers slaves, he is referring to Jews who claimed to be Christians and who wanted to convince Gentile Christians to obey the law of Moses.

The hypocrisy of Cephas

Jews normally did not eat with Gentiles because Gentiles did not obey the law of Moses. Cephas knew that Gentile Christians are not obligated to obey the law of Moses, and because of this, he knew that it was permissible to eat with them. However, when some men came saying that Gentile Christians are obligated to obey the law, Cephas stopped eating with the Gentile Christians, as if he, too, believed that they need to obey the law of Moses. Paul rebuked Cephas for treating the Gentile Christians like that.

Links:

[Galatians 2:1 Notes](#)

Galatians 2

2:1-5

Why did Paul go to Jerusalem after 14 years?

[21:1]

Paul traveled to Jerusalem because that is where James, Peter, and John lived. They were apostles and church leaders.

Paul wanted them to know that he preached and taught the truth about Jesus.

Some scholars think this was 14 years was after Paul believed in Jesus (see: Acts 9). Other scholars think it was after his first trip to Jerusalem (see: Acts 11.27-30). Other scholars think this time in Jerusalem when the church leaders met (see: Acts 15.2).

See: Preach (Preacher)

Who was Barnabas?

[2:1]

Barnabas, also called Joseph, was an apostle (see Acts 14:14) who traveled with Paul on several missionary trips. Barnabas was one of the first people to believe Paul was a Christian (see Acts 9:27). Sometime before he met Paul, Barnabas became a Christian. Some of the first Christians thought Barnabas was a prophet (see Acts 13:1).

His name means "son of comfort." Barnabas was born in the city of Salamis on the island of Cyprus (see Acts 4:36).

Scholars are not sure when he was born. Most scholars believe some non-Christians killed Barnabas because he was a Christian.

See: Acts 4:36 See: Prophet

Who was Titus?

[2:1]

Titus went with Paul on several missionary journeys. He helped Paul in many ways. He carried letters and messages for Paul to some churches. Many scholars think Titus became the leader of the church in Crete. Paul wrote a letter to Titus. This is one of the books in the New Testament.

Titus was born in Antioch at the beginning of the first century. His father was a Greek, and his mother was Jewish. People were not sure if he was Jewish or Gentile. Because of this, Christians asked if he needed to be circumcised in the same way Jewish men were circumcised. Some scholars think that 2:4 indicates Paul made Titus get circumcised. Other scholars say Titus was never circumcised.

See: Gentile; Circumcise (Circumcision)

See Map: Crete

What did Barnabas and Titus do for Paul?

[2:1]

Barnabas and Titus went to Jerusalem with Paul because God told him to go there. Paul told the church leaders there about how he preached and taught the Gentiles. Some scholars believe that Barnabas and Titus also spoke in Jerusalem when the church leaders talked about Gentiles becoming Christians (see: Acts 15).

See: Preach (Preacher); Gentile

Why did Paul worry about the Galatians?

[2:2]

Paul worried that the Galatians no longer followed the gospel he preached to them. He worried that the Galatians followed false teachers who were also called "Judaizers." They did not think that believing in Jesus was enough to make a person a Christian. They thought people also needed to follow the Law of Moses to become a Christian. Paul taught they did not need to follow the Law of Moses. He taught that once they believed in Jesus, they had freedom because of Jesus. That is, they no longer needed to follow the Law of Moses.

See: Gospel; Preach (Preacher); Law of Moses

Why did they want Titus circumcised?

[2:3]

Some scholars think that some of the Jewish Christians wanted Paul to have Titus circumcised. They were not going to accept Titus as a church leader until he was circumcised. Titus had a Greek father and was not Jewish. Titus was a Christian. However, some Jewish Christian did not accept Titus. They wanted him to be circumcised and follow other Law of Moses before they accepted him.

Paul told the Jewish Christians that Gentile Christians did not need to be circumcised to be Christians or church leaders. Peter, who was the most important church leader, also knew this (see: Acts 10). Paul got the other church leaders to agree that Titus did not have to be circumcised.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses

2:4-5

What did Paul mean about "slaves" and "submission"?

[2:4, 2:5]

Paul used language about "slaves" and "submission" because he knew that if a person believes in Jesus, that is enough for God to save them from their sins. This makes them a Christian. That is, they are no longer slaves to the Law of Moses because they are free in Christ. So, after he believed in Jesus, he knew that only Jesus saved him from his sins and following the Law of Moses did not. Paul wanted other Christians to understand that the gospel is true. He wanted them to know that being circumcised did not make them Christians. Only believing in Jesus made them Christians. Paul wanted his readers not to listen to anyone who said they were not Christian because they were not Jewish.

See: Submit (Submission); Law of Moses; Gospel; Circumcise (Circumcision); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

2:6-10

Does God want both Jews and Gentiles to be saved?

[2:7]

Paul wanted his readers to know that God wanted both Jews and Gentiles to become Christians. He knew that someone needed to preach the gospel to the Gentiles in the same way as they preached it to the Jews. Paul wrote that God "entrusted" him to be an apostle to the Gentiles in the same way God entrusted Peter to be an apostle to the Jews. God chose both of them to serve in this special way.

When Paul wrote about the "uncircumcised", he spoke about the Gentiles. When Paul wrote "circumcised", he spoke about the Jews.

See: Preach (Preacher); Apostle; Gentile; Circumcise (Circumcision); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Who were James, Cephas, and John?

[2:9]

James, Cephas (that is the apostle Peter), and John were apostles and leaders of the first Christians (see: Acts 15). Paul used a metaphor of pillars holding up a building to tell others that in the same way a building is held up by pillars, so these men were important in holding up the church during the time of the apostles. That is, they served the church greatly. Paul wanted people to know that these leaders helped him to preach the gospel in the right way.

Scholars do not know which man named James Paul wrote about. Some think he was the half-brother of Jesus (they had the same mother but not the same father). Other scholars think this was James, the son of Zebedee. He was one of the 12 original apostles of Jesus. Whoever he was, the James Paul talked about was the leader of the first Christians in Jerusalem. He may have written the book of James in the New Testament.

Jesus called Peter to become Jesus' disciple (see Matthew 4:18-22). Peter was also called Cephas. Cephas was with Jesus while Jesus taught people on earth. After Jesus was killed and rose from the dead, Peter preached and taught both Jewish and Gentile people to believe in Jesus. He wrote two books that are in the New Testament (1 Peter and 2 Peter).

John was the disciple whom Jesus called away from working as a fisherman along with his older brother, James (see Matthew 4:21-22). He was called the "beloved disciple" (see: John 13:23). He wrote five books in the New Testament (the Gospel of John, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation). He was one of the leaders of the first Christians.

See: Metaphor; Preach (Preacher); Apostle; Disciple

What was the "right hand of fellowship."

[2:9]

When Paul was alive, men shook hands or grabbed arms to welcome each other. They did this to show that they honored each other and agreed about important things. Paul used this as a metaphor for friendship. He wanted to say that the leaders of the Christians in Jerusalem thought of him and Barnabas to be friends.

See: Metaphor

Why was Paul to help poor people?

[2:10]

The leaders wanted Paul to help the poor people in order to show that he was following God correctly. Christians have always helped poor people because this honors God. The Bible tells people who believe in God to take care of poor people (see: Deuteronomy 15:7-8, 10-11; Psalm 41:1; Matthew 19:21; Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 8; James 2:2-4). In the Middle East, sometimes the crops were bad, or the rains did not come. Sometimes, men were not able to provide food for their families. Because of these difficult times, there were many poor people.

2:11-21

Why did Paul confront Peter?

[2:11]

In these verses, Paul wrote that he had to confront Cephas, who was also called Peter, about not eating with the Gentiles. After the meeting in Jerusalem, Paul returned to Antioch in Syria. Later, Peter also came to Antioch. While he was in Antioch, Peter stopped eating and being friends with Gentile Christians. He also started following the Law of Moses again. He did this because he was afraid of what the Jewish Christians thought about him.

Paul knew that this was wrong, so he confronted Peter about it. Paul wanted Peter and other Christians to know that they did not need to follow the Law of Moses anymore. Christians needed to know that following rules, regulations, or rituals did not save them from their sins. Paul also knew that Jesus did not think Jewish Christians were better than Gentile Christians. So he talked to Peter about this.

Paul also confronted Peter because Peter was not doing the things that he preached. When someone does not do what they say other people are to do, this is called "hypocrisy" (see 2:13). Paul told Peter that Peter was being a hypocrite. He wanted readers to know that they are not to be hypocrites.

Paul also wanted readers to know that he was equal to the other Christian leaders. He did this by describing how he was able to tell other leaders what they were to do.

See: Law of Moses; Preach (Preacher); Hypocrisy (Hypocrite)

See Map: Antioch and Syria

How are Christians justified?

[2:16]

Paul wrote mainly to the Jewish Christians to tell them that they are "justified" by believing in Jesus. That is, they now are friends with God and can live together with God in heaven forever. This is because God considers them to have done the right things, even though they have done the wrong things. This is called being "justified." Nothing else can justify them.

Following the Law of Moses did not justify them. He wanted Jewish Christians and also other Christians to understand that believing in Jesus is the most important thing for them to do.

Paul wrote more about justification in chapters 3-6.

See: Justify (Justification)

What did Paul ask about what Jesus taught?

[2:17]

Paul asked the Jewish Christians in Galatia about what Jesus taught and what he wanted his followers to do and not do (see 5:19-22). This is because some of them believed it was a sin to eat or be friends with Gentiles. That is, they believed that Jews were not to eat or be friends with Gentiles. To them, if the Gentiles were not circumcised, they were not friends with God. And they were not to be friends with them. Paul wanted to say that having Jews and Gentiles eat together or be friends was not a sin because Jesus made them same as Christians. They did not become friends of God by obeying the Law of Moses. Paul also wanted to say that Jewish Christians were not to go back to thinking the law was going to save them.

When Paul asked the Galatian Christians what Jesus taught, he wanted them to think about how Jesus did not want them to sin. Paul did not teach that Jesus wanted people to sin. He knew his readers knew this. So he asked this question to force his readers to think about what they knew Jesus taught. He asked them about what Jesus taught and what he wanted his followers to do and not do (see 5:19-22). He knew his readers would answer his question by rejecting the idea that Jesus told people to sin. He wanted them to know it was not a sin for Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians to be friends. It also meant that Gentile Christians were not to think that they had to follow the Law of Moses.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Paul compare following the law to death?

[2:20, 2:21]

Paul used the metaphor of life and death to say that trying to keep the Law of Moses, in order to get to heaven and live together with God, only ended in death and going to hell. Paul wrote that when he tried to keep the Law of Moses, it was like he was killing himself. He did not please God and God did not forgive his sins.

Paul wrote that nobody is saved from their sins because they follow rules or laws. Paul said that no one, not even Paul himself, was able to keep the whole Law of Moses. People cannot be saved from their sins by following rules.

When Paul believed in Jesus, Jesus gave him a new life. Out of love, God forgave Paul's sins. This was because Jesus died and rose from the dead.

Paul wrote that there is no other way to be friends with God. If there was, then Jesus did not have to die for God to forgive people's sins.

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses; Hell; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Galatians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to give the history of how he learned the gospel from God, not the apostles.

went up

"traveled." Jerusalem is located in hilly country. The Jews also viewed Jerusalem as the place on earth that is closest to heaven, so Paul may have been speaking figuratively, or it may be that it was reflecting the difficult, uphill, journey to get to Jerusalem.

Galatians 2:2

those who seemed to be important

"the most important leaders among the believers"

I was not running—or had not run—in vain

Paul uses running as a metaphor for work. Alternate translation: "I was doing, or had done, profitable work" in vain

"for no benefit" or "for nothing"

Galatians 2:3

to be circumcised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to have someone circumcise him"

Galatians 2:4

The false brothers came in secretly

"People who pretended to be Christians came into the church," or "People who pretended to be Christians came among us"

spy on the liberty

secretly watch people to see how they live in liberty

liberty

freedom

They desired

"These spies desired" or "These false brothers wanted" to enslave us

"to make us slaves to the law." Paul is speaking about being forced to follow the Jewish rituals that the law commanded. He is speaking about this as if it were slavery. The most important ritual was circumcision. Alternate translation: "to force us to obey the law"

Galatians 2:5

yield in submission

"submit" or "listen"

Galatians 2:6

added nothing to me

The word "me" here represents what Paul was teaching. Alternate translation: "added nothing to what I teach" or "did not tell me to add anything to what I teach"

Galatians 2:7

On the contrary

"Instead" or "Rather"

I had been entrusted ... Peter had been entrusted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God trusted me ... God trusted Peter"

had been entrusted with the gospel to those

"had been given the responsibility of preaching the gospel to those"

Galatians 2:8

General Information:

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Galatians 2:9

who had a reputation as pillars

A pillar is a post that supports a building. This is a

metaphor meaning important leaders. Alternate translation: "who were known to be important leaders" or "who were known to be important leaders of the church" recognized the grace that had been given to me
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "recognized the grace that God had given to me"
 the grace that had been given to me
 The abstract noun "grace" can be translated with the phrase "be kind." Alternate translation: "that God had been kind to me"
 gave ... the right hand of fellowship
 Grasping and shaking the right hand was a symbol of fellowship. Alternate translation: "welcomed ... as fellow workers" or "welcomed ... with honor"
 Galatians 2:10
 remember the poor
 You may need to make explicit what about the poor he was to remember. Alternate translation: "remember to take care of the needs of the poor"
 Galatians 2:11
 I opposed him to his face
 The words "to his face" are a metonym for "where he could see and hear me." Alternate translation: "I confronted him in person" or "I challenged his actions in person"
 Galatians 2:12
 Before
 in relation to time
 he stopped
 "he stopped eating with them"
 He was afraid of those who were demanding circumcision
 The reason Cephas was afraid can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "He was afraid that these men who required circumcision would judge that he was doing something wrong" or "He was afraid that these men who required circumcision would blame him for doing something wrong"
 those who were demanding circumcision
 Jews who had become Christians, but who demanded that those who believe in Christ live according to Jewish customs
 kept away from
 "stayed away from" or "avoided"
 Galatians 2:13
 this hypocrisy
 Paul calls Peter's staying away from the Gentiles "this hypocrisy" because Peter was pretending to be like those Jews who say that Gentile Christians have to be circumcised.
 Even Barnabas was led astray with them by their hypocrisy
 Here to be "led astray" is a metaphor for being persuaded to do something wrong. Alternate translation: "Even Barnabas was persuaded to be a hypocrite because of them"
 Galatians 2:14
 their behavior was not following the truth of the gospel
 "they were not living according to the truth of the gospel"
 how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?
 This rhetorical question is a rebuke and can be translated as a statement. The word "you" is singular and refers to

Peter. Alternate translation: "you are wrong to force the Gentiles to live like Jews."
 force
 Possible meanings are 1) force by using words or 2) persuade.
 Galatians 2:15
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul tells the believers that Jews who know the law, as well as Gentiles who do not know the law, are saved only by faith in Christ and not by keeping the law.
 not Gentile sinners
 "not those whom the Jews call Gentile sinners"
 Galatians 2:16
 we
 This probably refers to Paul and others but not to the Galatians, who were primarily Gentiles.
 no flesh
 The word "flesh" is a synecdoche for the whole person. Alternate translation: "no person"
 Galatians 2:17
 while we seek to be justified in Christ
 The phrase "justified in Christ" means justified because we are united with Christ and justified by means of Christ.
 we too were found to be sinners
 The words "were found to be" are an idiom that emphasizes that "we are" certainly sinners. Alternate translation: "we see that we also certainly are sinners"
 Absolutely not!
 "Of course, that is not true!" This expression gives the strongest possible negative answer to the preceding rhetorical question "Does Christ become a servant of sin?"
 You may have a similar expression in your language that you could use here.
 Galatians 2:18
 General Information:
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 Galatians 2:19
 General Information:
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 Galatians 2:20
 Son of God
 This is an important title for Jesus.
 Galatians 2:21
 I do not set aside the grace of God
 "I do not reject the grace of God" or "I do not consider God's grace to be worthless"
 the grace of God
 Paul is speaking of God's kindness to us. Christ died for us so that we can be justified.
 if righteousness could be gained through the law, then Christ died for nothing
 Paul uses this statement to argue that righteousness cannot be gained through the law. If it could be then there was no need for Christ to die to give us righteousness, because we could gain it ourselves by obeying the law.
 if righteousness could be gained through the law
 "if people could become righteous by obeying the law"
 then Christ died for nothing
 "then Christ would have accomplished nothing by dying"

Galatians 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Equality in Christ

All Christians are equally united to Christ. Ancestry, gender, and status do not matter. All are equal with each other. All are equal in the eyes of God.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

Paul uses many different rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to convince the Galatians of their sin. (See: and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that the physical part of man is sinful. "Flesh" is used in this chapter to contrast with that which is spiritual. (See: flesh)

"Those of faith are children of Abraham"

Scholars are divided on what this means. Some believe Christians inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham, so Christians replace the physical descendants of Israel. Others believe Christians spiritually follow Abraham, but they do not inherit the promises that God gave to Abraham. In light of Paul's other teachings and the context here, Paul is probably writing about the Jewish and Gentile Christians sharing the same faith as Abraham did.

Links:

[Galatians 3:1 Notes](#)

Galatians 3

3:1-14

Why was Paul upset with the Galatians?

[3:1, 3:2]

Paul was upset with the Galatians because they forgot how God saved them from their sins. He told them that they became Christians by believing in Jesus. This is how the Holy Spirit came to live in them. They did not have to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses for God to save them from their sins.

Paul wanted to know that the Galatians knew that they did not depend on keeping the law for God to save them. He wanted them to know that if they try to keep the Jewish Law, they will fail (see: Deuteronomy 27:26). They needed to believe in Jesus and trusting God to be saved from their sins.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Paul write about Abraham?

[3:6]

Paul wrote about Abraham because wanted his readers to think about how Abraham completely trusted in God (see: Genesis 15:6). In the same way Abraham completely trusted in God, the Galatian Christians needed to completely trust in God. The Galatians knew the story of Abraham. They knew that Abraham's circumcision came after he believed in God's promises. Paul told the Galatians that Abraham believed in God before God did anything he promised to give Abraham. Also, Abraham lived before God gave the law to the Jewish people. God did not give promises to Abraham or care for Abraham because Abraham followed the law. In the same way, following the law did not cause God to care for the Galatians either.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses

Why did Paul say that anyone hung on a tree was cursed?

[3:13]

In 3:13, Paul quoted Deuteronomy 21:23 because wanted them to know that Jesus was crucified on a tree so that he could be cursed for people's sins. People sometimes called the cross a "tree" because of it was made from a cut down tree.

Paul wanted his readers to know that Jesus did all that is needed for God to forgive their sins if they believe in him (see: Isaiah 52:13-53:12). When people sin, they deserve a curse. But when Jesus died on the cross, he took that curse for all people. Anyone who believes in Jesus will have this curse taken from them.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Curse; Cross

3:15-24

Who are the "descendants" of Abraham?

[3:16]

Paul wanted the Galatians to know that if they believed in Jesus, they were descendants of Abraham. That is, they did the

same types of things Abraham did. In Genesis 18:16-18, God told Abraham that he was going to give him a son, a "descendant." God fulfilled this promise by giving Abraham Isaac as a son. God gave Isaac to Abraham and Sarah because they trusted God. God also promised that the Messiah, that is Jesus, was going to be a descendant of Abraham. In the same way Isaac was a physical descendant of Abraham, Jesus is a physical descendant of Abraham. Paul also called Jesus a spiritual descendant of Abraham. That is, anyone who believes and trust in Jesus will also be a spiritual descendant of Abraham. That is, they do the same things Abraham did in the same way a son should do the same good things his father does. Both Abraham and Jesus showed people why they need to believe and trust God.

How are Christians to believe in God the same way Abraham did?

[3:18]

In the same way Abraham completely believed and trusted in God, so are Christians to believe and trust in God. In 3:26 Paul said that God saves people from their sins only because they believe in Jesus. Abraham also trusted in God to save him from his sins. So, Paul used the metaphor of saying that Christians are Abraham's descendants because they trust God the in the same way Abraham trusted God.

See: Metaphor; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What was the purpose of the law?

[3:19]

Paul wrote that the Law of Moses had two purposes. He used metaphors to talk about these two purposes.

Paul said that the law told the Jews how they were not honoring God. That is, it showed them they were sinners. The law told Jews how they were to honor God. But obeying the law perfectly was not possible. That is why Paul said the law showed them they were prisoners. In 3:19-22, Paul wrote that people were prisoners to the law. He does not mean prisoners of other people or of a government. That is, because they tried to keep the law to honor God, but were unable to, they will never be freed from the punishment that comes from not following the law perfectly. In 3:23-25, Paul wrote that the law was a tutor or guardian. That is, in the same way someone teaches and cares for children, so did the law for the Jewish people. Paul wanted readers to think about how children need to be taken care of and taught until they are adults. He wanted to say that God gave the law to people to teach them that they needed to trust in God completely. But, when God sent Jesus to earth, people did not need the law anymore to make them righteous. They only need to believe in Jesus for God to say that they are righteous and to give them peace. When this happens, God adopts them into his family (see: 3:25; Romans 9:4).

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses; Adopt (Adoption)

3:25-29

How did Paul want the Galatians to think about themselves?

[3:28]

In 3:28, Paul told Christians to think of each other as equal to each other. Paul wanted all Christians to know that they are equal because they believe in Christ. It did not matter whether the Galatians were Gentile or Jewish. If they believed in Jesus, God thought of them equally.

Why did Paul call Christians "heirs according to promise"?

[3:29]

Paul called the Galatians "heirs according to promise" in 3:29, because, just like children inherit their parents' things when they die, Christians will inherit the kingdom of God because of Jesus' death and resurrection. Romans gave and received an inheritance from family members. It was a gift. In 3:25-29, Paul wrote about some of the many gifts they received from God. These gifts were inherited because they were now part of God's family. Paul talks about several of these gifts: They no longer needed the law as a "guardian" the way Paul had written about in 3:23-24. God adopted them into his family because they believed in Jesus. They were "baptized into Christ." Paul wanted Christians to know that Jesus joined Christians to himself. Christians are also joined to each other because they all believe in Jesus. Paul used words about a person putting on clothing as a metaphor for this.

Advice to translators: an inheritance is when a parent or other family member dies and leaves their possessions to another person, usually their children.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir), Kingdom of God;Resurrect (Resurrection); Adopt (Adoption); Baptize (Baptism); Metaphor

Galatians 3:1

General Information:

Paul is rebuking the Galatians by asking rhetorical questions.

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers in Galatia that God gave them his Spirit when they believed the gospel, not because they obeyed his law.

Who has put a spell on you?

Paul is using irony and a rhetorical question to say that the

Galatians are acting as though someone has put a spell on them. He does not really believe that someone has put a spell on them. Alternate translation: "You behave as if someone has put a spell on you!"

put a spell on you

"done magic on you" or "done witchcraft on you"

It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly displayed as crucified

Paul speaks of his clear teaching of Jesus being crucified as if he had put on public display a picture of Jesus being

crucified. And he speaks of the Galatians having heard his teaching as if they had seen the picture. Alternate translation: "You yourselves heard the clear teaching about Jesus being crucified"

Galatians 3:2

This is the only thing I want to learn from you

This continues the irony from verse 1. Paul knows the answers to the rhetorical questions he is about to ask.

Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

Translate this rhetorical question as a question if you can, because the reader will be expecting a question here. Also, be sure that the reader knows that the answer to the question is "by the hearing of faith," not "by doing what the law says." Alternate translation: "You received the Spirit, not by doing what the law says, but by the hearing of faith." the hearing of faith

"believing what you heard"

Galatians 3:3

Are you so foolish?

This rhetorical question shows that Paul is surprised and even angry that the Galatians are foolish. Alternate translation: "You are very foolish!"

by the flesh

The word "flesh" is a metonym for effort. Alternate translation: "by your own effort" or "by your own work"

Galatians 3:4

Have you suffered so many things for nothing—if indeed it was for nothing?

Paul uses this question to rebuke the Galatians for behaving as though their faith in Christ and their suffering for it were for nothing. Alternate translation: "You have suffered so many things: Do not let it be for nothing!" or "You suffered so many things from those who opposed your faith in Christ. If you now think that righteousness comes by obeying the law, then your suffering was for nothing!"

Have you suffered so many things

The Galatians had believed that God makes people righteous because they trust in Jesus Christ, not because they obey the law. Because of this, they suffered many things from those who opposed their faith in Christ.

for nothing

"uselessly" or "without benefit to you"

Galatians 3:5

Does he ... do so by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

Paul asks another rhetorical question to remind the Galatians how people receive the Spirit. Alternate translation: "He ... does not do it by the works of the law; he does it by hearing with faith."

by the works of the law

This represents people doing the works that the law requires. Alternate translation: "because you do what the law tells us to do"

by the hearing of faith

Your language may require that what the people heard and whom they trusted be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "because you heard the message and had faith in Jesus" or "because you listened to the message and trusted in Jesus"

Galatians 3:6

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers that even Abraham received righteousness by faith and not by the law.

it was credited to him as righteousness

God saw Abraham's faith in God, so then God considered Abraham righteous.

Galatians 3:7

those of faith

"those who have faith." The meaning of the noun "faith" can be expressed with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "those who believe"

the children of Abraham

This represents people whom God views as he viewed Abraham. Alternate translation: "righteous in the same way that Abraham was righteous"

Galatians 3:8

The scripture, foreseeing ... faith, preached the gospel

Because God's promise to Abraham was written in the scripture before Christ fulfilled the promise, the scripture is like someone who knows the future before it happens and who preaches the gospel. Alternate translation: "In the scripture, God showed before it happened ... faith, and he presented the gospel"

In you

The word "you" refers to Abraham. Ultimately God would bless the nations through one of Abraham's descendants.

Alternate translation: "Because of you" or "Through you" all the nations

"all the people-groups in the world." God was showing that his plan of salvation was not only for the Jewish people, but for both Jews and non-Jews.

Galatians 3:9

the man of faith

Possible meanings are 1) Abraham was the man who believed and trusted in God or 2) Abraham was faithful to God.

Galatians 3:10

All who rely on ... the law are under a curse

Being under a curse represents being cursed. Here it refers to being eternally punished. "Those who rely on ... the law are cursed" or "God will eternally punish those who rely on ... the law"

the works of the law

"what the law says we must do"

Galatians 3:11

Now it is clear

What is clear can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "The scriptures are clear" or "The scriptures teach clearly"

no one is justified before God by the law

This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "God justifies no one by the law"

no one is justified before God by the law

Paul is correcting their belief that if they obeyed the law, God would justify them. Alternate translation: "no one is justified before God by obeying the law" or "God does not justify anyone for their obedience to the law"

the righteous will live by faith

The nominal adjective "righteous" refers to righteous

people. Alternate translation: "righteous people will live by faith"

Galatians 3:12

must live by them

Possible meanings are 1) "must obey them all" or 2) "will be judged by his ability to do what the law demands."

Galatians 3:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds these believers again that keeping the law could not save a person and that the law did not add a new condition to the promise by faith given to Abraham.

from the curse of the law

The noun "curse" can be expressed with the verb "curse."

Alternate translation: "from being cursed because of the law" or "from being cursed for not obeying the law"

from the curse of the law ... becoming a curse for us ... Cursed is everyone

The word "curse" here is a metonym for God condemning the person whom he has cursed. Alternate translation:

"from us having God condemn us because we broke the law ... having God condemn him instead of us ... God condemns everyone"

hangs on a tree

Paul expected his audience to understand that he was referring to Jesus hanging on the cross.

Galatians 3:14

so that the blessing of Abraham might come

"and because Christ became a curse for us, the blessing of Abraham will come"

so that by faith we might receive

Possible meanings are 1) this is because Christ became a curse for us. Alternate translation: "and because Christ became a curse for us, we will receive by faith" or 2) this is because the blessing in Abraham came in Christ Jesus.

Alternate translation: "and because the blessing in Abraham came in Christ Jesus, we will receive by faith"

we might receive the promise

The word "we" includes the people who would read the letter and so is inclusive.

Galatians 3:15

Brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

in human terms

"as a person" or "of things most people understand"

Galatians 3:16

Now

This word shows that Paul has stated a general principle and is now beginning to introduce a specific case.

referring to many

"referring to many descendants"

to your descendant

The word "your" is singular and refers to a specific person, who is a particular descendant of Abraham

Galatians 3:17

The law, which came 430 years afterward, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God

In some languages it might be strange to speak of a law coming or setting aside a covenant. It might be clearer to make explicit who gave the law. Alternate translation:

"When God gave the law 430 years later, he did not set aside the covenant that he had previously established"

set aside

"cancel"

430 years

"four hundred and thirty years"

God, to nullify the promise

"God; that is, it does not nullify the promise"

nullify the promise

"to make the promise worthless" or "to make things as if the promise had never been made"

Galatians 3:18

For if the inheritance comes by the law, then it no longer comes by promise

Paul uses this argument to show that the inheritance does not come by obeying the law but by believing God's promise. Alternate translation: "If people could receive the inheritance by obeying the law, then it would no longer be true that people receive the inheritance by believing God's promise"

the inheritance

Paul speaks of what God has promised to give to believers as if it were an inheritance of property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "the gift"

Galatians 3:19

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the believers in Galatia why God gave the law.

What, then, was the purpose of the law?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to introduce the next topic he wants to discuss. It can also be translated as a statement.

Alternate translation: "I will tell you what the purpose of the law is." or "Let me tell you why God gave the law."

It was added

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God added it" or "God added the law"

The law was ordained through angels

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God ordained the law through angels" or "God gave the law through angels"

by the hand of an intermediary

The words "by the hand of" are a metonym for the intermediary himself. An intermediary represents one person to another. Paul was probably talking about Moses, who represented God to the people of Israel. Alternate translation "by an intermediary" or "by his representative, Moses"

Galatians 3:20

Now an intermediary implies more than one person

An intermediary represents one person to another.

Alternate translation: "Now if we say that there was an intermediary, that means that there must have been more than one person."

intermediary

representative

But God is one

Paul uses this statement to contrast the law and the promise. Paul seems to be saying that the promise is superior to the law since God used an intermediary to give the law, but he did not use an intermediary when he made

the promise. "God is one" is an important statement from the Old Testament, so it would be best to translate it as Paul wrote it. If this does not make sense in your language, you could translate it as "God is one God."

Galatians 3:21

against the promises

"opposed to the promises" or "in conflict with the promises" if a law had been given that could give life

This can be stated in active form, and the abstract noun "life" can be translated with the verb "live." Alternate translation: "if God had given a law that enabled those who kept it to live"

righteousness would certainly have come by the law

"we could have become righteous by obeying that law"

Galatians 3:22

the scripture imprisoned everything under sin

The idea of being imprisoned under sin represents being controlled by sin. Possible meanings are 1) "the scripture caused everyone to be controlled by sin" or 2) "the scripture says that everyone is controlled by sin."

the promise by faith in Jesus Christ

The word "promise" represents what God promised.

Alternate translation: "what God promised to those who have faith in Christ"

Galatians 3:23

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds those in Galatia that believers are free in God's family, not slaves under the law.

we were held captive under the law, imprisoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the law held us captive and we were in prison" or "the law held us captive in prison"

we were held captive under the law, imprisoned

The way the law controlled us is spoken of as if the law were a prison guard holding us as captives. Alternate translation: "the law controlled us like a prison guard"

until faith should be revealed

This can be stated in active form, and who this faith is in can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "until God would reveal that he justifies those who have faith in

Christ" or "until God would reveal that he justifies those who trust in Christ"

Galatians 3:24

guardian

More than simply "one who gives oversight to a child," this was usually a slave who was responsible for enforcing rules and behaviors given by the parent and would report to the parent on the child's actions.

until Christ came

"until the time when Christ came"

so that we might be justified

Before Christ came, God had planned to justify us. When Christ came, he carried out his plan to justify us. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God would declare us to be righteous"

Galatians 3:25

General Information:

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Galatians 3:26

General Information:

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Galatians 3:27

For as many of you who were baptized into Christ

"For all of you who were baptized into Christ"

have clothed yourselves with Christ

Possible meanings are 1) this is a metaphor meaning that they have been united to Christ. Alternate translation:

"have become united with Christ" or "belong to Christ" or 2)

this is a metaphor meaning that they have become like

Christ. Alternate translation: "have become like Christ"

Galatians 3:28

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female

"God sees no difference between Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female"

Galatians 3:29

heirs

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.

Chapter 4

Galatians 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 27, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sonship

Sonship is a complex issue. Scholars have many views on Israel's sonship. Paul uses sonship to teach how being under the law differs from being free in Christ. Not all of Abraham's physical descendants inherited God's promises to him. Only his descendants through Isaac and Jacob inherited the promises. And God only adopts into his family those who follow Abraham spiritually through faith. They are children of God with an inheritance. Paul calls them "children of promise." (See: inherit, promise, spirit and faith and adoption)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Abba, Father

"Abba" is an Aramaic word. In ancient Israel, people used it to informally refer to their fathers. Paul "transliterates" its sounds by writing them with Greek letters.

Links:

[Galatians 4:1](#)

Galatians 4

4:1-7

What did Jesus do for Christians when he died on the cross?

[4:5, 4:7]

Paul used three words to tell people what Jesus did for Christians when he died on the cross.

Adoption: Jesus is the Son of God. He was always God's son. No one else is part of God's family in this way. However, when Jesus died on the cross, he made it possible for people to be adopted and become part of God's family. That is, if they believe in Jesus, God adopts them and they are his children in a different way. Heir: The person adopting a child gives rights to their child to inherit certain things and rights. Paul wanted Christians to know that God adopts them into his family when they believe in Jesus. This is better than being a servant or slave. In the same way Jesus has an inheritance from God, Christians receive a part of this inheritance when they go to heaven. Redeem: Paul wrote about Jesus redeeming people. When Paul was alive, people often became slaves to other people because they owed those people a lot of money. They continued to be slaves until they or someone else paid the money they owed. This was called "redemption". The redeemed person belongs to the redeemer (see: 1 Peter 1:17-18, and Matthew 20:28).

So Paul used redemption as a metaphor. He wanted to say that people start their lives in a form of slavery because they disobey God. But Jesus paid the price to redeem them when he died on the cross. This means they are not slaves to sin anymore. Instead, God has adopted them into his family.

See: Adopt (Adoption); Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Redeem (Redemption); Metaphor

4:8-11

What did Paul mean when he wrote about people or things who are "not gods at all"?

[4:8]

Paul wrote about those who are "not gods at all." He did this to warn Christians about false ideas taught by people who worshiped false gods. These people worshipped carved idols or other things that are not God. People thought and said they were gods, but they were not gods. There is only one God. Some Roman emperors did this. Some scholars think Paul wanted to warn about Jewish ideas along with these other common false teachings.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

What are the "weak and worthless elemental principles"?

[4:9]

When he wrote about "weak and worthless elemental principles," Paul wanted to talk about false ideas the Gentiles had. They followed false gods, astrology, and rituals for different seasons. These ideas are "weak and worthless" because they are not the truth about God. They could not help people in any way.

See: Astrology; Ritual

What does "days and new moons and seasons and years" mean?

[4:10]

Paul wrote about "days and new moons and seasons and years." This is because both many people followed the calendar to know how to please God. They did different things on different days in the hopes of pleasing the god or gods they worshipped. Paul wanted to say that no matter how well someone follows the calendar, this will never save people from their sins. God only saves those who believe in Jesus.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why was Paul afraid for the Galatians?

[4:11]

In 4:11, Paul said, "I am afraid for you" because the Galatians no longer followed the gospel.

When Paul was in Galatia, he taught them the gospel. That is, God saved them from their sins when they believed in Jesus. But after Paul left, other teachers taught them they needed to be circumcised and follow the Jewish laws. Unless they did this, God did not save them from their sins. This false teaching was not the gospel, but a false gospel. Paul wanted them to see that this was wrong. He wanted them to know they were in danger if they followed this wrong idea.

See: Gospel; Circumcise (Circumcision); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

4:12-20

Why did Paul tell the Galatians to "become like me"?

[4:12]

Paul told the Galatians to "become like" him because he wanted them to follow his example. In the past, Paul followed all the things the Jewish leaders taught because he thought he could please God that way. But when he believed in Jesus, he found out that he did not need to do these things in order to be saved from his sins. He wanted the Galatians to know that

following the Law of Moses or the teachings of the Jewish leaders did not save them either.

See: Law of Moses; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What "physical illness" did Paul have?

[4:13]

Scholars do not agree about what physical illness. Paul wrote about in 4:12-14. Some scholars think Paul had problems seeing things. Others think he suffered from another disease that always gave him problems. Paul also wrote about a "thorn in the flesh" (see: 2 Corinthians 12:7). This may or may not be the same illness. No scholar is certain on this issue. Paul wrote in 4:13 that this illness caused him to preach to the Galatians when he traveled through that region. That is, God used this illness to get his gospel to the Galatians. Also, the Galatians treated him kindly and took care of him while he was there.

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Why did Paul say he had "pains of childbirth" again?

[4:19]

Paul said he was "in the pains of childbirth" because he wanted the Galatians to know his great love for them. That is, he loved them in the same way a mother loves her children. When a mother gives birth, there are strong pains. But the after the pain, there is joy because the baby is born. When Paul used this metaphor, he wanted to say that he felt pain because the Galatians followed wrong ideas about God. Paul often spoke about those who he served as if they were his children. He wanted the Galatians to know they were children in some way and they were born in love and pain.

See: Metaphor

4:21-31

Why did Paul write about Sarah and Hagar?

[4:22, 4:23]

Paul talked about how God saved Sarah and Hagar. He did this so that people would know that when God saves someone, it is a free gift. Hagar was a slave woman (see: Genesis 16:1-16), but Sarah was a free woman (see: Genesis 21:8-21). Paul wrote about Hagar and her son Ishmael to make readers think about people who try to please God by following laws. He also wrote about Sarah and her son Isaac to make readers think about how God saves people because of his great love. Paul used the word "promise" to talk about God's great love.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Paul write that Hagar "gives birth to children who are slaves"?

[4:24]

Paul wrote that Hagar "gives birth to children who are slaves," because the child of a slave woman was also a slave. The child was unable to free himself from slavery. So, Paul wanted to say that people who follow the law to please God couldn't teach other people about God's great love. They are unable to do this because they do not understand God's great love. They can only teach people to follow the law. But this is a form of slavery (see: 4:8-11).

Why did Paul write that Hagar was "from Mount Sinai" and "represents Mount Sinai"?

[4:25]

Paul wrote that Hagar was "from Mount Sinai" because he wanted Christians to think of her in the same way as the Law of Moses. When Paul wrote about "Mount Sinai," he wanted to talk about people who follow rules or laws to try to please God. He did not want to say that Hagar actually came from Mount Sinai. He wanted to say that Mount Sinai was the place where God gave the Law to Moses. This was long after Hagar lived. But Paul wanted readers to think about her slavery and their own slavery to the law.

See: Law of Moses

Why did Paul write about the "present Jerusalem" and "the Jerusalem that is above"?

[4:25, 4:26]

Paul wrote about the "present Jerusalem" to make readers think about following the Law of Moses. He wanted to say that Jerusalem was the city where the Jewish Temple was located. The Temple was the center of Jewish worship. This worship followed the Law of Moses. So, like Hagar, Jerusalem represented wrong ideas about how to please God.

Paul wrote about the "Jerusalem that is above" to make readers think about God and his great power and his great love. In the Bible, this is also called the heavenly Jerusalem (See: Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 21:2; Philippians 3:20). When he said, "she is our mother," he wanted to say that people who believe in Jesus are freed from slavery to the Law of Moses. So, Paul used the Jerusalem to mean right ideas about God and his great love.

See: Law of Moses; Temple

Why did Paul write about Isaac?

[4:28]

When Paul wrote about Isaac, he wanted readers to think about how they are saved from their sins by God's great love. Paul wanted them to remember that Isaac was born because God gave a promise to Abraham and Sarah. This was long after they were able to have children normally. So it was clear that Isaac was born because God made it happen. God fulfilled his promise. Paul wanted the Galatians to know they are like Isaac. That is, they were saved from their sins

because God made this happen. God fulfilled his promise to save people through Jesus.
See: Genesis 15 See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Galatians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind the Galatian believers that Christ came to redeem those who were under the law, and that he changed them from being slaves into being sons.

no different from

"the same as"

Galatians 4:2

guardians

people with legal responsibility for children

managers

people whom others trust to control what is valuable, in this case children

Galatians 4:3

General Information:

The word "we" here refers to all Christians, including Paul's readers.

when we were children

Here "children" is a metaphor for being spiritually immature. Alternate translation: "when we were like children"

we were enslaved to the elemental principles of the world

Here "enslaved" is a metaphor for being unable to stop one's self from doing something. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the elemental principles of the world controlled us" or "we had to obey the elemental principles of the world as if we were slaves"

the elemental principles of the world

These words could refer to 1) the laws or moral principles of the world, or 2) spiritual powers that some people thought control what happens on earth.

Galatians 4:4

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

Galatians 4:5

redeem

Paul uses the metaphor of a person buying back lost property or buying the freedom of a slave as a picture of Jesus paying for his people's sins by dying on the cross.

Galatians 4:6

you are sons

Paul uses the word for male children here because the subject is inheritance. In his culture and that of his readers, inheritance passed most commonly, but not always, to male children. He was neither specifying nor excluding female children here.

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who cries out, "Abba, Father."

By crying out "Abba, Father" the Spirit assures us that we are God's children and he loves us.

God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts

The heart is metonym for the part of a person that thinks and feels. Alternate translation: "God has sent his Son's Spirit to show us how to think and act"

his Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

who cries

The Spirit is the one who cries.

Abba, Father

This is the way a young child would address his father in Paul's home language, but not in the language of the Galatian readers. To keep the sense of a foreign language, translate this as a word that sounds as much like "Abba" as your language allows.

Galatians 4:7

you are no longer a slave, but a son

Paul uses the word for male child here because the subject is inheritance. In his culture and that of his readers, inheritance passed most commonly, but not always, to male children. He was neither specifying nor excluding female children here.

you are no longer a slave ... you are also an heir

Paul is addressing his readers as though they are one person, so "you" here is singular.

heir

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.

Galatians 4:8

General Information:

Paul continues to rebuke the Galatians by asking rhetorical questions.

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers that they are again trying to live under God's laws rather than living by faith.

those who are

"those things that are" or "those spirits who are"

Galatians 4:9

you are known by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God knows you"

how is it that you are turning back to ... principles?

Here "turning back to" is a metaphor for starting to pay attention to something again. This is the first of two rhetorical questions. Alternate translation: "you should not start paying attention to ... principles." or "you should not be concerned with ... principles."

elemental principles

See how you translated this phrase in Galatians 4:3.

Do you want to be enslaved all over again?

Paul uses this question to rebuke the people for behaving in a way that would make them like slaves. Alternate translation: "It seems that you want to be slaves again." or

"You behave as though you wanted to be like slaves again."

Do you want to be enslaved all over again?

Here being "enslaved" is a metaphor for being obligated to obey certain rules or customs. Alternate translation: "Do you want to have to obey rules again like a slave has to obey his master?" or "It seems that you want to be controlled all over again!"

Galatians 4:10

You observe days and new moons and seasons and years

Paul is speaking of their being careful to celebrate certain times, thinking that doing that will make them right with God. Alternate translation: "You carefully celebrate days and new moons and seasons and years"

Galatians 4:11

may have been for nothing

"may have been useless" or "has not had any effect"

Galatians 4:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Galatian believers how kindly they treated him when he was with them, and he encourages them to continue to trust him while he is not there with them.

beg

Here this means to ask or urge strongly. This is not the word used to ask for money or food or physical objects.

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

You did me no wrong

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "You treated me well" or "You treated me as you should have"

Galatians 4:13

disease of the flesh

"physical disease" or "disease of the body"

Galatians 4:14

and though my physical condition put you to the test

"and though it was difficult for you to see me so physically ill"

my physical condition

Paul was speaking about a health problem that he had. We do not know what the problem was.

despise

hate very much

Galatians 4:15

General Information:

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Galatians 4:16

General Information:

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Galatians 4:17

to win you over

"to convince you to join them"

to shut you out

"to shut you out from us" or "to make you stop being loyal to us"

zealous for them

"zealous to do what they tell you to do"

Galatians 4:18

General Information:

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Galatians 4:19

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells believers that grace and law cannot work together.

My little children

This is a metaphor for disciples or followers. Alternate translation: "You who are disciples because of me"

I am suffering the pains of childbirth for you until Christ is formed in

you

Paul uses childbirth as a metaphor for his concern about the Galatians. Alternate translation: "I am in pain as though I were a woman having to give birth to you, and I will continue to be in pain until Christ truly controls you"

Galatians 4:20

change my tone

Paul wishes he could sound happy instead of sounding angry or confused. Alternate Translation: "change the way I sound" or "change the way I am speaking to you" or "speak to you differently"

Galatians 4:21

Tell me, you ... law, do you not listen to the law?

Paul is introducing what he will say next. Alternate translation: "I want to tell you something, you ... law; you need to learn what the law really says." or "Let me tell you who ... law what the law really says."

Galatians 4:22

General Information:

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Galatians 4:23

General Information:

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Galatians 4:24

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins a story to illustrate a truth—that law and grace cannot exist together.

These things may be interpreted as an allegory

"This story of the two sons is like a picture of what I will tell you now"

as an allegory

An "allegory" is a story in which the people and things in it represent other things. In Paul's allegory, the two women referred to in Galatians 4:22 represent two covenants.

women represent

"women are a picture of"

Mount Sinai

"Mount Sinai" here is a synecdoche for the law that Moses gave to the Israelites there. Alternate translation: "Mount Sinai, where Moses gave the law to Israel"

she bears children into slavery

Paul treats the law as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "the people under this covenant are like slaves who have to obey the law"

Galatians 4:25

she represents

"she is a picture of"

she is in slavery with her children

Hagar is a slave and her children are slaves with her.

Alternate translation: "Jerusalem, like Hagar, is a slave, and her children are slaves with her"

Galatians 4:26

is free

"is not bound" or "is not a slave"

Galatians 4:27

Rejoice

be happy

you barren one ... you who are not suffering

Here "you" refers to the barren woman and is singular.

Galatians 4:28

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

children of promise

Possible meanings are that the Galatians have become God's children 1) by believing God's promise or 2) because God worked miracles to fulfill his promises to Abraham, first by giving Abraham a son and then by making the Galatians children of Abraham and thus sons of God.

Galatians 4:29

according to the flesh

This refers to Abraham's becoming Ishmael's father by taking Hagar as a wife. Alternate translation: "by means of human action" or "because of what people did"

according to the Spirit

"because of something the Spirit did"

Galatians 4:30

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Galatians 4:31

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

of a slave girl, but of the free woman

The words "we are children" are understood from the previous phrase. This can be translated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "of a slave girl. Rather, we are children of the free woman"

Chapter 5

Galatians 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul continues writing about the law of Moses as if it were something that traps or enslaves a person. (See: lawofmoses)

Special concepts in this chapter

Fruit of the Spirit

The phrase "the fruit of the Spirit" is not plural, even though it begins a list of several things. Translators should keep the singular form if possible. (See: fruit)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Illustrations

Paul uses several metaphors in this chapter to illustrate his points and help explain complicated issues.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"You are cut off from Christ, you who would be justified by the law; you no longer experience grace."

Some scholars think Paul teaches that being circumcised causes a person to lose their salvation. Other scholars think Paul means that obeying the law to try to get right with God will keep a person from being saved by grace. (See: grace)

Links:

[Galatians 5:1 Notes](#)

Galatians 5

5:1-12

Why did Paul tell the Galatians not to go back to slavery to the Law of Moses?

[5:1]

Paul told the Galatians that becoming circumcised and trying to follow the Law of Moses made Jesus's life, death, and resurrection useless to them. Also, Paul told them that Jesus had set them free from all of the Jewish laws. He continued to write about the freedom Christians have because of Jesus. Paul again wrote that they should not get circumcised.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses

How did Paul talk about the law and "grace"?

[5:4]

Paul reminded Christians in Galatia that if they chose to be circumcised then they "no longer experience grace." Some scholars think Paul said that circumcised Christians lost what God did for them when he saved them. Other scholars think Paul said that Christians no longer experience God's power working in them and through them. What is clear is that Paul told the Galatians not to be circumcised because they lost something important.

Also, Paul wanted his readers to know that circumcision was the same as being a slave to the Law of Moses. He used words that talk about a hard choice between the law and God's great love, or "grace." Christians can choose to follow rules and laws to please God. Or they can choose to believe in Jesus and live by this belief. But they do not please God by doing both of these things. So he told them they must not be circumcised and become a slave to the law. He called this a "yoke of slavery" (see: 5:1).

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Grace; Law of Moses

What does the Holy Spirit do for Christians?

[5:5]

In 5:5 (see also: Romans 8), Paul told Christians that the Holy Spirit gives them faith to "wait for the hope of

righteousness”(δικαιοσύνη/g1343). That is, while they are alive, they need to believe in Jesus and do the same types of things that Jesus did while he was on earth. They were to know with confidence that God was going to do these things. The Holy Spirit reminds Christians they are going to heaven. In heaven, God makes them completely righteous. Why did Paul use the metaphor about yeast and dough?

[5:9]

When Paul wrote about yeast and dough, he used a metaphor to tell the Galatians that even a little false teaching is very bad for the church. He was telling them to completely resist false teachers.

Paul wrote in 5:8 that the false teachers taught ideas that Jesus did not teach. Paul and the other apostles taught people what Jesus taught. The false teachers taught people ideas not from God.

So, in 5:9 Paul quoted a proverb that most people understood (see also: 1 Corinthians 5:6). Bakers use leaven or yeast to make bread rise for baking. It does not take much leaven or yeast to make bread rise. In the same way, it does not take much false teaching to make the Galatians think wrong things about God. Jesus also spoke this proverb (see Mark 8:15). See: Metaphor; Church; Apostle; Proverb; Yeast (Leaven)

Why did Paul write that certain people needed to "castrate themselves"?

[5:12]

Scholars do not know why Paul wrote that certain people needed to "castrate themselves." He wrote this about the false teachers. Paul did not want them to actually do this. Instead, he did not want the Galatians not even to talk with these false teachers. These scholars think Paul wanted false teachers to be removed from the church, so they no longer mislead the Galatians with their false teaching.

Some scholars do not think Paul was angry. They think he was passionate that the Christians in Galatia continued to know and follow the truth he taught them. It is clear that Paul did not want the Galatian Christians to follow the false teachers in any way.

Advice to translators: When a man castrated himself, he cut off his penis.

5:13-26

How were Christians to live their lives?

[5:13, 5:14, 5:15]

Paul told Christians how to live their lives.

First, Paul wrote that Christians needed to love each other (see 5:13-14). Jesus taught this and so did the Old Testament. Paul also told readers to not attack each other with words. This caused everyone to be hurt.

Second, Paul wrote that people are able to do things in two ways. All people are able to follow the "sinful nature." This makes them do bad things. Christians choose to do things in the way the Holy Spirit guides them. This will make them do good things. Paul said there was a "conflict" between the sinful nature and the Holy Spirit in a Christian. He wrote this to say how important it is for each Christian to choose to do things in the way the Holy Spirit says to do it. He wanted to say that doing some good things and doing some bad things would not please God.

See: Sinful Nature

What are the "works of the sinful nature"?

[5:19, 5:20, 5:21]

Paul warned Christians not to "practice" or do the "works of the sinful nature." These are things that displease God greatly. Paul listed some things people do that are "works of the sinful nature." Then he wrote "and things like these." That is, he wanted to say that he did not list all the "works of the sinful nature." But he listed enough for readers to think of other things like them.

Some scholars think Paul wanted to say that these are things people do because they do not believe in Jesus. Other scholars think Paul warned Christians that they would not receive rewards if they disobeyed God. When a person believes in Jesus, God gives that person the Holy Spirit to guide them in not doing these things. However, the person still must choose not to do them. So Paul warned Christians about doing the "works of the sinful nature."

See: 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:5; and Revelation 22:15

See: Sinful Nature

What did Paul mean by "fruit"?

[5:22]

Paul wrote a metaphor concerning fruit to say that Christians need to be guided by the Holy Spirit. People can see fruit growing on trees. In the same way, people can see what Christians do when the Holy Spirit guides them to do things that are good. (See: Matthew 3:8, and Luke 3:8)

See: Metaphor; Fruit (Metaphor)

What is the purpose of the fruit of the Spirit?

[5:22]

Paul wrote about the Holy Spirit producing "fruit" inside Christians. He used a metaphor in the same way that Jesus used a metaphor to talk about Christians being part of the "vine" (see: John 15). Jesus and Paul both wanted to say that God wants Christians to get their help from God. In the same way that that fruit is fed by the tree that it grows on, Christians

are to be "fed" by the Holy Spirit.

Paul also wanted to say that fruit is seen on a tree or vine. In the same way, Christians say and do things that are seen by others when they follow the Holy Spirit. When Christians do the things the Holy Spirit tells them to do, they will do what Jesus did. This shows other people what to do to honor God. This can cause other people to believe in Jesus.

The fruit of the Spirit is the opposite of what Paul wrote about in 5:19-21.

See: 2 Corinthians 6:6; Ephesians 4:2; 5:9; Colossians 13:12-15

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Metaphor

What are the "Fruits of the Spirit"?

[5:22, 5:23]

The "fruit of the Spirit" is one thing, but several things are part of this one thing. Paul listed the good things that are a part of the fruit of the Spirit. He wanted to say that the Holy Spirit gives Christians all of these things to use, so they can do the things that please God.

Why did Paul tell Christians they "crucified the sinful nature"?

[5:24]

When Paul wrote about Christians crucifying the sinful nature, he used a metaphor about extreme or harsh punishment. Readers understood that crucifixion kills people. So Paul wanted readers to know that they need to have their sins completely removed. This happens when God saves them because they believe in Jesus. But they need to make sure they continue to follow what the Holy Spirit tells them to do.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Sinful Nature; Metaphor; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Galatians 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul applies the allegory in the previous chapter by reminding the believers to use their liberty in Christ because all the law is fulfilled in loving neighbors as ourselves.

For freedom Christ has set us free

"It is so that we can be free that Christ has set us free." It is implied that Christ sets believers free from the old covenant. Here freedom from the old covenant is a metaphor for not being obligated to obey it. Alternate translation: "Christ has set us free from the old covenant so that we might be free" or "Christ has set us free so that we might live as free people"

Stand firm

Standing firm here represents being determined not to change. How they are not to change can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "Do not give in to the arguments of people who teach something else" or "Be determined to stay free"

do not again be subject to a yoke of slavery

Here being under control of a yoke of slavery represents being obligated to obey the law. Alternate translation: "do not live like one who is under the control of a yoke of slavery to the law"

Galatians 5:2

if you let yourselves be circumcised

Paul is using circumcision as a metonym for Judaism.

Alternate translation: "if you turn to the Jewish religion"

Galatians 5:3

I testify

"I declare" or "I serve as a witness"

to every man who lets himself be circumcised

Paul is using circumcision as a metonym for being Jewish.

Alternate translation: "to every person who has become a Jew"

he is obligated to obey

"he must obey"

Galatians 5:4

You are cut off from Christ

Here "cut off" is a metaphor for separation from Christ.

Alternate translation: "You have ended your relationship with Christ" or "You are no longer united with Christ"

you who would be justified by the law

Paul is speaking ironically here. He actually teaches that no one can be justified by trying to do the deeds required by the law. Alternate translation: "all you who think you can be justified by doing the deeds required by the law" or "you who want to be justified by the law"

you no longer experience grace

Who that grace comes from can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "God will not be gracious to you"

Galatians 5:5

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and those who oppose the circumcision of Christians. He is probably including the Galatians.

For through the Spirit

"This is because through the Spirit"

by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) "we are waiting by faith for the hope of righteousness" or 2) "we are waiting for the hope of righteousness that comes by faith."

we eagerly wait

"We wait with excitement" or "we wait with great desire"

for the hope of righteousness

They confidently expect that God will make them righteous.

Alternate translation: "for the righteousness that we hope for" or "for the righteousness that we confidently expect to receive"

Galatians 5:6

neither circumcision nor uncircumcision

These are metonymy for being a Jew or a non-Jew.

Alternate translation: "neither being a Jew nor not being a Jew"

neither ... has value, but only faith working through love

"neither ... has value; rather, God is concerned with our faith in him, which we show by loving others"

has value

"has meaning" or "gives value to a person" or "makes God think a person is important"

Galatians 5:7

You were running

"You were practicing what Jesus taught"

Galatians 5:8

This persuasion does not come from him who calls you

"The one who persuades you to do that is not God, the one who calls you"

him who calls you

What he calls them to can be stated clearly. Alternate

translation: "the one who calls you to be his people"

persuasion

To persuade someone is to get that person to change what he believes and so to act differently.

Galatians 5:9

A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough

Paul uses this proverb to mean that a small part of something affects the whole thing. In this case, one person who is teaching something false can harm the entire Christian community.

Galatians 5:10

you will think nothing different

"you will not believe anything different from what I am telling you"

The one who is troubling you will suffer the judgment

"God will punish the one who is troubling you"

is troubling you

"is causing you to be uncertain about what is truth" or "stirs up trouble among you"

whoever he is

Possible meanings are 1) Paul does not know the names of the people who are telling the Galatians that they need to obey the law of Moses or 2) Paul does not want the Galatians to care about whether those who "confuse" them are rich or poor or great or small or religious or not religious.

Galatians 5:11

Brothers, if I still proclaim circumcision, why am I still being persecuted?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to show the evidence that he is not proclaiming circumcision. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Brothers, you can see that I am not proclaiming circumcision because I am still being persecuted."

Brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

if I still proclaim circumcision

"if I still proclaim that men have to be circumcised"

why am I still being persecuted?

This can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "why are the Jews still persecuting me?" (See:

In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

Paul is describing a situation that has not happened as evidence that he does not preach circumcision. Since the stumbling block of the cross has not been removed, that is evidence that Paul does not preach circumcision.

In that case the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

Paul had just said that he was still being persecuted. Here he implies that if the offense of the cross were removed, the Jews would have no reason to persecute him. The relationship between the two sentences can be made clearer by making this implied information explicit. Alternate translation: "If I am still preaching circumcision, then the stumbling block of the cross has been removed, and there is no reason for the Jews to persecute me"

In that case

"If I were still proclaiming circumcision" or "If I were still saying that people need to be circumcised"

the stumbling block of the cross has been removed

This can be expressed without the passive form. Alternate

translation: "the cross would no longer be a stumbling block" or "the cross would no longer cause people to stumble"

the stumbling block of the cross

Here the words "stumbling block" are a metaphor for something that angers or offends some people and leads them to reject the truth. In this case, teaching that people are saved by "the cross" offends those who believe a person is saved by obeying the law. These people "stumble" when they reject the teaching about the cross.

the cross

Here "the cross" is a metonym for the teaching that because Jesus Christ died on the cross and is alive again, God saves people who believe in Christ. People do not have to be circumcised or become Jews. Alternate translation: "the message about the cross"

Galatians 5:12

cut themselves off

Possible meanings are 1) literal, to cut off their male organs so as to become eunuchs or 2) metaphorical, completely withdraw from the Christian community.

Galatians 5:13

For

Paul is giving the reason for his words in Galatians 5:12.

you were called to freedom

This can be expressed in an active form. Alternate

translation: "Christ has called you to freedom"

you were called to freedom

It is implied that Christ has set believers free from the old covenant. Here freedom from the old covenant is a metaphor for not being obligated to obey it. Alternate translation: "You were called to freedom from the old covenant" or "Christ has chosen you to not be obligated to the old covenant"

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

an opportunity for the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for people's sinful nature. The relationship between the opportunity and the sinful nature can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "an opportunity for you to behave according to your sinful nature"

Galatians 5:14

the whole law is fulfilled in one word

The word "word" here is a metonym for a commandment.

Possible meanings are 1) "you can state the whole law in

just one commandment, which is this" or 2) "by obeying one commandment, you obey all the commandments, and that one commandment is this."

You must love your neighbor as yourself

The words "you," "your," and "yourself" are all singular.

Galatians 5:15

General Information:

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Galatians 5:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how the Spirit gives control over sin.

walk by the Spirit

Walking is a metaphor for living. Alternate translation:

"conduct your life in the power of the Holy Spirit" or "live your life in dependence on the Spirit"

you will not carry out the desires of the flesh

"you will not do what your sinful nature desires" or "you will not do the sinful things that you, a sinner, want to do"

the desires of the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the sinful nature and is spoken of as if it were a person and wanted to sin.

Alternate translation: "what you want to do because of your sinful nature" or "the things you want to do because you are sinful"

Galatians 5:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Galatians 5:18

not under the law

"not obligated to obey the law of Moses"

Galatians 5:19

the works of the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the sinful nature.

The sinful nature is spoken of as if it were a person who does things. The abstract noun "works" can be translated with the verb "does." Alternate translation: "the things the sinful nature does" or "the things people do because of their sinful nature" or "the things people do because they are sinful"

Galatians 5:20

General Information:

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Galatians 5:21

inherit

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

Galatians 5:22

the fruit of the Spirit is love ... faith

Here "fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome."

Alternate translation: "what the Spirit produces is love ... faith" or "the Spirit produces in God's people love ... faith"

Galatians 5:23

gentleness ... self-control

The list of characteristics described as "the fruit of the Spirit," which begins in the previous verse with the words

"love, joy, peace," ends here. The word "fruit" is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome."

Galatians 5:24

have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires

Paul speaks of the sinful nature of Christians who have refused to live by it as if it were a person and they have killed it on a cross. Alternate translation: "refuse to live

according the sinful nature with its passions and desires, as if they killed it on a cross"

the flesh with its passions and desires

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the sinful nature.

The sinful nature is spoken of as if it were a person that

had passions and desires. Alternate translation: "their sinful nature and the things they strongly want to do

because of it"

passions and desires

If your language does not have different words for

"passions" and "desires," you can treat this as a hendiadys or doublet that simply emphasizes the idea of desires that are wrong, that harm the one who desires and if fulfilled would harm other people.

Galatians 5:25

If we live by the Spirit

"Since God's Spirit has caused us to be alive"

walk by the Spirit

"Walk" here is a metaphor for living every day. Alternate

translation: "allow the Holy Spirit to guide us so we do things that please and honor God"

Galatians 5:26

Let us

"We should"

Chapter 6

Galatians 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter concludes Paul's letter. His final words address some issues that do not seem to be connected to the rest of his letter.

Brothers

Paul writes the words in this chapter to Christians. He calls them "brothers." This refers to Paul's Christian brothers and not his Jewish brothers.

Special concepts in this chapter

New Creation

People who are born again are a new creation in Christ. Christians have been given new life in Christ. They have a new nature in them after they come to faith in Christ. To Paul, this is more significant than a person's ancestry. (See: bornagain and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is contrasted with "spirit." In this chapter, flesh is also used to refer to the physical body. (See: flesh and sin and spirit)

Links:

[Galatians 6:1 Notes](#)

Galatians 6

6:1-5

How are Christians to treat other Christians who commit sins?

[6:1]

Paul told the Galatians that when another Christian sins, the Christians who know that person is to "restore him in a spirit of gentleness." Sometimes people sin and need to be corrected (see: Matthew 18). When a Christian sins, they can dishonor God and hurt other people. But other Christians need to help the person know he sinned. They need to help him repent. That is, so God will forgive him of those sins. They need to act kindly, and they need to be ready to forgive the other person. This helps the person to honor God again.

A Christian needs to do this because he knows that he also has sinned and is not better than the other person who sinned. He knows God forgives him when he repents. So, he needs to be humble and to keep thinking about what he does and thinks. Then, he will sin less himself.

See: Repent (Repentance)

What was the law of Christ?

[6:2]

When Paul told the Galatians to "fulfill the law of Christ" (6:3), he wanted to say they are to love each other. Paul wanted his readers to understand that loving one another was far better than the laws that the false teachers told them to follow. When people love each other, it pleases God more than when they just follow laws.

Jesus spoke often about how his followers needed to love other people. He said that the greatest rule is that a person must love God. But the second greatest rule is that a person must love other people. So, Paul called this the "law of Christ." Sometimes when Jesus talked about love, Jesus quoted from the Old Testament (see: Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:5). So Paul may have said "law of Christ" to make his readers think that even in the Old Testament, the Law of Moses, God said he wanted people to love each other.

See: Matthew 5:43, 22:39; Mark 12:30-31

See: Law of Moses

6:6-10

What did Paul teach the Galatians about "planting" and "gathering" or "harvesting"?

[6:7, 6:8, 6:9]

Paul wrote about "planting," "gathering," and "harvesting" to say that Christians need to do good to all people. God will favor them if they are good to others. He wanted his readers to understand that the things they said and affected both them and other people. To explain this, he used the metaphor of planting seeds and waiting for them to grow. He did this to say that Christians who do things that honor God will receive good back from God. This does not always happen right away. But if the Christians keep doing good things, sooner or later God will bring good things to them. In the same way, if they do bad things, sooner or later they receive bad things.

See: Metaphor

6:11-18

Why did Paul talk about writing "large letters"?

[6:11]

Paul talked about writing in "large letters" (6:11) to tell the Galatians that this letter was really from him. He needed to do this because of two things:

First, many scholars think Paul dictated to another person the words for this and other letters he wrote. Paul signed his letters before he sent them to the churches. Second, many scholars think Paul suffered from physical illnesses. These made it hard for him to read and write. This caused him to only write in large letters. His large signature looked very different from the rest of the letter.

So Paul wrote about this to tell his readers that the letter really was from him.

Why did Paul write about circumcision again?

[6:12]

Paul wrote about circumcision again because this message was so great. He wanted his readers to know that circumcision and following the Law of Moses did not honor God. He wrote about this throughout this letter. As he ended the letter, he wrote about circumcision one more time to help readers know how great was this issue.

So, he again warned about these false teachers (6:12). These people wanted to make the Galatian Christians obey the Law of Moses. That is, they wanted them to be circumcised. This disturbed Paul greatly. So he again wrote to the Christians that they did not need to be circumcised.

Paul also wrote (6:13) that not even the false teachers followed all the laws they wanted the Galatians to follow. Paul accused them of making the Galatians follow the laws because they wanted to boast about making new converts.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); Law of Moses

What did Paul mean about crucifixion and the cross?

[6:13, 6:14]

When Paul wrote about the cross and crucifixion (6:14), he wanted to say that Jesus was the greatest thing he possessed. Nothing in the world mattered to Paul in the same way believing in, trusting in, and following Jesus mattered to him. So he used the metaphor about the cross to tell his readers how important is Jesus. Paul called the things he did before he believed in Jesus dead. He wanted his readers to know that he thought of his actions in the same way he thought of dead people. That is, they did not do anything for him. He wanted his readers to think about their own past actions in the same way he did his own.

See: 1 Corinthians 1:17, Galatians 5:11, and Philippians 3:18

See: Cross; Crucify (Crucifixion); Metaphor; Atonement (Atonement)

Why did Paul write about the "Israel of God"?

[6:16]

Some scholars think Paul wrote about the "Israel of God" to tell the Galatians that Christians are truly God's people. Paul wanted his readers to think about what he wrote in Galatians 3. The false teachers wanted the Galatians to be circumcised. This joined them to "Israel" by following Law of Moses. The false teachers said this pleased God and made them God's people. But Paul taught that when people believe and trust in Jesus and God completely, that pleases God. And this makes them God's people. So anyone who believes in Jesus is the true "Israel of God."

Other scholars think that Paul was giving special greetings to the Jewish Christians. They do not think that Christians become Jews or the "Israel of God."

See: People of God

What were Paul's "marks"?

[6:17]

When Paul said that he had "marks of Jesus" on his body (6:17), he wanted readers to think about the scars he possessed from his stoning (see: Acts 14:19), sicknesses (see: 2 Corinthians 12:7-9) and violence (see: Acts 16:22; 2 Corinthians 11:23-29). These were his "marks." When he called them "marks of Jesus," he wanted his readers to think about the marks and scars Jesus got when the Romans beat him and crucified him. In the same way Jesus possessed permanent marks on his body, so did Paul. Paul wanted to say that no matter what happened to him, he followed Jesus.

Some scholars think that the Greek word for "marks" is the same word used for tattoos. Tattoos identified the wearer as a slave, criminal, or prisoner. That is, Paul wanted to say he was a slave to Jesus.

Galatians 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul teaches believers how they should treat other believers and how God rewards.

Brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

if someone

"if anyone among you"

if someone is caught in any trespass

Possible meanings are 1) someone else found that person in the act. Alternate translation: "if someone is discovered in an act of sin" or 2) that person committed the sin without intending to do evil. Alternate translation: "if someone gave in and sinned"

you who are spiritual

"those of you who are guided by the Spirit" or "you who are living in the guidance of the Spirit"

restore him

"correct the person who sinned" or "exhort the person who sinned to return to a correct relationship with God"

in a spirit of gentleness

Possible meanings are 1) that the Spirit is directing the one who is offering correction or 2) "with an attitude of

gentleness" or "in a kind way."

Be concerned about yourself, ... tempted.

These words treat the Galatians as though they are all one person to emphasize that he is talking to each of them.

Alternate translation: "Be concerned about yourselves ... tempted." or "I say to each one of you, 'Be concerned about yourself, ... tempted.'"

so you also may not be tempted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that nothing will tempt you also to sin"

Galatians 6:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Galatians 6:3

For if

"Because if." The words that follow tell why the Galatians should 1) "carry one other's burdens" (Galatians 6:2) or 2) be careful that they themselves are not tempted (Galatians 6:1) or 3) "not become conceited" (Galatians 5:26).

he is something

"he is someone important" or "he is better than others"

he is nothing

"he is not important" or "he is not better than others"

Galatians 6:4

Each one should

"Each person must"

Galatians 6:5

each one will carry his own burden

"each person will be judged by his own work only" or "each person will be responsible for his own work only"

each one will

"each person will"

Galatians 6:6

The one

"The person"

the word

"the message," everything God has said or commanded

Galatians 6:7

for whatever a man plants, that he will also reap

Planting represents doing things that end in some kind of result, and gathering in represents experiencing the results of what one has done. Alternate translation: "for just as a farmer gathers in the fruit of whatever kind of seeds he plants, so everyone experiences the results of whatever he does"

whatever a man plants

Paul is not specifying males here. Alternate translation:

"whatever a person plants" or "whatever someone plants"

Galatians 6:8

plants seed to his own flesh

Planting seeds is a metaphor for doing deeds that will have consequences later. In this case, the person is doing sinful actions because of his sinful nature. Alternate translation:

"plants seed according to what he wants because of his sinful nature" or "does the things he wants to do because of his sinful nature"

will reap destruction

God punishing the person is spoken of as if the person were harvesting a crop. Alternate translation: "will receive punishment for what he did"

plants seed to the Spirit

Planting seeds is a metaphor for doing deeds that will have consequences later. In this case, the person is doing good actions because he is listening to God's Spirit. Alternate translation: "does the things God's Spirit loves"

from the Spirit will reap eternal life

"will receive eternal life as a reward from God's Spirit"

Galatians 6:9

Let us not become weary in doing good

"We should continue to do good"

doing good

doing good to others for their well-being

for at the right time

"for in due time" or "because at the time God has chosen"

Galatians 6:10

So then

"As a result of this" or "Because of this"

especially to those

"most of all to those" or "in particular to those"

those who belong to the household of faith

"those who are members of God's family through faith in Christ"

Galatians 6:11

Connecting Statement:

As Paul closes this letter, he gives one more reminder that the law does not save and that the Galatians should remember the cross of Christ.

large letters

This can mean that Paul wants to emphasize 1) the statements that follow or 2) that this letter came from him.

with my own hand

Possible meanings are 1) Paul probably had a helper who wrote most of this letter as Paul told him what to write, but Paul himself wrote this last part of the letter or 2) Paul wrote the whole letter himself.

Galatians 6:12

make a good impression

"cause others to think well of them" or "cause others to think that they are good people"

in the flesh

"with visible evidence" or "by their own efforts"

to compel

"to force" or "to strongly influence"

only to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ

"so that the Jews will not persecute them for claiming that the cross of Christ alone is what saves people"

the cross of Christ

These words are a metonym for faith that Christ died on the cross so God would forgive his people's sins. Alternate translation: "believing that God forgives his people's sins because Jesus died on the cross"

Galatians 6:13

so that they may boast about your flesh

"so that they may be proud that they have added you to the people who try to keep the law"

Galatians 6:14

But may I never boast except in the cross

"I do not ever want to boast in anything other than the cross" or "May I boast only in the cross"

the world has been crucified to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I think of the world as already dead" or "I treat the world like a criminal God has killed on a cross"

I to the world

The words "have been crucified" are understood from the phrase before this. Alternate translation: "and I have been crucified to the world"

I to the world

Possible meanings are 1) "the world thinks of me as already dead" or 2) "the world treats me like a criminal that God has killed on the cross"

the world

Possible meanings are 1) the people of the world, those who care nothing for God or 2) the things that those who care nothing for God think are important.

Galatians 6:15

neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision

"neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is important to God"

a new creation

Possible meanings are 1) a new believer in Jesus Christ or

2) the new life of a believer.

Galatians 6:16

walk according to this standard

The word "walk" here is a metaphor for living life, and a standard is something against which people measure other things. Alternate translation: "live this way"

peace and mercy be upon them, even upon the Israel of God

Possible meanings are 1) that believers in general are the Israel of God or 2) "may peace and mercy be upon Gentile believers and upon the Israel of God" or 3) "may peace be upon those who follow the rule, and may mercy be upon even the Israel of God."

Galatians 6:17

From now on

This can also mean "Lastly" or "As I end this letter."

let no one trouble me

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is commanding the Galatians not to trouble him, "I am commanding you this: do not trouble me," or 2) Paul is telling the Galatians that he is commanding all people not to trouble him, "I am

commanding everyone this: do not trouble me," or 3) Paul is expressing a desire, "I do not want anyone to trouble me."

trouble me

Possible meanings are 1) "speak of these matters to me" or 2) "cause me hardship" or "give me hard work."

for I carry on my body the marks of Jesus

These marks were scars from people who beat and whipped Paul because they did not like him teaching about Jesus. Alternate translation: "for the scars on my body show that I serve Jesus"

Galatians 6:18

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit

The word "your" here refers to the Galatians and so is plural. The words "your spirit" are a synecdoche and represent the people themselves. Alternate translation:

"May our Lord Jesus Christ be kind to you"

brothers

See how you translated this in Galatians 1:2.

Introduction to Ephesians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of Ephesians

Greeting and prayer for the spiritual blessings in Christ (1:1-23) Sin and salvation (2:1-10) Unity and peace (2:11-22) Mystery of Christ in you, made known (3:1-13) Prayer for riches of his glory to make them strong (3:14-21) Unity of the Spirit, building up the Body of Christ (4:1-16) New life (4:17-32) Imitators of God (5:1-21) Wives and husbands; children and parents; slaves and masters (5:22-6:9) Armor of God (6:10-20) Final greeting (6:21-24)

Who wrote the Book of Ephesians?

Paul wrote Ephesians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

The Apostle Paul helped start the church in Ephesus on one of his trips. He also lived in Ephesus for a year and a half and helped the believers there. Paul probably wrote this letter while he was in prison in Rome.

What is the Book of Ephesians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Ephesus to explain God's love for them in Christ Jesus. He described the blessings that God was giving them because they were now united with Christ. He explained that all believers are united together, whether Jew or Gentile. Paul also wanted to encourage them to live in a way that pleases God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Ephesians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Ephesus" or "A Letter to the Christians in Ephesus."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the "hidden truth" in the Book of Ephesians?

The expression translated in the ULB as "hidden truth" or "hidden" occurs six times. By it Paul always meant something that God had to reveal to human beings because they could not know it on their own. It always referred to something about how God planned to save mankind. Sometimes it was about his plan to cause peace between himself and mankind. Sometimes it was about his plan to unite Jews and Gentiles through Christ. Gentiles are now able to benefit from the promises of Christ as equals with the Jews.

What did Paul say about salvation and righteous living?

Paul said much about salvation and righteous living in this letter and in many of his letters. He said that God has been very kind and saved Christians because they believe in Jesus. Therefore, after they become Christians, they should live in a righteous way to show that they have faith in Christ. (See: righteous)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. The word "you" is almost always plural and refers to the believers who may read

this letter. The three exceptions to this are: 5:14, 6:2, and 6:3.

What did Paul mean by the "new self" or the "new man"?

When Paul spoke of the "new self" or the "new man," he meant the new nature that a believer receives from the Holy Spirit. This new nature was created in God's image (See: 4:24). The phrase "new man" is also used for God causing peace between Jews and Gentiles. God brought them together as one people that belong to him (See: 2:15).

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20; 2:6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 22; 3:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 21; 4:1, 17, 21, 32; 5:8, 18, 19; 6:1, 10, 18, 21. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Ephesians?

"in Ephesus" (1:1). Some early manuscripts do not include this expression, but it is probably in the original letter. The ULB, UDB, and many modern versions include it. "because we are members of his body" (5:30). Most modern versions, including the ULB, read in this way. Some older translations read, "because we are members of his body and of his bones." Translators might decide to choose the second reading if other versions in their area have it that way. If translators choose the second reading, they should put the additional words inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they are probably not original to the Book of Ephesians.

Chapter 1

Ephesians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"I pray"

Paul structures part of this chapter like a prayer of praise to God. But Paul is not just talking to God. He is teaching the church in Ephesus. He also tells the Ephesians how he is praying for them.

Special concepts in this chapter

Predestination

Many scholars believe this chapter teaches on a subject known as "predestination." This is related to the biblical concept of "predestine." Some scholars take this to indicate that God has, from before the foundation of the world, chosen some people to eternally save. Christians have different views on what the Bible teaches on this subject. So translators need to take extra care when translating this chapter. (See: predestine)

Links:

[Ephesians 1:1 Notes](#) [Ephesians intro](#)

Ephesians 1 Commentary

1:1-3

Did 1:1 originally contain the words "in Ephesus"?

[1:1]

See: Introduction

Why did Paul say that God wanted him to be an apostle?

[1:1]

Paul was an apostle because God wanted him to be an apostle. Perhaps Paul wanted people to know that God specifically chose him to be an apostle. On perhaps, Paul wanted people to know that he spoke for God. Therefore, when a person rejected Paul, they also rejected God. Both of these things may have been true.

See: Apostle; Will of God

What did Paul say when he wrote greetings to the church in Ephesus?

[1:2]

Paul greeted the Christians in Ephesus in a way that was similar to other letters. However, it was also different from other letters, because he also prayed that God would give "favor" or "grace" (χάρις/g5485) and peace to the Christians. This greeting is similar to Paul's other letters (see: Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; Galatians 1:3; Philippians 1:2). Perhaps this reminded the Christians in Ephesus of the favor God showed them. Favor or grace is one of the things that Paul wrote

about the most in Ephesians.

See: Grace

When does Paul's sentence end?

[1:3]

In Greek, the sentence beginning in 1:3 stops at the end of 1:14. However, it is common for translations to break this sentence into many smaller sentences.

How does Paul speak about blessing?

[1:3]

Paul said that God is "blessed," that is, God should be worshipped and should be honored. Paul then said that God has blessed Christians. This means that God helps Christians in certain ways. Paul explained that the way God helps to Christians is not easily seen or understood. These blessings are not the same as the things that a person is born able to do. Many scholars believe that the blessings which cannot easily be seen come from the Holy Spirit. However in 1:3, Paul stated that these blessings come from the place where God lives. Paul also stated that these blessings are "in Christ." Christians receive these blessings because they are in Jesus.

See: Bless (Blessing); In Christ

1:4

How did God choose Christians?

[1:4]

Some scholars think that God "chose" (ἐκλέγομαι/g1586) each Christian before they were born. God helped them to, or made them, believe in Jesus. Other scholars think that God chose the church, that is, all Christians. They think God always planned to create a group of people who believe in Jesus. Other scholars think that "chose" means that God created all Christians to serve him in a certain way. God chose them before he made the world.

See: Elect (Election)

When did God choose Christians?

[1:4]

Paul explains when God "chose" (ἐκλέγομαι/g1586) Christians. Some scholars think that this was at the same time that God created the world. Other scholars think that God did this before he created the world.

See: John 17:24; 1 Peter 1:20

Why did God choose Christians?

[1:4]

God "chose" or "determined" (ἐκλέγομαι/g1586) that Christians are to try to be "holy" (ἅγιος/g0040) or to act like Jesus. They are also to be "without a fault" (ἄμωμος/g0299), that is, people should not be able to say that they do the wrong things. They are to do the same types of things that Jesus did, but not do the evil things that non-Christians did (see: 1 Peter 1:16). The Holy Spirit helps Christians to live in a way that honors God.

Does the phrase "in love" with the sentence in 1:4 and 1:5?

[1:4]

The phrase "in love" could be part of 1:4 or 1:5. If it is part of the sentence in #v4, it would explain that Christians love God. It would be similar to other uses in Ephesians (see: Ephesians 3:17; 4:15-16; 5:2). If "in love" is a part of 1:5, then it would explain the reason why God "chose" (ἐκλέγομαι/g1586) Christians. Paul also used it in this way in Ephesians (see: Ephesians 2:4-5)

1:5-6

How are Christians adopted?

[1:5]

Part of God's plan was for Christians to be "adopted" into his family. In Scripture, Christians are spoken about as if they were adopted into God's family. This is because they receive all the legal rights and blessings that a child would receive from a parent. This adoption can only occur through Jesus (see: Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:4-5).

Advice to translators: Children receive an inheritance from their parents. This means that they get receive their parents' property and money after they die. In this question, the inheritance is called "legal rights," that is, legal rights as heirs.

See: Adopt (Adoption); Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

1:7-14

What are some things that God gives to those whom He has chosen?

[1:7, 1:9, 1:11, 1:13]

God blessed Christians in many different ways.

Christians have "redemption" (ἀπολύτρωσις/g0629), that is, Christians are freed from their sin enslaving them. This redemption is only found in Jesus (see: Romans 3:23-25; Colossians 1:13-14).

Christians are forgiven of their sins. When God forgives somebody, they are pardoned or permanently released from the punishment because of their sin.

Christians know more about God's plans. Parts of God's plan have previously been hidden. Paul refers to the things hidden as a "mystery" (see: Ephesians 3:4-5, 9).

Some scholars think that Christians will receive an inheritance from God. This inheritance is that Christians will live with God in heaven (see: Philippians 3:20-21). However, fewer scholars believe 1:11 indicates that Christians are God's inheritance, that is, Christians belong to God.

The Holy Spirit has "sealed" or "secured"(σφραγίζω/g4972) Christians. Some scholars think Jesus protects Christians so that they will live together with God forever. However, other scholars think Paul taught that Gentiles have become part of the people of God and this is what the Holy Spirit has sealed.

See: Redeem (Redemption); Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Seal; People of God

How will God "bring together" all things in Jesus?

[1:10]

God will "bring together"(ἀνακεφαλαιώω/g0346) all things together in Jesus. This includes all things in "heavenly places" or "the universe"(οὐρανός/g3772) and all things on earth. God's plan was that Jesus would have first place in everything, that is, for everyone and everything to worship Jesus.

1:15-16

Why did Paul appreciate the Christians in Ephesus?

[1:16]

After talking about the Christians in Ephesus, Paul now talked about why he appreciated them. Some scholars think Paul's appreciated the things that God did for both him and the Ephesians. This is what Paul talked about in 1:3-14. Other scholars think Paul appreciated the Christians in Ephesus because they believed in Jesus and lived in a way that honored God. They did this by loving one another. They think this is what Paul talked about in 1:13-14.

Advice to translators: To "appreciate" someone is to be thankful for them and to tell them this.

1:17-19

What did Paul ask God to give the Christians in Ephesus?

[1:17]

Paul asked God to give several different things to the Christians in Ephesus.

Paul asked God to give Christians the "spirit"(πνεῦμα/g4151) of "wisdom"(σοφία/g4678). This is a certain wisdom that comes from the Holy Spirit or the wisdom to lead a life that honors God.

Paul also asked God to give Christians the Spirit of "understanding"(ἀποκάλυψις/g0602). This meant to learn more about God.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Reveal (Revelation)

Why did Paul want the Christians in Ephesus to know?

[1:19]

Paul wanted the Christians in Ephesus to know something they did not know before.

Paul wanted these Christians to know that they would get to live together with God in heaven forever. Therefore, Christians should be confident about this. (see: 1 Peter 1:3-5; Romans 5:1-2)

Paul wanted these Christians to know that they have received a great inheritance from God, that is, God gave them certain gifts.

Paul wanted these Christians to know that God is very powerful. God uses his power to help Christians.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Gifts of the Holy Spirit

1:20-23

Why is Jesus sitting next to God?

[1:20]

The permission God gives to Jesus to rule is spoken of as if it were his right hand. God gave Jesus the permission to rule with him. Paul talked about God ruling on his throne in heaven while sitting down. Paul wanted to say that Jesus rules alongside of or with God. The ruler was expected to sit on a throne when he made decrees, that is, when he gives rules for others to follow.

Why are Christians to trust that God is able to do these things?

[1:21]

Christians are to trust that God is able to do these things because:

God had the power to bring Jesus back to life after Jesus died.

God had the power to give Jesus permission to rule alongside of him.

God made Jesus greater than many different things and people (see: 1:20). Paul explained that God made Jesus greater than anything or anyone with the power or the permission to rule others. He has more power than any other person in heaven or on earth. (see: Philippians 2:9-11)

God made Jesus the leader of the entire church and Jesus has the power to keep it going and to help it to grow. God made Jesus leader over everything. When something is “put under”(ὑποτάσσω/g5293) another person’s feet, the person controlled or ruled over that thing.

See: Church

How is Jesus’ name greater than any other name?

[1:21]

In the ancient Near East, a person’s “name” often symbolized who that person was. In 1:21, Jesus’ name refers to Jesus himself. Paul said that Jesus is much greater than every other person. This is true both now and in the future.

Jesus is also greater because all things have been “put under his feet.” This means that permission to rule everything has been given to Jesus (see: 1 Corinthians 15:27; 1 Peter 3:22).

Why is the church called Jesus’ body?

[1:23]

In Scripture, all Christians are called the church. The church is spoken about as if it were Jesus’ body. This is because the church is a single group working together to serve a single purpose. This purpose of to serve God. Jesus is the “head” of this body because he leads it.

Jesus “filled” the church, that is, he gave the church many blessings.

See: 1 Corinthians 12:12-17; Colossians 1:18

See: Church; Body of Christ

Ephesians 1:1

General Information:

Paul names himself as the writer of this letter to the believers at the church at Ephesus. Except where noted, all instances of “you” and “your” refers to the Ephesian believers as well as all believers and so are plural.

Paul, an apostle ... to God’s holy people in Ephesus

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter and its intended audience. Alternate translation: “I, Paul, an apostle ... write this letter to you, God’s holy people Ephesus”

who are faithful in Christ Jesus

“In Christ Jesus” and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

Ephesians 1:2

Grace to you and peace

This is a common greeting and blessing that Paul often uses in his letters.

Ephesians 1:3

General Information:

In this book, unless otherwise stated, the words “us” and “we” refer to Paul and the believers in Ephesus, as well as all believers.

Connecting Statement:

Paul opens his letter by talking about the believers’ position and their safety before God.

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised

This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: “Let us praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”

who has blessed us

“for God has blessed us”

every spiritual blessing

“every blessing coming from the Spirit of God”

in the heavenly places

“in the supernatural world.” The word “heavenly” refers to the place where God is.

in Christ

Possible meanings 1) the phrase “in Christ” refers to what Christ has done. Alternate translation: “through Christ” or “through what Christ has done” or 2) “in Christ” is a metaphor referring to our close relationship with Christ. Alternate translation: “by uniting us with Christ” or “because we are united with Christ”

Ephesians 1:4

from the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: “from the time he created the world”

holy and blameless

Paul uses two similar words to emphasize moral goodness.

Ephesians 1:5

God predestined us for adoption

The word “us” refers to Paul, the Ephesian church, and all believers in Christ. Alternate translation: “God planned long ago to adopt us”

God predestined us

“God chose us ahead of time” or “God chose us long ago”

for adoption as sons

Here “adoption” refers to becoming part of God’s family.

Here the word “sons” refers to males and females. Alternate translation: “to be adopted as his children”

through Jesus Christ

God brought believers into his family by the work of Jesus Christ.

his will

“God’s will”

Ephesians 1:6

General Information:

The words “his” and “he” refer to God.

he has freely given us in the One he loves

“he has kindly given to us by means of the One he loves”

the One he loves

“the One he loves, Jesus Christ” or “his Son, whom he loves”

Ephesians 1:7

riches of his grace

Paul speaks of God’s grace as if it were material wealth.

Alternate translation: "greatness of God's grace" or "abundance of God's grace"

Ephesians 1:8

He multiplied this grace to us

"He gave us this great amount of grace" or "He was extremely kind to us"

with all wisdom and understanding

Possible meanings are 1) "because he has all wisdom and understanding" 2) "so that we might have great wisdom and understanding"

Ephesians 1:9

according to what pleased him

Possible meanings are 1) "because he wanted to make it known to us" or 2) "which was what he wanted."

which he demonstrated in Christ

"he demonstrated this purpose in Christ"

in Christ

"by means of Christ"

Ephesians 1:10

with a view to a plan

A new sentence can be started here. If you start a new sentence here, you will need to end 1:9 with a period instead of a comma. Alternate translation: "He did this with a view to a plan" or "He did this, thinking about a plan" for the fullness of time

"for when the time is right" or "for the time that he has appointed"

Ephesians 1:11

we were given an inheritance, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God gave us an inheritance, having predestined us according to his plan. For he works"

Ephesians 1:12

so that we, who are the first to hope in Christ

The pronoun "we" refer to Paul and the other Jewish believers, not to the Ephesian believers.

the first to hope in Christ

"the first people to hope in Christ." They confidently expected that Christ would fulfill God's promises. Alternate translation: "the first to trust in Christ"

so that we, ... Christ, would be for the praise of his glory.

Possible meanings are 1) other people would praise God because of the grace he had shown the believers ([Ephesians 1:6](#)). Alternate translation: "we, ... Christ, would live in a way that brings glory to God." or "people would praise God because of the glorious grace he showed us who ... Christ." Or 2) believers would praise God for his glory. Alternate translation: "so that we, ... Christ, would praise him for his glory as long as we live."

Ephesians 1:13

General Information:

Paul has been speaking in the previous two verses about himself and the other Jewish believers, but now he begins speaking about the Ephesian believers.

the word of truth

Possible meanings are 1) "the message about the truth" or 2) "the true message."

were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit

Wax was placed on a letter and stamped with a symbol representing the person who wrote the letter. Paul uses this custom as a picture to show how God has used the Holy Spirit to assure us that we belong to him. Alternate translation: "God has sealed you with the Holy Spirit that he promised"

Ephesians 1:14

the guarantee of our inheritance

What God has promised and will provide is spoken of as though it were property or wealth that one would inherit from a family member. Alternate translation: "the guarantee that we will receive what God has promised" the redemption of the possession

The abstract nouns "redemption" and "possession" can be translated using the verbs "redeem" and "possess," respectively. Possible meanings of "possession" are 1) God possesses. Alternate translation: "God redeems us as his own people" Or 2) Christians possess. Alternate translation: "we take possession of our inheritance"

Ephesians 1:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul prays for the Ephesian believers and praises God for the power that believers have through Christ.

Ephesians 1:16

I have not stopped thanking God

Paul uses "not stopped" to emphasize that he continues to thank God. Alternate translation: "I continue to thank God"

Ephesians 1:17

a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him

"spiritual wisdom to understand his revelation"

Ephesians 1:18

that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "eyes of your heart" is a metaphor for one's ability to gain understanding. Alternate translation: "that you may gain understanding and be enlightened"

that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened

This may be stated in the active tense. Alternate translation: that God may enlighten your heart" or "that God may enlighten your understanding"

may be enlightened

"may be made to see"

the hope to which he has called you

Here "the hope" refers to what God wants us to confidently expect. Alternate translation: "what he has called you to confidently expect" or "what he has called you to confidently wait for"

to which he has called you

to which he has invited you

the riches of his glorious inheritance among all God's holy people

What God has promised and will provide is spoken of as though it were property or wealth that one would inherit from a family member. Alternate translation: "the riches of all the glorious things he has promised to give to all God's holy people"

all God's holy people

"all those whom he has set apart for himself" or "all those who belong completely to him"

Ephesians 1:19

the incomparable greatness of his power
God's power is far beyond all other power.
toward us who believe
"for us who believe"

the working of the strength of his might
"the strength of his might that is at work for us"
the strength of his might
"his mighty strength" or "his very great strength"
Ephesians 1:20
raised him
"made him alive again"

when he raised him from the dead
Here "the dead" is a nominal adjective that means all dead people together in the underworld. To be raised from among them means to become alive again. Alternate translation: "when he brought him back to life" or "when he caused him to be alive again"

seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places
The person who sits "at the right hand" of a king sits at his right side and rules with all the authority of the king at whose right hand or side he sits. This is a metonym of location that represents the authority that the person in that location possesses. Alternate translation: "gave him all authority to rule from heaven"

seated him at his right hand
To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "seated him in the place of honor and authority beside him"

in the heavenly places
"in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is. See how you translated this in Ephesians 1:3.
Ephesians 1:21

far above all rule and authority and power and dominion
Rulers, authorities, dominions, and powers are different

terms for the ranks of supernatural beings, both angelic and demonic. Alternate translation: "far above all types of supernatural beings"

every name that is named
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: Possible meanings are 1) "every name that man gives" or 2) "every name that God gives"

name
Possible meanings are 1) title or 2) position of authority.
in this age
"at this time"

in the age to come
"in the future"
Ephesians 1:22
subjected all things under Christ's feet
Here "feet" represents Christ's lordship, authority, and power. Alternate translation: "put all things under Christ's power" or "made all things subject to Christ"

head over all things
Here "head" refers to the leader or the one who is in charge. Alternate translation: "ruler over all things"
Ephesians 1:23

The church is his body
Just as with a human body, the head
his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all
Possible meanings are 1) the body is the fullness of Christ. This means Christ fills or gives to the church everything that he has to give, and Christ also fills all things in every way or 2) "the fullness" refers back to "him," that is, Christ in 1:22, and "him" in 1:23 refers to God the Father. This means the full deity of the Father dwells within Christ, and the Father fills all things in every way or 3) the body is the completion of Christ. This means that Christ as the "head" is completed by the church, which is "his body," and Christ fills all things in every way.

Chapter 2

Ephesians 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter focuses on a Christian's life before coming to believe in Jesus. Paul then uses this information to explain how a person's former way of living is distinct from a Christian's new identity "in Christ." (See: faith)

Special concepts in this chapter

One body

Paul teaches about the church in this chapter. The church is made of two different groups of people (Jews and Gentiles). They are now one group or "body." The church is also known as the body of Christ. Jews and Gentiles are united in Christ.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"Dead in trespasses and sins"

Paul teaches that those who are not Christians are "dead" in their sin. Sin binds or enslaves them. This makes them spiritually "dead." Paul writes that God makes Christians alive in Christ.

Descriptions of worldly living

Paul uses many different ways to describe how non-Christians act. They "lived according to the ways of this world" and are "living according to the ruler of the authorities of the air," "fulfilling the evil desires of our sinful nature," and "carrying out the desires of the body and of the mind."

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"It is the gift of God"

Some scholars believe "it" here refers to being saved. Other scholars believe that it is faith that is the gift of God. Because of how the Greek tenses agree, "it" here more likely refers to all of being saved by God's grace through faith.

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for a person's sinful nature. The phrase "Gentiles in the flesh" indicates the Ephesians once lived without any concern for God. "Flesh" is also used in this verse to refer to the physical part of man. (See: flesh)

Links:

[Ephesians 2:1 Notes](#)

Ephesians 2

2:1-3

How is a non-Christian dead?

[2:1]

Paul spoke about non-Christians as if they were dead. They are "dead" (νεκρός/g3498) because of their sins. Non-Christians are spoken about as if they are dead because they are separated from God and because they have no hope. Dying is a type of separation. It separates the soul from the body. When a non-Christian dies, his soul is separated from God forever (see: Ephesians 4:18). Non-Christians were also considered to be without hope (2:12), that is, they would not be able to live together with God in heaven. Non-Christians are also considered dead because they inherited sin from their fathers, going all the way back to Adam and sin leads to death (see: Romans 3:23; 5:12; 6:23).

See: Sin; Soul

How do non-Christians live?

[2:2]

Paul talked about the way that non-Christians generally live. While Paul spoke about non-Christians in general, all non-Christians live in a way that does not honor God. They may dishonor very much or very little.

Non-Christians live in the same way that the "world" lives. In Scripture, this is a common metaphor. All sinful people are called the "world." These people do not live in a way that honors God. This is because the rules of the world oppose all things that honor God (see: John 15:18-19; Colossians 2:8).

Non-Christians live in the way Satan wants them to live. In #v2, Satan is described as a ruler of the earth.

Paul described three different heavens. In ancient Israel, this was a common Jewish way of describing the universe. There are three heavens: the earth, the universe, and the place where God lives. In 2:2, Paul uses the word "air" as a metaphor for the first heaven, which is the whole earth.

Some scholars believe that Satan currently lives in a part of heaven, the place where God lives. This is because these scholars do not think that he has been removed from heaven yet (see: Revelation 12:7-9). In this heaven, he controls some of the angels, who are also called demons.

Non-Christians do the things that their "physical body" or "flesh" (σάρξ/g4561) wants to do. In Scripture, the flesh is a metaphor that means that non-Christians sin want to do things that do not honor God (see: Galatians 5:19-21).

Non-Christians do the things that their "mind" or "thoughts" (διάνοια/g1271) desires. In Scripture, the mind is a metaphor that means that non-Christians sin by following their sinful thoughts. Yet, they may believe that they are doing a good thing.

Non-Christians do not honor God with their actions. They do not need help to do this. This is normal for them.

See: Angel; Demon; World

Why is Satan described as a prince?

[2:2]

God is the ruler over everything. In Scripture, God is the king who rules all kings. Therefore, God is the ruler of the earth. However, Scripture also calls Satan the ruler of the earth. Since God is still ruler over Satan, Satan is called a "prince." A prince is a person who rules under a king.

See: Satan (The Devil)

How are non-Christians "children of wrath"?

[2:3]

Non-Christians are called children of "wrath" or "God's anger" (ὀργή/g3709). After becoming a Christian, a person becomes a child of God (see: 1 John 2:29). God created all people, but not all people are his children. Before believing in Jesus, non-Christians are children of the devil (see: 1 John 3:10). God will punish these evil people. God will punish their sin with of his wrath.

2:4-6

Why did God do great things for people who did not honor him?

[2:4]

God did great things for people who did not honor him. This is because God is kind to all people and does not always punish them, even when they deserve to be punished. He does this because he loves everyone, even when they do not

honor him.

Fewer scholars think that God only loves non-Christians who will become Christians. They think God hates sinners (see: Psalm 5:5) and this type of kindness is only for those who become Christians.

How does God make Christians alive?

[2:5]

Paul spoke about Christians as if they are alive in a certain way. This is because Paul talked about non-Christians as if they are dead. After believing in Jesus, Christians become “alive.” Christians are now able to live in a new way, a way that honors God. They are no longer controlled by their desire to sin, that is, they do not have to do the evil things they want to do.

In 2:6, Paul also used the metaphor of waking up from sleeping. When God makes a Christian “alive,” it is as if they have woken up from sleep. This was also a way to describe someone who had risen or come back to life after they died.

See: Colossians 2:13

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

Why are Christians seated with Jesus in heaven?

[2:6]

Christians are seated with Jesus because believers are “in Jesus.” While Christians are not physically with Jesus at this time, heaven is their new “home” (see: Philippians 3:20). This means that they are to act as if they are from heaven, instead of the earth, which Paul said is evil. Some scholars think this refers to a future time when Christians will rule alongside of Jesus (see: 2 Timothy 2:11; Revelation 3:21). Other scholars think that Christians share in the victory over sin and Satan in their life (see: Ephesians 6:10-12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

See: In Christ

2:7

What will God do in the future?

[2:7]

In the end, God’s plan is for Christians to honor him. It will display his favor and kindness, which is so great, it cannot be measured. In Scripture, everything serves God’s plan, which will one day reach its greatest or highest point. At its greatest point, God’s plan will be completed.

2:8-9

Does God give Christians what they deserve?

[2:8]

Paul said that God does not give Christians what they deserve. He gives them better than they deserve. This is because they believed in Jesus. They deserved punishment, but they get to live together with God forever. They cannot do anything to earn this. However, people need to believe in Jesus in order to receive this gift from God.

See: Romans 11:6; 2 Timothy; Titus 3:5

What is the gift of God?

[2:8]

Some scholars think that God delivering people from the punishment that came as a result of their sin is a gift from God. Other scholars think God’s gift is making people believe in Jesus. They believe this because they also think that non-Christians are unable to believe in Jesus, unless God makes them believe in Jesus. 2:10

Why does God save Christians?

[2:10]

Christians are God’s “works,” that is, God made all people. However, he also remakes all Christians or makes all Christians new when they believe in Jesus. They are now able to honor God in the way that they live. God is the one who does this. The reason that God has done this is so that Christians can do things that honor God.

Christians are not able to be saved by honoring God. Instead, it is because God has saved Christians that they are then able to live in a way that honors God. However, God must first save Christians.

There are specific things that Christians will do in their life that honor God. God knows what these specific things are, even before a Christian does them. Elsewhere, Scripture speaks about these actions as if God did them (see: Philippians 2:13). This is because God helps the Christian to live in a way that honors him.

Advice to translators: In this passage, “save” means to not be punished for their sins. When God saves a Christian, they will live together with God in heaven forever. It does not mean that they are saved from some physical danger.

See: 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Walk

2:11-12

How were the Gentiles separated from God?

[2:12]

Paul reminded the Gentiles that they used to be separated from God. They were not part of the covenant God made with

Abraham. Israel obeyed this covenant by circumcising their male children when they were 8 years old (see: Genesis 17:9-11).

Because they were not part of this, they were not part of the “people of God.” The Gentiles were called “uncircumcised.” However, this meant more than just “not circumcised.” It was a way to insult the Gentiles. The Jews hated the Gentiles because they did not honor God.

Paul talked about the different ways the Gentiles were separated from God. He told them to remember these things about how they used to be separated from God:

They did not have anyone to deliver them from difficult circumstances. Perhaps God would not help them. They were not a part of the nation of Israel, God’s chosen people. They were not able to inherit the promises God gave to Israel. God called them “strangers” or “foreigners” to God’s covenants. This is because they did not get to participate in these covenants or receive the blessings of these covenants. They did not have any hope. Some scholars think they did not have hope that God would help them. Other scholars think that they did not have any hope that their future would be better. They did not know about the God of Israel. They were far away from God. Paul used this metaphor to explain that the Gentiles were not honoring God in anything that they did. Before they could honor God, they first needed to learn about God and learn about God could be honored. Only then could they try to honor God.

See: Covenant; Circumcise (Circumcision); People of God; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

2:13

How have things changed for Gentiles?

[2:13]

After Jesus’ death, things between the Gentiles and the God of Israel have changed. Now, God brought the Gentiles, who became Christians, close to him. Paul used this metaphor to explain that the Gentiles could now honor God. Some scholars think that this metaphor was originally used when a Gentile began to obey the Law of Moses. However, Paul used it in a different way because the Jews and Gentiles both became Christians.

See: Isaiah 57:19; Acts 2:39; 22:21

2:14-16

Are Jews and Gentiles equal in the church?

[2:14]

In the Church, Jews and Gentiles were joined together into one group. Because of this, they are considered equal. Before the church began, the Gentiles needed to follow the Jewish religion. They were evil and did not honor God. When Paul wrote, calling someone a Gentile was even considered an insult. Therefore, the Jews believed that they were far better than the Gentiles. In the church, being a Jew is not better than being a Gentile.

See: Church

What was the wall between the Jews and Gentiles?

[2:14]

Paul spoke about the Jews and Gentiles being separated as if it were a wall between them. The Jews and the Gentiles hated each other. This “wall” was a type of barrier between them. Some scholars think that the wall reminded people of the wall that physically separated the Jews and Gentiles in temple. Other scholars think that the wall reminded people of the curtain in the temple that separated the people from God. Still other scholars think that the wall reminded the people that they did not need to obey the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses

How did Paul talk about peace in this passage?

[2:15]

Paul uses the word “peace” several times in this passage. Jesus is peace, that is, he brings peace. He brings peace to the Jews and the Gentiles. Before, they hated each other. Jesus made them into one new group. This new group is spoken about as if it were a man because a man cannot be separated into two different people.

2:17-18

To whom did God give peace?

[2:17]

In Israel, it was common to talk about the Jews as if they were close to God. It was also common to talk about the Gentiles as if they were far from God (see: 2:13). God gave made it possible for both Jews and Gentiles to be at peace with him.

In 2:17, God gave peace to those believe in Jesus. In Scripture, non-Christians are described as being at war with God (see: Romans 8:7). By believing in Jesus, they no longer fight against God.

Can Christians directly approach God?

[2:18]

Both Jews and Gentiles have been given the ability to speak to God without the need for another person who speaks to God for them. In Judaism, a person could not speak to God without a priest. The priest was the only person who could speak to God. The Gentiles needed the Jews, and the Jewish priests, in order to talk to God. After Jesus died, this changed.

The curtain in the temple that separated God from man was torn (see: Matthew 27:51). Now, Jesus approaches God for people. No one else is needed for both the Jews and the Gentiles.

See: Priest (Priesthood)

2:19-22

How did Paul describe Christians?

[2:19]

Paul described Christians in different ways in this passage.

They are not “strangers” or “outsiders” and “aliens” or “foreigners.” These two words mean almost the same thing. Both of these words use the same metaphor of being a foreigner or outsider. God is not a foreigner to Christians. They now know about God. In addition to this, Christians are visitors or foreigners on the earth (see: Philippians 3:20). When they die, Christians will go to their new home in heaven.

They are “fellow citizens” or “citizens of the same nation.” This is the opposite of being strangers and aliens. Paul continued his metaphor and said that all Christians are from the same nation or tribe.

They are part of God’s family. This is a common metaphor in Scripture. All Christians are called children of God. In this passage, Paul indicated that the Christians join a group of all those who trust in God. All of these people are united as part of God’s family.

See: Children of God

How does the church resemble a building?

[2:20, 2:21, 2:22]

Paul spoke about the church as if it were building. This building was a temple.

The apostles served as the foundation of the building. They are the base upon which everything else is built or are themselves the base. They helped the church to grow.

Some scholars think that Paul walk talking about the apostles and prophets who lived when he lived. These were titles given to certain people. Everything that came after these people built upon the things they had done.

Other scholars think that the prophets could have been the prophets in Israel. They think that Paul wanted to remind people that the church came out of the Jewish religion.

Other scholars think that the church continues to have people who serve God as apostles and prophets. The apostles are people who God sends out to serve him. The prophets are people who God sends out to speak for him. 2. Jesus is the “cornerstone.” When making a building, the cornerstone is the stone that is the most essential part of the building and it is the first stone put in place. This stone guides every other part of the building so that it is the right place. This is what Jesus does for the church. He is also the one who holds the whole building together and helps it to grow. 3. The church is a temple. The church is made of Christians who try to honor God in the way that they live. The temple was a place where God was worshipped. Now, the church is where God is worshipped. He is worshipped when Christians live in a way that honors him (see: Romans 12:1). 4. The church is where the Holy Spirit lives.

See: Apostle; Prophet; Temple; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers of their past and the way they now are before God.

you were dead in your trespasses and sins

This speaks of sinful people being unable to obey God as if they were people who were physically dead.

in your trespasses and sins

The words “trespasses” and “sins” have similar meanings. Paul uses them together to emphasize the greatness of the people’s sin. They can also be translated using the verbs “trespass” and “sin,” respectively. Alternate translation: “because you had trespassed and sinned”

Ephesians 2:2

in which you once walked

The word “walked” is a metaphor for the way they lived their lives. To say that they “walked in” their trespasses and sins [Ephesians 2:1]

according to the ways of this world

The apostles also used “world” to refer to the selfish behaviors and corrupt values of the people living in this world. Alternate translation: “according to the values of

people living in the world” or “following the principles of this present world”

according to the ruler of the authorities of the air

“doing what the ruler of the authorities of the air wants them to do.” These words expand upon “according to the age of this world.” The “ruler of the authorities of the air” is the devil or Satan.

the spirit that is working in the sons of disobedience

These words expand upon “the ruler of the authorities of the air.” This is another way of speaking of the devil or Satan.

the sons of disobedience

Ephesians 2:3

the desires of the flesh and of the mind

The words “flesh” and “mind” represent the entire person. flesh

This word is a metonym for the body, which is made of flesh. Alternate translation: “body”

children of wrath

people with whom God is angry

Ephesians 2:4

God is rich in mercy

"God is abundant in mercy" or "God is very kind to us" because of his great love with which he loved us
 "because of his great love for us" or "because he loves us very much"
 Ephesians 2:5
 by grace you have been saved
 This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "God saved us because of his great kindness toward us"
 Ephesians 2:6
 God raised us up together with Christ
 Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Possible meanings are 1) because God has caused Christ to come alive again, God has already given Paul and the believers in Ephesus new spiritual life. Alternate translation: "God has given us new life because we belong to Christ" or 2) because God has caused Christ to come alive again, the believers in Ephesus can know that after they die they will live with Christ, and Paul can speak of the believers living again as if it has already happened. Alternate translation: "We can be sure that God will give us life as he has caused Christ to come alive again"
 in the heavenly places
 "in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is. See how this is translated in Ephesians 1:3.
 in Christ Jesus
 "In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.
 Ephesians 2:7
 in the ages to come
 "in the future"
 Ephesians 2:8
 For by grace you have been saved through faith
 God's kindness to us is the reason he made it possible for us to be saved from judgment if we simply trust in Jesus.
 Alternate translation: "God saved you by grace because of your faith in him"
 this did not
 The word "this" refers back to "by grace you have been saved by faith."
 Ephesians 2:9
 not from works, so that no one may boast
 You may want to start a new sentence here. Alternate translation: "Salvation does not come from works, so that no one may boast" or "God does not save a person because of what that person does, so no one can boast and say that he earned his salvation"
 Ephesians 2:10
 in Christ Jesus
 "In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.
 we would walk in them
 Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Here "in them" refers to the "good deeds." Alternate

translation: "we would always and continually do those good deeds"
 Ephesians 2:11
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul reminds these believers that God has now made Gentiles and Jews into one body through Christ and his cross.
 Gentiles in the flesh
 This refers to people who were not born Jewish.
 uncircumcision
 Non-Jewish people were not circumcised as babies and thus the Jews considered them people who do not follow any of God's laws. Alternate translation: "uncircumcised pagans"
 circumcision
 This was another term for Jewish people because all male infants were circumcised. Alternate translation: "circumcised people"
 what is called the "circumcision" in the flesh made by human hands
 Possible meanings are 1) "Jews, who are circumcised by humans" or 2) "Jews, who circumcise the physical body."
 by what is called
 This can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "by what people call" or "by those whom people call"
 Ephesians 2:12
 separated from Christ
 "not knowing Christ" or "not belonging to Christ"
 foreigners to citizenship in Israel
 "foreigners, not citizens of Israel"
 strangers to the covenants of the promise
 Paul speaks to the Gentile believers as if they had been foreigners, kept out of the land of God's covenant and promise. Alternate translation: "not belonging to those with whom God made the covenants of the promise"
 having no hope
 They had no reason to confidently expect anything good to happen. Specifically, they had no hope that God would save them and give them eternal life with him. Alternate translation: "not hoping in God" or "not confidently waiting for eternal life with God"
 Ephesians 2:13
 But now in Christ Jesus
 Paul is marking a contrast between the Ephesians before they believed in Christ and after they believed in Christ.
 you who once were far away from God have been brought near by the blood of Christ
 Not belonging to God due to sin is spoken of as being far away from God. Belonging to God because of the blood of Christ is spoken of as being brought near to God. Alternate translation: "you who once did not belong to God now belong to God because of the blood of Christ"
 by the blood of Christ
 The blood of Christ is a metonym for his death. Alternate translation: "by Christ's death" or "when Christ died for us"
 Ephesians 2:14
 he himself is our peace
 The word "himself" here emphasizes that Jesus alone is the reason that Jews and Gentiles can worship God as one peaceful community. Alternate translation: "he is the one

who enables us to live in peace with each other"

our peace

The word "our" refers to Paul and his readers and so is inclusive.

he made us both one

"he made the Jews and Gentiles one"

By his flesh

The words "his flesh," his physical body, are a metonym for his body dying. Alternate translation: "By the death of his body on the cross" or "By dying on the cross" or "By his actions as a mortal man"

he broke down the dividing wall of hostility

Paul is speaking of Jews and Gentiles being hostile to each other and unable to worship God together as if they were on different sides of a wall. Because Jesus died, Gentiles as well as Jews can now worship God. Alternate translation: "he made it possible for Jews and Gentiles not to be hostile to each other anymore"

Ephesians 2:15

He set aside the law with its commands and ordinances

Jesus's blood satisfied the law of Moses so that both the Jews and Gentiles can live at peace in God.

one new man

a single new people, the people of redeemed humanity in himself

It is union with Christ that makes reconciliation possible between Jews and Gentiles.

Ephesians 2:16

Christ reconciles both peoples

"Christ brings the Jews and the Gentiles together in peace" through the cross

The cross here represents Christ's death on the cross.

Alternate translation: "by means of Christ's death on the cross"

putting to death the hostility

Stopping their hostility is spoken of as if he killed their hostility. By dying on the cross Jesus eliminated the reason for Jews and Gentiles to be hostile toward each other.

Neither are now required to live according to the law of Moses. Alternate translation: "stopping them from hating one another"

Ephesians 2:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the Ephesian believers that present Gentile believers are also now made one with the Jewish apostles and prophets; they are a temple for God in the Spirit.

proclaimed the good news of peace

"proclaimed the good news that tells that God and people can be at peace with each other" or "proclaimed the good news that is itself the way that people can be at peace with each other"

you who were far away

This refers to the Gentiles or non-Jews.

those who were near

This refers to the Jews.

Ephesians 2:18

For through Jesus we both have access

Here "we both" refers the believing Jews

in one Spirit

All believers, both Jewish and Gentile, are given the right to enter into the presence of God the Father by the same Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19

you Gentiles ... the household of God

Paul is using a metaphor to tell his Gentile readers that though God formerly did not consider them part of his people, God now considers them part of his people.

foreigners and strangers ... fellow citizens ... and members of the household

The words "foreigners" and "strangers" mean almost the same thing, so "strangers and foreigners" may be a doublet. However, Paul is contrasting "foreigners and strangers" with "fellow citizens ... and members." The word "citizens" refers to having political rights, so here "foreigners" probably refers to people living in a country not their own and having no political rights. The word "members" refers to being part of a family, so "strangers" probably refers to people who are not part of a family.

Ephesians 2:20

You have been built on the foundation

Paul speaks of God's people as if they were a building.

Christ is the cornerstone, the apostles are the foundation, and the believers are the structure.

You have been built

This can be stated in the active tense. Alternate translation:

"God has built you"

Ephesians 2:21

the whole building fits together and grows as a holy temple

Paul continues to speak of Christ's family as if it were a building. In the same way a builder fits stones together while building, so Christ is fitting us together.

In him ... in the Lord

"In Christ ... in the Lord Jesus" These metaphors express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

Ephesians 2:22

in him

"in Christ" This metaphor expresses the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

you also are being built together as a dwelling place for God in the Spirit

This describes how believers are being put together to become a place where God will permanently live through the power of the Holy Spirit.

you also are being built together

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God is also building you together"

Chapter 3

Ephesians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"I pray"

Paul structures part of this chapter as a prayer to God. But Paul is not just talking to God. He is both praying for and instructing the church in Ephesus.

Special concepts in this chapter

Mystery

Paul refers to the church as a "mystery." The role of the church in the plans of God was once not known. But God has now revealed it. Part of this mystery involves the Gentiles having equal standing with the Jews in the plans of God.

Links:

[Ephesians 3:1 Notes](#)

Ephesians 3

3:1-6

Why was Paul in jail?

[3:1]

Paul was in jail because he was a Christian. He did not do anything evil. The Romans believed that their gods brought them favor, made their empire very great, and gave them peace with other nations. When someone rejected their gods, or worshipped another god, he rejected the gods the Romans believe in, who helped their nation. Because of this, they rebelled against the gods and the nation. This caused the Romans to say that Christians were trying to cause problems for their nation. Perhaps this was why Paul was imprisoned.

What is the "mystery of Jesus"?

[3:3]

The "mystery of Jesus" was a certain part of God's plan. People did not know about this part of God's plan before Jesus told them about it. After Jesus came to the earth, he talked much about this because God wanted him to tell people more about God's plans. Before, God hid this "mystery." Now, Jesus has talked about this mystery and explained it to people. Before Jesus came to the earth, people did not believe that the messiah would come to the earth to die for the sins of mankind. However, the Old Testament said that this would happen (see: Isaiah 53). They also did not believe that the Gentiles would be joined together with the Jews. However, Jesus said that this happened. They also did not believe that God would promise certain things to the Gentiles or that God would give them favor. Jesus said that this now happens. Advice to translators: Translate "mystery" as your local translation does.

See: Galatians 1:11-12; Colossians 1:24-27

See: Messiah (Christ)

How was the "mystery" revealed by God?

[3:5]

God did not tell the prophets who lived during the Old Testament times everything about this "mystery." Now in the New Testament times, God told the apostles and prophets to tell people more about this mystery. This was always part of God's plan (see: 3:11).

See: 2:19-22

See: Apostle; Prophet; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

3:7

How did God make Paul someone who would teach others about the gospel?

[3:7]

God made Paul a "minister of" or "someone who would teach others about" (διδάκων/g1249) the gospel. This is how he served God. Paul wanted people to know that it was God's choice to do this and not his own choice. Paul said that God gave him a gift of favor (see:3:2). Paul also said that God did this by the "working of his power" (see: 1 Corinthians 15:10).

3:8-10

Why did God want Paul to serve him?

[3:8]

Paul told the Christians in Ephesus that God had three reasons why he wanted Paul to serve him.

God wanted Paul to "preach" or "proclaim things about God" (εὐαγγελίζω/g2097) to the Gentiles. Part of Paul's message was to tell the Gentile Christians about the "unfathomable riches" found in Jesus (see: Romans 11:33). Some scholars think that the word "unfathomable" means that Christians cannot know how great God is. Other scholars think that Paul taught about something that came from God and it could not be known without God's help.

God wanted Paul to serve him in order to "shed light" on how God's previously "hidden purpose" (μυστήριον/g3466) started to happen, that is, God wanted Paul to explain to people what God wanted them to know after the church began. This is also called a "mystery," which hidden from the beginning of the world, and only God knew it. Perhaps Paul was thinking about the words he said in 1:4.

God wanted Paul to serve him by telling people about God's wisdom. He spoke about God's wisdom as if it were an object with many different sides, that is, God's wisdom is complex and cannot be fully understood by man. God wanted the rulers or leaders in the world to know about his wisdom and he wanted Paul to tell them about it. God also wanted the "authorities" or "those who rule"(ἐξουσία/g1849) in the "heavenly places"(ἐπουράνιος/g2032) to do this.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Church; In Christ

Advice to translators: Translate "authorities in heavenly places" as your local translation does. A "being" is a living creature that is not a human being.

Who were the authorities in the heavenly places?

[3:10]

Scholars think that the "authorities or those who rule"(ἐξουσία/g1849) were good and evil beings. These beings did not live in this world, but somewhere in a "heavenly place"(ἐπουράνιος/g2032).

3:11-12

What did Jesus give to Christians?

[3:12]

Christians have many things because of Jesus:

Christians have "boldness, confidence, no fear, or no need to hide things from God"(g3954). Christians do not need to fear when they approach God. Christians can speak to God without needing to hide anything from God (John 7:26; 11:14).

Christians have "confident access to, confidence in, or trust in"(προσαγωγή/g4318) God (see: Hebrews 4:16; 10:19-22).

Christians can go to God without worrying that he will punish them. This is because God said that they can come to him.

Christians should trust the things that God says.

3:13

What did Paul want for the Christians in Ephesus?

[3:13]

Paul wanted the Christians in Ephesus not to "lose heart"(ἐγκακέω/g1573), that is, Paul did not want them to struggle because of his "tribulations, trials, or difficult circumstances"(θλίψις/g2347). He had difficult circumstances for them (see: 3:1; Philippians 2:17). Instead, Paul wanted them to think about all of the things that he just said and all of the great things Jesus gave to them.

Paul also explained to them that he was "honored" to go through these difficult circumstances. This is because he was able to help them.

3:14-15

How did Paul pray?

[3:14]

Paul continues the prayer that he had started in 3:1. He also wanted people to think about what he said in 2:11-22.

Paul said, "I bend my knees to the Father." Paul wanted to say that God was in control over everything in his life. He also wanted people to know that he was friends with God.

See: Philippians 2:10-11; Isaiah 45:23

Who did Paul pray for?

[3:14, 3:15]

Paul prayer for people all over the world. God created people and God cares for them. Perhaps Paul wanted people to think about how God loves both the Jews and the Gentiles and how God now saves both of them.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

3:16-19

How did Paul ask God for something?

[3:16]

Paul asked God for something because he knew what God is like or how powerful God is. He described God as if God were rich, wealthy, too rich to be counted, perhaps he has much power. Or perhaps he is just very great in many different ways. He is so great, that it cannot be measured or counted

Paul asked God to give power to the Christians in Ephesus. What type of power is this?

[3:16]

Paul wanted God to "strengthen or make strong" the Christians with God's power. This strength was to be given to the believers through the Holy Spirit. In Scripture, the Holy Spirit is the one who gives Christians power (see: Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5). Paul wanted Christians to have or use God's power in the "inner person" (see: Romans 7:22; 2 Corinthians 4:16).

Advice to translators: Each culture will have a way to speak about the inner person. In English, the "heart" is used to describe what happens inside of a person, that is their thoughts.

See: Inner Person

How does God make Christians strong?

[3:16]

Paul speaks about Christians growing and becoming strong as if they were a tree growing deep roots. They are “grounded”(θεμελιόω/g2311) in love, that is, they often love other people and God. They have done this for a long time. This type of love only comes from God.

Some scholars think that Christians are to get better at loving other people and loving God in every possible way. This is what Paul wanted to say when he talked about height, width, and depth. Other scholars think that Paul wanted to say that Christians are to know about God’s power. Still other scholars think that Paul wanted to say that Christians needed to know more and more about how much Jesus loves people.

How are Christians to be filled with God?

[3:19]

Paul often spoke about the Holy Spirit being in Christians, and being “filled” with the Holy Spirit when they obey God. Perhaps here, Paul wanted the Christians to be completely full of the Holy Spirit, that is, completely obedient to God. He wanted the Christians to live in a way that honors God.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

3:20-21

How did Paul end his prayer?

[3:20, 3:21]

When Paul said, “Now to Him...,” he is praising God, that is, Paul honored God. He knows that God has done something, he has answered Paul’s prayer. Paul honored God when he said that God is able to or can do more than a Christian could ask him to do. Perhaps Paul said that God can do more than a Christian can even think. While some may think that Christians can think about anything, God can actually do more things than people can even think about. The phrase, “far beyond” means that God can do anything.

Because of this, God deserves to be honored by “everyone” or “all generations”(γενεά/g1074). This was true then, and it is true now, and it will always be true.

Ephesians 3:1

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles—
Paul started a sentence, but he did not finish it.

For this reason

This refers to what Paul was speaking about in chapter 2.
Alternate translation: "Because of God's grace to you Gentiles" or "Because God has made you Gentiles members of his household"

the prisoner of Christ Jesus

Paul was in prison because people did not like him preaching about Christ Jesus. Alternate translation: "the prisoner for Christ Jesus" or "the prisoner for preaching about Christ Jesus"

Ephesians 3:2

the stewardship of the grace of God that was given to me for you
"the responsibility that God gave me to bring his grace to you"

Ephesians 3:3

The mystery was made known to me by revelation

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I learned about the mystery by revelation" or "God revealed the mystery to me"

The mystery

The mystery is God's plan, which God had not clearly told people about earlier. Alternate translation: "God's secret plan" or "The hidden truth"

as I have written briefly

Paul refers to another letter he had written to these people.

Ephesians 3:4

General Information:

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Ephesians 3:5

In other generations this mystery was not made known to the sons of men

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God did not make this truth known to people in the past"

But now it has been revealed by the Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But now the Spirit has revealed it" or "But now the Spirit has made it known"

his holy apostles and prophets

"the apostles and prophets whom God set apart to do this work"

Ephesians 3:6

the Gentiles are fellow heirs ... through the gospel

This is the hidden truth Paul began to explain in the previous verse. The Gentiles who receive Christ also receive the same things as the Jewish believers.

fellow members of the body

The church is often referred to as the body of Christ.

in Christ Jesus

"In Christ Jesus" and similar expressions are metaphors that frequently occur in the New Testament letters. They express the strongest kind of relationship possible between Christ and those who believe in him.

through the gospel

Possible meanings are 1) because of the gospel the Gentiles are fellow sharers in the promise or 2) because of the gospel the Gentiles are fellow heirs and members of the body and fellow sharers in the promise.

Ephesians 3:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 3:8

unsearchable

unable to be completely known

riches of Christ

Paul speaks of the truth about Christ and the blessings he brings as if they were material wealth.

Ephesians 3:9

the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things

This can be stated in active form. "God, who created all things, kept this plan hidden for long ages in the past"

Ephesians 3:10

This plan was made known through the church

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God made this plan known by means of the church"

rulers and authorities

These words share similar meanings. Paul uses them together to emphasize that every spiritual being will know God's wisdom. See how you translated similar words in [Ephesians 1:21]

in the heavenly places

"in the supernatural world." The word "heavenly" refers to the place where God is. See how this is translated in Ephesians 1:3.

the many-sided nature of the wisdom of God

God's great and complex wisdom is spoken of as if it were an object with many sides. Alternate translation: "the great and complex wisdom of God"

Ephesians 3:11

according to the eternal plan

"in keeping with the eternal plan" or "consistent with the eternal plan"

Ephesians 3:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul praises God in his sufferings and prays for these Ephesian believers.

we have boldness

"we are without fear" or "we have courage"

access with confidence

It may be helpful to state explicitly that this access is into God's presence. Alternate translation: "access into God's presence with confidence" or "freedom to enter into God's presence with confidence"

confidence

"certainty" or "assurance"

Ephesians 3:13

for you, which is your glory

Here "your glory" is a metonym for the pride they should feel or will feel in the future kingdom. The Christians in Ephesus should be proud of what Paul is suffering in prison. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "for you. This is for your benefit" or "for you. You should be proud of this"

Ephesians 3:14

For this reason

You may need to make explicit what the reason is. Alternate translation: "Because God has done all this for you"

I bend my knees to the Father

Bowed knees are a picture of the whole person in an attitude of prayer. Alternate translation: "I bow down in prayer to the Father" or "I humbly pray to the Father"

Ephesians 3:15

from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named

The act of naming here probably also represents the act of creating. Alternate translation: "who created and named every family in heaven and on earth"

Ephesians 3:16

I pray that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power

"I pray that God, because he is so great and powerful, would allow you to become strong with his power." This is the first item for which Paul bends his knees and prays.

would grant

"would give" or "would cause"

in your inner person

Here the phrase "inner person" refers to the personality, heart, or soul. Alternate translation: "in your heart" or "in your soul"

Ephesians 3:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues the prayer he began in Ephesians 3:14.

I pray that Christ may live in your hearts through faith and that you may be rooted and founded in his love

This is the second item which Paul prays that God will "grant" the Ephesians "according to the riches of his glory." The first is that they would "be strengthened" (Ephesians 3:16).

that Christ may live in your hearts through faith

Here "heart" represents a person's inner being, and

"through" expresses the means by which Christ lives within the believer. Christ lives in the hearts of believers because God graciously allows them to have faith. Alternate translation: "that Christ may live within you because you trust in him"

you may be rooted and founded in his love

Paul speaks of their faith as if it were a tree that has deep roots or a house built on a solid foundation. Alternate translation: "that you will be like a firmly rooted tree and a building built on stone because of his love"

Ephesians 3:18

that you might be able to understand

This is the first item which Paul says will be the result of the Christians being rooted and grounded in Christ's love (Ephesians 3:17).

all God's holy people

"all believers in Christ" or "all the saints"

the width, the length, the height, and the depth

Possible meanings are 1) these words describe the greatness of God's wisdom, Alternate translation: "how very wise God is" or 2) these word describe the intensity of Christ's love for us. Alternate translation: "how much Christ loves us"

Ephesians 3:19

to know the love of Christ, which goes beyond knowledge

This is the second item which Paul says will be the result of the Christians being rooted and grounded in Christ's love (Ephesians 3:17).

that you may be filled with all the fullness of God

This is the third item for which Paul bends his knees and prays (Ephesians 3:14). The first is that they would "be

strengthened" (Ephesians 3:16), and the second is that they "can understand" (Ephesians 3:18).

Ephesians 3:20

General Information:

The words "we" and "us" in this book continue to include Paul and all believers.

Connecting Statement:

Paul concludes his prayer with a blessing.

Now to him who

"Now to God, who"

to do far beyond all that we ask or think

"to do much more than all that we ask or think" or "to do things that are much greater than all that we ask him for or think about"

Ephesians 3:21

General Information:

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Chapter 4

Ephesians 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 8, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Spiritual gifts

Spiritual gifts are specific supernatural abilities that the Holy Spirit gives to Christians after they come to believe in Jesus. These spiritual gifts were foundational to developing the church. Paul lists here only some of the spiritual gifts. (See: faith)

Unity

Paul considers it very important that the church is united. This is a major theme of this chapter.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Old man and new man

The term "old man" probably refers to the sinful nature with which a person is born. The "new man" is the new nature or new life that God gives a person after they come to believe in Christ.

Links:

[Ephesians 4:1 Notes](#)

Ephesians 4

4:1-3

How does Paul want Christians to live?

[4:1, 4:2, 4:3]

Paul really wanted all Christians to live in a way that honored God. In Ancient Near East, people expected that a person would live in a way that would bring honor to their leader or someone they followed. Paul wanted to say that when Christians do the right things, they honor God. When a person believes in Jesus, God becomes his leader, so he needs to live the way Paul wrote about. (see: 1:4, 18; Philippians 1:27).

In order to do this, Christians must do these things:

They should be humble. A Christian should not think that they are greater than they are. When someone is humble, they are not impressed when other people think that they are great or tell them that they are great. They do not have too much pride. They should be gentle or mild. This does not mean that a Christian is weak. Instead, a Christian controls the way he does something. He does not do things because of some bad feeling. He is not cruel or severe to others. They should be patient. Christians are to wait and expect God to do something because he said he will do it. They should endure. A Christian must keep doing the right things even if bad things are happening to them. They do this because they love other Christians and want to serve them.

Paul wanted Christians to do everything that they could to remain united, joined together, one group in the Spirit. While the Spirit joins all Christians together into one group, Christians need to work to remain friends with other Christians.

See: Ancient Near East; Call (Calling)

4:4-6

How else did Paul speak about Christians being joined together in this passage?

[4:4, 4:5, 4:6]

In these verses, Paul used the word "one" many times. He wanted all Christians to work together to be friends. This is called "unity."

Paul often wrote about all Christians as if they were part of one "body." He wrote that all Christians as a group form "one" body, not many bodies. He also used this word to describe how all Christians should have the same purpose and trust in

God, even though they are all different as people.

Paul wrote that there is one “spirit” (see: 2:18). This is the Spirit of God, who gathers all Christians into the one body. The Holy Spirit and God the Father work together perfectly. In the same way, Christians are to work together.

Paul said the body of believers have one “hope”(ἐλπίς/g1680) that is, Christians are completely certain that God will do good things He has promised (see: 1:11-12; 1 John 3:2-3; Romans 15:4; Hebrews 10:23; 1 Peter 1:13).

Next, Paul said that Christians are joined together because there is one “Lord” or “master”(κύριος/g2692), Jesus. He is also the ruler over all Christians (see 1:22-23). All Christians serve the same master.

When Paul wrote about one “faith”, he wanted Christians to know that all Christians believe the same thing, Jesus.

Paul also wrote about one baptism. However, Paul did not mean the physical act of water baptism. Paul used the word baptism as a metaphor to mean that in some way God sees the believer as if they had been buried with Christ and also raised to a new life with Jesus. This means that God has given believers an ability to live in a way that pleases God. (see: Romans 6:3-11; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12).

Finally, Paul wrote that there is one God and Father of everyone. Paul used the word “above” to talk about God’s great power and the permission he has to rule everything. Paul then said that God works through everyone. Paul wanted his readers to think about how God accomplishes part of His purposes because believers willingly obey him (see: 2:10). Paul said that God is in everyone. He meant that the Holy Spirit works in all believers (see: John 14:16-17; 1 John 3:24; 4:13).

See: Baptize (Baptism); Call (Calling); Body of Christ

4:7-10

How does Jesus help all believers to serve God?

[4:7]

Paul wrote that God gives every believer favor or a gift in the amount that Jesus chooses. Jesus gives the gift and he decides how much of the gift each believer will receive (see: Romans 12:3-6). Paul wants his readers to know that God has given each believer a gift so they can perform a serve God in a special way (see: Romans 12:6-8).

What did Paul mean when he wrote about Jesus coming down and going up?

[4:9]

Paul wrote that Jesus “came down” and also “went up.” In Scripture, heaven is often described as being “up.” When Jesus came from heaven, he went “down” to earth. Then, Jesus went back “up” to heaven. Some scholars think that Paul was speaking about Jesus coming down when he was born. Other scholars think that Paul was speaking about Jesus coming down at Pentecost. At Pentecost, the Spirit of God came “down” upon people and gave them certain gifts (see: Acts 2:1-6). Paul further wrote that Jesus went “up” so that He might fill all things, that is, when Jesus went up, God gave him permission to rule over the entire world. Therefore, he had the right to give gifts just as he wanted.

See: Pentecost

4:11

What special gifts does Jesus give for His body, all believers?

[4:11]

In this verse, Paul wrote that Jesus gave Christians different gifts to serve him and the church (see: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 27-31). Jesus gives these gifts to “build up” other Christians, that is, to serve other Christians and help them to live in a way that honors God.

See: Church; Gifts of the Holy Spirit

4:12-13

Why does God give these particular gifts?

[4:12]

Paul wrote that God calls all Christians to use their gifts people to serve him until all believers become “mature or grown” (τέλειος/g5046). Paul did not want to talk about growing in size. Instead, he wanted to say that Christians grow to become more like Jesus in the way they live.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

4:14-16

What is the result that Paul wanted readers to think about?

[4:15]

Paul often spoken about people who were not “mature” or “grown”(τέλειος/g5046) as if they were young children. In 4:14, Paul talked about immature believers using the metaphor of a boat. When a boat is being sailed by a person who does not know how to control it, the boat will be moved by the waves and the wind. It will go places that the people in it do not want to go. In the same way, when someone is not mature, they go the wrong places. Perhaps Paul wanted to say that a believer who is not mature can be tricked into accepting the false things that other people teach (see: 5:6-13).

Paul then wrote about how “mature” Christians should act. He wrote about “speaking the truth”(ἀληθεύω/g0226) with love (see: Galatians 4:16). When believers become more mature, they talk and live more like Jesus lived. They help other people to know about the love of Jesus. Like he had written earlier in Ephesians, Paul once again wrote that Christ is the

head, meaning where the body is guided from (see: 1:22-23).

Paul then wrote that in Christ the “whole body,” that is, all Christians are “joined”(συναρμολογέω/g4883) and “held together”(συμβιβάζω/g4822) (see: 2:19-22). God brought together all people who believe in Jesus, whether they are Jews or Gentiles (see: 2:13-22). All Christians are joined together because they each serve God and other Christians in a special way.

Advice to translators: Someone who is a “mature” Christian is a Christian who lives in a way that honors God. A Christian who is not mature is “immature.”

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

4:17-19

How did Paul describe the way unbelievers act?

[4:17, 4:18, 4:19]

In 4:1-3, Paul wrote that Christians should live in a way that honors God. In these verses, he wrote that Christians must stop living in the way Gentiles lived. Paul wrote about how unbelieving Gentiles behave in several ways.

Unbelievers do not know much about God. This means they cannot do things to serve God or do things that will please God (see: Romans 1:21-23). The unbeliever's hearts are in a spiritual and moral darkness, that is, they do not understand things about God because they cannot see him and they do not understand how to live in a way that honors God. Most scholars think that this darkening of their minds keeps them from being able to know about God. The unbeliever's life is separated from God because of the unbeliever's ignorance. However, they do not just lack information about God. They reject God. Paul spoke about this as if their hearts were becoming hard (see: Romans 1:18-23). Finally, Paul talked about the unbeliever losing all feeling of God and what is right, that is, they choose to make themselves feel good instead of trying to please God. They want to do this. They want to do wrong things and to do evil things.

Advice to translators: Unbelievers are people who do not believe in Jesus, or who reject Jesus.

See: Gentile

4:20-21

How do Christians learn more about Jesus?

[4:20]

Paul wrote about Christians understanding or learning more about Jesus in a way that is much better than how unbelievers can think or know anything. In the New Testament, only Paul wrote about “learning Jesus” and he only wrote about it here in 4:20. Christians are to know about Jesus in the way you know another person. When a Christian knows Jesus in this way, he wants to live in a way that pleases Jesus.

4:22-24

What did Paul mean when he wrote about the old self and the new self?

[4:22, 4:23, 4:24]

Paul wrote about how believers “learn more about Jesus” using the metaphor of changing clothes. He wrote about the way that Christians used to live as if it were putting off or taking off a piece of clothing called the “old self.” He also wrote about the way Christians are now to live as if they were “putting on”(ἐνδύω/g1746) a new piece of clothing called the “new self.”

Paul also told Christians to be “renewed”(ἀνανεόω/g0365) in the way they think, that is, to think about how they are to live in a new way. Paul wanted them to honor God, not to live how they used to live before they believed in Jesus.

See: Old and New Self

4:25

What change did Paul write that believers should make in how they talk?

[4:25]

Paul wrote that Christians need to change the way they talk to other people. They are to “putting on” the new self and not tell lies or speak falsely in any way. In their old self, Christians used to follow Satan, who is the father of lies (see: John 8:44). However, the Holy Spirit gives Christians the power to follow the Holy Spirit instead of Satan.

See: Old and New Self

4:26-27

What did Paul write to the believers about anger?

[4:26]

Paul quoted from Psalm 4:4 and wrote that in the believer, anger should be not sin. Although a Christian may get angry, he should make sure he does not commit any sin because of that anger.

Paul also wrote that believers must be at peace with other people, even after they are angry with them. Paul wanted to say that when it can hurt a Christian to remain angry with someone.

4:28-30

How are believers taught to speak to one another?

[4:29]

Paul already wrote that Christians should not lie (see: 4:25). Now in these verses, he wrote more strongly that Christians are not to say any “unwholesome” or “corrupt”(σαπρός/g4550) words or ideas.

Christians should speak in a way that “builds up” other people. When a believer speaks like this, they bless or give a great gift to the people who hear them.

Advice to translators: Some cultures use the metaphor of a wall to talk about the way people speak to one another. The things people say can “build up” a person. They can also “tear down” a person.

How do Christians grieve the Holy Spirit?

[4:30]

Paul wrote that believers must not “grieve”(λυπέω/g3076) the Holy Spirit of God. One way they do this is to speak in a way that was wrong or evil (see: Isaiah 63:10; Acts 5:1-10).

4:31-32

What changes did Paul write that a believer needs in his life?

[4:31, 4:32]

Paul concludes the things that Paul was talking about. Paul wanted Christians to change the way they live. God gave the Holy Spirit to Christians to help them to do this.

Some changes are things the believer needs to put away. That is, a person must let the Holy Spirit remove these things from them. Paul started with the inner attitudes of the believer and ended with his outward actions. The bad things that need to be removed are:

“Bitterness”(πικρία/g4088)- This means any attitude of resentment (see: Hebrews 12:14-15).

“Anger”(ὀργή/g3709) and “fierce-anger”(θυμός/g2372)- Some scholars think that these two words mean two different things. They think fierce-anger as a sudden, violent action, but anger is inside a person, they think in a certain way. Other scholars think that the two words mean the same thing, one type of anger causes the other type of anger.

All “shouting”(κραυγή/g2906) and “abusive speech”(βλασφημία/g0988). Shouting is when a person talks in a way that is very loud. Abusive speech is an evil way of speaking. It includes insults, gossip, lying, and cursing.

“Hatred”(κακία/g2549). This is all types of evil actions that toward other people. Some scholars think that all of the things that Paul talked about are all ways a person can show that they hate other people.

However, Paul also talked about how a Christian can live in a way that honors God and be at peace with one another.

With “kindness”(χρηστός/g5543)- Kindness means being genuine, pleasant and nice to other people. This is one of the “fruit of the Spirit” (see: Galatians 5:22). Paul also wrote about the kindness God showed to believers (see: 2:7).

“Tender-hearted” or “compassionate”(εὐσπλαγχνος/g2155)- Christians to care for other people in both how they think and in the things that they do (see: Colossians 3:12). Jesus did this for Christians (see: Matthew 9:36).

“Forgiveness”(χαρίζομαι/g5483). Christians should forgive one another because God forgave them (see: 1:7-12; 2:4-10).

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Because of what Paul has been writing to the Ephesians, he tells them how they should live their lives as believers and again emphasizes that believers are to agree with each other.

as the prisoner for the Lord

"as someone who is in prison because of his choice to serve the Lord"

walk worthily of the calling

Walking is a common way to express the idea of living one's life.

Ephesians 4:2

to live with great humility and gentleness and patience

"to always be very humble, gentle, and patient"

Ephesians 4:3

to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace

Here Paul speaks of "peace" as if it were a bond that ties people together. This is a metaphor for being united with other people by living peacefully with them. Alternate translation: "to live peacefully with one another and remain united, as the Spirit made possible"

Ephesians 4:4

one body

The church is often referred to as the body of Christ.

one Spirit

"one Holy Spirit"

you were called in one hope of your calling

Here the word "call" means "invite" or "choose." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God invited you to one hope when he invited you" or "God chose you to hope for one thing when he chose you"

one hope

Here the word "hope" refers to the thing to hope for.

Alternate translation: "one thing to hope for" or "one thing to confidently wait for"

Ephesians 4:5

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 4:6

Father of all ... over all ... through all ... and in all

The word "all" here means "everything."

Ephesians 4:7

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds believers of the gifts that Christ gives believers to use in the church, which is the whole body of believers.

To each one of us grace has been given

This can be stated using an active form. Alternate translation: "God has given grace to each one of us" or "God gave a spiritual gift to each believer"

grace has been given

Here grace refers to a spiritual gift or ability. Alternate translation: "a spiritual gift has been given" or "ability has been given"

according to the measure of the gift of Christ

Here "the gift of Christ" refers to a gift that Christ has given. Alternate translation: "according to the amount that Christ has given us"

Ephesians 4:8

General Information:

The quotation here is from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament. King David wrote this psalm.

When he ascended on high

"When he went up to the very high place"

Ephesians 4:9

he ascended

"he went up"

he also descended

"he also came down"

into the lower regions of the earth

Possible meanings are 1) the lower regions are a part of the earth. Alternate translation: "into the lowest place on earth" or 2) "the lower regions" is another way of referring to the earth. Alternate translation: "into the lower regions, the earth"

Ephesians 4:10

that he might fill all things

"so that he might be present everywhere in his power"

fill

"complete" or "satisfy"

Ephesians 4:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 4:12

to equip God's holy people

"to prepare the people he has set apart" or "to provide the believers with what they need"

for the work of service

"so they can serve others"

for the building up of the body of Christ

Paul is speaking of people who grow spiritually as if they were doing exercises to increase the strength of their physical bodies.

building up

"improvement" or "strengthening"

body of Christ

The "body of Christ" refers to all of the individual members of Christ's Church.

Ephesians 4:13

reach the unity of faith and knowledge of the Son of God

The believers need to know Jesus as the Son of God if they are to be united in faith and mature as believers.

reach the unity of faith

"become equally strong in faith" or "become united together in faith"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

become mature

"become mature believers"

mature

"fully developed" or "grown up" or "complete"

Ephesians 4:14

be children

Paul refers to believers who have not grown spiritually as if they were children who have had very little experience in life. Alternate translation: "be like children"

tossed back and forth ... carried away by every wind of doctrine

This speaks of a believer who has not become mature and follows wrong teaching as if that believer were a boat that the wind is blowing in different directions on the water.

by the trickery of people in their deceitful schemes

"by crafty people who trick believers with clever lies"

Ephesians 4:15

into him who is the head

Paul uses the human body to describe how Christ causes believers to work together in harmony as the head of a body causes the body parts to work together to grow healthy.

Ephesians 4:16

Christ builds the whole body ... makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love

Paul uses the human body to describe how Christ causes believers to work together in harmony as the head of a body causes the body parts to work together to grow healthy.

by every supporting ligament

A "ligament" is a strong band that connects bones or holds organs in place in the body.

Ephesians 4:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the Ephesians what they should no longer do now that they as believers are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God.

Therefore, I say and insist on this in the Lord

"Because what I have just said, I will say something more to strongly encourage you because we all belong to the Lord" that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their minds

The word "walk" here is a metaphor for the way a person lives his life, especially whether he does right or does wrong. Alternate translation: "stop living the way the Gentiles live, with their worthless thoughts"

Ephesians 4:18

They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God

Here "darkened in their understanding" is a metaphor that means not to be able to understand the truth. And "alienated from the life of God" is a metaphor that means to not have the life that God gives. Alternate translation: "They do not understand what is true, and they do not have the life that God gives to people"

because of the ignorance that is in them

"because they refuse to learn what is true"

because of the hardness of their hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds. The phrase "hardness of their hearts" is a metaphor that means "stubbornness." Alternate translation: "because they are stubborn" or "because they refuse to listen to God"

Ephesians 4:19

have committed themselves to sensuality

Paul speaks of these people as if they were objects that they themselves were giving to other people, and he speaks of the way they want to satisfy their physical desires as if it were the person to whom they give themselves. Alternate translation: "only want to satisfy their physical desires"

they practice every kind of uncleanness with greed

"they are continually practicing every kind of uncleanness"

uncleanness

This word for ritual uncleanness is a metaphor for the guilt that comes from sinful acts. It can be translated using the word "unclean." Alternate translation: "sinful act"

Ephesians 4:20

But that is not how you learned about Christ

The word "that" refers to the way the Gentiles live, as described in [Ephesians 4:17-19](#). This emphasizes that what the believers learned about Christ was the opposite of that. Alternate translation: "But what you learned about Christ was not like that"

Ephesians 4:21

I assume that you have heard ... and that you were taught

Paul knows that the Ephesians have heard and been taught. you were taught in him

Possible meanings are 1) "Jesus's people have taught you" or 2) "someone has taught you because you are Jesus's people."

as the truth is in Jesus

"as everything about Jesus is true"

Ephesians 4:22

to put off what belongs to your former manner of life

Paul is speaking of moral qualities as if they were pieces of clothing. Alternate translation: "to stop living according to your former manner of life"

to put off the old man

Paul is speaking of moral qualities as if they were pieces of clothing. Alternate translation: "to stop living as your former self did"

old man

The "old man" refers to the "old nature" or "former self."

that is corrupt because of its deceitful desires

Paul speaks of the sinful human nature as if it were a dead body falling apart in its grave.

Ephesians 4:23

to be renewed in the spirit of your minds

This may be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "to allow God to change your attitudes and thoughts" or "to allow God to give you new attitudes and thoughts"

Ephesians 4:24

in true righteousness and holiness

"truly righteous and holy"

Ephesians 4:25

get rid of lies

"stop telling lies"

we are members of one another

"we belong to one another" or "we are members of God's family"

Ephesians 4:26

Be angry and do not sin

"You may get angry, but do not sin" or "If you become angry, do not sin"

Do not let the sun go down on your anger

The sun going down represents nightfall or the end of the day. Alternate translation: "You must stop being angry before night comes" or "Do not let the sun set while you are still angry with someone"

Ephesians 4:27

Do not give an opportunity to the devil

"Do not give the devil an opportunity to lead you into sin"

Ephesians 4:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 4:29

harmful talk

This refers to speech that is cruel or rude.

for the edification of those

"for encouraging those" or "for strengthening those"

give grace to the hearers

"help those who hear you"

Ephesians 4:30

do not grieve

"do not distress" or "do not upset"

for it is by him that you were sealed for the day of redemption

The Holy Spirit assures believers that God will redeem them. Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as if he were a mark that God puts on believers to show that he owns them.

Alternate translation: "for he is the seal that assures you that God will redeem you on the day of redemption" or "for he is the one who assures you that God will redeem you on the day of redemption" or

the day of redemption

Here redemption is a metaphor for causing people to no longer be affected by sin. The idea in the noun

"redemption" can be expressed with a phrase. Alternate translation: "the day when God will redeem his people" or "the day when God will free his people from sin"

Ephesians 4:31

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his instructions on what believers should not do and ends with what they must do.

Put away all bitterness, rage, anger

"Put away" here is a metaphor for not continuing to have certain attitudes or behaviors. Alternate translation: "You must not allow these things to be part of your life: bitterness, rage, anger"

rage

intense anger

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind

"Instead, be kind"

tenderhearted

Chapter 5

Ephesians 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 14.

Special concepts in this chapter

Darkness and Light

In this chapter Paul teaches how God's people should live. He uses the image of darkness to represent sin and the image of light to represent righteousness.

Christ and his church as a model for marriage

Paul teaches husbands and wives to relate to each other as Christ and the church relate to each other.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Wives, submit to your husbands

Scholars are divided over how to understand this passage in its historical and cultural context. Some scholars believe men and women are perfectly equal in all things. Other scholars believe God created men and women to serve in distinctly different roles in marriage and the church. Translators should be careful not to let how they understand this issue affect how they translate this passage.

Links:

[Ephesians 5:1 Notes](#)

Ephesians 5

5:1-2

Why did Paul tell Christians to imitate God?

[5:1]

Paul wanted Christians to live in a way that honors God (see: 4:17-32). Paul told the Christians that they needed to imitate God. That is, they need to do the things that God does, closely follow God, or do the things that God wants them to do in Scripture. When they do this, they teach other people about what God is like. Also, Paul explained that learning to imitate God is something Christians must always do. Christians must never stop learning to live in the way God wants them to live.

How did Paul tell Christians to imitate God?

[5:1, 5:2]

Christians imitate God by loving all people. Paul used a Greek word for a certain type of love. When someone loves in this way, they want to do good for the people they love without wanting anything from them. This is how Christians should love one another. Jesus loves all people with this type of love, and he showed it by dying for all people. Christians are to love all people in the same way Jesus loves all people.

See: Atonement (Atonement)

Why did Paul tell Christians to love all people?

[5:2]

Paul told Christians to love all people. This is because:

Christians must love all people because God made them his children (see: 1:5; 2:19; Matthew 5:44-48; Luke 6:35-36). Christians must love all people because Jesus loves them. Jesus loved other people by serving them and even dying for them. In the same way this made God happy, it will also make God happy when Christians love in the same way Jesus did. (see: 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; Romans 3:21-26).

See: Adopt (Adoption)

What is fragrant aroma?

[5:2]

See: Fragrant Offering (Aroma)

What warnings did Paul write to Christians?

[5:3, 5:4]

Paul wrote many warnings to Christians. He wrote about the things Christians are not to do or say (see: Colossians 3:5-8; Galatians 5:19-21).

Paul said Christians are not to have sex for money, have sex with people of the same gender, have sex with anyone other than their spouse, or have sex with someone in their family (see: 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9, 16; Matthew 5:28).

Paul also told Christians that “impurity”(ἀκαθαρσία/g0167) of any kind is not to be found in them. That is, they are never to do things that dishonor God. Instead, God wants all Christians to honor him by their actions (see: 1 Thessalonians 4:7-8). He wants Christians to be holy because he is holy (see: 1 Peter 1:16). They are not even to talk about impure things. Paul said that Christians must not talk using “obscenity”(αἰσχροτύχη/g0151), foolish talking”, or “harmful ridicule”(εὐτραπελία/g2160). Some scholars think this means making jokes about sex in ways that dishonor God or joking about doing anything that dishonors God. Other scholars think that Paul did not want Christians to talk in any way that does not help another person. That is, speech that insults or mocks another person does not honor God. Instead, Paul wrote that Christians need to live a life that gives “thanks”(εὐχαριστία/g2169) in the way they talk and what they do. That is, they are thankful to God and live in a way that shows God they are thankful. Paul also wrote about the difference between gratitude and doing what does not honor God in the Book of Romans (see: Romans 1:21).

5:5

What did Paul say happened to those who did not listen to his warnings in 5:3-4?

[5:5]

Paul told Christians that those who did not follow his warnings can not have an “inheritance” in the kingdom of God. He said there were three types of people who can not have a place in God’s kingdom:

The sexually immoral person. That is, a person who has sex with someone whom they are not married to. The impure person. That is, a person who does things that do not honor God. The covetous person. That is, a person who wants things that are not theirs.

Paul wrote that a person who does any of these things worships an idol. That is, they were really worshipping something or someone other than God. Paul wanted his readers to know that people who live their lives in this way cannot have any inheritance in God’s kingdom.

Paul wrote “for you can be sure of this” to make Christians give special attention to what happened to those who did not follow his warnings in 5:3-4. Some scholars think Paul wrote these words because he wanted them to remember what he already told them while he was with them. Other scholars think Paul really was giving a command to these Christians.

Paul wanted them to obey what he wrote.

See: Idolatry (Idol); Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Sexual Immorality; Kingdom of God

5:6-7

Who are “sons of disobedience”?

[5:6]

The “sons of disobedience” are people who disobey God.

What did Paul say about God’s anger on those who did not obey Paul’s warnings?

[5:6]

Paul wrote that God must punish the “sons of disobedience.” That is, people who live in ways that do not honor God. Paul told Christians that God becomes very angry when people do the things Paul wrote about in 5:3-5. Because of his anger for people not honoring him, God will punish these “sons of disobedience.” Some scholars think that God will punish sin in the future. Other scholars think that God is punishing it now and in the future (see: Romans 1:18-32; 2:5-6).

Also, Paul told Christians not to let “empty words” from the sons of disobedience make them sin. People who speak “empty words” are those who make excuses for the bad things they do, and they say that God will not punish them for those things. Paul told Christians that listening to empty words

Paul ended his warning by telling Christians not to do the things that the sons of disobedience do. That is, Christians are not to do things that do not honor God.

What is the command Paul gave believers?

[5:7]

Paul commanded Christians not to allow anyone to deceive them with “empty words.” That is, Paul wanted to write about a person who makes excuses for doing evil things. This person speaks empty words because they are not true and are against what God wants.

Paul warned Christians that God becomes very angry when people do what Paul wrote about in 5:3-5. Paul called people who persistently behave in these ways the “sons of disobedience.” Some scholars believe that God will show his strong anger sometime in the future. Other scholars believe that God is showing his strong anger now, and will also show it in the future (see: Romans 1:18-32; 2:5-6).

Paul concluded his warning by stating that Christians must not join with the sons of disobedience. This means that Christians must not behave like or associate with people who behave like this.

5:8-14

What did Paul say about the things people thought and did?

[5:8, 5:9, 5:10, 5:11]

Paul used the metaphor of darkness to talk about the things that those who do not believe in Jesus do. In 5:3-6, Paul talked

about things a person of darkness does. Now in 5:11-12, Paul wrote that a person of “darkness” does things that do not honor God. Also, because they do not want others to see them doing these things, they only do these things when they are alone.

Paul then talks about Christians as “light in the Lord” and “children of light.” Paul told Christians to think about things and to do things that show others God’s light. That is, Christians follow God’s commands to show others God’s light. When Christians follow God’s commands, the light of God is shown in their lives in three ways:

“Goodness”(ἀγαθωσύνη/g0019)- This means that a believer in Jesus does only what is good, honors God, and they give to others. This is the opposite of non-Christians. That is, people who are sexually immoral, impure, or greedy in other ways are in darkness (see: 5:3). Living in the right way- This means that Christians do the things God wants. This is the opposite of people who do impure or covetous things (see: 5:3 and 5:5). Truth- This means that a believer in Jesus only says what is true, and they do everything God says. Christians are to speak and act in the way God wants them to live. This is the opposite of people who lie and do not do what God wants (5:6).

Paul also said that the believer in Jesus is a person who “find out” the things that the Lord wants. That is, Christians carefully think about the things they do and the things they think about to know if it is what God wants from them. Paul writes about proving in other letters as well (see: Romans 12:1-2; Philippians 1:9-11).

Paul wrote that Christians must not do the things that those who are in darkness do. That is, they must not do things that do not honor God. Also, Paul said that they must “expose” the things that those in darkness do, that is, they make them known. Some scholars think that Christians expose these things by always following God’s commands. These scholars think Paul was saying that when non-Christians see the things Christians do and do not do, they see that the things they are doing themselves are wrong. Other scholars think that what Christians say or do not say also exposes the things that those in darkness do. These scholars also think that Paul wanted to talk about Christians who have gone back to doing the things that dishonor God.

See: Metaphor; Sexual Immorality; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

How does Paul speak about sleeping and death?

[5:14]

In 5:14, some scholars think that Paul used the metaphors of sleep and death to talk about those who did not believe in Jesus. He wanted to say that those who did not believe in Jesus needed to “wake up” from the dead. That is, those who did not believe in Jesus needed to know that the way they thought and the things they did were wrong. They needed to believe in Jesus, change the way they thought, and change the things they did.

Other scholars think Paul used the metaphors of sleep and death to talk about Christians. That is, Christians who do things that do not honor God need to wake up and stop sinning, because sin makes them like dead people (see: 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6).

See: Metaphor; Sleep (Metaphor)

5:15-20

What did Paul tell Christians about wisdom and the Holy Spirit?

[5:15, 5:18]

In 5:15-20, Paul wrote that Christians must do things that are wise. When Christians learn, know, and do the things God wants them to do, they are wise. Paul wanted Christians to not do what was unwise. He already wrote about God giving wisdom to Christians (see 1:7-10, 1:17). Then, he wrote that Christians needed to use the wisdom God gave them to understand what God wanted them to do (see: 5:17).

One way a Christian uses wisdom is by “making the most” of his time. Paul wanted Christians to know that their lives are not long. If they are wise, they will do what honors God while they are alive. Wise Christians will not do deeds of darkness. That is, they will not do things that do not honor God. Paul wrote that the “days are evil” (see: 5:16) That is, the world is filled with evil people. Christians are to be wise and not do the same things that those who are not Christians do. Paul told Christians not to get drunk because this will make them do things that are unwise. Instead, Christians must always be filled with the Holy Spirit. This will help them to do what honors God. People will be able to know when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit because of the way they talk and the way they worship God. This person will give thanks to God for everything in their life, even the bad things. The person filled with the Holy Spirit knows that all things in life work together for his good (see: Romans 8:28).

Next, Paul wrote commands in 5:19-6:9 for the person filled by the Holy Spirit to follow.

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

5:21

What did Paul say to Christians about submission?

[5:21]

Paul wrote that Christians need to “submit”(ὑποτάσσω/g5293) to one another. That is, Christians are to willingly obey one another. Also, Paul wanted Christians to know that they all need to obey, worship, and respect Jesus. So, Christians are willing to obey each other because they want to do the things that Jesus told them to do.

See: Submit (Submission) 5:22-24

What did Paul write to wives?

[5:22, 5:23, 5:24]

Paul told wives to “submit”(ὑποτάσσω/g5293) to their own husbands like they submit to Jesus. That is, the wife first submits to Jesus, whom God has made the leader over all believers. This does not mean that a wife is her husband’s property (see: Galatians 3:27-28). Instead, God has also designed marriage so that the husband is the leader over his family in the same way that Jesus is the leader over all Christians. Whatever God leads the husband to do, the husband leads his family to do the same. But Jesus is the leader over the husband. In this way, the family is like the church. Because the wife sees the order of God’s design for the family, she wants to submit to it.

5:25-33

What did Paul write to husbands?

[5:25]

Paul commanded that husbands need to love their wives. He used a certain Greek word for “love.” This means a husband says and does what will honor his wife. Paul used the metaphor of Jesus living and dying for sinners to talk about the love a husband is to have for his wife (see: 5:2; John 10:11-17; 15:12-13). Jesus willingly sacrificed himself for all Christians because he loves them. In the same way, the husband must be willing to sacrifice the things he wants or needs, even his life, for his wife’s good.

In 5:28, the word “should” or “ought”(ὀφείλω/g3784) means the husband has a duty to his wife. So, the husband must have unconditional love for his wife. That is, a husband is to love his wife even if she does not submit to him or does what is not good to him. Because of this love, the husband “nourishes”(ἐκτρέφω/g1625) and “cherishes”(θάλπω/g2282) his wife like Jesus nourishes and cherishes all Christians. Paul wrote these words because he wanted husbands to know that they are to care for their wives like God takes care of his children.

Paul’s final instructions for marriage are found in 5:33. He again commanded husbands to love their wives as much as they love themselves. And in 5:33, he told wives to “respect”(φοβέω/g5399) her husband in the same way she does for Jesus.

Some scholars think Paul’s instructions came directly from 5:31-32. That is, Jesus has made Christians a part of his body in the same way that a husband and wife become one person when they marry. A husband is to love his wife in the same way that he loves himself because she is now a part of his own body in the same way Christians are a part of the body of Jesus. And, in the same way that all Christians are to honor Jesus, the head of their Christian body, the wife is to honor her husband, the head of their joined body.

See: Marriage; Body of Christ; Children of God

Why did Jesus sacrifice himself?

[5:25, 5:26, 5:27]

Paul wrote that Jesus sacrificed himself to “sanctify” all believers in Jesus. That is, Jesus’ sacrifice makes Christians acceptable to God and sets them apart for God (see: 5:8-9; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 10:10).

Also, Jesus cleansed all believers. That is, he made Christians acceptable to God. Jesus served the punishment for their sin. Paul did not say that Christians would not sin anymore during their lives. But because Jesus died, God can see Christians as if they were never sinners.

Paul said that Jesus cleanses and sanctifies all Christians by washing them with the water of the word. That is, when people hear the gospel and believe in it, they are cleansed and set apart for God.

Finally, Paul wrote that Jesus did these things so that all Christians will be with God. Jesus will take them for a great and beautiful gift at the end of the world. God wanted to do this for those who trust in him, even before the beginning of the world (see: 1:4).

See: Gospel; Clean and Unclean; Atonement (Atonement)

What did Paul say about marriage in 5:31-32?

[5:31, 5:32]

In 5:31-32, Paul said that God created marriage to be like the love Jesus has for all believers. He also said that in the same way Jesus is joined to all believers, a man and woman join together in marriage.

When Paul wrote instructions to husbands about marriage he quoted from an Old Testament passage (see: Genesis 2:24).

When God created people, God made the first woman from one of Adam’s ribs. Then Adam said, “this one is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh” (see: Genesis 2:23). He said this because the woman came from a part of his body. Also, he said this because he and the woman are to live their lives together like they are one person instead of two people. The husband and wife will leave their parents homes, and they will become united in a new family.

Paul called this a “mystery.” In the Bible, a mystery is something that people did not understand. But, when Jesus came to earth, people began to understand. So, in 5:31-32, Paul wanted Christians to know that marriage should be like the way Jesus loves those who believe in him and how Christians are to love each other.

See: Mystery

Ephesians 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to tell the believers how they should and should not live as God's children.

Therefore be imitators of God

"Therefore you should do what God does." Therefore refers back to Ephesians 4:32 which tells why believers should imitate God, because Christ forgave believers.

as beloved children

God desires us to imitate or follow him since we are his children. Alternate translation: "as dearly loved children imitate their fathers" or "because you are his children and he loves you dearly"

Ephesians 5:2

walk in love

Walking is a common way to express the idea of living one's life. Alternate translation: "live a life of love" or "always love each other"

a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God

"like a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice to God"

Ephesians 5:3

But sexual immorality or any kind of uncleanness or of greed must not even be named among you

"Do not do anything that would let anyone think that you are are guilty of sexual immorality or any kind of uncleanness or greed"

any kind of uncleanness

"any moral uncleanness"

uncleanness

This word for ritual uncleanness is a metaphor for the guilt that comes from sinful acts. It can be translated using the word "unclean." Alternate translation: "sinful act"

Ephesians 5:4

Instead there should be thanksgiving

"Instead you should thank God"

Ephesians 5:5

inheritance

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

Ephesians 5:6

empty words

words that have no truth to them

Ephesians 5:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 5:8

For you were once darkness

Just as one cannot see in the dark, so people who love to sin lack spiritual understanding.

but now you are light in the Lord

Just as one can see in the light, so people whom God has saved understand how to please God.

Walk as children of light

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Alternate translation: "Live as people who understand what the Lord wants them to do"

Ephesians 5:9

the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome."

Alternate translation: "the result of living in the light is good work, right living, and truthful behavior"

Ephesians 5:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 5:11

Do not associate with the unfruitful works of darkness

Paul speaks of the useless, sinful things that unbelievers do as if they are evil deeds people do in the dark so no one will see them. Alternate translation: "Do not do useless, sinful things with unbelievers"

unfruitful works

actions that do nothing good, useful, or profitable. Paul is comparing evil actions to an unhealthy tree that produces nothing good.

expose them

Speaking against the works of darkness is spoken of as bringing them out into the light so that people can see them. Alternate translation: "bring them out into the light" or "uncover them" or "show and tell people how wrong these actions are"

Ephesians 5:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 5:13

when anything is exposed by the light

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"when the light shines on something"

Ephesians 5:14

General Information:

It is unknown if this quotation is a combination of quotations from the prophet Isaiah or a quotation from a hymn sung by the believers.

anything that becomes visible is light

"people can clearly see everything that comes into the light." Paul makes this general statement in order to imply that God's Word shows people's actions to be good or bad. The Bible often speaks of God's truth as if it were light that could reveal the character of something.

Awake, you sleeper, and arise from the dead

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is addressing unbelievers who need to wake up from being dead spiritually just as a person who has died must come alive again in order to respond, or 2) Paul is addressing the Ephesian believers and using death as a metaphor for their spiritual weakness. the dead

All those who have died. This expression describes all dead people together in the underworld. To arise from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

you sleeper ... shine on you

These instances of "you" refer to the "sleeper" and are singular.

Christ will shine on you

Christ will enable an unbeliever to understand how evil his deeds are and how Christ will forgive him and give him new life, just as light shows what actually is there that darkness hid.

Ephesians 5:15

Look carefully how you walk—not as unwise but as wise
Wise people can identify sin, so they guard themselves from it and flee from it. Alternate translation: "Therefore you must be careful to live as a wise person rather than a foolish person"

Ephesians 5:16

Redeem the time

Using time wisely is spoken of as if it were redeeming the time. Alternate translation: "Do the best things you can with your time" or "Use time wisely" or "Put time to its best use"

because the days are evil

The word "days" is a metonym for what people do during those days. Alternate translation: "because the people around you are doing all kinds of evil things"

Ephesians 5:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 5:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul ends his instructions on how all believers should live.

And do not get drunk with wine

"You should not get drunk from drinking wine"

Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit

"Instead, you should be controlled with the Holy Spirit"

Ephesians 5:19

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs

Possible meanings are that 1) Paul is using these words as a merism for "all sorts of songs to praise God" or 2) Paul is listing specific forms of music.

psalms

These are probably songs from the Old Testament book of Psalms that Christians sang.

hymns

These are songs of praise and worship that may have been written specifically for Christians to sing.

spiritual songs

Possible meanings are 1) these are songs that Holy Spirit inspires a person to sing right at that moment or 2)

"spiritual songs" and "hymns" are doublets and mean basically the same thing.

with all your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or inner being. The phrase "with all your heart" means to do something with enthusiasm. Alternate translation: "with all of your being" or "enthusiastically"

Ephesians 5:20

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

"because you belong to our Lord Jesus Christ" or "as people who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ"

Ephesians 5:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 5:22

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to explain how Christians are to submit themselves to one another (Ephesians 5:21). He starts with instructions to wives and husbands on how they should act toward each other.

Ephesians 5:23

the head of the wife ... the head of the church

The word "head" represents the leader.

Ephesians 5:24

Christ, so also wives to their husbands

"Christ, so also must wives be subject to their husbands" or "Christ. In the same way, wives also must be subject to their husbands"

Ephesians 5:25

love your wives

"unselfishly serve your wives"

gave himself up

"allowed people to kill him"

for her

Paul speaks of the assembly of believers as though it were a woman whom Jesus will marry. Alternate translation: "for us"

Ephesians 5:26

sanctify her ... cleansed her

Paul speaks of the assembly of believers as though it were a woman whom Jesus will marry. Alternate translation:

"sanctified us ... cleansed us"

having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is referring to God making

Christ's people clean by God's word and through water

baptism in Christ or 2) Paul speaks of God making us

spiritually clean from our sins by the message as if God

were making our bodies clean by washing them with water.

Ephesians 5:27

without stain or wrinkle

Paul speaks of the church as though it were a garment that

is clean and in good condition. He uses the same idea in

two ways to emphasize the church's purity.

holy and blameless

The word "blameless" means basically the same thing as

"holy." Paul uses the two together to emphasize the church's purity.

Ephesians 5:28

as their own bodies

That people love their own bodies may be stated explicitly.

Alternate translation: "as husbands love their own bodies"

Ephesians 5:29

his own flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the body that is

made of flesh. Alternate translation: "his own body"

but nourishes

"but feeds"

Ephesians 5:30

we are members of his body

Here Paul speaks of the close union of believers with Christ

as if they were part of his own body, for which he would naturally care.

Ephesians 5:31

General Information:

The quotation is from the writings of Moses in the Old Testament. The words "his" and "himself" refer to a male believer who marries.

Ephesians 5:32

General Information:

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Chapter 6

Ephesians 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Slavery

Paul does not write in this chapter about whether slavery is good or bad. Paul teaches about working to please God whether as a slave or as a master. What Paul teaches here about slavery would have been surprising. In his time, masters were not expected to treat their slaves with respect and not threaten them.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Armor of God

This extended metaphor describes how Christians can protect themselves when spiritually attacked.

Links:

[Ephesians 6:1 Notes](#)

Ephesians 6

6:1-4

What did Paul tell children?

[6:1, 6:2, 6:3]

Paul told children that they must “obey”(ὕπακούω/g5219) their parents “in the Lord.” That is, they are to honor their parents in the same way they honor God. They are to do this by obeying their parents. Paul wanted them to know that what God told Christians to do is right because God said to do those things (see: Exodus 20:12).

Paul repeated the Old Testament command that children must honor their father and mother (see: Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16). Also, Paul wrote that this command came with a promise from God (see: Matthew 22:37-40). Jesus taught that Christians must love and respect all people. He said that this is the second greatest command. Paul wanted Christians when they honored their father and mother, they learned to respect all people. Paul told Christians that God blesses those who follow this command. Also, it will help them to live a long life on the earth.

See: Hope

What did Paul tell fathers?

[6:4]

Paul told Christian fathers to remember that the Holy Spirit fills them (see: 5:18). He told fathers that the Holy Spirit helped them teach their children about God and how to do what honors him (see: Colossians 13:20-21; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

See: Filling of the Holy Spirit

6:5-9

What did Paul tell slaves?

[6:5, 6:6, 6:7]

Paul commanded slaves to obey their masters (see: Colossians 3:22-25). He said that slaves needed to serve their masters in three ways:

Slaves needed to honor their masters. This verse used the same word for “submit” used in 5:21. That is, slaves were to submit to their masters in the same way they submit to other Christians. Slaves needed to do their work well. Slaves needed to serve their masters in the same way they served Jesus. Paul wrote to slaves who were Christians. Non-Christians do not serve Jesus.

Paul told slaves to work with “enthusiasm”(εὐνοια/g2133) because their work was for Jesus. Slaves must not do their work to “attract attention”(ὀφθαλμοδουλία/g3787) or to “impress people”(ἀνθρωπάρεσκος/g441). Paul told Christians that God will bless all of his servants who do their work well.

When Paul was alive, many people were slaves. Some of these slaves became Christians. Paul wanted Christian slaves to think about how to please God while they were slaves. Paul did not say that slavery was good. But he wanted all Christians to know that doing what honors God is the most important thing for them to do.

What did Paul tell masters?

[6:9]

Paul wrote that masters must be fair, honest, and respectful to their slaves (see: Colossians 4:1). If they obey Paul’s command, masters do not need to threaten slaves to make their slaves obey them.

Paul wanted Christian masters to remember that God is the master of everyone. God does not show “favoritism.” That is, God all people, even slaves and masters, in the same way (see: Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:10-11).

6:10-17

How did Paul tell Christians to be strong?

[6:10]

Paul commanded Christians to be strong. Because he knew the enemies of God attack Christians, Paul commanded Christians to be ready for these attacks.

Paul told Christians to “put on the whole armor of God.” Paul used the metaphor of a soldier wearing his armor to talk about how Christians prepared for attacks from their enemies. By wearing the “whole armor of God,” Christians get ready to fight against the enemies of God in the same way soldiers get ready to fight their enemies (see: 6:11).

Paul also commanded Christians to “stand firm.” That is, Paul wanted Christians to know that the enemy cannot cause Christians to sin against God (see: 4:27).

Paul told Christians that their strength came from God. This means Christians must not think they can fight against the devil by themselves. Instead, Christians must get their strength from the Holy Spirit to fight the devil.

Paul wrote that Christians must use all of the armor of God. This allows Christians to win against the enemies of God. Paul wanted Christians to know that they must always be prepared for all types of spiritual battles. That is, battles they know about and those battles that they do not know about.

Some scholars think that the “time of evil” in 6:13 is talking about a time in the future. A time when God allows a lot of evil on the earth before Jesus comes back to earth. Other scholars think that Paul wanted to talk about the entire Christian life. That is, a Christian’s life from the time he believed in Jesus until he died. Other scholars think Paul wanted to say that spiritual attacks come at different times and at different strengths in a Christian’s life.

See: Metaphor; Spiritual Warfare

6:12

What causes spiritual battles?

[6:12]

Paul wrote that Christians do not fight against people. Instead, they fight against the spiritual world. That is, Paul wanted Christians to know they fought Satan and against beings that cannot be seen. Paul wrote that Christians fought against three things:

Beings who ruled and “authorities”(ἐξουσία/g1849)- Paul wanted Christians to know that there are some beings, which cannot be seen, who fight against Jesus and have some permission to do things that affect people on earth (see: Colossians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

“Powers”(κοσμοκράτωρ/g2888) over this present darkness- Again, Paul spoke of about beings who were not from the earth. They do the things that Satan wants them to do. They exist to do only evil things to people. Paul used the metaphor of darkness in 6:12 to tell Christians what Satan wanted to do in the world. He wanted to say that Satan affected people in an evil way because God allowed him to.

“Spiritual forces”(πνευματικός/g4152) of evil in the heavenly places- Paul wrote that all beings, even those in heaven, must fight against evil. Spiritual battles happen everywhere, not just on earth. Paul used the word “wickedness” to say that they try to get others to do what is evil. That is, doing things that do not honor God and his commands.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Metaphor; Satan (The Devil);Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

6:13-17

What is the armor of God?

[6:13, 6:14, 6:15, 6:16, 6:17]

Paul used the metaphor “armor of God” to tell Christians that they needed to wear protection. In the same way armor protects soldiers in battle, the armor of God protects Christians against the enemy’s attacks.

Paul wrote that different pieces make the armor of God. Paul wanted Christians to know that they must wear all of these pieces everyday. Without this armor, they cannot fight against the enemy, that is, Satan. Paul wrote about six pieces of armor that the Christian must wear:

The “belt of truth”- Paul used the metaphor of a belt to tell Christians that they must always “wrap” themselves in truth. That is, they must always speak truthfully. The belt of a Roman soldier held all the pieces of their armor together at their waist. In the same way the soldiers belt held their armor together, the belt of truth holds the Christian together. That is, Christians must know and speak things that are truth. God’s word is true. The Bible is God’s word. When Jesus prayed to the God the Father he said, “your word is truth” (see: John 17:17). Christians must read and study the Bible. This allows them to learn the truth and be changed by the truth (see: Romans 12:2). Also, when Christians know the true things taught in the Bible, they know what is true and what are lies.

The “breastplate of righteousness”- In the days of Jesus, Roman soldiers wore a hard piece of armor over their chest called a breastplate. This piece of armor protected their most important part of the body against attack from the enemy. Paul used the metaphor of a soldier’s breastplate to tell Christians that in the same way this piece of armor protects the soldier’s heart, God protects the spiritual heart of Christians. That is, it keeps them from believing in the enemy’s lies.

“Shoes for your feet, put on the readiness”- Paul used the metaphor of shoes to tell Christians to stand strong in Jesus. That is, Christians are to keep doing the things that God wants them to do. The shoes of a Roman soldier had long spikes on the bottom to keep their feet from slipping. In the same way these shoes kept soldiers from being moved, the shoes of readiness keep the Christian from moved away from God and the things that he taught. By standing strong in Jesus, Christians have peace. In order to stand strong in Jesus, Christians must never forget the truth of the gospel. The “shield of faith”- A Roman soldier's shield provided complete protection for the soldier against enemy arrows and swords. In the same way, believing in Jesus completely protects Christians. This protects Christians against the devil's evil plans (see: 1 Peter 5:8-9). Paul used the words “flaming arrows” to tell Christians about the different ways the devil attacks. In the same way the soldier's shield protects them against their enemy's arrows, so the shield of faith protects Christians against the devil's arrows. Believing in Jesus keeps the enemies attacks from hurting Christians. The “helmet of salvation”- The helmet protected the soldier's head from attack. In the same way the helmet protected the soldier's head, so does the helmet of salvation protect the Christian. God saves all Christians. Perhaps this helmet protects Christians from the lies that the enemy tells Christians about how God saves them (see: 2:5; Isaiah 59:17). The “sword of the spirit”- The Roman soldiers used their swords to attack their enemy and to block the enemies sword. Paul wanted to say that the “word of God” is a spiritual sword given to Christians by the Holy Spirit. Believers use the Bible to defend themselves against wrong ideas about God and replace these wrong ideas with the truth. Jesus used the word of God. During Jesus' temptation by Satan, Jesus used the word of God to both defend and attack (see: Luke 4:1-13).

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins) ; Metaphor; Gospel; Heart (Metaphor); Word of God

6:18-20

How did Paul tell Christians to pray?

[6:18, 6:19]

Paul told Christians to pray all of the time and in all kinds of ways. They are to pray with other people and by themselves. They are to pray in front of other people and by themselves. Paul wrote that Christians pray in the Spirit. That is, Christians pray with the power of the Holy Spirit and can talk with God directly (see: Romans 8:26-27). Some scholars think Paul wanted to say that the armor of God can only be put on by prayer. Fewer scholars think that wearing the helmet and carrying the sword needed prayer because Paul had just written about those pieces. Fewer scholars think Paul wanted Christians to pray before using the entire armor of God. This allows them to do the things God wants them to do.

Paul wrote that Christians must always be alert or ready (see: Luke 21:34-36). This allows them to always be ready for spiritual battles. That is, they are ready to battle against Satan and the enemies of God whom they cannot see. In order to be ready for spiritual battle, Christians must continue to pray at all times.

Also, Paul wrote Christians must pray for one another as well as for Paul himself (see: 1 Peter 5:8-9). So, he asked the believers in and around Ephesus to pray for him. Paul knew he needed God's help to do what God wanted him to do. So he asked the Christians to pray that he continue to tell others people about the gospel bravely and clearly.

See: Gospel

6:21-22

How did Paul let the believers know about his circumstances?

[6:21]

Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus with this letter. Paul was in prison in a house near Rome. Paul was unable to leave because he was being guarded. However, Tychicus was not in prison. He followed Paul. So, Tychicus went to Ephesus with the letter. Tychicus also told Christians in Ephesus about Paul's imprisonment. Most scholars think that Tychicus also took the other letter Paul wrote to the Colossians.

6:23-24

How is the ending of this letter similar to Paul's other letters?

[6:23, 6:24]

In the Ancient Near East, it was common to end a letter with a blessing. Paul did this in many of his letters. These blessings included peace (see: Philippians 4:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 13:11). Paul prayed for God to love the people reading this letter (see: 1 Corinthians 16:24; 2 Corinthians 13:14) and for God to increase their trust in Jesus (see: Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 16:23). Finally, Paul said that God blessed those who love Jesus.

See: Ancient Near East; Bless (Blessing)

Ephesians 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to explain how Christians are to submit themselves to each other. He gives instructions to children, fathers, workers, and masters.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord

"Children, as followers of the Lord, obey your parents" or

"Children, it is your duty as Christians to obey your parents"

Ephesians 6:2

General Information:

Here Paul quotes Moses. Moses was talking to the people of

Israel as though they were one person, so "your" is singular. You may need to translate it as plural.

Ephesians 6:3

General Information:

Here Paul continues quoting Moses. Moses was talking to the people of Israel as though they were one person, so "you" is singular. You may need to translate it as plural.

Ephesians 6:4

do not provoke your children to anger

"do not make your children angry" or "do not cause your children to be angry"

raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord

The abstract nouns "discipline" and "instruction" can be expressed as verbs. Alternate translation: "teach them to become adults by making sure that they know and do what the Lord wants them to do"

Ephesians 6:5

be obedient to

"obey." This is a command.

your masters according to the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the physical world.

Alternate translation: "your human masters" or "your masters in this world"

deep respect and trembling

The phrase "deep respect and trembling" uses two similar ideas to emphasize the importance of slaves honoring their masters.

and trembling

Here "trembling" is an exaggeration used to emphasize how important it is that slaves obey their masters. Alternate translation: "and fear" or "as though you were shaking with fear"

in the honesty of your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or intentions. Alternate translation: "with honesty" or "with sincerity"

Ephesians 6:6

as slaves of Christ

Serve your earthly master as though your earthly master were Christ himself.

from your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for "thoughts" or "intentions."

Alternate translation: "with sincerity" or "enthusiastically"

Ephesians 6:7

Serve with all your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for "thoughts" or "inner being."

Alternate translation: "Serve with all of your being" or "Be completely dedicated when you serve"

Ephesians 6:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Ephesians 6:9

treat your slaves in the same way

"you also must treat your slaves well" or "just as slaves must do good to their masters, you also must do good to your slaves" (Ephesians 6:5)

You know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven

"You know that Christ is the Master of both slaves and their masters, and that he is in heaven"

there is no partiality with him

"he judges everyone the same way"

Ephesians 6:10

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives instructions to make believers strong in this battle we live for God.

the strength of his might

"his great power." See how "the strength of his power" is translated near the end of Ephesians 1:21.

Ephesians 6:11

Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the scheming plans of the devil

Christians should use all the resources God gives to stand firmly against the devil just as a soldier puts on armor to protect himself from enemy attacks.

the scheming plans

"the tricky plans"

Ephesians 6:12

flesh and blood

This expression refers to people, not spirits who do not have human bodies.

against the powers over this present darkness

Here it is implied that "the powers" refers to powerful spiritual beings. Here "darkness" is a metaphor for things that are evil. Alternate translation: "against the powerful spiritual beings that rule over people during this present evil time"

Ephesians 6:13

Therefore put on the whole armor of God

Christians should use the protective resources God gives them in fighting the devil in the same way a soldier puts on armor to protect himself against his enemies.

so that you may be able to stand ... to stand firm

The words "stand" and "stand firm" represent successfully resisting or fighting something. Alternate translation: "so that you may be able to resist evil ... to remain strong"

in the evil day

Here the word "day" can refer to any short period of time, even a period longer than a day. Alternate translation: "at the evil time" or "when people do evil deeds"

Ephesians 6:14

Stand firm

Successfully resist or fight against something. You may need to make explicit what it is that the readers are to resist. See how you translated these words in [Ephesians 6:13]

the belt of truth

Truth holds everything together for a believer just as a belt holds the clothing of a soldier together.

truth ... righteousness

We are to know the truth and act in ways that please God.

the breastplate of righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) the gift of righteousness covers a believer's heart just as a breastplate protects the chest of a soldier or 2) our living as God wants us gives us a clear conscience that protects our hearts the way a breastplate protects a soldier's chest.

Ephesians 6:15

and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace

Just as a soldier wears shoes to give him solid footing, the believer must have solid knowledge of the gospel of peace in order to be ready to proclaim it.

Ephesians 6:16

In all circumstances take up the shield of faith

The believer must use the faith that God gives for protection when the devil attacks just as a soldier uses a shield to protect him from enemy attacks.

the flaming arrows of the evil one

The attacks of the devil against a believer are like flaming arrows shot at a soldier by an enemy.

Ephesians 6:17

take the helmet of salvation

Salvation given by God protects the believer's mind just as a helmet protects the head of a soldier.

the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God

The writer speaks of God's instructions to his people as if they were a sword that his people could use to fight an enemy,

Ephesians 6:18

With every prayer and request, pray at all times in the Spirit

"Pray at all times in the Spirit as you pray and make specific requests"

To this end

"For this reason" or "Keeping this in mind." This refers to the attitude of taking God's armor.

be watching with all perseverance as you offer prayers for all God's holy people

"be watching, and even when it is difficult, keep praying for all the believers "

Ephesians 6:19

Connecting Statement:

In his closing, Paul asks them to pray for his boldness in telling the gospel while he is in prison and says he is sending Tychicus to comfort the Corinthians (6:21).

that a message might be given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that God might give me the word" or "God might give me the message"

when I open my mouth. Pray that I might make known with boldness "when I speak. Pray that I boldly explain"

open my mouth

This is a metonym for speaking. Alternate translation: "speak"

Ephesians 6:20

It is for the gospel that I am an ambassador who is kept in chains

The words "in chains" are a metonym for being in prison.

Alternate translation: "I am now in prison because I am a representative of the gospel"

so that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak

The word "pray" is understood from verse 19. Alternate translation: "so pray that whenever I teach the gospel, I will speak it as boldly as I should" or "pray that I may speak the gospel as boldly as I should"

Ephesians 6:21

Tychicus

Tychicus was one of several men who served with Paul.

the beloved brother

"my beloved brother"

make everything known

"will tell you everything about me"

Ephesians 6:22

so that he may encourage your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's inner beings.

Alternate translation: "so that he may encourage you"

Ephesians 6:23

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes his letter to the Ephesian believers with a blessing of peace and grace on all believers who love Christ.

Ephesians 6:24

General Information:

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Introduction to Philippians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of the Philippians

Greeting, thanksgiving and prayer (1:1-11) Paul's report on his ministry (1:12-26)

Instructions To be steadfast (1:27-30) To be united (2:1-2) To be humble (2:3-11) To work out our salvation with God working in you (2:12-13) To be innocent and light (2:14-18)

Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30) Warning about false teachers (3:1-4:1) Personal instruction (4:2-5) Rejoice and do not be anxious (4:4-6) Final remarks Values (4:8-9) Contentment (4:10-20) Final Greetings (4:21-23)

Who wrote the Book Philippians?

Paul wrote Philippians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul wrote this letter while in prison in Rome.

What is the Book of Philippians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in Philippi, a city in Macedonia. He wrote it to thank the Philippians for the gift they had sent him. He wanted to tell them about how he was doing in prison and to encourage them to rejoice even if they are suffering. He also wrote to them about a man named Epaphroditus. He was the one who brought the gift to Paul. While visiting Paul, Epaphroditus became ill. So, Paul decided to send him back to Philippi. Paul encouraged the believers in Philippi to welcome and to be kind to Epaphroditus when he returns.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Philippians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Philippi," or "A Letter to the Christians in Philippi."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the city of Philippi like?

Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, founded Philippi in the region of Macedonia. This meant that the citizens of Philippi were also considered citizens of Rome. The people of Philippi were proud of being citizens of Rome. But Paul told the believers that they are citizens of heaven (3:20).

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. The word "you" is almost always plural and refers to the believers in Philippi. The exception to this is 4:3.

Who were the "enemies of the cross of Christ" (3:18) in this letter?

The "enemies of the cross of Christ" were probably people who called themselves believers but did not obey God's commands. They thought that freedom in Christ meant that believers could do whatever they desired and God would not punish them (3:19).

Why were the words "joy" and "rejoice" frequently used in this letter?

Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter

What does Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:1, 8, 13, 14, 26, 27; 2:1, 5, 19, 24, 29; 3:1, 3, 9, 14; 4:1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 13, 19, 21. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers--that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Philippians?

Some versions have "Amen" at the end of the final verse in the letter (4:23). The ULB, UDB, and other many modern versions do not. If "Amen" is included, it should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that it is probably not original to the Book of Philippians.

Chapter 1

Philippians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul includes a prayer in the beginning of this letter. At that time, religious leaders sometimes began informal letters with a prayer.

Special concepts in this chapter

The day of Christ

This probably refers to the day when Christ returns. Paul often connected the return of Christ with motivating godly living. (See: godly)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This statement in verse 21 is a paradox: "to die is gain." In verse 23 Paul explains why this is true. ([Philippians 1:21](#))

Links:

[Philippians 1:1 Notes](#) [Philippians intro](#)

Philippians 1 Commentary

1:1-2

Why did Paul say that Timothy also wrote this letter?

[1:1]

This letter begins with Paul and Timothy's names. However, only Paul wrote this letter. Perhaps Paul wrote Timothy's name here because he was with Paul at this time. Or perhaps Timothy also wrote down the words of the letter as Paul

spoke them to him.

See: Romans 16:22; 1 Corinthians 16:21; 2 Thessalonians 3:17

Paul said that he and Timothy were servants of God. What did he want to say when he said this?

Paul said that he and Timothy were “servants (δοῦλος/g1401) of Christ Jesus.” The New Testament often says that Christians are God’s servants. Paul and Timothy did not do what they wanted to do. Instead, they did what Christ had wanted them to do. They did this because they wanted to honor God.

Some scholars think that Paul wanted to say that he and Timothy belonged to Jesus. That is, they served Jesus. They did what Jesus wanted them to do.

Other scholars think that Paul wanted to say that he and Timothy were messengers of God. This is because writers often wrote the Greek word “servant” in the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament to talk about people such as Moses, Joshua, and other prophets (see: 2 Kings 8:12; Psalms 104:26; Joshua 24:29; Nehemiah 1:6; Ezekiel 34:23).

See: Serve (Servant, Slave)

Who were the people to whom Paul wrote?

[1:1]

Anyone who believes in Jesus is a “holy one,” that is, he is “set apart.” God has separated him from the other people. He belongs to God. He does things for God. God wants Christians to be different from the rest of the people in the world. Christians should live in this way, because they want to honor him. Paul said that they are “in Christ.”

See: Holy Ones; In Christ

Why was Philippi an important city?

[1:1]

The people in the city of Philippi were proud to be citizens of the Roman Empire. The Romans allowed them to do things that other people could not do. There were not very many citizens in the places that Rome ruled.

See: Holy Ones; Citizen

Who were the overseers and deacons?

[1:1]

Paul wrote to the Christians in Philippi as well as to their leaders. These are two different types of leaders. Elsewhere, Paul wrote that “overseers” must be able to teach others. However, he did not write the same thing about “deacons” (see: 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1).

See: Overseer; Deacon

How did Christians greet one another?

[1:2]

The first Christians often greeted each other by saying, “Grace (χάρις/g5485) be to you and peace.” Perhaps this was because God was kind to Christians, and because he gives them peace.

See: Grace

Why is God called “our father”?

[1:2]

See: God the Father

1:3-11

How were the Philippians joined together with Paul in the gospel?

[1:5]

Paul thanked the Christians for their “fellowship (κοινωνία/g2842) in the gospel.” They were partners or joined together with Paul because God was kind to both the Philippians and to Paul. This made the Philippians able to do several things:

The Philippians believed the same gospel Paul believed. In this way, they joined together with Paul. They also joined together because they both told others about the gospel.

The Philippians helped Paul several times with money and other needs that he had (see: 4:14-18). They were also his partners because they helped Paul tell others about the good news. Paul could not do the things that he did without the Philippians helping him.

The Philippians honored God because they lived in the right way. Paul also did this. This was how all people should live, if they believe the gospel. This shows everyone that God has changed their lives because they believed in Jesus.

The Philippians suffered because they believed in Jesus. They suffered as Paul suffered because he preached the gospel.

See: Fellowship; Gospel

What is the day of the Lord?

[1:6]

See: Day of the Lord

How did Paul defend and confirm of the gospel?

[1:7]

Paul was in prison because he taught people about Jesus and the gospel. He defended (ἀπολογία/g627), that is, explained

the gospel when they asked him. He also confirmed (βεβαίωσις/g951) the gospel came from God. Paul did not only tell people about Jesus. He also encouraged them to believe in Jesus and to live in a way that honors God.

See: Gospel

What did Paul pray that God would do?

[1:9, 1:10, 1:11]

Paul prayed three things for the Christians in Philippi:

He prayed that they would love other people and they would love other people more and more.

Paul prayed that they would learn more about how God wanted them to live. They should do this in order to honor

Paul prayed that the Philippian believers would be full of "the fruit of righteousness." The phrase "fruit of

See: Galatians 5:22-23

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

Why did Paul pray?

[1:9, 1:10, 1:11]

Paul prayed this prayer for three reasons:

He wanted the Christians in Philippi to live rightly because they loved God and each other.

Paul wanted them to be sincere(εὐλικρινής/g1506) or honest. He also wanted them to be "without offense" (ἀπό

What Paul wanted most was that everyone would honor God as God deserved. Christians should honor God because

See: Day of the Lord

1:12-18

Paul was in prison. How did this help him serve Jesus?

[1:12, 1:13]

Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter. However, he still rejoiced. He wrote that he was able to teach more people about Jesus because he was in prison than when he had been free. Paul was able to teach the other prisoners and the guards about Jesus. Also, Paul continued to teach without fearing anyone. This is why other Christians had courage to teach people about Jesus. So many people heard about Jesus because Paul was in prison.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

Why did some people preach Jesus from envy and rivalry?

[1:15, 1:17]

In many ways, the Jews lived differently than the Greeks, Romans, and other non-Jews. Many of the Jews who believed in Jesus thought that non-Jews had to live like Jews if they wanted to believe in Jesus, too. They thought that these new Christians had to be circumcised and had to obey the Law of Moses.

Almost all of the first Christians were Jews. Most of them thought that Jesus died for the Jews and for anyone else who became a Jew. That is why these Jews were shocked when Paul taught non-Jews that they could believe in Jesus and follow him without becoming Jews. Some of these Jewish Christians taught that Paul was teaching people wrong things. Also, Paul persuaded many non-Jews to believe in Jesus. This made those Jewish Christians angry, because they did not think Paul was teaching the truth about Jesus.

But they were not able to trouble Paul. Paul rejoiced because they were teaching other people about Jesus.

See: Judaizer

1:19-26

What deliverance did Paul speak about?

[1:19]

Perhaps Paul wanted to say that God would set him free from prison. Or perhaps he wanted to say that God would not punish him for his sins, even if he would die in prison. Perhaps Paul was thinking about both of these things. This is because he said that he might die in prison (see: 1:20-21). Even if he died there, he was certain that he would be with the Christians in Philippi again in heaven (see: 1:25-26).

See: Job 13:13-18

See: Heaven

Why was Paul confident that he would not be disappointed?

[1:20]

Paul hoped that he would never be afraid to tell others about Jesus or to praise Jesus. He would be “ashamed” if that happened.

This is because Paul wanted to live rightly so that others would praise Jesus. He knew that he could still do this, even if he was in prison (see: 1:20).

It did not matter if he continued to live or if he died. If he continued to live, Paul would continue to work for Jesus. He would continue to teach others about Jesus and teach other Christians how to honor God (see: 1:22 and 1:25). If Paul died, he would be with Jesus and worship him in heaven (see: 1:23).

See: Psalms 34:3-5 and Psalms 35:26-27

See: Shame (Ashamed); Hope

Why does Paul speak about producing fruit?

[1:22]

When Christians do good things that honor God, Scripture often describes them as “producing fruit.” When the things Paul did helped other Christians to do good things, he spoke about this as his “fruit of labor.”

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

1:27-30

How were the Christians to conduct themselves in a way that was worthy of the gospel?

[1:27]

Paul told the Philippian believers to “conduct themselves in a manner worthy (ἀξίως/g516) of the gospel of Jesus,” that is, he wanted them to live in a way that honored God. Paul used the Greek word “live as a citizen (πολιτεύομαι/g4176),” which usually meant for a free person in a city to do everything he should do.

However, Paul wanted to say that Christians are citizens of heaven (see: 3:20). That is, their true home is in heaven. That is where they belong. Others will honor them because of that. Even better, God approves of them, and he approves of what they do that shows they belong to him.

Paul wrote about two things that they should do because they were citizens of heaven: (1) they should be united together, at peace with one another, and (2) they should obey Jesus, their king, even if other people tried to stop them from obeying him.

See: Gospel; Citizen

How were the Philippians to stand firm in one spirit and to struggle together with one mind?

[1:27]

Paul told the Philippian believers to “stand firm (στήκω/g4739) in one spirit (πνεῦμα/g4151)” and to working hard together with one “mind (ψυχή/g5590).” When someone “stands firm,” he is working hard to do something. He does not give up, even if people try to stop him. The Christians were to keep teaching others about Jesus, even if other people tried to stop them.

Paul wanted Christians to work hard together in order to honor Jesus. The Christians in Philippi were to do these things in “one spirit” and in “one mind.” In other words, they were to be united or at peace with one another and to work together to accomplish the same task. Paul wanted for the Philippian believers to act more like Jesus did. He wanted them to live rightly so they could honor him. He wanted them to work together so they could honor him.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Mind

What was the sign of destruction and salvation?

[1:28]

Paul wrote that the believers should work hard and work together. He knew that other people would try to stop them. However, Paul said that when the Christians do these things, they were a “sign,” that is they showed or proved that God would destroy the unbelievers and save the believers.

See: Sign

How is suffering a gift?

[1:29]

Paul wrote that Christians in Philippi suffered for God. This was a “gift” that God gave to them. In other words, God allowed them to suffer for him because he loved them.

However, Paul did not want to say that it is good to suffer hardship or pain if nothing good happens after that. Scholars think that if God makes his children suffer, he does something good for them. This is because a person who is suffering

usually allows God to help him more than if he were not suffering. He becomes closer to God (see: 1:7 and 1:12-14). In other words, he loves God more.

God helps Christians more because they believe in him. When God allows them to suffer for him, and when he helps him, this shows that he is doing things for them.

See: Grace

Philippians 1:1

General Information:

Paul and Timothy wrote this letter to the church at Philippi. Because Paul writes later in the letter saying "I," it is generally assumed that he is the author and that Timothy, who is with him, writes as Paul speaks. All instances of "you" and "your" in the letter refer to the believers in the Philippian church and are plural. The word "our" probably refers to all believers in Christ, including Paul, Timothy, and the Philippian believers.

Paul and Timothy ... and deacons

If your language has a particular way of introducing the authors of a letter, use it here.

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus

"Paul and Timothy, who are servants of Christ Jesus"

all God's holy people in Christ Jesus

This refers to those whom God chose to belong to him by being united to Christ. Alternate translation: "all God's people in Christ Jesus" or "all those who belong to God because they are united with Christ"

the overseers and deacons

"the leaders of the church"

Philippians 1:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Philippians 1:3

every time I remember you

Here "remember you" means when Paul thinks about the Philippians while he is praying. Alternate translation: "every time I think of you"

Philippians 1:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Philippians 1:5

because of your partnership in the gospel

Paul is expressing thanks to God that the Philippians have joined him in teaching people the gospel. He may have been referring to them praying for him and sending money so that he could travel and tell others. Alternate translation: "because you are helping me proclaim the gospel"

Philippians 1:6

I am confident

"I am sure"

he who began ... you

"God, who began ... you,"

Philippians 1:7

It is proper for me

"It is right for me" or "It is good for me"

I have you in my heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions. This idiom expresses strong affection. Alternate translation: "I love you very much"

have been my partners in grace

"have been partakers of grace with me" or "have shared in grace with me"

Philippians 1:8

God is my witness,

"God knows" or "God understands"

with the compassion of Christ Jesus

The abstract noun "compassion" can be translated with the verb "love." Alternate translation: "and I love you as Christ Jesus dearly loves us all"

Philippians 1:9

Connecting Statement:

Paul prays for the believers in Philippi and talks about the joy there is in suffering for the Lord.

may abound

Paul speaks of love as if it were objects that people could obtain more of. Alternate translation: "may increase"

in knowledge and all understanding

Here "understanding" refers to understanding about God.

This can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "as you learn and understand more about what pleases God"

Philippians 1:10

approve

This refers to examining things and taking only those that are good. Alternate translation: "test and choose"

what is excellent

"what is most pleasing to God"

sincere and blameless

The words "sincere" and "blameless" mean basically the same thing. Paul combines them to emphasize moral purity. Alternate translation: "completely blameless"

Philippians 1:11

filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ
Being filled with something is a metaphor that represents being characterized by it or by habitually doing it. Possible meanings of "fruit of righteousness" are that 1) it is a metaphor that represents righteous behavior. Alternate translation: "habitually doing what is righteous because Jesus Christ enables you" or 2) it is a metaphor that represents good deeds as a result of being righteous. Alternate translation: "habitually doing good works because Jesus makes you righteous"

to the glory and praise of God

Possible meanings are 1) "Then other people will see how you honor God" or 2) "Then people will praise and give honor to God because of the good things they see you do."

These alternate translations would require a new sentence.

Philippians 1:12

General Information:

Paul says that two things have happened because of "the progress of the gospel": many people inside and outside the palace have found out why he is in prison, and other Christians are no longer afraid to proclaim the good news.

Now I want

Here the word "Now" is used to mark a new part of the letter.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women, because all believers in Christ are members of one spiritual family, with God as their heavenly Father.

what has happened to me

Paul is talking about his time in prison. Alternate

translation: "what I suffered because I was put into prison for preaching about Jesus"

has really served to advance the gospel

"has caused more people to hear the gospel"

Philippians 1:13

my chains in Christ came to light

"Chains in Christ" here is a metonym for being in prison for the sake of Christ. "Came to light" is a metaphor for

"became known." Alternate translation: "It became known that I am in prison for the sake of Christ"

my chains in Christ came to light throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the palace guards and many other people in Rome know that I am in chains for the sake of Christ"

my chains in Christ

Here Paul uses the preposition "in" to mean "for the sake of." Alternate translation: "my chains for the sake of Christ" or "my chains because I teach people about Christ"

my chains

Here the word "chains" is a metonym for imprisonment. Alternate translation: "my imprisonment"

palace guard

This was a group of soldiers that helped protect the Roman emperor.

Philippians 1:14

Most of the brothers have far more confidence in the Lord

Some modern translations read, "Most of the brothers in the Lord have far more confidence."

fearlessly speak the word

"fearlessly speak God's message"

Philippians 1:15

Some indeed even proclaim Christ

"Some people preach the good news about Christ"

out of envy and strife

"because they do not want people listening to me, and they want to cause trouble"

and also others out of good will

"but other people do it because they are kind and they want to help"

Philippians 1:16

The latter

"Those who proclaim Christ out of good will"

I am put here for the defense of the gospel

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1)

"God chose me to defend the gospel" or 2) "I am in prison because I defend the gospel."

for the defense of the gospel

"to teach everyone that the message of Jesus is true"

Philippians 1:17

But the former

"But the others" or "But the ones who proclaim Christ out of envy and strife"

while I am in chains

Here the phrase "in chains" is a metonym for imprisonment. Alternate translation: "while I am imprisoned" or "while I am in prison"

Philippians 1:18

What then?

Paul uses this question to tell how he feels about the situation he wrote about in [Philippians 15-17]

Only that in every way—whether from false motives or from true—Christ is proclaimed

"As long as people preach about Christ, it does not matter if they do it for good reasons or for bad reasons"

in this I rejoice

"I am happy because people are preaching about Jesus"

I will rejoice

"I will celebrate" or "I will be glad"

Philippians 1:19

this will result in my deliverance

"because people proclaim Christ, God will deliver me"

in my deliverance

"Deliverance" here is an abstract noun that refers to one person bringing another person to a safe place. You may have to specify that it is God whom Paul expects to deliver him. Alternate translation: "in my being brought to a safe place" or "in God bringing me to a safe place"

through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ

"because you are praying and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is helping me"

Spirit of Jesus Christ

"Holy Spirit"

Philippians 1:20

It is my eager expectation and hope

Here the word "expectation" and the phrase "hope" mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them together to emphasize how strong his expectation is. Alternate translation: "I eagerly and confidently hope"

with all boldness

You may need to state explicitly the missing clause in this elliptical sentence, that Paul will act boldly. You may also need to translate the abstract noun "boldness" as a clause. Alternate translation: "because I act with all boldness" or "after I have acted boldly"

Christ will be exalted in my body

The phrase "in my body" is a metonym for what happens to Paul's body. This includes what he does if he lives and what others may do to him, even if they kill him. This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "I will honor Christ no matter what happens to my body" or 2) "people will praise Christ no matter what I do or what others do to me"

whether by life or by death

"whether I live or die" or "if I go on living or if I die"

Philippians 1:21

For to me

These words are emphatic. They indicate that this is Paul's personal experience.

to live is Christ

Here pleasing and serving Christ is spoken of as Paul's only purpose for living. Alternate translation: "to go on living is an opportunity to please Christ"

to die is gain

Here death is spoken of as "gain." Possible meanings for "gain" are 1) Paul's death will help spread the message of the gospel or 2) Paul will be in a better situation.

Philippians 1:22

But if I am to live in the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the body, and "living in the flesh" is a metonym for being alive. Alternate translation: "But if I am to remain alive in my body" or "But if I continue to live"

that means fruitful labor for me

The words "fruitful labor" here refer to work that has good results. Alternate translation: "that means I will be able to do work that produces good results"

Yet which to choose?

"But which should I choose?"

Philippians 1:23

For I am hard pressed between the two

Paul speaks of how hard it is for him to choose between living and dying as if two heavy objects, like rocks or logs, were pushing on him from opposite sides at the same time. Your language might prefer the objects to pull rather than push. Alternate translation: "I am under tension. I do not know if I should choose to live or to die"

My desire is to depart and be with Christ

Paul uses a euphemism here to show that he is not afraid of dying. Alternate translation: "I would like to die because I would go to be with Christ"

Philippians 1:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Philippians 1:25

Being convinced of this

"Since I am sure that it is better for you that I stay alive"

I know that I will remain

"I know that I will continue to live" or "I know that I will keep on living"

Philippians 1:26

so that in me

"so that because of me" or "so that because of what I do"

Philippians 1:27

that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel

The phrases "standing firm in one spirit" and "with one mind striving together" share similar meanings and emphasize the importance of unity.

with one mind striving together

"striving together with one mind." Agreeing with one another is spoken of as having one mind. Alternate translation: "agreeing with one another and striving together"

striving together

"working hard together"

for the faith of the gospel

Possible meanings are 1) "to spread the faith that is based on the gospel" or 2) "to believe and live as the gospel teaches us"

Philippians 1:28

Do not be frightened in any respect

This is a command to the Philippian believers. If your language has a plural command form, use it here.

This is a sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation—and this from God

"Your courage will show them that God will destroy them. It will also show you that God will save you"

and this from God

"and this is from God." Possible meanings are the word "this" refers to 1) the believers' courage or 2) the sign or 3) destruction and salvation.

Philippians 1:29

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Philippians 1:30

having the same conflict which you saw in me, and now you hear in me "suffering in the same way that you saw me suffer, and that you hear I am still suffering"

Chapter 2

Philippians 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations, like the ULB, set apart the lines of verses 6-11. These verses describe the example of Christ. They teach important truths about the person of Jesus.

Special concepts in this chapter

Practical instructions

In this chapter Paul gives many practical instructions to the church in Philippi.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"If there is any"

This appears to be a type of statement that expresses something that may or may not be true. However, in this chapter it expresses something that is true. The translator may also translate this phrase as "Since there is."

Links:

[Philippians 2:1 Notes](#)

Philippians 2

2:1-11

Why did Paul say “if”?

[2:1]

Paul wanted to tell the Christians what they would do if they were at peace with each other. This is why he wrote the word “if.” If they were at peace, they would do these things:

They would encourage one another.

They would love each other, so they would comfort each other. Or perhaps, Paul wanted to say that God would comfort them.

They would all try to do the things that God wants them to do. Or perhaps Paul wanted to say that they all would have the Holy Spirit come to live in them when they believed in Jesus.

They would love and forgive one another, since God loved them and forgave them.

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

Why did Paul say that the Philippians gave him joy?

[2:2]

Paul spoke as if the Christians in Philippi could make his joy full or complete. This was a way of telling them what he wanted very much, that is, he wanted them to be at peace with one another and to all do what God wanted them to do.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

How did Paul say he wanted the Philippians to serve others?

[2:3, 2:4]

Paul made a very strong statement to the Philippian Christians that he wanted them to serve God by serving other people. In (2:3) Paul first wrote what he did not want them to do, and then what he did want them to do. He wrote again in this way in (see: 2:4).

Advice to translators: In this passage, Jesus and God the Son can be used in the same way. In English, it is common to call Jesus, “Jesus” after he came to the earth and call him “God the Son” before he came to the earth. However, you may translate Jesus as “Jesus” or “God the Son” in this note.

How was Jesus in the form of God?

[2:6]

In 2:6, Paul said that Jesus was in the “form (μορφή/g3444)” of God. Some scholars think that Paul wanted to say that Jesus did not have a physical body in the same way that God the Father does not have a physical body. More scholars think that Paul wanted to say that Jesus was like God in every way before he came to earth. When Jesus came to the earth, he did not “hold on to” or “keep” this form. Instead, he came to the earth as a human being with a body. When he lived on the earth, he was not like God in every way. When he returned to heaven, he was like God in every way again. This is why Paul wrote that Christ Jesus “emptied (κενόω/g2758)” himself.

Advice to translators: It is important to say that Jesus (God the Son) remained God when he was on earth. He stopped being like God in certain ways, but he was still fully or completely God.

See: Jesus is God); God the Father

What is the name that is above every name?

[2:9]

Jesus was the greatest person who ever lived. This is what Paul wanted to say when he wrote this Jesus’ name was above every other name.

See: Name

What did Paul want to say when he said every knee will bend?

[2:10]

When someone kneels or bows, it means that he is submitting to a king or someone like a king. In 2:10, Paul prophesied about a time when Jesus will return. When Jesus returns, all people will know that he is God. They will all submit to him, because he is God and the king of all kings.

See: Submit (Submission)

2:12-13

How does someone work out their salvation?

[2:12]

Paul said that when someone is saved, this person must “work out (κατεργάζομαι/g2716)” something. When he said this, he wanted to say that Christian must continue to do something until the day they when they be with God in heaven. He did not want to say that Christians can save themselves. However, scholars do not agree about what else Paul wanted to say.

Some scholars think Paul wanted to say that God had saved the Christians, so they should know that God wanted them to obey him. However, other scholars think that Paul was telling the Christians to obey God so they could save themselves

from this world.

Paul wrote that the Christians must do this with fear and shaking because they were afraid. However, Paul did not want them to be so scared of God that they were shaking. Perhaps Paul wanted to say that Christians should try hard to live rightly. If they do this, this can help them know that they will one day live with God.

However, some people think that Christians cannot “work out” that they were saved if God does not help them. Still other people think that Paul told the Christians to honor God. If they honor God, they will want to obey him.

See: Isaiah 19:16

See: Fear of God; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

How does God work in you?

[2:13]

In 2:13, Paul said that God was working in the Christians. God does this through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps the Christian to live in a way that honors God. So Christians must obey God. God is pleased with Christians when they do this.

2:14-18

How is someone blameless, honest, and without blemish?

[2:15]

Paul wanted the Christians to be “blameless (ἄμemptος/g273),” “honest or innocent”(ἀκέραιος/g185),” and “without blemish” (ἄμωμος/g299). They were to do this by being at peace with one another.

These things were the opposite of how the rest of the world lived. Paul said the rest of the world lived in a crooked way.

He said that they lived in a way that was perverse, that is, not how God wanted them to live. In Scripture, writers often say this world is dark, because the people in this world sin. In Scripture, those who honor God are living in the light. This is because Jesus is the light of the world (see: John 8:12)

See: World; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

How are Christians children of God?

[2:15]

All Christians are children of God. However, God did not give birth to give birth to them as a mother gives birth to her children. Instead, God has caused Christians to be born a second time. John wrote about this more than Paul. John wrote that they are born “of” or “from” God (see: 1 John 2:29). When John wrote about God, he showed that a person must be born a second time (see: John 3). If a person is not born a second time, that person is a child of the devil (see: 1 John 3:10). But if God causes a person to be born a second time, that person is at peace with God. He is a friend of God.

See: Family of God ; Children of God; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

What is the word of life?

[2:16]

The “word of life,” that is, the message about life, is the gospel. This is because it is the message that says that those who believe in Jesus will live forever. Not only do Christians live forever with God, but they also live in a new way.

How was Paul poured out as an offering?

[2:17]

Paul said that his life could be “poured out” like a drink offering. In the Law of Moses, the drink offering was said to make a smell that God liked (see: Numbers 15:7). By saying this, Paul was really saying that if he died serving the Lord, then the Lord would be happy because Paul had obeyed him.

See: Law of Moses; Offer (Offering)

How are Christians running?

[2:16]

Paul often said that Christians should try hard to obey God. He wrote about Christians as if they were running a race. That is why he wrote that he was running.

See: Metaphor

2:19-24

How does Paul speak About Timothy?

[2:19, 2:20]

Paul trained Timothy, that is, he taught him to serve God and be a leader in the church. Because Paul could not visit the Christians in Philippi, he sent Timothy instead. He was sure that Timothy would serve Jesus well.

In this passage, Paul wrote many things about Timothy so that the Christians in Philippi would trust and Timothy and obey him.

2:25-30

Who was Epaphroditus?

[2:25]

Paul wrote about this man only here and in 4:18. People today do not know very much about Epaphroditus. This man did help Paul, and Paul loved him. He almost died while serving God. Perhaps this was when he was bringing to Paul the gift

that the Philippians had sent to Paul. Paul even said that Epaphroditus did this for the Philippians, who could not do it themselves. Because of this, Paul wanted the Philippians to treat him well when he came with Timothy.

Philippians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul advises the believers to have unity and humility and reminds them of Christ's example.

If there is any encouragement in Christ

"If Christ has encouraged you" or "If you are encouraged because of Christ"

if there is any comfort provided by love

The phrase "by love" probably refers to Christ's love for the Philippians. Alternate translation: "if his love has given you any comfort" or "if his love for you has comforted you in any way"

if there is any fellowship in the Spirit

"if you have fellowship with the Spirit"

if there are any tender mercies and compassions

"if you have experienced many of God's acts of tender mercy and compassion"

Philippians 2:2

make my joy full

Paul speaks here of joy as if it were a container that can be filled. Alternate translation: "cause me to rejoice greatly"

Philippians 2:3

Do nothing out of ambition or empty conceit

"Do not serve yourselves or think of yourselves as better than others"

ambition

"selfish ambition"

Philippians 2:4

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others

"Do not care only about what you need and desire, but also about what others need and desire"

Philippians 2:5

Have this mind in yourselves which also was in Christ Jesus

"Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had" or "Think about one another the way Christ Jesus thought of people"

Philippians 2:6

he existed in the form of God

"everything that is true of God was true of him"

did not consider his equality with God as something to hold on to

Here "equality" refers to "equal status" or "equal honor."

Holding onto equality with God represents demanding that he continue to be honored as God is honored. Christ did not do that. Though he did not cease to be God, he ceased to act as God. Alternate translation: "did not think that he had to have the same status as God"

Philippians 2:7

he emptied himself

Paul speaks of Christ as if he were a container in order to say that Christ refused to act with his divine powers during his ministry on earth.

he was born in the likeness of men

"he was born a human being" or "he became a human being"

Philippians 2:8

became obedient to the point of death

Paul speaks of death here in a figurative way. The translator can understand "to the point of death" either as a metaphor of location

death, even death on a cross

"death, that is, death on a cross" or "death—more specifically, death on a cross"

Philippians 2:9

the name that is above every name

Here "name" is a metonym that refers to rank or honor.

Alternate translation: "the rank that is above any other rank" or "the honor that is above any other honor"

above every name

The name is more important, more to be praised than any other name.

Philippians 2:10

at the name of Jesus every knee should bow

Here "knee" is a synecdoche for the whole person. Bowing, or kneeling, is a symbolic act of worship. Alternate translation: "at the name of Jesus everyone will bow to worship him")

under the earth

Possible meanings are 1) the place where people go when they die or 2) the place where demons dwell.

Philippians 2:11

every tongue

Here "tongue" refers to the whole person. Alternate

translation: "every person" or "every being"

to the glory of God the Father

Here the word "to" expresses result: "with the result that they will praise God the Father"

Philippians 2:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages the Philippian believers and shows them how to live the Christian life before others and reminds them of his example.

my beloved

"my dear fellow believers"

in my presence

"when I am there with you"

in my absence

"when I am not there with you"

work out your own salvation

To "work out" one's salvation means to work in a way that is appropriate to one's salvation or to work in a way that shows one's salvation. The abstract noun "salvation" can be expressed with a phrase about God saving people. Alternate translation: "work in a way that is appropriate because you have been saved" or "work hard to do the good things that show that God has saved you"

salvation with fear and trembling

Paul uses the words "fear" and "trembling" together to show the attitude of reverence that people should have for God. Alternate translation: "salvation, trembling with fear" or "salvation with deep reverence"

Philippians 2:13

both to will and to work for his good pleasure

"so that you will want to do what pleases him and will be able to do what pleases him"

Philippians 2:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Philippians 2:15

blameless and pure

The words "blameless" and "pure" are very similar in meaning and are used together to strengthen the idea.

Alternate translation: "completely innocent"

in the middle of a crooked and depraved generation

The words "crooked" and "depraved" are used together to emphasize that the people are very sinful. Alternate translation: "among very sinful people"

in which you shine as lights in the world

Shining as lights in the world represents living in a good and righteous way so that people in the world can see that God is good and true. Alternate translation: "among whom your righteous lives are like lights in the world"

Philippians 2:16

Hold on to the word of life

"Hold on to" here means "firmly believe." Alternate translation: "Continue to firmly believe the word of life the word of life"

"the message that brings life" or "the message that shows how to live the way God wants you to"

on the day of Christ

This refers to when Jesus comes back to set up his kingdom and rule over the earth. Alternate translation: "when Christ returns"

I did not run in vain or labor in vain

The phrases "run in vain" and "labor in vain" here mean the same thing. Paul uses them together to emphasize how hard he has worked to help people believe in Christ.

Alternate translation: "I did not work so hard for nothing" run

The scriptures often use the image of walking to represent conducting one's life. Running is living life intensely.

Philippians 2:17

But even if I am being poured out as an offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all

Paul speaks of his death as if he were a drink offering which is poured upon the animal sacrifice to honor God. What Paul means is that he would gladly die for the Philippians if that would make them more pleasing to God. Alternate translation: "But, even if the Romans kill me and it is as if my blood pours out as an offering, I will be glad and rejoice with you all if my death will make your faith and obedience more pleasing to God"

Philippians 2:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Philippians 2:19

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the Philippian believers about his plan to send Timothy soon and that they should treat Epaphroditus as special.

But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon

Paul wanted to send Timothy to them, but he would do so

only if the Lord Jesus wanted him to do that. Alternate translation: "But I plan to send Timothy to you soon, as long as that is what the Lord Jesus wants me to" or "But if it is the will of the Lord Jesus, I expect to send Timothy to you soon"

Philippians 2:20

For I have no one else like him, who

"No one else here loves you as much as he does: he"

Philippians 2:21

For they all

Here the word "they" refers to a group of people Paul does not feel he can trust to send to Philippi. Paul is expressing his displeasure with those who should have been able to go but are not going because Paul does not trust them to fulfill their mission.

Philippians 2:22

as a son with his father, so he served with me

Fathers and sons love each other and work together.

Timothy was not really Paul's son, but he worked with Paul as a son works with his father.

in the gospel

Here "the gospel" stands for the activity of telling people about Jesus. Alternate translation: "in telling people about the gospel"

Philippians 2:23

I hope to send him as soon as I see how things will go with me

Paul wanted to send Timothy soon, but he would wait until he saw how things would go with himself. He would send Timothy immediately after that. Alternate translation: "I hope to send him immediately after I see how things will go with me"

I hope to send him

"I plan to send him" or "I expect to send him"

I see how things will go with me

"I find out what happens concerning me" or "I learn what will happen to me"

Philippians 2:24

I am confident in the Lord that I myself will also come soon

"I am sure, if it is the Lord's will, that I will also come soon"

Philippians 2:25

Epaphroditus

This is the name of a man sent by the Philippian church to minister to Paul in prison.

fellow worker and fellow soldier

Here Paul is speaking of Epaphroditus as if he were a soldier. He means that Epaphroditus is trained and is dedicated to serving God, no matter how great the hardship he must suffer. Alternate translation: "fellow believer who works and struggles along with us"

your messenger and servant for my needs

"who brings your messages to me and helps me when I am in need"

Philippians 2:26

he was very distressed, and he longed to be with you all

"he was very worried and wanted to be with you all"

Philippians 2:27

sorrow upon sorrow

The cause of the sorrow can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the sorrow of losing him added to the sorrow I

already have from being in prison"

Philippians 2:28

I can have less sorrow

"I will not be as sad as I have been"

Philippians 2:29

welcome him

The word "him" refers to Epaphroditus. Alternate

translation: "gladly receive Epaphroditus"

in the Lord with all joy

"as a fellow believer in the Lord with all joy" or "with the

great joy we have because the Lord Jesus loves us"

Philippians 2:30

he came near death

"he almost died." Paul speaks of dying as if death were a place that people could go to.

so that he could bring to completion what was lacking in your service to me

The meanings of the abstract nouns "completion" and

"service" can be expressed as verbs. Alternate translation:

"so that he could complete what you could not do in serving me"

Chapter 3

Philippians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In verses 4-8, Paul lists how he qualifies for being considered a righteous Jew. In every way, Paul was an exemplary Jew.

But he contrasts this with the greatness of knowing Jesus. (See: righteous)

Special concepts in this chapter

Dogs

The people of the ancient Near East used dogs as an image to refer to people in a negative way. Not all cultures use the term "dogs" in this way.

Resurrected Bodies

We know very little about what people will be like in heaven. Paul teaches here that Christians will have some kind of glorious body and will be free from sin. (See: heaven and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Prize

Paul uses an extended illustration to describe the Christian life. The goal of the Christian life is attempting to grow to be like Christ until a person dies. We can never achieve this goal perfectly, but we must strive for it.

Links:

[Philippians 3:1 Notes](#)

Philippians 3

3:1-6

How did Paul keep the Philippian Christians safe?

[3:1]

Paul wrote the same things that he had written earlier in the letter. However, he now wrote them again in a shorter way. Paul wanted to write these things again so the Christians in Philippi would remember what he wrote and to do the things that he wanted them to do. In this way, he kept them "safe," that is, he helped them know how to trust God and live rightly.

Who were the dogs Paul talked About?

[3:2]

Paul warned the Philippian Christians about certain false teachers. He called those teachers dogs. Paul was talking about wild dogs. The Jews hated the Gentiles and called them "dogs." The Jews thought that God would not approve of either Gentiles or dogs.

See: False Teacher;Gentile

What is circumcision?

[3:3, 3:5]

When someone was circumcised, some of the skin at the end of his penis was cut off. Jewish men were circumcised to show that they belonged to God's people, that is Israel, and that they obeyed the Law of Moses.

However, Paul said that it was the Christians who truly worshiped God. They did so by the power of the Holy Spirit, and because they honored Jesus. They knew that Jesus had saved them. They knew this because they trusted in him. Being circumcised could not help them.

This is why Paul said that Christians who became circumcised were mutilating or cutting into pieces their own body, that is, they were injuring themselves for nothing.

Christians who are not circumcised can still obey God and have peace with him. This is because they honor Jesus.

Many Jews and Jewish Christians were shocked because Paul taught this. They thought that he was insulting God, because

it was God who had given the law to Israel.

See: Genesis 18

See: Circumcise (Circumcision); People of God; Israel; Law of Moses; Holy Spirit; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Mutilate;

How does someone have peace with God?

Many Jews believed that God was pleased with them because they were born Jews and because they tried to obey the Law of Moses. But Paul showed them that they were wrong. He himself had tried as much as he could to keep the law.

He was circumcised when he was eight days old. His parents obeyed the Law of Moses (see: Leviticus 12:3). He came from a family that honored God.

Paul belonged to the nation of Israel, that is, he was born to Jews. He may have lived in Israel when he was young.

He was from the tribe of Benjamin. Paul was not just from the nation of Israel, he was Jewish. He was from one of Israel's two tribes of the southern kingdom of Judah that continued to honor God instead of rebelling against him.

He was a "Hebrew of Hebrews." All of Paul's ancestors had been Jewish.

He was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were religious leaders during the time when Paul lived. They taught people and helped them to obey the Law of Moses. The Pharisees were the great religious leaders.

Paul persecuted the church. He thought he was a good Jew. Because of this, Paul worked hard to stop the Christians.

However, the Jews were not supposed to work hard to stop the Christians. At this time, Paul and the Jews believed that the Christians were false teachers who needed to stop teaching.

He obeyed the Law of Moses. He did this as well as anyone could.

Paul said he was all of these things, but he was never at peace with God because of them.

See: Law of Moses; Circumcise (Circumcision); Israel; Tribes of Israel; Judah (Southern Kingdom); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Pharisees; Persecute (Persecution)

See: Deuteronomy 33:12

3:7-11

Why does someone need to believe in Jesus?

If being a Jew could have saved Paul, then he would live together with God in heaven forever. However, it could not save Paul. Therefore, Paul knew that it was better to believe in Jesus than to follow the Law of Moses or to have people think that he was a very good Jew. Paul said that everything was worthless if he did not believe in Jesus. He was willing to lose everything if he could "gain" Jesus, that is, so that Jesus would save him.

In this passage, Paul wrote many different metaphors in order to tell people that he wanted people to believe in Jesus more than anything else.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Metaphor

What is righteousness?

[3:9]

When a person has "righteousness (δικαιοσύνη/g1343), "he is at peace with God and friends with God. Paul wanted to say that this could not happen by trying to obey the Law of Moses. He also wanted to say that a person can only be at peace with God and friends with God by believing in Jesus. When someone believes in Jesus, it is God who does these things for that person.

See: Righteous (Righteousness)); Law of Moses

How does someone know Jesus?

[3:10]

He wanted to know Jesus through the "power of Jesus' resurrection." Paul was speaking about the power with which God raised Jesus from the dead. Perhaps that is also the power that God gives to Christians so that they can obey him.

Paul wanted to know Jesus through the "fellowship (κοινωνία/g2842)" of suffering, that is, sharing of Jesus' suffering. In ancient Israel, many people believed that God caused people to suffer when they disobeyed him. Therefore, if someone suffered, this showed that God was displeased with him. This is what people thought.

Paul also wanted to know Jesus by "transformed (συνμορφίζω/g4833)" to be like Jesus, when Jesus died. Perhaps Paul wanted unbelievers to kill him because he believed in Jesus. Or perhaps he wanted only the things that Jesus wanted.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Fellowship; Suffer

Do the dead come back to life?

[3:11]

Paul spoke about a time when he would rise from the dead, that is, come from being dead to being alive. Perhaps Paul was thinking of when he would die and go to Jesus in heaven. Some scholars think this. But other scholars think that Paul was writing about when Jesus returns to the earth. At that time, the believers will rise to live forever with Jesus (See 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and Revelation 20:1-9). This is when Jesus will reward the Christians for how well they obeyed God and honored Jesus.

Resurrect (Resurrection); Heaven; Jesus' Return to Earth; Reward

3:12-16

What is the goal and prize?

[3:14]

Paul compared a Christian's life to a race. In this race, people work for a prize. Paul taught that:

He had not yet received his prize. The prize will be life together with God forever in heaven. This will be a gift from God. However, Paul knew he would have to struggle to always honor God and obey him, and to always trust in Jesus.

No one can reach the goal while they are here on the earth. This is because Christians will never be as perfect as Jesus is perfect until they reach heaven.

Jesus saved all Christians so that they could all work towards the goal of honoring God in the way that they live. This is also the same goal that Paul talked about in 3:16. They were to keep doing the same thing that he had already taught them.

Paul did not want to compare himself to other people. He only wanted to compare himself to Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Heaven; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

3:17-21

How did Paul speak about living as a Christian?

[3:17]

Paul wrote the metaphor of walking to talk about the way a Christian should live. Many people lived in the wrong way, that is, they disobey Jesus. This made Paul very sad.

See: Metaphor

Who were the enemies of Jesus?

[3:18]

Paul did not say who the enemies of Jesus were. However, he said some things:

They opposed Jesus and his death. Perhaps they were these same false teachers who tried to force Christians to obey the Law of Moses. If this is true, they did not understand why Jesus died. Jesus died so that Christians could live forever with God in heaven. Therefore, these false teachers did not believe that Jesus died for everyone.

God will punish all enemies of Jesus. They will die and be apart from him forever.

They want nothing except to sin, to do what they themselves want to do.

They think that people will honor them because they sin, but people will shame them instead.

They do evil things. In Scripture, the writers often say that the world is evil, that is, the people in the world.

See: False Teacher; Law of Moses; Atonement; Hell; Sin (Ashamed); World

How are Christians citizens of heaven?

[3:20]

Paul told the Philippian believers to live in a way that was "worthy of (ἀξίως/g516)" the gospel of Jesus (see: 1:27). Paul used the Greek word "live as a citizen (πολιτεύομαι/g4176)," which usually meant for a free person in a city to do everything he should do.

However, Paul wanted to say that Christians are citizens of heaven. That is, their true home is in heaven. That is where they belong. Others will honor them because of that. Even better, God approves of them, and he approves of what they do that shows they belong to him.

Paul wrote about two things that they should do because they were citizens of heaven: (1) they should be united together, at peace with one another, and (2) they should obey Jesus, their king, even if other people tried to stop them from obeying him.

See: Gospel; Citizen; Heaven

How is Jesus savior?

[3:20]

In 3:20, Paul called Jesus "savior." Paul knew that Jesus died to save people from their sins. Because Jesus died, God does not punish Christians for having sinned. Jesus also saves or rescues Christians from the power of sin. That is, Christians are able to do what God wants them to do.

See: Savior; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Philippians 3:1

Connecting Statement:

In order to warn his fellow believers about Jews who would try to get them to follow the old laws, Paul gives his own testimony about when he persecuted believers.

Finally, my brothers

"Now moving along, my brothers" or "Concerning other

matters, my brothers"

brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

rejoice in the Lord

"be happy because of all the Lord has done"

For me to write these same things again to you is no trouble for me

"It is no trouble for me to write these things again to you"

and it keeps you safe

Here "it" refers to Paul's writing the same things twice.

Alternate translation: "doing this keeps you safe because these teachings will protect you from those who teach what is not true"

Philippians 3:2

General Information:

Paul begins to warn the Philippians against people who say that Christians have to obey the Jewish ceremonial law.

Obedience to this law is symbolized by the synecdoche of circumcision.

Watch out for

"Beware of" or "Be on guard against"

the dogs ... those evil workers ... the mutilation

These are three different ways of describing the same group of false teachers. Paul is using strong expressions to show how he feels about these Jewish teachers who claim to be Christians.

dogs

The word "dogs" was used by the Jews to refer to those who were not Jews. They were considered unclean. Paul speaks of the false teachers as though they were dogs, to insult them. If you have a different animal in your culture that is considered unclean or whose name is used as an insult, you could use this animal instead.

the mutilation

This exaggeration plays on the idea of circumcision. Paul speaks of those who wanted to trim off the foreskin as if they were totally mutilating the body. The action of mutilation is a metonym for the people who would perform the action. Alternate translation: "those who mutilate the body"

Philippians 3:3

General Information:

Paul continues warning the Philippians against people who say that Christians have to obey the Jewish ceremonial law. Obedience to this law is symbolized by the synecdoche of circumcision.

For it is we who are

Paul uses "we" to refer to himself and all true believers in Christ, including the Philippian believers.

the circumcision

Paul uses this phrase to refer to believers in Christ who are not physically circumcised but are spiritually circumcised, which means they have received the Holy Spirit through faith. Alternate translation: "the truly circumcised ones" or "truly God's people"

have no confidence in the flesh

Here "flesh" is a metonym for anything concerning one's body, such as his ancestry, whether or not he has been circumcised, and what he does. To have no confidence in the flesh means to understand that those things cannot make a person right with God. Alternate translation: "do not trust in anything about ourselves to make us right with God"

Philippians 3:4

Even so, I myself could have confidence in the flesh. If anyone thinks he has confidence in the flesh, I could have even more

Here Paul describes a situation that could be true but is not.

Here "flesh" is a metonym for anything concerning one's body, such as one's ancestry, whether or not one has been circumcised, and what one does. To have confidence in the flesh means to believe that those things can make a person right with God. See how you translated a similar phrase in 3:3. Alternate translation: "However, I could trust in something about myself to make me right with God. If anyone thinks he can trust in anything about himself, I could trust in myself even more"

I myself

Paul uses "myself" for emphasis. Alternate translation: "certainly I"

Philippians 3:5

I was circumcised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A priest circumcised me"

on the eighth day

"seven days after I was born"

a Hebrew of Hebrews

Possible meanings are 1) "a Hebrew son with Hebrew parents" or 2) "the purest Hebrew."

with regard to the law, a Pharisee

The Pharisees were committed to obeying all of the law.

Being a Pharisee showed that Paul was committed to obeying all of the law. Alternate translation: "as a Pharisee, I was committed to obeying all of the law"

Philippians 3:6

As for zeal, I persecuted the church

Paul's zeal was his enthusiasm for honoring God. He believed that by persecuting the church he proved how

zealous he was for God. Alternate translation: "I had so much zeal for God that I persecuted the church" or

"Because I wanted so much to honor God, I persecuted the church"

I persecuted the church

"I attacked Christians"

as for righteousness under the law, I was blameless

"Righteousness under the law" refers to being righteous by obeying the law. Paul obeyed the law so carefully that he believed that no one could find any part of it that he disobeyed. Alternate translation: "I was so righteous by obeying the law that I was blameless"

Philippians 3:7

whatever things were a profit for me

Paul is referring here to the praise he received for being an eager Pharisee. He speaks of this praise as if he had viewed it in the past as a businessman's profit. Alternate

translation: "anything that other Jews praised me for"

profit ... loss

These are common business terms. If many people in your culture do not understand formal business terms, you could translate these terms as "things that made my life better" and "things that made my life worse."

I have considered them as loss

Paul speaks of that praise as if he were now viewing it as a business loss instead of a profit. In other words, Paul says that all his religious acts of righteousness are worthless before Christ.

Philippians 3:8

In fact

"Really" or "Truly"

now I count

The word "now" emphasizes how Paul has changed since he quit being a Pharisee and became a believer in Christ. Alternate translation: "now that I have trusted in Christ, I count"

I count all things to be loss

Paul is continuing the business metaphor from [Philippians 3:7]

because of the surpassing value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord

"because knowing Christ Jesus my Lord is worth so much more"

so that I may gain Christ

"so that I may have only Christ"

Philippians 3:9

be found in him

The phrase "be found" is an idiom that emphasizes the idea of "be." Alternate translation: "be truly united with Christ" not having a righteousness of my own from the law

Paul knows that he cannot become righteous by obeying the law.

but that which is through faith in Christ

The word "that" refers to righteousness. Paul knows that he can become righteous only by believing in Christ. Alternate translation: "but having the righteousness that comes by believing in Christ"

Philippians 3:10

the power of his resurrection

"his power that gives us life"

the fellowship of his sufferings

"what it is like to suffer as he suffered" or "what it is like to participate in suffering with him"

becoming like him in his death

Possible meanings are 1) Paul wants to be like Christ by dying as Christ died or 2) Paul wants his desire to sin to become as dead as Jesus was before he was raised.

Philippians 3:11

so somehow I may experience the resurrection from the dead

The word "somehow" means Paul does not know what is going to happen to him in this life, but whatever happens, it will result in eternal life. Alternate translation: "so that no matter what happens to me now, I will come back to life after I die"

Philippians 3:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul urges the believers at Philippi to follow his present example because of heaven and the new bodies that wait for believers. He speaks of how he works as hard as he can to be like Christ, knowing that God will allow him to live forever in heaven, as if he were a runner racing for the finish line.

obtained these things

These include knowing Christ, knowing the power of his resurrection, sharing in Christ's suffering, and being united with Christ in his death and resurrection ([Philippians 3:8-11](#)).

or am already perfect

"so I am not yet perfect" or "so I am not yet mature"

but I press on

"but I keep trying"

to take hold of that for which I was taken hold of by Christ Jesus

Receiving spiritual things from Christ is spoken of as if Paul could grasp them with his hands, and Jesus choosing Paul to belong to him is spoken of as if Jesus grasped Paul with his hands. This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "to receive these things for which Jesus claimed me as his own"

Philippians 3:13

Brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

I myself have yet taken hold of it

Receiving spiritual things from Christ is spoken of as if Paul could grasp them with his hands. Alternate translation: "all these things belong to me yet"

Forgetting what is behind and straining forward to what is ahead,

Like a runner in a race is no longer concerned about the part of the race that is completed but only focuses on what is ahead, Paul speaks of setting aside his religious works of righteousness and only focusing on the race of life that Christ has set before him to complete. Alternate translation: "I do not care what I have done in the past; I only work as hard as I can on what is ahead."

Philippians 3:14

I press on toward the goal with a view to the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks of the way he does all he can to serve Christ and live in obedience to him as if he were a racer running as fast as he can to win a race. Alternate translation: "I do all I can to be like Christ, like a runner racing to the finish line, so that I may belong to him, and God may call me to himself after I die"

the upward call

Possible meanings are that Paul speaks of living eternally with God as if God were to call Paul to ascend 1) to heaven as Jesus did or 2) the steps to the podium where winners of races received prizes, as a metaphor for meeting God face to face and receiving eternal life.

Philippians 3:15

All of us who are mature, let us think this way

Paul wants his fellow believers to have the same desires he listed in [Philippians 3:8-11](#). Alternate translation: "I encourage all of us believers who are strong in the faith to think the same way"

God will also reveal that to you

"God will also make it clear to you" or "God will make sure you know it"

Philippians 3:16

General Information:

Paul uses "we" to include the Philippian believers.

Nevertheless, let us live up to what we have already attained.

"However, let us keep living by the same standard we have achieved."

Nevertheless

"No matter what else is true"

Philippians 3:17

Be imitators of me

"Do what I do" or "Live as I live"

brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

those who are walking by the example that you have in us

"those who already are living as we live" or "those who already are doing what we do"

Philippians 3:18

Many are walking ... as enemies of the cross of Christ

These words are Paul's main thought for this verse.

Many are walking

A person's behavior is spoken of as if that person were walking along a path. Alternate translation: "Many are living" or "Many are conducting their lives"

those about whom I have often told you, and now I am telling you with tears

Paul interrupts his main thought with these words that describe the "many." You can move them to the beginning or end of the verse if you need to.

I have often told you

"I have told you many times"

am telling you with tears

"am telling you with great sadness"

as enemies of the cross of Christ

Here "the cross of Christ" refers to Christ's suffering and death. The enemies are those who say they believe in Jesus but are not willing to suffer or die like Jesus did. Alternate translation: "in a way that shows they are actually against Jesus, who was willing to suffer and die on a cross"

Philippians 3:19

Their end is destruction

"Someday God will destroy them." The last thing that happens to them is that God will destroy them.

their god is their stomach

Here "stomach" refers to a person's desires for physical pleasure. Calling it their god means that they want these pleasures more than they want to obey God. Alternate translation: "they desire food and other physical pleasures more than they desire to obey God"

their glory is in their shame

Here "shame" stands for the actions that the people should be ashamed about but are not. Alternate translation: "they are proud of the things that should cause them shame"

They think about earthly things

Here "earthly" refers to everything that gives physical pleasure and does not honor God. Alternate translation: "All they think about is what will please themselves rather than what will please God"

Philippians 3:20

General Information:

By Paul's use of "our" and "we" here, he includes himself and the believers in Philippi.

our citizenship is in heaven

Possible meanings are 1) "we are citizens of heaven" or 2) "our homeland is heaven" or 3) "our true home is heaven."

Philippians 3:21

He will transform our lowly bodies

"He will change our weak, earthly bodies"

into bodies formed like his glorious body

"into bodies like his glorious body"

body, formed by the might of his power to subject all things to himself

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"body. He will change our bodies with the same power he uses to control all things"

Chapter 4

Philippians 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"My joy and my crown"

Paul had helped the Philippians become spiritually mature. As a result, Paul rejoiced and God honored him and his work. He considered discipling other Christians and encouraging them to grow spiritually as important to Christian living. (See: spirit and disciple)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Euodia and Syntyche

Apparently these two women disagreed with each other. Paul was encouraging them to agree.

Links:

[Philippians 4:1 Notes](#)

Philippians 4

4:1-9

What are Paul's joy and crown?

[4:1]

When the Christians in Philippi obeyed God, it made Paul happy or proud. He compared them to wreath of leaves that athletes won in sport contests. Paul was happy because he had taught them to obey God and honor him.

See: Crown; Metaphor

How do Christians stand firm?

[4:1]

Paul talked about standing firm "in" or "for" Jesus, that is, he wanted to encourage the Philippian Christians to work hard to obey Jesus. He spoke the metaphor of "standing," because he wanted to say that they should never "run away" from

Jesus, that is, they should not sin.

See: In Christ; Metaphor; Sin

Who are Euodia and Syntyche?

[4:2]

Euodia and Syntyche were two Christian women in Philippi who argued with one another. Paul wrote nothing else about them except what he wrote here. Paul cared about these women because they had helped him. He wanted them to live at peace with one another.

What is the book of life?

[4:3]

In the Ancient Near East, people in cities often wrote down the names of all their citizens, that is, of the men who owned property in the city. In the same way, Paul wanted to say that God had written down the names of all the people who belonged to him. Paul called this the “book of life.”

How is the Lord near?

[4:5]

When Paul said that the lord is “near,” he was talking about Jesus. Jesus was not on the earth. Paul wanted to say that Jesus would come back to the earth soon. Because of this, he wanted Christians in Philippi to live as if they would see Jesus very soon. He knew that Jesus would ask them why they did what they did on earth.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

How does peace surpass all understanding?

[4:7]

Paul spoke about peace that surpasses or is greater than anything that can be known.” Perhaps Paul wanted to say that God is wiser than anyone else. Or perhaps Paul wanted to say that people cannot fully understand how great the peace that God gives is.

How does someone guard their hearts and thoughts?

[4:7]

Paul wanted to say that the peace that God gives to Christians would help them not to be anxious.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

How does Paul use the words “In Christ”?

[4:7]

See: In Christ

How did Paul say for Christians to think about these things?

[4:8]

Paul wrote down many different things beginning with the words “whatever is” or “everything that is.” Paul wanted the Christians in Philippi to “dwell (λογίζομαι/g3049)” on these things, that is, to think about these things a lot. After they thought about these things, Paul wanted them to do these things. If they did these things, then God would give them peace.

4:10-23

Why were the Philippians Christians concerned again about Paul?

[4:10]

In the past, the Philippians sent Paul a gift of money to help him. They did not send him money again, but that was because they were not able to do so. Paul was not angry with the Philippians. Instead, he was happy that they wanted to help him again. So he thanked them for helping him in the past.

Paul also wanted to teach the Philippians. He knew that God would give him what he needed to live. He did not need anything more than this because he had peace with God. He also wanted to say that God made him able to obey him in every way that God wanted.

Paul told the Philippians that their gift was not only for him. Their gift was also a way for them to worship God. He compared their gift to a sacrifice of food. Both of these things, Paul said, produce smells that made God happy. That is, God accepted both as sacrifices to himself.

See: Sacrifice

How are Christians to be happy?

[4:11, 4:12]

Paul talked about being “content.” When someone is content, he is happy, even if he is suffering hardship. Paul was like this himself. He was happy, even though he was in prison because he had preached about Jesus. In 4:13, he said that he could be happy any time because God gave him the strength to endure any hardship.

How did Paul end this letter?

In 4:20-23, Paul ended this letter as other people ended letters in his time. He gave honor to God and prayed that God would be kind to the Christians in Philippi.

See: Ancient Letters; Pray (Prayer)

Who are Caesar's household?

[4:22]

Paul greeted the believers in Philippi for the people who were with him. He called some of the people with him "people from Caesar's house." Caesar was the title of the emperor, the leader of the whole Roman Empire. Some scholars think that his house was a way of talking about people who were in Caesar's family. However, more scholars think that it was a way of talking about people who served Caesar in his palace. Perhaps they were servants or soldiers.

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar)

What is your spirit?

[4:23]

When Paul talked about a person's "spirit (πνεῦμα/g4151)," he was not talking about the Holy Spirit. Instead, he was talking about the believers' minds and hearts.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Mind; Heart (Metaphor)

Philippians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues with some specific instructions to the believers in Philippi on unity and then gives instructions to help them live for the Lord.

Therefore, my beloved brothers whom I long for

"So, my fellow believers whom I love and greatly desire to see"

brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

my joy and crown

Paul uses the word "joy" to mean that the Philippian church is the cause of his happiness. A "crown" was made of leaves, and a man wore it on his head as a sign of honor after he won an important game. Here the word "crown" means the Philippian church brought honor to Paul before God.

Alternate translation: "You give me joy because you have believed in Jesus, and you are my reward and honor for my work"

in this way stand firm in the Lord, beloved friends

"continue living for the Lord in the way that I have taught you, dear friends"

Philippians 4:2

I am pleading with Euodia, and I am pleading with Syntyche

These are women who were believers and helped Paul in the church at Philippi. Alternate translation: "I beg Euodia, and I beg Syntyche"

be of the same mind in the Lord

The phrase "be of the same mind" means to have the same attitude or opinion. Alternate translation: "agree with each other because you both believe in the same Lord"

Philippians 4:3

General Information:

When Paul says, "my true companion," the word "you" is singular. Paul does not say the name of the person. He calls him that to show he worked with Paul to spread the gospel.

Yes, I ask you, my true companion

Here "you" refers to the "true fellow worker" and is singular.

true companion

This metaphor is from farming, where two animals would be bound to the same yoke, and so they work together.

Alternate translation: "fellow worker"

along with Clement

Clement was a man who was a believer and worker in the church at Philippi.

whose names are in the Book of Life

"whose names God has written in the Book of Life"

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord

"Be happy because of all the Lord has done." See how you translated this in Philippians 3:1.

Philippians 4:5

The Lord is near

Possible meanings are 1) The Lord Jesus is near to the believers in spirit or 2) the day the Lord Jesus will return to the earth is near.

Philippians 4:6

in everything by prayer and earnest appeal with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God

"whatever happens to you, ask God for everything you need with prayer and thanks"

Philippians 4:7

the peace of God

"the peace that God gives"

which surpasses all understanding

"which is more than we can understand"

will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ

This presents God's peace as a soldier who protects our hearts and thoughts from worrying. Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's emotions. Alternate translation:

"will be like a soldier and guard your emotions and thoughts in Christ" or "will protect you in Christ and will keep you from worrying about the troubles of this life"

your thoughts

The word translated "thoughts" can also be translated "minds," referring to the part of the person that thinks.

Philippians 4:8

Finally

As Paul ends his letter, he gives a summary of how believers should live to have peace with God.

brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

whatever things are lovely

"whatever things are pleasing"

whatever things are of good report

"whatever thing people admire" or "whatever things people respect"

if there is anything excellent

"if they are morally good"

if there is anything to be praised

"and if they are things that people praise"

Philippians 4:9

that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me
"that I have taught and shown you"

Philippians 4:10

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to thank the Philippians for a gift that they have sent him.

Philippians 4:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to explain that he is thanking them for this gift simply because he is grateful, not because he needs them to give him anything more.

to be content

"to be satisfied" or "to be happy"

in all circumstances

"no matter what my situation is"

Philippians 4:12

I know what it is to be poor ... to have plenty

Paul knows how to live happily having either no possessions or many possessions.

how to be well fed or to be hungry, and how to have an abundance or to be in need

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them to emphasize that he has learned how to be content in any situation.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through him who strengthens me

"I can do all things because Christ gives me strength"

Philippians 4:14

in my difficulties

Paul speaks of his hardships as if they were a place that he is in. Alternate translation: "when things became difficult"

Philippians 4:15

the beginning of the gospel

Paul uses the word "gospel" here to mean his preaching of the gospel. Alternate translation: "as I began to preach the gospel"

no church supported me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone

This double negative emphasizes that the Philippians were unique. Alternate translation: "the only church that supported me in the matter of giving and receiving was you" or "you were the only church that sent me money or helped me"

Philippians 4:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Philippians 4:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues explaining that he is thanking the Philippians for their gift to him simply because he is grateful, not because he needs them to give him anything more (see Philippians 3:11).

It is not that I seek the gift

Paul is explaining that his reason for writing about gifts is not that he hopes that they will give him more gifts.

Alternate translation: "My reason for writing this is not that I want you to give me more"

I seek the fruit that increases to your credit

Paul explains his reason for writing about gifts. Here "fruit that increases to your credit" is a metaphor for either 1) more good deeds that can be recorded for the Philippians. Alternate translation: "Rather I want God to recognize the increasing good deeds that you do" or 2) more blessings for the good things that the Philippians do. Alternate translation: "Rather I want God to bless you more because of the good deeds that you do"

Philippians 4:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes thanking the Philippians for their gift (see Philippians 3:11) and assures them that God will take care of them.

I have received everything in full

Possible meanings are 1) Paul has received everything that the Philippians sent or 2) Paul is using humor to continue the business metaphor from Philippians 3:8 and saying that this part of the letter is a receipt for commercial goods that Epaphroditus delivered.

even more

"even more than necessary"

They are a sweet-smelling aroma, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God

Paul speaks of the gift from the Philippian church as if it were a sacrifice offered to God on an altar. Paul implies that the church's gift is very pleasing to God, like the sacrifices that the priests burned, which had a smell that pleased God. Alternate translation: "I assure you these gifts are very pleasing to God, like an acceptable sacrifice"

Philippians 4:19

will meet all your needs

This phrase translates the same word that is translated "have been well supplied" in verse 18. It is an idiom meaning "will provide everything you need"

according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus

"from his glorious riches that he gives through Christ Jesus"

Philippians 4:20

Now to our God

The word "Now" marks the closing prayer and the end of this section of the letter.

Philippians 4:21

The brothers

This refers to those people who were either ministering with or to Paul.

brothers

See how you translated this in Philippians 1:12.

all God's holy people

Some versions translate this as "every holy person" or "every saint."

Philippians 4:22

All God's holy people

Some versions translate this as "All the believers" or "All of the saints."

especially those of Caesar's household

This refers to servants who worked in Caesar's palace.

"especially the fellow believers who work in the palace of Caesar"

Philippians 4:23

with your spirit

Paul refers to the believers by using the word "spirit," which is the part of a person that can relate to God.

Alternate translation: "with you"

Introduction to Colossians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Colossians

Greeting, thanksgiving, and prayer (1:1-12) The person and work of Christ
Deliverance and redemption (1:13-14) Christ: the Image of the invisible God, and the One who is over all creation (1:15-17) Christ is the Head of the Church, and the Church trusts in him (1:18-2:7)
Tests of faithfulness
Warnings against false teachers (2:8-19) True godliness is not rigid rules and unbending traditions (2:20-23)
Teaching and living
Life in Christ (3:1-4) Old and new life (3:5-17) Christian family (3:18-4:1)
Christian behavior (4:2-6) Closing and greetings
Paul thanks Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7-9) Paul sends greetings from his associates (4:10-14) Paul gives directions to Archippus and the Christians in Laodicea (4:15-17) Paul's personal greeting (4:18)

Who wrote the Book of Colossians?

Paul wrote the Book of Colossians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul wrote this letter while in prison in Rome.

What is the Book of Colossians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the Asia Minor city of Colossae. The main purpose of this letter was to defend the gospel against false teachers. He did this by praising Jesus as the image of God, sustainer of all things, and head of the church. Paul wanted them to understand that only Christ is needed for God to accept them.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Colossians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to the Church in Colossae," or "A Letter to the Christians in Colossae."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What were the religious issues that the church in Colossae struggled with?

In the church in Colossae, there were false teachers. Their exact teaching is unknown. But they probably taught their followers to worship angels and to obey strict rules about religious ceremonies. They probably also taught that a male must be circumcised and that believers should eat only certain types of food. Paul said these false teachings came from the minds of men and not from God.

How did Paul use the imagery of heaven and earth?

In this letter, Paul twice speaks of things in heaven as "things above." He distinguishes it from the earth, which other parts of Scripture speak of as being "below." The purpose of this imagery was to teach Christians to live in a way that honors God, who lives in heaven above. Paul is not teaching that the earth or the physical world is evil. (See: evil)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in Colossians in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In Colossians, these words usually indicate a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. So Colossians in the ULB uses "believers" or "those who believe in him." (See: 1:2, 12, 26)

Was Jesus created or is he eternal?

Jesus was not a created being but has always existed as God. Jesus also became a human being. There is potential for confusion in Colossians 1:15 where it says Jesus "is the firstborn of all creation." This statement means that Jesus is dominant over all of creation. It does not mean that he was the first thing God created. Translators should be careful not to imply that Jesus is a created being.

What does Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the

translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of “in union with.” (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Colossians?

For the following verses, some modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"May grace be to you, and peace from God our Father" (1:2). Some older versions have a longer reading: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." "Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf" (1:7). Some older translations read "for you": "Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, a faithful servant of Christ for you." "the Father, who has made you able to have a share in the inheritance of the believers in light" (1:12). Some older translations read, "the Father, who has qualified us for a share in the inheritance in light." "In his Son we have redemption" (1:14). Some older translations read, "In his Son we have redemption through his blood." "and forgave us all of our trespasses" (2:13). Some older translations read: "and forgave you all of your trespasses." "When Christ appears, who is your life" (3:4). Some older translations read, "When Christ appears, who is our life." "It is for these things that the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience" (3:6). The ULB and many other modern translations read this way. However, some modern and older translations read, "It is for these things that the wrath of God is coming." "I sent him to you for this, that you might know the matters about us" (4:8). Some older translations read, "I sent him to you for this, that he might know the matters about you."

Chapter 1

Colossians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

As in a typical letter, Paul begins his letter in verses 1-2 by introducing Timothy and himself to the Christians in Colossae. Paul writes much of this chapter around two subjects: who Christ is, and what Christ has done for the Christian.

Special concepts in this chapter

Secret truth

Paul refers to a "secret truth" in this chapter. The role of the church in the plans of God was once unknown. But God has now revealed it. Part of this involves the Gentiles having equal standing with the Jews in the plans of God. (See: reveal)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Images for Christian living

Paul uses many different images to describe Christian living. In this chapter, he uses the images of "walking" and "bearing fruit." (See: fruit)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Verse 24 is a paradox: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you." People do not usually rejoice when they suffer. But in verses 25-29 Paul explains why his suffering is good. ([Colossians 1:24](#))

Links:

[Colossians 1:1 Notes](#) [Colossians intro](#)

Colossians 1 Commentary

1:1-2

Who was Paul?

[1:1]

Paul wrote this letter. (See: Introduction to Colossians).

What is an "apostle"?

[1:1]

See: Apostle

Who was Timothy?

[1:1]

Timothy was a young man who worked with Paul. He helped Paul write this letter. (See: Introduction to Colossians).

Who are God's holy people?

[1:2]

See: Holy Ones

What did Paul write in verse 2?

[1:2]

Some ancient copies of the New Testament have the words “the Lord Jesus Christ.” More and older copies of the New Testament do not have these words. Scholars do not think Paul wrote these words. Who were the “faithful brothers”? When Paul wrote “faithful brothers,” he was writing about the Christians in Colossae. He called them this because they believed in Jesus. Because of this, they were God’s children. So, they were also Paul’s brothers and sisters in some way. When Paul used the word “brothers,” he was speaking about both men and women.

See: Family of God See Map: Colossae

What is “grace”?

[1:2]

In ancient times, people often greeted each other by saying “grace.” Greek people and people who spoke Greek used it. They wanted people to get favor. Paul always wrote this in his letters. This was because many of his readers were Greek. He also wanted the Christians to remember that God gave favor to them. God forgives the sins of all people who believe in Jesus (See: Romans 3:24, 4:16).

See: Grace

What is “peace”?

[1:2]

In ancient times, Jews often greeted one another by saying “peace” (See: Genesis 43:23).

1:3-8

Why did Paul call God the father of Jesus?

[1:3]

Paul called God the father of Jesus. Paul wanted people to know that God is the father of Jesus and that Jesus is God. He wrote more about this in the rest of this letter. Scholars think the some Christians in Colossae did not believe that Jesus is God. Paul wrote this letter to help them to know true things about Jesus. Paul wanted people to know that Jesus is greater than everyone except God the Father.

See: God the Father; Trinity; Jesus is God

What is the “certain hope reserved for you in heaven”?

[1:5]

When Paul wrote “certain hope reserved for you in heaven”, he wanted his readers to know that the “hope” he wrote about is a promise from God. God promises that people who believe in Jesus will live with him forever in heaven. Christians can be certain God has “reserved” places in heaven for them.

See: Hope; Heaven

What is the “gospel”?

[1:5]

See: Gospel

Why did Paul write “bearing fruit”?

[1:6]

Paul wrote “bearing fruit” to speak about how the Colossians lived. “Bearing fruit” is a metaphor for the way the Jesus changed the people who believed in him. The Colossians traded fruits for other goods. They understood the value of a tree that made a lot of fruit. Paul wrote “bearing fruit” to get them to think that they were valuable to God because of the things they did to serve and honor God.

See: Metaphor; Fruit (Metaphor); Gospel

What did Paul write in verse 7?

[1:7]

Some ancient copies of the New Testament have the words “on our behalf.” More and older copies of the New Testament have the words “on your behalf.” Scholars think Paul wrote “on our behalf.” Who was Epaphras?

Epaphras was the person who started the church at Colossae. Scholars think Paul told Epaphras about Jesus. After Epaphras believed in Jesus, Paul trained him so he could lead a church. Scholars believe Epaphras came from Colossae (see: 4:12).

See: Church

Why did Paul write “love in the Spirit”?

[1:8]

Paul wrote “love in the Spirit” to tell the Christians in Colossae that he knew how much they cared about him. He knew this because of what Epaphras told him.

Scholars disagree about why Paul wrote “in the Spirit.” Some scholars think he wanted to speak about the Holy Spirit. That is to say, in some way, the Holy Spirit caused the Colossian Christians to love Paul. Other scholars think that Paul spoke about their human spirits. That is, God helped them to love Paul.

See: Love; Holy Spirit; Spirit (Spiritual)

1:9-14

Why did Paul write "knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding"?

[1:9]

Paul wrote "knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" to tell the Christians in Colossae something special. Paul prayed that God would give the Colossian Christians "full knowledge" of God's will, with "wisdom" and "understanding" (σύνεσις/g4907). He wanted them to know the will of God and how to live in a way that honors God. Knowing this was greater than anything the false teachers taught.

See: Will of God; False Teacher

Why did Paul ask God to "fill" the Colossians with all these things?

[1:9]

When Paul asked God to "fill" the Christians in Colossae with these things, it was a metaphor. He spoke about God "filling" them to get them to think about all they thought and all they did. He wanted them to live in a way that would honor God even more. Therefore, he asked God to help them know more of God's will. He asked God to give them a certain type of wisdom and understanding. He did not want them to ask to know more about things that would make them rich. He wanted to say that if God "filled" them with the things, then they would know what God wanted them to do.

See: Metaphor; Filling of the Holy Spirit; Will of God

Why did Paul write "walk worthily of the Lord"?

[1:10]

When Paul wrote "walk worthily of the Lord," this was a metaphor. He wanted people to think about living in ways that honor God. He used the metaphor of "walk" to write about the things they did.

See: Walk (Metaphor)

What is "glory"?

[1:11]

See: Glory (Glorify)

Why did Paul call God "father"?

[1:12]

See: God the Father; Trinity

What did Paul write in verse 12?

[1:12]

Some ancient copies of the New Testament have the words "who made us able." More and older copies of the New Testament have the words "who made you able." Scholars think Paul wrote "who made you able." What is an "inheritance"?

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

Who is "the Son"?

[1:13]

The "Son" is Jesus.

See: Son of God; Trinity

What did Paul write in verse 14?

[1:14]

Some ancient copies of the New Testament have the words "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." More and older copies of the New Testament have the words "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." Scholars think Paul wrote "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." What is the "dominion of darkness"?

When Paul wrote "dominion of darkness", he wanted readers to think about Satan. He also wanted them to think about how they used to sin before they did believe in Jesus. A "dominion" is an area controlled by a ruler. Paul wanted to say that before they believe in Jesus, people serve Satan. Satan encourages them to sin.

Scholars also think that Paul wrote about "darkness" because he wanted the Colossian Christians to reject the things the false teachers taught. Scholars think they taught about light and darkness. They believed that a person could move from darkness into light by learning certain things. Paul wanted to say that they really were still in darkness because they thought this way. So the Colossian Christians should not listen to them.

See: Satan (The Devil); Light and Darkness (Metaphor); False Teacher

What is "redemption"?

[1:14]

See: Colossians 1:22; John 3:16; Romans 5:10

See: Redeem (Redemption)

1:15-23

What is an image?

[1:15]

An image is something that is like a person, an animal, or another thing in some way. Jesus is God's perfect image. That is,

Jesus is like God the Father in every way, but he is not God the Father. People know about God the Father because of the things Jesus said and did.

See: Image; God the Father; Jesus is God

Why did Paul call Jesus the firstborn (1:15)?

[1:15, 1:18]

Paul called Jesus the "firstborn" to say he has special honor. A first born child is the first child that was born in a family. In ancient times, the firstborn was greater than the family's other children in some way.

The firstborn had a different inheritance than their brothers and sisters. If the firstborn child's parents were a king or a queen, they became the king or queen when their parents died. Paul said Jesus was the first born. This as a metaphor. Jesus deserves to be honored more than any other person. Also, Jesus was the first to come back to life after he died.

Because of this, Jesus is the older brother of everyone else who becomes a child of God (see: Romans 8:29). Jesus was alive before God created the universe. Jesus will rule over everyone and everything forever. He deserves to be greatly honored. See: Metaphor; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Resurrect (Resurrection); Family of God; Son of God; Children of God

Who made the universe (1:16)?

[1:16]

God made the universe. That is to say, he made everything. However, Paul wrote that God did this by Jesus and through Jesus (See: Proverbs 8:22-31, John 1:3, 1 Corinthians 8:6, and Hebrews 1:2). Scholars do not know how God did this.

See: God the Father; Son of God; Trinity

Why did Paul write "thrones or dominions or governments or authorities"?

[1:16]

Paul wrote about "thrones or dominions or governments or authorities." He wanted his readers to know nothing could happen unless God gave permission for it to happen. Because of this, no one can say they are as great as or greater than God.

Why did Paul write that in Jesus all things "hold together"?

[1:17]

Paul wrote that in Jesus all things "hold together" so his readers would know that Jesus makes the universe stay together. If he did not do this, there would be nothing in the universe (see: Hebrews 1:3).

How is Jesus "head of" the church?

[1:18]

When Paul wrote that Jesus is "head of" the church, he wanted readers to know that Jesus is the leader of all Christians everywhere.

See: Church

Why did Paul write "all his fullness"?

[1:19]

When Paul wrote "all his fullness," he wanted readers to know that Jesus is God. That is, Jesus is completely God. There is nothing God has that Jesus does not have. Also, there is nothing of Jesus that is not God.

See: Trinity; Jesus is God

What is "to reconcile" and "made peace"?

[1:20]

Paul wrote about God reconciling things. When someone is reconciled to someone else, they are brought together after they fought against each other in some way. When Paul wrote this, he wanted people to think about how everyone sins. Because of this, they fight against God in some way. However, God sent Jesus to "reconcile" or "make peace" between God and people. When Jesus died, he made it possible for God to forgive the sins of people who believe in Jesus. These people are at peace with God. God did what was needed so that people could be at peace with him.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin; Atone (Atonement); Reconcile (Reconciliation)

What is "holy, blameless, and above reproach"?

[1:22]

When Paul wrote "holy, blameless, and above reproach," he wanted readers to think about how Christians should live in a way that honors God. He said that Jesus made it possible for people who believe in him to serve him completely. He also said that these people do not have to sin any longer. And he also said that other people do not think they do evil things.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

What is "the faith"?

[1:23]

When Paul wrote "the faith", he wanted to tell readers that they must continue to trust in Jesus. He wanted them to keep trusting Jesus.

See: Faith (Believe in)

What is the gospel?

[1:23]

See: Gospel

1:24-29

Why did Paul write "I fill up in my flesh" (1:24)?

[1:24]

When Paul wrote "I fill up in my flesh," he wanted his readers to think about how he suffered. He wrote "fill up" as a metaphor to say he accepted whatever happened to him while he preached the gospel.

In another letter, Paul listed the ways he suffered while he traveled to preach and teach (see: 2 Corinthians 11:23-29). In ancient times, it was difficult to travel a long distance. Paul suffered when he traveled to serve God and other Christians. Once he arrived, sometimes people beat him or imprisoned him because they did not like the things he said (see: Acts 16:19-24). Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison (See: Introduction to Colossians).

Paul wrote this so his readers would know that Paul was willing to suffer because he believed in Jesus. He did not try to avoid suffering. He thought it was more important to do what God wanted him to do.

See: Metaphor; Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Suffer

Why did Paul write "what is lacking of the afflictions of Christ"?

[1:24]

When Paul wrote "what is lacking of the afflictions of Christ," he wanted people to think that what Paul did was because of what Jesus did. "Afflictions" is another word for suffering.

Paul taught that Jesus died to completely atone for peoples' sins. Paul did not write that he suffered to atone for peoples' sins. Instead, Paul wrote that he suffered so that other people could learn about Jesus. Then they too could believe in Jesus.

See: Atonement (Atonement); Suffer; Sin

What is "his body"?

[1:24]

When Paul wrote "his body", he used a metaphor. He was writing about the church. In other letters, Paul explained this metaphor (see: Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12). When he wrote the church, he wanted readers to think about all Christians everywhere.

See: Church; Body of Christ

Why did Paul write "secret truth"?

[1:26]

When Paul wrote "secret truth," he wanted to speak about something that people can learn about. It is something that was once a secret (see: Ephesians 3:9, Romans 16:25). Now God has revealed it. So it is not a secret now. Instead it is "truth" that people need to know.

See: Colossians 2:2; 4:3; Ephesians 3:3 See: Reveal (Revelation); Mystery

What specific "secret truth" did Paul reveal?

[1:26, 1:27]

Some scholars think the "secret truth" Paul revealed was that Gentiles could also become part of the people of God. First, God made the people of Israel his people. Now, anyone who believed in Jesus could also be part of God's people. Other scholars think the "secret truth" Paul wrote about was that Gentiles could be at peace with God. Before, Gentiles needed to do the things the Jews did so they could be at peace with God. Now anyone can be at peace with God because they believe in Jesus.

God had hidden this plan from people for a long time (see: Ephesians 3:9, Romans 16:25). Now, God revealed it to Paul (see: Ephesians 3:3). He wanted Paul to reveal it to Gentiles and other Christians.

See: Romans 11:25, Ephesians 3:6, Acts 22:21, and Acts 28:28. See: Reveal (Revelation); People of God; Gentile

What are the "riches" that Paul wrote about?

[1:27]

Paul wrote about "riches." This was a metaphor. He wanted to write that God highly values people who believe in Jesus. That is, God thinks about them the way a rich person thinks about their money. So, when Paul wrote about the "secret truth among the Gentiles," he really wanted the Gentiles to know about Jesus. Paul served God by telling Gentiles about Jesus. This is what God wanted Paul to do.

See: Metaphor; Gentile

Why did Paul write "Christ in you"?

[1:27]

When Paul wrote "Christ in you", he wanted people to think that when they believed in Jesus, Jesus became part of them in some way. Paul did not want to say that Jesus is physically inside of Christians. Some scholars think that "Christ in you" is the Holy Spirit. Other scholars think that a person who believes in Jesus can in some way make themselves like Jesus. That is, they can live in a way that honors God.

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

What is the "hope of glory"?

[1:27]

The hope of glory is something Christians know. They know that they will be with God in heaven. They will be near God who is glorious.

See: Hope; Glory (Glorify)

How did Paul present people mature in Christ?

[1:28]

Paul wrote about presenting people mature in Christ. This was a metaphor. He was speaking about making an offering to God of the people who they taught. They wanted to give them to God to show God how they helped these people serve God. Paul wanted to help these people to live in a way that honors God. He did this to honor God.

Colossians 1:1

General Information:

Though this letter is from Paul and Timothy to the Colossian believers, later in the letter Paul makes it clear that he is the writer. Most likely Timothy was with him and wrote the words down as Paul spoke. Throughout this letter the words "we," "our," and "ours" include the Colossians unless noted otherwise. The words "you," "your," and "yours" refer to the Colossian believers and so are plural unless noted otherwise.

an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God

"whom God chose to be an apostle of Christ Jesus"

Colossians 1:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Colossians 1:3

We give ... our Lord ... we always

These words do not include the Colossians.

Colossians 1:4

We have heard

Paul is excluding his audience.

your faith in Christ Jesus

"your belief in Christ Jesus"

Colossians 1:5

because of the hope reserved for you in heaven

Here "hope" stands for what the believer can confidently expect, that is, the things that God has promised to do for all believers. These things are spoken of as if they were physical objects that God was keeping in heaven for the believers to possess later. Alternate translation: "because of what you hope for that is reserved for you in heaven" or "because you are confident that God, who is in heaven, will do the many good things that he has promised you"

the word of truth, the gospel

Possible meanings are 1) "the message about the truth, the gospel" or 2) "the true message, the gospel."

Colossians 1:6

this gospel is bearing fruit and is growing

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome."

Alternate translation: "This gospel is having good results, more and more" or "This gospel is having increasing results"

in all the world

This is a generalization referring to the part of the world that they knew about. Alternate translation: "throughout the world"

the grace of God in truth

"the true grace of God"

Colossians 1:7

our beloved ... our behalf

The word "our" does not include the Colossians.

gospel as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who

"gospel. It is exactly what you learned from Epaphras, who is our beloved fellow servant and who" or "gospel. It is exactly what Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, taught you. He"

Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf

Here "on our behalf" means that Epaphras was doing work for Christ that Paul himself would have done if he were not in prison.

Epaphras

the man who preached the gospel to the people in Colossae Colossians 1:8

to us

The word "us" does not include the Colossians.

your love in the Spirit

Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as if he were a place in which the believers were located. Alternate translation: "how the Holy Spirit has enabled you to love believers"

Colossians 1:9

Connecting Statement:

Because the Spirit has enabled them to love others, Paul prays for them and tells them here how he prays for them.

Because of this love

"Because the Holy Spirit has enabled you to love other believers"

we heard ... we have not stopped ... We pray

The word "we" does not include the Colossians.

from the day we heard this

"from the day Epaphras told us these things"

that you will be filled with the knowledge of his will

Paul speaks of the Colossian believers as though they were containers. Alternate translation: "that God will fill you with what you need to know so that you can do his will"

in all wisdom and spiritual understanding

"so that the Holy Spirit will make you wise and able to understand what God wants you to do"

Colossians 1:10

that you will walk in a manner that is worthy of the Lord and that pleases him

Walking here signifies behavior in life. Alternate

translation: "that you will live as God expects you to and so please him"

by bearing fruit in every good work and growing

Paul is speaking of the Colossian believers as if they were trees or plants that grow and bear fruit. Alternate translation: "by making sure that all of your good works please God and people and growing"

growing in the knowledge of God

"always getting to know God better" or "always learning more about God"

Colossians 1:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Colossians 1:12

made you able to have a share

"allowed you to share"

made you able

Here Paul is focusing on his readers as receivers of God's blessings. But he does not mean that he himself has no share in those blessings.

inheritance

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

in light

This idea is opposite to the idea of the dominion of darkness in the next verse. Alternate translation: "in the glory of his presence"

Colossians 1:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks about the ways in which Christ is excellent.

He has rescued us

"God has rescued us"

the dominion of darkness

"Darkness" here is a metaphor for evil. Alternate

translation: "the evil forces that controlled us"

his beloved Son

"Son" is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

Colossians 1:14

General Information:

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Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God

"His Son is the image of the invisible God." Here "image" does not mean a representation of something that is visible. Instead, "image" here means that by knowing the Son, we learn what God the Father is like.

the firstborn of all creation

The expression "firstborn" does not refer to when Jesus was born. Instead, it refers to his position as the eternal Son of God the Father. In this sense, "firstborn" is a metaphor meaning "most important." Jesus is the most important and the unique Son of God. Alternate translation: "God's Son, the most important one over all creation"

of all creation

The noun "creation" can be translated with a verb.

Alternate translation: "over all that God created"

Colossians 1:16

For in him all things were created

Here "him" refers to the Son. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For in him God created all things"

all things were created through him and for him

Here "him" refers to the Son. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God created all things through him and for him"

Colossians 1:17

He himself is before all things

"It is he who existed before all things"

in him all things hold together

Paul is speaking here of the Son controlling all things as if he were physically holding them together. "he holds everything together"

Colossians 1:18

He is the head

"Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the head"

He is the head of the body, the church

Paul speaks of Jesus's position over the church as if he were the head on the human body. As the head rules the body, so does Jesus rule the church.

the beginning

"the originating authority." He is the first chief or founder.

firstborn from among the dead

Jesus is the first person to die and come back to life, never to die again.

Colossians 1:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Colossians 1:20

the Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

through the blood of his cross

"by means of the blood Jesus shed on the cross"

the blood of his cross

Here "blood" stands for the death of Christ on the cross.

whether things on earth or things in heaven

This phrase explains what "all things" means. Some languages might prefer to put it closer to "all things."

Colossians 1:21

Connecting Statement:

Paul makes it clear that God has now revealed that Christ exchanges the sin of Gentile believers for his holiness.

At one time you also

"There was a time when you Colossian believers also"

were alienated

were no longer living in loving relationship with God

Colossians 1:22

blameless, and above accusation

Paul uses two concepts, "blameless" and "above accusation," that mean almost the same thing to emphasize the idea of perfection. Alternate translation: "holy and perfect"

before him

This expression of location stands for "in God's view" or "in God's mind"

Colossians 1:23

not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you heard

To be moved away from the hope of the gospel is a metaphor meaning to stop hoping in what God promised in the gospel. Alternate translation: "continuing in the hope of the gospel that you heard" or "continuing to hope in the promises of God that you heard about in the gospel"

not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you heard

The hope of the gospel is the confident expectation that God will do what the gospel teaches he will do. Alternate

translation: "continuing to confidently expect what is promised in the gospel"
 which was proclaimed
 This can be translated with an active phrase. Alternate translation: "which believers proclaimed"
 to every person created under heaven
 God created everyone. The phrase "under heaven" is a metonym for in the world. Alternate translation: "to every person in the world"
 the gospel of which I, Paul, became a servant
 Paul was a servant of God. Alternate translation: "the gospel that I, Paul, serve God by proclaiming"
 Colossians 1:24
 I fill up in my flesh what is lacking of the afflictions of Christ
 Paul speaks about the suffering that he continues to experience. He may be acknowledging here that there is much suffering that he and all other Christians must endure before Christ comes again, and that Christ in a spiritual sense joins with them in experiencing these hardships. Paul certainly does not mean that Christ's sufferings alone were not enough to provide salvation for the believers.
 I fill up in my flesh
 Paul speaks of his body as if it were a container that could hold suffering.
 for the sake of his body, which is the church
 Paul often speaks of the church, the group of all Christian believers, as if it were Christ's body.
 Colossians 1:25
 to fulfill the word of God
 This means to bring about the purpose of God's gospel message, which is that it be preached and believed. "Word of God" here is a metonym for the message from God. Alternate translation: "to be obedient to what God has instructed"
 Colossians 1:26
 This is the mystery that was hidden

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is the mystery that God had hidden"
 for ages and for generations
 The words "ages" and "generations" refer to the time period from the creation of the world until the time when the gospel was preached.
 now has been revealed to God's holy people
 Alternate translation: "now God has revealed it to his holy people"
 Colossians 1:27
 the riches of the glory of this mystery
 Paul speaks of the value of this mystery about God as if it were a treasure of material wealth. Alternate translation: "the greatness of the glory of this mystery"
 which is Christ in you
 The mystery that God has made known is "Christ in you."
 Paul speaks of believers as if they were containers in which Christ is present. This is one of his ways of expressing the union of the believers with Christ. Alternate translation: "which is that Christ is in you" or "which is that Christ is united to you"
 the hope of glory
 The fact that Christ is in believers gives believers hope that they will share in God's glory. Alternate translation: "so you can confidently expect to share in God's glory" or "so you can confidently wait for God's glory"
 Colossians 1:28
 We proclaim ... we may present
 These instances of "we" include Paul and his companions but do not include the Colossians.
 so that we may present every person
 You may need to make explicit to whom they will present every person. Alternate translation: "so that we may present to God every person"
 Colossians 1:29
 General Information:
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Chapter 2

Colossians 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Circumcision and baptism

In verses 11-12, Paul uses both the old covenant sign of circumcision and the new covenant sign of baptism to show how Christians are united with Christ and freed from sin.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

This is a complex issue. "Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for our sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that the physical part of man is sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that, while Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. Paul also uses "flesh" in this chapter to refer to the physical body.

Implicit information

Paul mentions several issues in this chapter that imply information about the context of the church in Colossae. It is best to allow the text to remain uncertain over the actual details.

Links:

[Colossians 2:1 Notes](#)

Colossians 2

2:1-5

What was Paul's struggle?

[2:1]

When Paul wrote about his struggle, he wanted people to know how he prayed for them very often. He was in prison. Therefore, he could not be with them. This made him very sad. Scholars also think he wanted them to think that he was in some way wrestling with God. That is, he was fighting with God in some way when he was asking God to help them.

Where was Laodicea?

[2:1]

Laodicea was about 16 kilometers west of Colossae. Christians in the two cities knew each other. Christian leaders sent letters to both of them. They usually shared those letters with each other. Paul prayed for both those churches.

See Map: Colossae; Laodicea

Why did Paul write "have not seen my face in the flesh"?

[2:1]

When Paul wrote "have not seen my face in the flesh," he was writing about people who had not seen Paul. Paul did not start the church in Colossae. Therefore, many people were part of that church who had not met him. He still loved them.

See: Church

Why did Paul write "hearts"?

[2:2]

See: Heart (Metaphor)

What is the "secret truth of God"?

[2:2]

The "secret truth of God" is that Jesus is the Messiah.

See: Colossians 1:26

Why did Paul write "hidden"?

[2:3]

Paul wrote "hidden" to make his people think about God. He wrote that Jesus is God. God is very great, and he can do anything. However, Jesus was also a person. This meant that other people could not see everything he could do because he was God but he was also a man. Therefore, Paul wrote that some of the things Jesus could do were "hidden." That is, people could not see them.

See: Jesus is God

Why did Paul write "with you in spirit"?

[2:5]

Paul wrote "with you in spirit" to tell people that he knew they believed in Jesus. They believed in Jesus the same way he did. They prayed for the same things (see: Colossians 1:3,9).

Paul also knew that they heard the gospel he taught. He knew this because Epaphras started the church in Colossae. Paul trained Epaphras. So Epaphras taught them what Paul taught Epaphras. Paul wanted to say that in some way it was as if he taught them himself.

See: Gospel, Church

Why did Paul write "faith"?

[2:5]

See: Faith (Believe in)

2:6-15

Why did Paul write "received Christ the Lord"?

[2:6]

When Paul wrote "received Christ the Lord", he wanted people to think about when they believed in Jesus, who is the Messiah. He used the metaphor of receiving a gift. This is because when a person believes in Jesus and God saves them from their sins, it is a great gift from God.

See: Metaphor, Messiah (Christ)

Why did Paul write "walk in him"?

[2:6]

See: Walk

Why did Paul write "be rooted in him"?

[2:7]

When Paul wrote "be rooted in him", he used a metaphor to speak about how Christians should follow Jesus. He wanted people to think about how a plant is rooted in the ground. The ground keeps the plant strong. It keeps the plant growing. In some way, when a person believes in Jesus, God keeps that person strong and helps them to live in a way that honors God.

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write "be built on him"?

[2:7]

When Paul wrote "be built on him", he used a different metaphor to speak about Christians should obey Jesus. He wanted people to think about how a building is built on a foundation. The foundation keeps the building from falling down. In some way, Jesus keeps Christians from falling away from God.

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write "captures you"?

[2:8]

When Paul wrote "captures you", he warned people not to start believing the wrong things. He used the metaphor of a soldier being captured by an enemy in war. That soldier became the slave of the enemy. Paul wanted to say that it is in some way like this if a Christian starts to believe wrong ideas about God or Jesus. That person does the wrong things and they cannot stop doing the wrong things because they believe the wrong things.

See: Metaphor

What is "philosophy and empty deceit"?

[2:8]

Paul wrote "philosophy and empty deceit" to warn people not to believe something other than the gospel.

"Philosophy" is a word for ways of thinking. Paul used it to speak about ideas that people make up. That is to say, they are things people teach that are not from God.

When Paul wrote "empty deceit", he wanted people to know that these ideas are worthless. If people believed them, they did not help them. Also, he wanted them to know that these ideas are lies. That is, other people tell them these things to deceive them.

Advice to translators: An idea is something someone thinks.

See: Gospel

What are the "elements of the world"?

[2:8]

Scholars disagree about what "elements of the world" are. Some scholars think when Paul wrote "elements of the world," he wanted people to think about spirits that are not from God. These spirits are demons. Other scholars think he wrote this to get people to think about things the world. The ancient Greeks thought that everything in the world was composed of the "elements" of earth, air, fire, and water. Other scholars think Paul wrote about ways the false teachers spoke. These false teachers would speak about ideas as if they were people.

Advice to translators: An idea is something someone thinks.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Demon

What is the "fullness of God"?

[2:9]

When Paul wrote "fullness of God," he wanted people to know that Jesus is God. That is, Jesus is completely God. There is nothing God has that Jesus does not have. Also, there is nothing of Jesus that is not God.

See: Trinity; Jesus is God

Why did Paul write "filled in him"?

[2:10]

When Paul wrote "filled in him," he wanted people to know that Jesus in some way completed or perfected them.

See: Colossians 1:9

What is the "circumcision of Christ"?

[2:11]

See: Circumcise (Circumcision)

Why did Paul write "you were buried with him in baptism"?

[2:12]

When Paul wrote "you were buried", he used the metaphor of death and burial to speak about what happens when someone believes in Jesus. When a person dies, their body is buried in the ground. That is, people no longer see it. When a person is baptised, it is a symbol of that they no longer have to do the things they used to do. They do not have to sin. They begin a new life. That is, they begin obeying Jesus instead of sinning.

Paul wrote "with him" to make people know that Jesus changes people who believe in him. When a person is baptised, it is also a symbol that the person in some way is joining in Jesus' resurrection.

See: Metaphor; Symbol; Sin; Baptize (Baptism); Resurrect (Resurrection); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

How are people "raised up" in Christ?

[2:12]

Paul wrote that Christians are "raised up" in Christ. In some way, God gives Christians the benefit of Jesus' resurrection. That is, Christians will be resurrected. However, Paul said that in some way, Christians are changed when they believe in Jesus. In some way, this is like being resurrected, or being given a new life.

Scholars think this was part of the metaphor of baptism. That is, when a person comes up from the water when they are baptised, it is a symbol of their new life. This new life is because of Jesus. Baptize (Baptism) See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Symbol; Baptize (Baptism); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

What was Paul writing about being "dead in your trespasses" and "alive together with" Christ?

[2:13]

Paul wrote about being "dead in your trespasses" but now "alive together with" Jesus to get readers to think about how different their lives were before and after they believed in Jesus. Before they believed in Jesus, they sinned against God. In the Bible, people often used the metaphor of being dead to speak about this (see: Romans 5:12-21). But when a person believes in Jesus, God saves them from their sins. Paul wanted people to know that in some way, this is like getting a new life. They now live in some way "with" Jesus, who is the Messiah. Paul said that this new life is in some way like the new life Jesus got when he was resurrected.

See: Sin; Metaphor; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Resurrect (Resurrection); Die (Death); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Messiah (Christ)

Why did Paul write "nailing it to the cross"?

[2:14]

When Paul wrote about peoples' sins being "nailed to the cross", he wanted to say that God cancelled their sins completely. God will no longer judge them or punish them for their sins. Nailing to the cross is a metaphor or symbol for completely ending something.

See: Metaphor; Cross; Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

What was Paul saying in 2:15?

[2:15]

In 2:15, Paul was saying that when Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected, he defeated forever all "powers and authorities" that are opposed to God (see: 1:16, 2:10). That is to say, they still exist on earth. But they never can defeat God. Paul used the metaphor of "disarming" them to speak about this. Then he wrote that Jesus "made a public spectacle of them". That is to say, he defeated them in a way that all people can know about it. Also, it was a way that shames them. People may still follow the "powers and authorities". But if they do, they are foolish.

These "powers and authorities" included Satan and demons.

See: Metaphor; Cross; Atonement (Atonement); Satan (The Devil); Demon

2:16-23

Why did Paul write "a shadow of the things to come"?

[2:17]

When Paul wrote "a shadow of the things to come," he wanted people to know that any religious rules or laws are less important than eternal life.

Some teachers wanted the Christians in Colossae to go back to obeying the Law of Moses. They taught that people are saved from their sins by following the Law of Moses.

However, Paul said these things were only a "shadow." That is they were not as great as something that happened later.

He wanted people to believe in Jesus and obey the things Jesus taught. This is how people are at peace with God.

See: Eternal Life; Law of Moses; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What is "humility"?

[2:18]

In 2:18, Paul used the word "humility" differently than he did in the rest of the New Testament. He used it to speak about certain things people did to please God. These were things such as fasting, that a person did to make other people think he was serving God. This is different than other places the word "humility" is used in the New Testament (see: 3:12; Acts 20:19; Ephesians 4:2; Philippians 2:3). In those places, it is written to say that a person knows they are not greater than God or other people. The person is not proud.

See: Humble (Humility)

What is "the worship of angels"?

[2:18]

Scholars disagree over "the worship of angels." Some scholars think he was speaking about people worshipping angels instead of worshipping God. Other scholars think he was speaking about people worshipping God the way the angels worship God.

Paul wanted his readers to reject both of these things. He wanted them to worship God through Jesus, who is the Messiah.

See: Worship; Angel; Messiah (Christ)

What is "fleshly thinking"?

[2:18]

"Fleshly thinking" is when a person thinks too much about their body and what they feel. Paul warned his people that this way of thinking was not what God wants. God wants people to think about other things. He wanted them to think about serving God and helping other people.

What is the "head"?

[2:19]

When Paul wrote about the "head", he used a metaphor to speak about Jesus. Paul wanted people to know that Jesus is the leader of all Christians. The head is the part of a person that determines what the body will do. That is to say, in some way the head leads the body.

See: Metaphor; Body of Christ; Church

What is the "body" that Paul wrote about?

[2:19]

The "body" that Paul wrote about is a metaphor for the church.

See: Body of Christ; Church

What did Paul write about in 2:20-23?

In 2:20-23, Paul wrote again that a person should not think that they will be saved from their sins if they follow certain rules. Paul said that these are part of "the world", that is to say of things that are opposed to God. These rules were part of the wrong things that false teachers taught in Colossae. Paul said that Christians need to believe in Jesus and obey the things Jesus taught.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Law of Moses; World

How can a person "die together with Christ"?

[2:20]

When Paul wrote that a person "die together with Christ," he used the metaphor of dying to speak about a person believing in Jesus and being saved from their sins.

See: Colossians 2:13, 15 See: Metaphor; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Die (Death)

Colossians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to encourage the believers in Colossae and Laodicea to understand that Christ is God and that he lives in believers, so they should live in the same way they received him.

how great a struggle I have had for you

Paul has exerted much effort in developing their purity and their understanding of the gospel.

Laodicea

This was a city very close to Colossae where there was another church for which Paul was praying.

as many as have not seen my face in the flesh

Here "face in the flesh" represents the person as a whole.

Alternate translation: "all those who have never seen me personally" or "all those whom I have never met face to face"

Colossians 2:2

so that their hearts

Paul includes the Colossians even though he uses a different pronoun. Alternate translation: "so that their hearts and yours"

brought together

This means brought together in a close relationship.

all the riches of full assurance of understanding

Paul speaks of a person who is completely sure that the good news is true as though that person were rich in physical things.

the mystery of God

This is knowledge that can be revealed only by God.

that is, Christ

Jesus Christ is the mystery revealed by God.

Colossians 2:3

In him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden

Only Christ can reveal God's true wisdom and knowledge.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has hidden all the treasures of wisdom and

knowledge in Christ"

the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

Paul speaks of God's wisdom and knowledge as if they were material wealth. Alternate translation: "the very precious wisdom and knowledge"

wisdom and knowledge

These words mean basically the same thing here. Paul uses them together to emphasize that all spiritual understanding comes from Christ.

Colossians 2:4

trick

This means to cause someone to believe something that is not true, so he acts on that belief, and suffers harm as a result.

persuasive speech

speech that will make people change what they believe

Colossians 2:5

not with you in the flesh

The person's flesh, or physical body, is a metonym for the person. Alternate translation: "not physically present with you"

I am with you in spirit

Being with someone in spirit is a metaphor for thinking continually about that person. Alternate translation: "I continually think about you"

good order

the proper way of doing things

the strength of your faith

"how nothing and no one can cause you to stop believing"

Colossians 2:6

walk in him

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. The words "in him" refer to being in close relationship with Christ and so doing what pleases him. Alternate translation: "live your lives the way he wants you to" or "live so that people can see that you belong to him"

Colossians 2:7

Be rooted ... be built ... be established ... abound
 These words explain what it means to "walk in him."
 Be rooted in him
 Paul speaks of a person with true faith in Christ as if that person were a tree growing in solid ground with deep roots.
 be built on him
 Paul speaks of a person with true faith in Christ as if that person were a building that has a strong foundation.
 be established in faith
 "trust in Jesus for everything"
 just as you were taught
 This is best stated without naming or otherwise calling attention to the teacher, who was Epaphras (Colossians 1:7). Alternate translation: "just as you learned" or "just as they taught you" or "just as he taught you"
 abound in thanksgiving
 Paul speaks of thanksgiving as if it were objects that a person could obtain more of. Alternate translation: "be very thankful to God"
 Colossians 2:8
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul urges the believers to be careful not to turn to the words and rules of others because nothing can add to the fullness of God that believers have in Christ.
 See that
 "Make sure that"
 captures you
 Paul speaks of the way a person can believe false teachings philosophy
 religious doctrines and beliefs that are not from God's word but are based on man's thoughts about God and life
 empty deceit
 Paul speaks of false ideas that produce nothing and so are without value as though they are containers with nothing in them.
 the tradition of men ... the elemental spirits of the world
 The "tradition of men" may refer to Jewish traditions, while "the elemental spirits of the world" refers to pagan (Gentile) belief systems. Both of these are worthless.
 the elemental spirits of the world
 Possible meanings are 1) spiritual powers that some people thought control what happens on earth, or 2) the laws or moral principles of the world.
 Colossians 2:9
 in him all the fullness of God lives in bodily form
 "God's total nature lives in physical form in Christ"
 Colossians 2:10
 You have been filled in him
 Paul speaks of people as though they were containers into which God has placed Christ. Alternate translation: "You are made complete in Christ"
 who is the head over every ruler and authority
 Christ is the ruler over every other ruler
 Colossians 2:11
 In him you were also circumcised
 Paul is speaking of those who belong to Christ as if they were inside Christ's body. This can also be made active. Alternate translation: "When you joined the church in

baptism, God circumcised you"
 a circumcision not done by humans
 With this metaphor, Paul says that God has made Christian believers acceptable to himself in a way that reminded him of circumcision, the ceremony through which Hebrew male babies were added to the community of Israel.
 Colossians 2:12
 You were buried with him in baptism
 Paul speaks of being baptized and joining the assembly of believers as if it were being buried with Christ. This can be made active. Alternate translation: "God buried you with Christ when you joined the church in baptism"
 in him you were raised up
 With this metaphor, Paul speaks of the new spiritual life of believers that God made possible by making Christ come alive again. This can be made active. Alternate translation: "because you have joined yourself to Christ, God raised you up" or "in him God caused you to live again"
 you were raised up
 Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God raised you up" or "God caused you to live again"
 Colossians 2:13
 When you were dead
 Paul speaks of unresponsiveness to God as if it were death. Alternate translation: "When you Colossian believers were unable to respond to God"
 you were dead ... he made you alive
 With this metaphor Paul speaks of coming into new spiritual life as if it were coming back to life physically.
 dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh
 You were dead on two accounts: 1) you were spiritually dead, living a life of sin against Christ and 2) you were not circumcised according to the law of Moses.
 forgave us all of our trespasses
 "he forgave us, both us Jews and you Gentiles, of all our trespasses"
 Colossians 2:14
 He blotted out the written record of debts that was hostile to us
 Paul speaks of God forgiving our sins as if God were forgiving a debt that we owe him.
 blotted out the written record
 When someone blots out words, they cover the words with ink so that no one can read them.
 that was hostile to us
 "that was opposed to us"
 Colossians 2:15
 made a public spectacle of them
 In Roman times, it was common practice for the Roman armies to have a victory parade when they returned home, displaying all the prisoners they had captured and goods they had obtained. God was victorious over the evil powers and authorities.
 by the cross
 Here "the cross" stands for Christ's death on the cross.
 Colossians 2:16
 in eating or in drinking
 The law of Moses included what one could eat and drink.

"for what you eat or what you drink"

about a festival or a new moon, or about Sabbath days

The law of Moses specified the days to celebrate, to worship, and to offer sacrifice. "for the way you celebrate festivals or new moons or the Sabbath"

Colossians 2:17

These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance is Christ
A shadow shows the shape of an object, but it is not the object itself. In a similar way, the festivals, celebrations, and Sabbaths show us something about how God would save people, but those things do not save people. The savior is Christ. Alternate translation: "These are like a shadow of what would happen, but the reality is Christ" or "These are like a shadow of the savior who would come, but the savior is Christ"

Colossians 2:18

Let no one ... judge you out of your prize

Here Paul refers to false teachers as if they were corrupt judges at an athletic contest who would unjustly disqualify the believers from winning the prizes they deserve, and he speaks of Christ saving a person as if Christ were giving a prize to the winner of such a contest. Alternate translation: "Let no one ... disqualify you from winning a prize"

who wants humility

The word "humility" is a metonym for actions one does to make others think that one is humble. Alternate translation: "who wants you to do things to show that you are humble"

enters into the things he has seen

Here Paul speaks about people who claim to have dreams and visions from God and who talk proudly about them.

becomes puffed up for no reason by his fleshly thinking

Here Paul says that sinful ways of thinking make a person arrogant. Alternate translation: "puffs himself up for no reason by means of his fleshly thinking"

puffed up

Here a person who boasts is spoken of as if he were an object into which someone had blown air to make it larger than it should be.

his fleshly thinking

Here the idea of flesh stands for the sinful human nature. "the sinful thoughts he naturally thinks"

Colossians 2:19

He does not hold on to the head

A person not trusting in Christ is spoken of as if he does not hold firmly to the head. Christ is spoken of as if he were the head of a body. Alternate translation: "He does not firmly grasp Christ, who is like the head of a body" or "He does not cling to Christ, who is like the head of a body"

It is from the head that the whole body throughout its joints and ligaments is supplied and held together

Paul speaks of the church, which is ruled and empowered by Christ, as if it were a human body. Alternate translation: "It is from the head that God supplies the whole body throughout its joints and ligaments and holds it together"
Colossians 2:20

If you died together with Christ to the elemental spirits of the world
A believer is spiritually united with Christ. As Christ died, the believer has died to the elemental spirits of the world. This is a metaphor for no longer responding to the elemental spirits of the world. The believer is no longer controlled by them.

the elemental spirits of the world

Possible meanings are 1) spiritual powers that some people thought control what happens on earth, or 2) the laws or moral principles of the world. See how you translated this in Colossians 2:8.

live as obligated to the world

"think you must obey the desires of the world"

the world

the thoughts, desires, and assumptions of the sinful majority of the world's people

Colossians 2:21

"Do ... touch?"

The rhetorical question that begins with the words "why do you live as obligated to the world" in verse 20 ends here. Paul uses this question to rebuke the Colossians for following the false beliefs of the world. "you should not live as obligated to the world: 'Do ... touch!'"

"Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch"

Paul is quoting what other people have been telling the Colossians and using a rhetorical question to challenge them. Alternate translation: "why do you believe them when they say, 'Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch?'" or "you should not obey them when they say, 'Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch'"

Colossians 2:22

General Information:

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Colossians 2:23

These rules have the appearance of wisdom, with their self-made religion and humility and severe treatment of the body

"These rules seem wise to unbelieving people because they allow those who follow them to appear humble because they hurt their own bodies"

have no value against the indulgence of the flesh

"do not help you stop following your human desires"

Chapter 3

Colossians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The second part of this chapter parallels Ephesians 5 and 6.

Special concepts in this chapter

Old and new self

The old and new self mean the same as the old and new man. The term "old man" probably refers to the sinful nature with which a person is born. The "new man" is the new nature or new life that God gives a person after they come to

believe in Christ. (See: sin and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Character

Many of the things Paul encourages his readers to pursue or avoid are not actions but character qualities. Because of this, they may be difficult to translate.

"The things above"

Where God dwells is often pictured as being located "above." Paul says to "seek the things above" and to "think about the things above." He is implying Christians should seek and think about heavenly and godly things.

Links:

[Colossians 3:1 Notes](#)

Colossians 3

3:1-4

How are people "raised with Christ"?

[3:1]

See: Colossians 2:12, 2:13 See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Messiah (Christ)

What are "things above"?

[3:1]

"Things above" are things about heaven. When Paul wrote this, he wanted people to think about the kingdom of God. He did not want them to keep thinking about things on earth. He wanted them to think about serving God.

See: Heaven; Kingdom of God

Why did Paul write "you have died"?

[3:3]

Paul wrote "you have died." This is a metaphor (see: Colossians 2:13, 20). He wanted them to repent of their sins completely.

See: Metaphor; Repent (Repentance); Sin Offering

Why did Paul write "your life is hidden with Christ"?

[3:3]

When Paul wrote "your life is hidden with Christ", he wanted people to think about the way God changed them when they believed in Jesus. He used the metaphor of hiding. He wanted them to know that because they believed in Jesus, they could honor and serve God. And because they honored and served God, they did not serve other gods. It was as if they were hidden from the gods they used to worship.

See: Messiah (Christ); Metaphor; False gods

When will Christ "appear"?

[3:4]

Nobody knows when the messiah will "appear" again. That is, no one knows when Jesus will return to the earth. Paul wrote this so his readers would think about Jesus returning to the earth.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Messiah (Christ)

Why did Paul write "you will also appear with him in glory"?

[3:4]

Paul wrote "you will also appear with him in glory" because he wanted people to think about eternal life with God.

See: Eternal Life; Glory (Glorify)

3:5-17

Why did Paul write "put to death"?

[3:5]

When Paul wrote "put to death," it was a metaphor. He wanted Christians to completely removing certain things from their lives. That is, he wanted them to completely stop doing these evil things. When a person dies, he cannot affect the people who know him any more. In the same way, when a Christian completely stops doing certain things, those things no longer affect him any more.

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write "members"?

[3:5]

Paul wrote "members." This was a metaphor. He was writing about anything a person desires that is wrong.

Who are the "sons of disobedience"?

[3:6]

The "sons of disobedience" are people who do not honor God. They do wrong things. They do not follow what Paul and

Epaphras taught the Christians in Colossae.

Why did Paul write "walked"?

[3:7]

See: Metaphor; Walk

Who is the "old man with its practices"?

[3:9]

The "old man with its practices" is a way of speaking about how people are before they believe in Jesus. That is, how they live before they become Christians. Paul often wrote about believing in Jesus as if it is the beginning of a new life. So, he also wrote about a person before they believe in Jesus as the "old man".

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

Who is the "new man"?

[3:10]

The "new man" is a way of speaking about people after they believe in Jesus. Paul often wrote this way as a metaphor. That is, he wrote about believing in Jesus as if it is the beginning of a new life. That is, as if the person becomes a "new man" when they believe in Jesus. He is different than he was before he believed in Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

How does a person "put on the new man"?

[3:10]

When Paul wrote that a person should "put on the new man." It was a metaphor. He wrote about putting on clothes. That is, a person chooses to put clothes on. Sometimes, the person chooses which clothes to put on. So Paul wrote this to get people to think that a Christian needs to choose to live a certain way. That is, Christians are to live in a way that honors God.

See: Metaphor

What is the "image of the one who created it"?

[3:10]

When Paul wrote the "image of the one who created it," he spoke about God. He wanted people to remember that they were created in God's image (see: Genesis 1:26-27). He also wanted people to think about how God forgives their sins when they believe in Jesus. When God does this, it is as if he creates them as new people (see: Colossians 3:10).

See: Image; Sin; Atonement (Atonement); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

What did Paul want readers to think when he wrote 3:11?

[3:11]

When Paul wrote 3:11, he wanted to say that God cares whether someone believes in Jesus. God will forgive the sins of anyone who believes in Jesus. However, God does not care where someone was born. He does not care if someone is rich or poor. He does not care who someone worshipped before they believed in Jesus. God wants people to believe in Jesus.

See: John 3:16-17; Ephesians 2:11-22 See: Messiah (Christ); Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

What is to "put on a heart"?

[3:12]

When someone "put on a heart," they choose to live in a certain way. Paul continued to use the metaphor of a person putting on clothes (see: Colossians 3:10). He did this to tell people that they should choose to live in a way that honors God. He wanted to say that Christians need to choose this every day.

See: Metaphor

What is "bear with"?

[3:13]

When someone "bear with" someone, they are patient. That is, they do not get angry or upset with someone else.

Why did Paul write "bond of perfection"?

[3:14]

Paul wrote "bond of perfection" to get people to think that if they love each other, God will keep them together. "Bond" is a metaphor for joining things together forever. So Paul wrote this to write about God joining people together who are different. God does this because they all believe in Jesus. So, they love each other. The bond "of perfection" was a way of saying that this is the best way for people to live.

See: Metaphor

What is "peace" ?

[3:15]

"Peace" is when someone is calm does not often get upset.

Why did Paul write "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"?

Paul wrote "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts" to tell people to keep obeying Jesus. He used the metaphor of a person ruling other people. He wanted to say that Christians need to remember that Jesus is their king. That is, they need to do things he said to do.

If they do this, then God will give them peace that is better than any peace they can have without Jesus. That is why Paul

wrote peace "of Christ."

See: Metaphor; Messiah (Christ)

What is to be "called in one body"?

[3:15]

Paul wrote about all Christians when he wrote "called in one body." In the Bible, the church is spoken about as if it is a body. Paul wanted people to think that God called them to be part of his church. That is, God did certain things so they could believe in Jesus. When they do this, it makes them part of the church.

See: Body of Christ; Church; Call (Calling)

What is the "word of Christ"?

[3:16]

The "word of Christ" is the gospel about Jesus. It is also all the things that Jesus taught while he was on the earth.

See: Gospel

How can the word of Christ "live in you richly"?

[3:16]

When Paul wrote about the word of Christ living in you richly, he wanted people to keep learning about Jesus and thinking about what Jesus taught people to do. If someone does this, they will do things that honor God. This will help other people to know that this person believes in Jesus.

See: Messiah (Christ)

3:18-25

Why did Paul write "masters according to the flesh"?

[3:22]

Paul wrote "masters according to the flesh" to get people to think about people who owned slaves. He wrote "according to the flesh" to say that a person was only a slave while they were living on earth. That is, people were not slaves because God wanted them to be slaves. It was only because of what other people did.

What is "eyeservice"?

[3:22]

"Eyeservice" was when a slave obeyed his master only when the master watched him. Paul told people that this was wrong. They should obey all the time.

What are "people pleasers"?

[3:22]

"People pleasers" are men or women who do things just to get other people to think they were good people. Paul told people that this was wrong. They should think about pleasing God.

What is working "as to the Lord and not as to people"?

[3:23]

Working "as to the Lord and not as to people" is another way of saying what Paul wrote in 3:22. That is, he wanted people to always do things that honor God. He wanted people not to do things because of what other people will think.

What is "the inheritance"?

[3:24]

See: Colossians 1:9 See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

What is "favoritism"?

[3:25]

"Favoritism" is when one person or group of people receives a gift or favor just because of who they are. That is, it is not because they have done something to deserve the gift. Paul told people that God does not do this. He loves all people (see: John 3:16). He forgives the sins of everyone who believes in Jesus.

See: Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

Colossians 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul warns the believers that because they are one with Christ, they ought not do certain things.

If then

This is an idiom that means "because."

God has raised you with Christ

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Possible meanings are 1)

because God has caused Christ to come alive again, God has already given the believers in Colossae new spiritual life.

Alternate translation: "God has given you new life because you belong to Christ" or 2) because God has caused Christ to

come alive again, the believers in Colossae can know that after they die they will live with Christ, and Paul can speak of the believers living again as if it has already happened. Alternate translation: "you can be sure that God will give you life as he has caused Christ to come alive again"

things above

"things in heaven"

where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of

receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate

translation: "where Christ is sitting in the place of honor

beside God" or "where Christ is sitting in the place of honor at God's right side"

Colossians 3:2

General Information:

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Colossians 3:3

For you have died

As Christ actually died, so God counts the Colossian believers as having died with Christ.

your life is hidden with Christ in God

Paul speaks of people's lives as if they were objects that can be hidden in containers and speaks of God as if he were a container. Alternate translation: Possible meanings are 1) "it is as though God has taken your life and concealed it with Christ in God's presence" or 2) "only God knows what your true life really is, and he will reveal it when he reveals Christ"

Colossians 3:4

Christ appears ... you will also appear

Another possible meaning is "Christ is revealed ... you will also be revealed," which can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God reveals Christ ... he will also reveal you"

who is your life

Christ is the one who gives spiritual life to the believer.

Colossians 3:5

the members that are on earth

The word "members" here refers to parts of a person's nature. Being "on earth" or being worldly is a metaphor for being sinful. The rest of the verse is a list of sinful "members" or behaviors. Alternate translation: "the earthly parts of your nature" or "the parts of your nature that are worldly"

uncleanness

"impure behavior"

passion

"lust" or "extremely strong desires"

greed, which is idolatry

"greed, which is the same thing as idolatry" or "do not be greedy because that is the same as worshiping idols"

Colossians 3:6

wrath of God

God's anger against those who do evil as shown by what he does to punish them.

the sons of disobedience

This is an idiom that means they were characterized by disobedience. The abstract noun "disobedience" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "disobedient people" or "people who disobey him"

Colossians 3:7

It is in these things that you also once walked

Paul speaks of the way a person behaves as if it were a road or path a person walks on. Alternate translation: "These are the things you used to do"

when you lived in them

Possible meanings are 1) "when you practiced these things" or 2) "when you lived among the people who disobey God"

Colossians 3:8

evil intentions

"desire to do wicked deeds"

slander

speech used to hurt others by saying untrue things about them

obscene speech

words that do not belong in polite conversation

from your mouth

Here "mouth" is a metonym for talk. "in your talk"

Colossians 3:9

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to tell the believers how to live and reminds them that Christians should treat everyone according to the same standard.

you have taken off the old man with its practices

Here Paul is speaking of a Christian's rejecting his old sinful life as if it were an old garment that he takes off in order to put on a new garment. It was very common for Israelites such as Paul to speak of moral qualities as if they were pieces of clothing.

Colossians 3:10

and you have put on the new man

Here Paul is speaking of a Christian's rejecting his old sinful life as if it were an old garment that he takes off

the image

This refers to Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:11

there is no Greek or Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, freeman

These terms are examples of the categories of people that Paul says do not matter for God. God sees every person alike, not by race, religion, nationality, or social status.

Alternate translation: "race, religion, culture, and social status do not matter"

barbarian

a foreigner who does not know local customs

Scythian

This is someone from the land of Scythia, which was outside the Roman Empire. Greeks and Romans used this word for someone who grew up in a place where everyone did wicked things all the time.

Christ is all, and is in all

Nothing is excluded or left out of the rule of Christ.

Alternate translation: "Christ is all important and lives in all his people"

Colossians 3:12

as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved

This can be made active. Alternate translation: "as those whom God has chosen for himself, whom he desires to see live for him alone, and whom he loves"

put on a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience

The "heart" is a metaphor for feelings and attitudes. Here it is spoken of as if it had certain feelings and attitudes, and as if it were clothing to wear. Alternate translation: "have a merciful, kind, humble, gentle, and patient heart" or "be merciful, kind, humble, gentle, and patient"

Colossians 3:13

Bear with one another

"Be patient with one another" or "Accept each other even when you disappoint each other"

Be gracious to each other

"Treat others better than they deserve to have you to treat

them"

has a complaint against

The abstract noun "complaint" can be stated as "complain."

Alternate translation: "has a reason to complain against"

Colossians 3:14

have love, which is the bond of perfection

Here "bond of perfection" is a metaphor for something that causes perfect unity among people. Alternate translation:

"love one another because doing so will unite you perfectly together."

Colossians 3:15

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts

Paul speaks of the peace that Christ gives as if it were a ruler. Possible meanings are 1) "Do everything so that you can have peaceful relationships with each other" or 2)

"Allow God to give you peace in your heart"

in your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a people's minds or inner beings. Alternate translation: "in your minds" or "inside of you"

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ live in you richly

Paul speaks of Christ's word as if it were a person capable of living inside other people. "Word of Christ" here is a metonym for the teachings of Christ. Alternate translation: "Be obedient to the instructions of Christ" or "Always trust Christ's promises"

singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs

"singing all sorts of songs to praise God." Some interpreters believe that "psalms," "hymns," and "spiritual songs" all refer to different psalms in the book of Psalms.

psalms

These are probably songs from the Old Testament book of Psalms that Christians sang.

with thankfulness in your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's minds or inner beings. Alternate translation: "with thankfulness in your minds" or "being thankful"

Colossians 3:17

in word or in deed

"in speaking or in acting"

in the name of the Lord Jesus

Acting in the name of a person here is a metonym for acting to help other people think well of that person. Alternate translation: "to honor the Lord Jesus" or "so that others will know you belong to the Lord Jesus and will think well of him" or "as if the Lord Jesus himself were doing it"

through him

Possible meanings are 1) because he has done great deeds or 2) because he has made it possible for people to speak to God and so give him thanks.

Colossians 3:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to give special instructions to wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, and masters.

Wives, submit to

"Wives, obey"

it is appropriate

"it is proper" or "it is right"

Colossians 3:19

do not be bitter against

"do not be harsh with" or "do not be angry at"

Colossians 3:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Colossians 3:21

do not provoke your children

"do not needlessly make your children angry"

Colossians 3:22

obey your masters according to the flesh

"obey your human masters"

things, not with eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with a sincere heart

"things. Do not obey only when your master is watching, as

though you need only to please people, but be sincere"

with a sincere heart

"Heart" here is a metonym for a person's thoughts or intentions. Alternate translation: "with all honest intentions" or "with sincerity"

Colossians 3:23

as to the Lord

"as you would work for the Lord"

Colossians 3:24

the reward of the inheritance

"the inheritance as your reward"

inheritance

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

Colossians 3:25

anyone who does unrighteousness will receive the penalty

The phrase "receive the penalty" means to be punished.

Alternate translation: "anyone who does unrighteousness will be punished" or "God will punish anyone who does what is unrighteous"

who does unrighteousness

who actively does wrong of any kind

there is no partiality

The abstract noun "partiality" can be expressed with the verb "favor." To favor some people is to judge them by different standards so the result is better for them than for others who do the same actions. Alternate translation: "God does not favor anyone" or "God judges everyone by the same standard"

Chapter 4

Colossians 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

[Colossians 4:1](#) appears to belong with the topics of Chapter 3 instead of Chapter 4.

Special concepts in this chapter

"In my own hand"

It was common in the ancient Near East for the author to speak and someone else to write down the words. Many of the New Testament letters were written this way. Paul wrote the final greeting himself.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Secret truth

Paul refers to a "secret truth" in this chapter. The role of the church in the plans of God was once unknown. But God has now revealed it. Part of this involves the Gentiles having equal standing with the Jews in the plans of God. (See: reveal)

Links:

[Colossians 4:1 Notes](#)

Colossians 4

4:1-6

Who is the "master in heaven"?

[4:1]

When Paul wrote "master in heaven," he wanted people to think about Jesus. Jesus is the master who all Christians serve. He is in heaven now. That is, he went to heaven after he was resurrected. He will be in heaven until he returns to earth.

See: Heaven; Resurrect (Resurrection); Jesus' Return to Earth

What is "thanksgiving"?

[4:2]

See: Thanksgiving

Why did Paul write "open a door for the word"?

[4:3]

Paul wrote "open a door." This was a metaphor. He was writing about being able to tell other people about Jesus. Opening a door allows a person go into another room. So Paul wanted people to know that he asked God to allow him in some way to tell people around him about Jesus.

Paul wrote "the word" because he wanted people to think about the gospel.

See: Metaphor; Door (Metaphor); Gospel

What is the "mystery of Christ"?

[4:3]

See: Mystery

Why was Paul "chained up"?

[4:3]

Paul was "chained up" because the Romans had arrested him. He was a Roman citizen. Because of this, he wanted the Roman emperor to judge him (see: Acts 25). While he waited to see the emperor, the Romans kept him chained up so he could not escape.

See: Citizen

Why did Paul write "seasoned with salt"?

[4:6]

Paul wrote "seasoned with salt." This is a metaphor about the gospel. Salt makes food taste better. That is, salt makes the food seem better to people. In some way, Paul wanted readers to explain the gospel to people so that it would seem better to them.

Jesus also used the metaphor of salt to speak about how Christians should speak to other people and live (see: Matthew 5:13).

See: Metaphor; Gospel

4:7-9

What were the "things concerning me" and "matters about us"?

[4:7]

When Paul wrote "things concerning me" and "matters about us," he wanted people to think about what they heard was happening to him. They heard about him from the people who brought this letter to them.

Who was Tychicus?

[4:7]

Tychicus was a man who traveled with Paul. He went with Paul to Jerusalem (see: Acts 20:4). He was with Paul in Rome. He took this letter to the Christians in Colossae.

See Map: Jerusalem; Rome

Who was Onesimus?

[4:9]

Onesimus was a man who met Paul when Paul went to Rome. Before this, Onesimus was a slave. In fact, he was a slave in

Colossae. He believed in Jesus, so he was a Christian.

Onesimus became a Christian after he escaped from slavery. Paul wrote a letter to Onesimus's owner (see: Philemon). In that letter, Paul asked Philemon not to punish Onesimus. Instead, Paul wanted Philemon to treat Onesimus in the same way he treated other Christians.

Now, Onesimus was with Paul while Paul was in prison at Rome. Paul sent him to Colossae with Tychicus. He wanted the Christians in Colossae to know that Onesimus was also a Christian. That is, he wrote about Onesimus so the Christians in Colossae would treat Onesimus in the same way they treated each other.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave) See Map: Rome; Jerusalem

4:10-18

Who was Aristarchus?

[4:10]

Aristarchus was a man who traveled with Paul (see: Acts 20:1-6). He came from Thessalonica.

Scholars disagree about why Paul wrote that Aristarchus was Paul's "fellow prisoner." Some scholars think the Romans kept him in prison with Paul. That is, they arrested Aristarchus for being a Christian. Other scholars think Paul used "prisoner" as a metaphor. He was writing about Aristarchus being a fellow Christian who was there to help Paul while in prison.

See Map: Thessalonica

Who was Mark?

[4:10]

Mark was a man who traveled with Paul (see: Acts 12:12, 12:25, 15:37-39, 2 Timothy 4:11). He was also called John Mark. He wrote the gospel of Mark.

See: Gospel

Who was Barnabas?

[4:10]

Barnabas was a man who traveled with Paul (see: Acts 11-15).

Who was "Jesus called Justus"?

[4:11]

"Jesus called Justus" was a man who traveled with Paul. He is not Jesus who is the messiah. Scholars do not know much about this man. He was a Jew who believed in Jesus the messiah, so he became a Christian. Some scholars think he worked with Christians who were born Jews and also Christians who were born Gentiles. They think this because "Jesus" is a Jewish name, but "Justus" is a Latin name.

See: Messiah (Christ); Gentile

Why did Paul write "of the circumcision"?

[4:11]

When Paul wrote "of the circumcision," he wanted people to know that three of the men he wrote about were Jewish. Jewish people circumcised their boys when they were 8 days old. At this time, the Gentiles did not do this. Therefore, people knew a man was Jewish if he was circumcised.

See: Circumcise (Circumcision)

Who was Epaphras?

[4:12]

See Colossians 1:7-8

Why did Paul write "slave of Christ Jesus"?

[4:12]

Paul wrote "slave of Christ Jesus." This is a metaphor. Some scholars think he was writing about someone who believes in Jesus and obeys Jesus. That is, he obeys Jesus in the same way a slave obeys his master. (See: Colossians 3:11, 3:22). Other scholars think Paul wrote about someone who chose to serve Jesus. Christians choose to serve Jesus. They did this because they love him.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Metaphor

Why did Paul write "strives for you in prayer" ?

[4:12]

Paul wrote "strives for you in prayer" to speak about how hard Epaphras prayed for the Christians in Colossae. When someone strives for something, they work very hard to do it. Therefore, Paul wanted to say that Epaphras prayed especially hard for the Colossian Christians.

Where was Laodicea?

[4:13]

See: Colossians 2:1.

Where was Hierapolis?

4:13]

See Map: Hierapolis

Who was "Luke the beloved physician"?

[4:14]

He was a "physician." A "physician" was someone who healed people who were sick or injured.

Paul said Luke was "beloved" because they were close friends. He loved Luke. Also, many other Christians knew and loved Luke.

See: Gentile; Gospel; New Testament

Who was Demas?

[4:14]

Demas was a man who traveled with Paul. However, scholars believe he stopped working with Paul (see: 2 Timothy 4:10). Some scholars think this is because he stopped believing in Jesus. Other scholars do not think this is why he stopped working with Paul

Who was Nympha?

[4:15]

Nympha was a Christian who lived near Colossae. Scholars do not know if Nympha was a man or a woman. More scholars think Nympha was a woman.

Why did Paul write "the church that meets in her house"?

[4:15]

Paul wrote "the church that meets in her house." He was writing about Christians who met at Nympha's house. That is, they worshipped God together in Nympha's house. Scholars think they did this because they were too far from Colossae to meet with the Christians in the city. Nympha's house may have been in Laodicea. Or it may have been somewhere in between Colossae and Laodicea.

See Map: Colossae; Laodicea

Who was Archippus?

[4:17]

Archippus was a Christian man in Colossae. Scholars think he was a leader in the church there. However, they do not know what he did in the church. Scholars think he could have been part of Philemon's family (see: Philemon 2). Perhaps he was Philemon's son.

Scholars disagree about why Paul wrote "Look to the ministry that you have received in the Lord, that you should fulfill it." Some scholars think Paul said this to encourage Archippus. That is, Paul wanted Archippus to keep doing the things he was doing. Other scholars think Paul said this because Archippus was no longer serving the church for some reason. So Paul wrote it to warn Archippus to go back to serving God in this way.

See: Church

Why did Paul write "this greeting is with my own hand"?

[4:18]

When Paul wrote "this greeting is with my own hand," he wanted people to know that he really sent the letter. Often Paul spoke words and one of his companions wrote them down as a letter. But he wrote these last words himself. This way, readers could see that the handwriting was his own. Therefore, they would know the things in this letter were what Paul taught.

See: Ancient Letters

Colossians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

After speaking to masters, Paul ends his special instructions to the different kinds of believers in the church at Colossae.

right and fair

These words mean almost the same thing and are used to emphasize the things that are morally correct.

you also have a Master in heaven

Paul implies that God, as the Master in heaven, will give his servants what is right and fair. This could be blessing for the earthly master who treats his servants kindly or punishment for the earthly master who treats his servants unkindly. Alternate translation: "you also have a Master, who is God in heaven"

Colossians 4:2

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to give instructions to believers on how to live and speak.

Continue steadfastly in prayer

"Keep praying faithfully" or "Keep praying consistently"

Colossians 4:3

General Information:

Here the word "us" refers to Paul and Timothy but not the Colossians.

God would open a door to us

Opening a door for someone is a metaphor for giving that person the opportunity to do something. Alternate translation: "God would provide opportunities for us"

open a door to us for the word

"make an opportunity for us to preach his message"

the mystery of Christ

This refers to the gospel of Jesus Christ, which was not understood before Christ came.

for which also I have been in chains

Here "in chains" is a metonym for being in prison, though Paul probably also was physically attached to a chain. Paul

was in chains because he told people about the mystery of Christ. Alternate translation: "It is for proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ that I am now in prison"

Colossians 4:4

Pray that I may make it clear

"Pray that I might be able to speak the message of Jesus Christ clearly"

Colossians 4:5

Walk in wisdom toward those outside

The idea of walking is often used for the idea of conducting one's life. Alternate translation: "Live in such a way that those who are not believers will see that you are wise"

redeem the time

To "redeem" something means to restore it to its rightful owner. Here time is spoken of as something that can be restored and used to serve God. Alternate translation: "do the best things you can with your time" or "put the time to its best use"

Colossians 4:6

Let your words always be with grace. Let them be seasoned with salt

Food with salt is a metaphor for words that teach others and that others enjoy hearing. Alternate translation: "Let your conversation always be gracious and attractive"

so that you may know how you should answer

"so that you may know how to answer questions from anyone about Jesus Christ" or "so that you may be able to treat every person well"

Colossians 4:7

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes with special instructions about certain people as well as greetings to and from individual believers.

all the things concerning me

"everything that has been happening to me"

fellow slave

"fellow servant." Though Paul is a free man, he sees himself as a servant of Christ and sees Tychicus as a fellow servant.

Colossians 4:8

about us

These words do not include the Colossians.

may encourage your hearts

The heart was thought to be the center of many emotions.

Alternate translation: "may encourage you"

Colossians 4:9

General Information:

Onesimus was a slave of Philemon in Colossae. He had stolen money from Philemon and run away to Rome where he became a Christian through the ministry of Paul. Now Tychicus and Onesimus are the ones bringing Paul's letter to Colossae along with a letter from Paul to Philemon asking him to send Onesimus back to Paul.

the faithful and beloved brother

Paul calls Onesimus a fellow Christian and servant of Christ.

They will make known

"Tychicus and Onesimus will make known"

everything that has happened here

All that is taking place where Paul is currently living.

Tradition says Paul was in Rome under house arrest or in prison at this time.

Colossians 4:10

Aristarchus

He was in prison with Paul in Ephesus when Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians.

if he comes

"if Mark comes"

Colossians 4:11

Jesus who is called Justus

This is a man who also worked with Paul.

These alone of the circumcision are my fellow workers for the kingdom of God

Paul uses "circumcision" here to refer to Jews because, under the Old Testament law, all male Jews had to be circumcised. Alternate translation: "These three men are the only Jewish believers working with me to proclaim God as king through Christ Jesus"

These alone of the circumcision

"These men—Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus—alone of the circumcision"

Colossians 4:12

Epaphras

Epaphras was the man who had preached the good news to the people in Colossae (Colossians 1:7).

one of you

"from your city" or "your fellow townsman"

a slave of Christ Jesus

"a committed disciple of Christ Jesus"

always strives for you in prayer

"earnestly prays for you"

you may stand complete and fully assured

"you may stand mature and confident"

Colossians 4:13

General Information:

Laodicea and Hierapolis were towns close to Colossae.

Colossians 4:14

Demas

This man was one of Paul's co-workers.

Colossians 4:15

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

in Laodicea

a city very close to Colossae where there was also a church

Nympha, and the church that is in her house

A woman named Nympha hosted a house church. Alternate translation: "Nympha and the group of believers that meets in her house"

Colossians 4:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Colossians 4:17

Say to Archippus, "Look to the ministry that you have received in the Lord, that you should fulfill it"

Paul reminds Archippus of the task God had given him and that he, Archippus, was under obligation to the Lord to fulfill it. The words "Look," "you have received," and "you should fulfill" all refer to Archippus and should be singular.

Colossians 4:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes his letter with a greeting written in his own handwriting.
Remember my chains
The word "chains" is a metaphor that Paul uses to indicate that he is in prison, but it is also likely that he was literally attached to a chain. Alternate translation: "Remember me

and pray for me while I am in prison"
May grace be with you
Here "grace" stands for God, who shows grace or acts kindly to believers. Alternate translation: "I pray that our Lord Jesus Christ would continue to act graciously toward you all"

Introduction to 1 Thessalonians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 1 Thessalonians

Greeting (1:1) Prayer of thanksgiving for the Thessalonian Christians (1:2-10) Paul's ministry in Thessalonica (2:1-16)
Paul's concerns for their spiritual growth Like a mother (2:7) Like a father (2:11)
Paul sends Timothy to the Thessalonians and Timothy reports back to Paul (3:1-13) Practical instructions Live to please God (4:1-12) Comfort regarding those who have died (4:12-18) Christ's return is a motive for godly living (5:1-11)
Closing blessings, thanks, and prayers (5:12-28)

Who wrote 1 Thessalonians?

Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul wrote this letter while staying in the city of Corinth. Of all Paul's letters that are in the Bible, many scholars think 1 Thessalonians was the first letter Paul wrote.

What is the Book of 1 Thessalonians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the city of Thessalonica. He wrote it after the Jews in the city forced him to leave. In this letter he said he considered his visit to them a success, even though he was forced to leave.

Paul responded to the news from Timothy about the Thessalonian believers. The believers there were being persecuted. He encouraged them to continue living in a way that pleased God. He also comforted them by explaining what happens to those who die before Christ returns.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "1 Thessalonians" or "First Thessalonians." They may instead prefer to choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's First Letter to the Church in Thessalonica," or "The First Letter to the Christians in Thessalonica."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the "second coming" of Jesus?

Paul wrote much in this letter about Jesus's eventual return to Earth. When Jesus returns, he will judge all mankind. He will also rule over creation, and there will be peace everywhere.

What happens to those who die before the return of Christ?

Paul made clear that those who die before Christ's return will come back to life and be with Jesus. They will not remain dead forever. Paul wrote this to encourage the Thessalonians. For some of them worried that those who died would miss the great day when Jesus returns.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 1 Thessalonians?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"May grace and peace be to you" (1:1). Some older translations read: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." "Instead, we were as gentle among you as a mother comforting her own children." (2:7) Other modern

versions and older translations read, "Instead, we were like babies among you, as when a mother comforts her own children." "Timothy, our brother and fellow worker for God" (3:2). Some other translations read: "Timothy, our brother and servant of God."

Chapter 1

1 Thessalonians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verse 1 formally introduces this letter. Letters in the ancient Near East commonly had introductions of this type.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hardship

Other people persecuted the Christians in Thessalonica. But the Christians there handled it well.

Links:

[1 Thessalonians 1:1 Notes](#) [1 Thessalonians intro](#)

1 Thessalonians 1 Commentary

1:1

Was this book written as a letter?

[1:]

See: Ancient Letters

Why did Paul write about Silvanus and Timothy?

[1:1]

Paul wrote about Silvanus and Timothy when he greeted the Christians at Thessalonica for several reasons:

He reminded the Christians in Thessalonica that Silvanus and Timothy were with him when he started the church at Thessalonica.

He wanted the Christians in Thessalonica to know that Silvanus and Timothy returned to Paul. They were safe. That is, they were not hurt or put into prison. He wanted the Christians in Thessalonica to be happy to hear about this.

He wanted the Christians in Thessalonica to know that he had heard about them from people they could trust.

Paul wanted people to know that he who wrote his letters. Sometimes people said that Paul did not really write a letter.

But the Thessalonian Christians knew Silvanus and Timothy worked with him. So, he wrote about Silvanus and Timothy so the Thessalonians would know that he really wrote this letter.

See: Church

See Map: Thessalonica

1:3

Why did Paul write "we remember" you?

[1:3]

When Paul wrote "we remember" you, he wanted the Christians in Thessalonica to know that he often prayed for them.

He gave thanks to God for the way they believed in Jesus. He gave thanks to God for how they did things for God. He also thanked God because they continued to trust God. All of this honored God. So Paul wanted the Thessalonian Christians to know that he honored them when he prayed.

See: Thanksgiving; Faith (Believe in); Hope

Why did Paul write "our God and Father"?

[1:3]

When Paul wrote "our God and Father", he wanted his readers to think about God. He was not writing about two separate people or beings. Instead, he wanted to say that the Father is God.

See: Trinity; God the Father

1:4

Why did Paul write that God "chose" them?

[1:4]

When Paul wrote that God "chose" the Christians in Thessalonica, he wanted the Christians in Thessalonica to know that God planned in some way that they would believe in him. God planned for people everywhere to believe in him before he created the world.

Some scholars believe that God chose certain people to be Christians. Other scholars believe that God knew which people would believe in him before the person chose to believe.

See: Elect (Election)

1:5

Why did Paul write "our gospel"?

[1:5]

When Paul wrote "our gospel," he wanted the Thessalonian Christians to remember what he taught them. He taught them about Jesus when Paul lived in Thessalonica. He taught them right things about Jesus. He wanted them to remember these things and to not think about the wrong things that other people said.

See: Gospel; False Teacher

1:6

Why did Paul write "imitators of us and of the Lord"?

[1:6]

Paul wrote that the Thessalonians were "imitators of us and of the Lord," He said this to say that the Christians in Thessalonica honored God. They did good things. They did the things they saw Paul do. When Paul lived in Thessalonica, they saw him do good things that honored God. They also heard him teach about Jesus. So they knew about the good things that Jesus did. Because they did things in the same way that Paul and Jesus did things, they honored God.

Why did Paul write "received the word with much joy"?

[1:6]

When Paul wrote that the Thessalonian Christians "received the word with much", he wrote about how they learned from him. When he was in Thessalonica, he taught them the "word,"; that is, the gospel about Jesus. They had "much joy." That is, they were very happy because of Jesus. Scholars believe that some people in Thessalonica persecuted the Christians there. However, Paul told them that their joy was greater than this persecution.

See: Gospel; Persecute (Persecution) ; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

See: Map: Thessalonica; Corinth; Macedonia; Achaia

1:8-10

What did Paul want to say in 1:8-10?

{1:8, 1:9, 1:10}

In 1:8-10, Paul wanted to tell the Christians in Thessalonica that many people knew how they believed in God. People in other places knew the Thessalonians worshipped idols in the past. Those people heard that the Thessalonian Christians stopped worshipping idols. So those people knew that now the Thessalonian Christians worshipped the true God.

See: Worship

Why did Paul write "has rung out" in 1:8?

[1:8]

When Paul wrote that "from you the word of the Lord has rung out," he said that he knew the Christians in Thessalonica talked about Jesus to other people. He used the metaphor of a bell. A bell "rings out" so it is heard far away. People far away heard about the way the Thessalonian Christians talked about Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Gospel

Why did Paul write "waiting for his Son from heaven" in 1:10?

[1:10]

Paul wrote "waiting for his Son from heaven" because he wanted the Thessalonian Christians to know that Jesus will come to earth again. After he was killed and was made alive again, he returned to heaven. He will come back someday. However, only God the Father knows exactly when he will return (see: Acts 1:9- 11). Paul also said Christians should "wait" patiently until Jesus returns.

See: Son of God; Heaven; God the Father

Why did Paul write about "wrath" in 1:10?

[1:10]

Paul wrote about "wrath" to get his readers to think about how God will judge people because they sin. When someone has "wrath," they are very angry. God is very angry about people doing wrong things. So, someday he will judge and punish people who have sinned. However, Paul also wrote that Jesus "frees us from the wrath to come." He wanted his readers to remember that if they believe in Jesus, he will protect them from God's judgement. Some scholars think Paul also wanted people to know Jesus helps people who believe in him not to do wrong things that make God angry. Some scholars think Paul wanted to say that the antichrist will not affect people who believe in Jesus.

See: Wrath; Antichrist

1 Thessalonians 1:1

General Information:

Paul identifies himself as the writer of the letter and greets the church at Thessalonica.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy to the church

The UDB makes clear that it was Paul who wrote this letter.

May grace and peace be to you

The terms "grace" and "peace" are metonyms for the person who acts toward people in a kindly and peaceful manner.

Alternate translation: "May God be kind to you and give you peace"

peace be to you

The word "you" refers to the Thessalonian believers.

1 Thessalonians 1:2

General Information:

In this letter the words "we" and "us" refer to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, unless otherwise noted. Also, the word "you" is plural and refers to the believers at the church of Thessalonica.

We always give thanks to God

Here "always" suggests that when Paul prays to God, he consistently presents the Thessalonians to God in his prayers.

we mention you continually in our prayers

"we continually pray for you"

1 Thessalonians 1:3

your work of faith, labor of love, and patient endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ

"what you have done because you have faith in God, the hard work you have done because you love others, and how you always continued to hope in our Lord Jesus Christ"

patient endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ

The Thessalonians confidently expected that Jesus would do all that he promised to do. Alternate translation:

"firmness of your trust in our Lord Jesus Christ" or

"continual trust in our Lord Jesus Christ"

1 Thessalonians 1:4

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to give thanks for the believers at Thessalonica and praises them for their faith in God.

Brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

we know

The word "we" refers to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy but not the Thessalonian believers.

1 Thessalonians 1:5

not in word only

"not only in what we said"

but also in power, in the Holy Spirit

Possible meanings are 1) the Holy Spirit gave Paul and his companions the ability to preach the gospel powerfully or 2) the Holy Spirit made the preaching of the gospel have a powerful effect among the Thessalonian believers or 3) the Holy Spirit demonstrated the truth of the gospel preaching by means of miracles, signs, and wonders.

power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance

The abstract noun "assurance" can be translated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "power and in the Holy Spirit, and God made you sure that it was true"

what kind of men

"how we conducted ourselves when"

1 Thessalonians 1:6

You became imitators

To "imitate" means to act like or to copy the behavior of another.

received the word

"welcomed the message" or "accepted what we had to say"

in much tribulation

"during a time of great suffering" or "in much persecution"

1 Thessalonians 1:7

Achaia

This is an ancient district in what is present-day Greece.

1 Thessalonians 1:8

the word of the Lord has rung out

"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate translation: "the Lord's teachings have rung out"

has rung out

Here Paul speaks of the Christian witness produced by the Thessalonian believers as if it were a bell that was rung or a musical instrument that was being played.

1 Thessalonians 1:9

For they themselves

Paul is referring to the churches that already existed in the surrounding regions, who have heard about the Thessalonian believers.

they themselves

Here "themselves" is used to emphasize those people who had heard about the Thessalonian believers.

what kind of reception we had among you

The abstract noun "reception" can be expressed as the verb "receive" or "welcome." Alternate translation: "how warmly you received us" or "how warmly you welcomed us"

you turned to God from the idols to serve the living and true God

Here "turned to ... from" is a metaphor that means to start being loyal to one person and stop being loyal to someone else. Alternate translation: "you stopped worshiping idols and started serving the living and true God"

1 Thessalonians 1:10

his Son

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

whom he raised from the dead

"whom God caused to live again so that he was no longer dead." The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again.

who rescues us

Here Paul includes the Thessalonian believers.

Chapter 2

1 Thessalonians 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Christian witness

Paul values his "Christian witness" as evidence that the gospel is true. Paul says that being godly or holy bears witness to the non-Christian. Paul defends his character so that his witness is not affected. (See: testimony and godly and holy)

Links:

[1 Thessalonians 2:1 Notes](#)

1 Thessalonians 2

2:1-12

What did Paul write to his readers in 2:1-12?

In 2:1-12, Paul wrote to his readers and told them to do things in the same way that Paul, and those who worked with him, did things. While he lived in Thessalonica, Paul told people that they needed to honor God and he taught them how to honor God. Paul did the things that honored God. So he told the Thessalonians to do the things that honored God also. In the same way a father tells his children the things to do, so Paul told the Thessalonians what to do to honor God.

See: Acts 16:19-24, 35-39

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write 2:3-7?

Paul wanted his readers to know the differences between what he taught and what other people taught about Jesus. So Paul wrote about how he taught and the things that he did. He did not write about the false teachers. However, he wanted his readers to think about the things that he did differently than the things that the false teachers did.

Paul used the metaphor of a parent who loves his child. He taught the Thessalonian Christians in the same way a parent teaches their child. So he wanted them to treat each other in the same way that he treated them.

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write that God examines "the heart"?

[2:4]

Paul wrote that God looks into "the heart." He wanted his readers to know that God knows everything that people think and feel. He was not writing about the actual, physical heart in our body. Instead, the word heart is often used to talk about how a person feels and thinks. Paul wanted the Thessalonian Christians to know that God completely knows them. God knows about even things that a person thinks but does not talk about (See: Hebrews 4:12-13).

See: Heart (Metaphor)

Why did Paul write about "flattery"?

[2:5]

Paul wrote about "flattery." This is when someone says something to someone to gain favor with them. They may not believe the things they say. Paul said this because he wanted to talk about people who said good things about other people that were not true. They did this to make other people feel honored. They did this so those people might do something for them. People often used flattery to try to get things from other people.

Paul wanted his readers to know that he did not flatter them. He was different than people who used flattery. He spoke truth because he wanted to honor God. Saying false things about other people did not honor God even if it was good things. Who did Paul write about in 2:6?

In 2:6, Paul wrote about himself. He wanted the Thessalonian Christians to know that he did not want to be honored. The Jewish religious leaders and the false teachers wanted to be honored because of the things they taught. He wanted Christians to know that people who "seek glory" do not honor God. Paul wanted people to know that he did not want to be honored.

See: Glory (Glorify)

Why did Paul write "walk in a manner worthy of God"?

[2:12]

Paul used a metaphor when he wrote that Christians needed to "walk in a manner worthy of God." He wanted Christians to know that they needed to honor God by the things that they did, said, and thought.

See: Walk

2:13-16

Why did Paul write "for this reason"?

[2:13]

When Paul wrote "for this reason," he wanted his readers to know that what he wrote in 2:3-12 was why he wrote 2:13-16. In 2:3-12, he wrote about how he loved the Thessalonian Christians. So, in 2:13-16, he wrote that he thanked God because they did the things that honored God in the way he taught them to honor God.

What was the difference between the "word of man" and the "word of God"?

[2:13]

Paul talked about the "word of man." When people taught "word of man," they can be wrong. Paul taught the "word of God." The things he taught are true and they come from God.

Paul wanted the Thessalonian Christians to know there was a difference between what he taught and what the false teachers taught. Paul wanted them to know that God gave him the words to say. It was as true as though God spoke it himself. (See: 1 Corinthians 14:37).

Why did Paul write about the Jews killing Jesus?

[2:15]

When Paul wrote about "the Jews" killing Jesus, he wanted his readers to know that some Jewish leaders wanted Jesus to die and helped the Roman government kill him. They planned with the Romans to have the Romans kill Jesus. They did this because they did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah (See: John 11:45-53).

Some Jewish leaders did not want people to do the things Paul taught. They did not believe he taught things from God. So, they treated him the way they treated Jesus.

See: Acts 17:5, Matthew 23:31-36

See: Messiah (Christ)

What were the Jewish leaders trying to prevent?

[2:15, 2:16]

The Jewish leaders tried to prevent Paul from preaching and teaching about Jesus. They did not want him to preach to other Jews. They also did not want him to preach to Gentiles. They were afraid that this would weaken the Jewish religion. So, these leaders tried to stop Paul from preaching.

See: Preach (Preacher); Gentile

Why did Paul write "they always fill up their own sins"?

[2:16]

When Paul wrote that "they always fill up their own sins," he wanted to talk about how the Jewish leaders did very bad things. They did not want other people to hear about Jesus. So they tried to stop Paul and others from teaching the gospel. Paul wanted his readers to know that this was the worst thing these people could do against God.

See: Metaphor; Gospel

2:17-20

What did Paul want his readers to know about Satan?

[2:18]

Paul wanted his readers to know that Satan is a real (See: Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 2:11, 11:13-15). He also wanted them to know that Satan wants to stop people from hearing about Jesus. Paul taught people about Jesus, so Satan did things to try to stop him.

See: Satan (The Devil)

Why did Paul write about Jesus "at his coming"?

[2:19]

When Paul wrote about Jesus "at his coming," he wanted his readers to know that Jesus will come to earth again. Scholars call this the "second coming" of Jesus.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Paul write that the Thessalonians were his "glory and joy"?

[2:20]

When Paul wrote that the Thessalonian Christians were his "glory and joy," he wanted them to know he was very proud of them. He had lived with them. He taught them about Jesus. He knew they believed in Jesus. He knew they worked to serve God. All these things made Paul proud of them. They made him very happy.

See: Glory (Glorify)

1 Thessalonians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to remind the Thessalonians of how he behaved when he was with them.

you yourselves

The words "you" and "yourselves" refer to the Thessalonian believers.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

our coming

The word "our" refers to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy but not the Thessalonian believers.

was not useless

This can be expressed in a positive manner. Alternate translation: "was very worthwhile"

1 Thessalonians 2:2

previously suffered and were shamefully treated

"were mistreated and insulted"

in much struggling

"while struggling under great opposition"

1 Thessalonians 2:3

was not from error, nor from uncleanness, nor from deceit

"was truthful, pure, and honest"

uncleanness

Ritual uncleanness here is a metaphor for guilt from having committed sin.

1 Thessalonians 2:4

approved by God to be trusted

Paul was tested and proven trustworthy by God.

we speak

Paul is referring to preaching the gospel message.

who examines our hearts

The word "hearts" is a metonym for a person's desires and thoughts. Alternate translation: "who knows our desires and thoughts"

1 Thessalonians 2:5

General Information:

Paul tells the Thessalonian believers that his conduct was not based in flattery, greed, or self glory.

we never came with words of flattery
 "we never spoke to you with false praise"
 1 Thessalonians 2:6
 Nor did we seek glory from people
 "And we did not try to make people praise us"
 1 Thessalonians 2:7
 as a mother comforting her own children
 Just as a mother gently comforts her children, so Paul,
 Silvanus, and Timothy spoke gently to the Thessalonian
 believers.
 1 Thessalonians 2:8
 In this way we had affection for you
 "This is how we demonstrated our affection for you"
 we had affection for you
 "we loved you"
 We were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also
 our own lives
 Paul speaks of the gospel message and his life and the lives
 of those with him as if they were a physical object that one
 could share with others. Alternate translation: "We were
 pleased not only to tell you the gospel of God but also to
 spend time with you and to help you"
 you had become very dear to us
 "we cared for you deeply"
 1 Thessalonians 2:9
 brothers
 Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and
 women.
 our labor and toil
 The words "labor" and "toil" mean basically the same thing.
 Paul uses them to emphasize how hard they worked.
 Alternate translation: "how hard we worked"
 Night and day we were working so that we might not be a burden to
 any of you
 "We worked hard to make our own living so you would not
 need to support us"
 1 Thessalonians 2:10
 holy, righteous, and blameless
 Paul uses three words that describe their good behavior
 toward the Thessalonian believers.
 1 Thessalonians 2:11
 as a father with his own children
 Paul compares how he encouraged the Thessalonians to a
 father gently teaching his children how to behave.
 1 Thessalonians 2:12
 exhorting you and comforting you and urging you
 The words "exhorting," "comforting," and "urging" are used
 together to express how passionately Paul's group exhorted
 the Thessalonians. Alternate translation: "strongly exhorted
 you"
 into his own kingdom and glory
 The word "glory" describes the word "kingdom." Alternate
 translation: "into his own glorious kingdom"
 to walk in a manner that is worthy of God
 "Walk" here is an metaphor for "live." Alternate translation:
 "to live so that people will think well of God"
 1 Thessalonians 2:13
 General Information:
 Paul continues to use "we" to refer to himself and his

traveling companions and "you" to the Thessalonian
 believers.
 we also thank God constantly
 Paul often thanks God for their acceptance of the gospel
 message he shared with them.
 not as the word of man
 "Word of man" here is a synecdoche for "a message that
 comes simply from a man." Alternate translation: "not a
 message that is made up by a man"
 the word of God
 "Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate
 translation: "the message that comes from God"
 which is also at work in you who believe
 Paul speaks of God's gospel message as if it were a person
 who was doing work. Alternate translation: "which those of
 you who believe are listening to and beginning to obey"
 1 Thessalonians 2:14
 brothers
 Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and
 women.
 became imitators of the churches
 "became like the churches." The Thessalonian believers
 endured persecutions similar to those of the Judean
 believers.
 from your own countrymen
 "from other Thessalonians"
 1 Thessalonians 2:15
 General Information:
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 1 Thessalonians 2:16
 They forbid us to speak
 "They try to make us stop speaking"
 they always fill up their sins
 Paul speaks as though someone can fill a container with his
 sins as with liquid.
 wrath will overtake them in the end
 This refers to God finally judging and punishing people for
 their sins.
 1 Thessalonians 2:17
 brothers
 This means fellow Christians, including both men and
 women.
 in person not in heart
 Here "heart" represents thoughts and emotions. Though
 Paul and those traveling with him were not present
 physically in Thessalonica, they continued to care and think
 about the believers there. Alternate translation: "in person,
 but we continued to think about you"
 to see your faces
 Here "face" represents the entire person. Alternate
 translation: "to see you" or "to be with you"
 1 Thessalonians 2:18
 General Information:
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 1 Thessalonians 2:19
 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of pride in front of our Lord Jesus
 at his coming? Is it not you?
 Paul uses rhetorical questions to emphasize the reasons he
 wants to come see the Thessalonian believers. Alternate

translation: "For you are our hope, our joy, and our crown of pride in front our Lord Jesus at his coming."

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of pride in front of our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?

The Thessalonians are the reason that Paul and his fellow workers have hope and joy. Here "hope" means "certain expectation." Paul is certain that his work among them will be successful and that they will be with him at Christ's return. Alternate translation: "For what is the reason that we can be hopeful or joyful? What is our crown of pride in front of our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?" or "For you are the reason that we are hopeful and joyful. You are our crown of pride in front of our Lord Jesus at his coming."

For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of pride in front of our Lord Jesus

at his coming? Is it not you?

Here "crown" refers to a laurel wreath awarded to victorious athletes. Here it is a metaphor meaning that the Thessalonians are the symbol that Paul's work was successful. Paul will be proud of them when they stand before Christ. Alternate translation: "For what is the reason we are hopeful and joyful. What is the reason that we can be proud of what we accomplished when we stand before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you?" or "For you are the reason that we are hopeful and joyful. You are our reason for being proud of what we accomplished when we stand before our Lord Jesus at his coming."

1 Thessalonians 2:20

General Information:

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Chapter 3

1 Thessalonians 3 General Notes

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Links:

[1 Thessalonians 3:1 Notes](#)

1 Thessalonians 3

3:1-5

Why did Paul write 3:1-5?

Paul wrote 3:1-5 because he was worried about the Christians in Thessalonica. They were being persecuted. So he wanted to know more about what was happening to the Thessalonian Christians. He also wanted to comfort them and wanted them to be ready if they were persecuted again in the future.

See: Persecute (Persecution))

Why did Paul write that "it was good to be left behind"?

[3:1]

Paul wrote that "it was good to be left behind" to say two things: He needed to stay in Athens to serve God there. This was good. He was "left behind" when he sent Timothy to Thessalonica (3:2). He did this so that Timothy could discover what happened to the Thessalonian Christians. Therefore, Timothy could encourage them. This was also good.

Why did Paul write that he was "appointed" for "sufferings" and that he "suffered afflictions"?

[3:3, 3:4]

Paul wrote that he was "appointed" for "sufferings" and that he "suffered afflictions" because he wanted his readers to know that they might be persecuted. Jesus said people would persecute his followers (see: Mark 13:9-11). Therefore, Paul wrote that he was appointed for sufferings, or chosen to suffer, because he followed Jesus.

Some scholars think Paul wanted his readers to think that Christians suffered to fulfill prophecies. The first Christians thought Jesus was coming to earth again very soon. They also thought Christians would have to suffer before this happened. So Paul wrote about being "appointed" so his readers would think about these prophecies.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Jesus' Return to Earth; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Paul write "perhaps the tempter had somehow tempted you"?

[3:5]

Paul wrote "perhaps the tempter had somehow tempted you" so his readers would think about Satan. One of the things Satan does is to try to tempt Christians to stop believing in Jesus. He can do this when people persecute Christians. Satan can try to make them think that if they stop believing in Jesus, they will not suffer any longer. So Paul was afraid that the Thessalonian Christians might stop believing in Jesus.

See: Tempt (Temptation); Satan (The Devil); Persecute (Persecution)

3:6-10

What did Paul want to write in 3:6-10?

In 3:6-10, Paul wanted to write that Timothy returned to him. Timothy told Paul that the Thessalonian Christians continued to follow Jesus. This encouraged Paul and comforted him.

Why did Paul write "for now we live"?

[3:8]

Paul wrote "for now we live" to tell the Thessalonian Christians that he was encouraged by what Timothy told him. He wrote "for" so they would know that this was because of what he wrote before this. He wrote "now we live" to say that he was very strongly encouraged. He used a metaphor of life and death to write about how much he cared for the Thessalonian Christians.

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write "stand firm"?

[3:8]

Paul wrote "stand firm" to tell the Thessalonian Christians to keep believing in Jesus. He did not want to write that people should stop moving physically. Instead, he used a metaphor to write about following Jesus. He wanted to be sure the Thessalonian Christians did not stop believing in Jesus because they suffered. He wanted to know they did not follow people who taught the wrong things. He wanted his readers to know they could endure any sufferings.

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write "provide what is lacking in your faith"?

[3:10]

Paul wrote that he would "provide what is lacking in your faith" to write the Thessalonian Christians that he wanted to continue to teach them about God. Some scholars think he wrote about "what is lacking" to write that they still needed to learn more about God. Just before this, he wrote that he wanted to return to Thessalonica. Then, Paul could teach them more.

Other scholars think that Paul wanted to say what they believed about Jesus was not complete. That is, they needed to learn more about how to follow Jesus.

3:11-13

Why did Paul write "direct our way to you"?

[3:11]

Paul wrote "direct our way to you" to say that he prayed for God to make it possible for him to return to Thessalonica.

Why did Paul write "blameless in holiness"?

[3:13]

Paul wrote "blameless in holiness" to make the Thessalonian Christians know that they needed to follow Jesus completely. The word "blameless" means that nobody can say that a person did something wrong. That is, they cannot do things perfectly. Paul wrote "in holiness" to write that doing the right things should be because a person is following Jesus. That is, Christians should be "blameless" because they know they belong to God. So, they do no sin.

See: Sin

Why did Paul write "at the coming of our Lord Jesus"?

[3:13]

Paul wrote "at the coming of our Lord Jesus" so his readers would think about when Jesus returns.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Paul write "with all his holy people"?

[3:13]

Paul wrote "with all his holy people" to write that Jesus would not return alone. Scholars think different things about who are these "saints": Some scholars think the "holy people" in 3:13 are angels (see: Zechariah 14:5, 2 Thessalonians 1:7). Other scholars think Paul wrote about Christians (see: Romans 8:19). Some of these scholars think they are Christians who died. Other scholars think they are Christians that God will take to heaven before they die. Fewer scholars think Paul wrote "with all his holy people" to write that he prayed for God to "strengthen" the Thessalonian Christians the way he strengthens all Christians.

See: Holy Ones; Heaven; Angel

1 Thessalonians 3:1

we could no longer bear it

"we could no longer endure worrying about you"

good to be left behind at Athens alone

"good for Silvanus and me to stay behind in Athens"

it was good

"it was proper" or "it was reasonable"

Athens

Athens was a city in the the Roman province of Achaia [1 Thessalonians 1:7-8]

1 Thessalonians 3:2

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells the believers he has sent Timothy to strengthen their faith.

our brother and fellow worker

These two expressions both describe Timothy.

1 Thessalonians 3:3

no one would be shaken

To be shaken is an idiom for being afraid. Alternate translation: "no one would be frightened away from trusting in Christ"

we have been appointed

Paul assumes that everyone knows that it was God who appointed them. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "God has appointed us"

1 Thessalonians 3:4

Truly

This word marks that there is more to the truth than what

has just been said. Alternate translation: "Moreover" to suffer affliction
 "to be mistreated by others"
 1 Thessalonians 3:5
 I could no longer endure it
 Paul is describing his own emotions by using an idiom. Alternate translation: "I could not continue to wait patiently"
 I sent
 It is implied that Paul sent Timothy. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I sent Timothy" our labor
 "our hard work among you" or "our teaching among you" in vain
 "useless"
 1 Thessalonians 3:6
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul tells his readers what Timothy reported when he returned from visiting them.
 came to us
 The word "us" refers to Paul and Silvanus.
 the good news of your faith
 It is understood that this refers to faith in Christ. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "a good report of your faith"
 you always have good memories
 When they think of Paul, they always have good thoughts about him.
 you long to see us
 "you desire to see us"
 1 Thessalonians 3:7
 brothers
 Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.
 because of your faith
 This refers to faith in Christ. This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "because of your faith in Christ" in all our distress and affliction
 The word "affliction" explains why they are in "distress." Alternate translation: "in all our distress caused by our afflictions"
 1 Thessalonians 3:8
 we live
 This is an idiom that expresses living a satisfied life. Alternate translation: "we are very encouraged" if you stand firm in the Lord
 To "stand firm" is an idiom meaning to continue being faithful. Alternate translation: "if you continue to trust in

the Lord"
 1 Thessalonians 3:9
 For what thanks can we give to God for you, for all the joy that we have before our God over you?
 This rhetorical question can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "We cannot thank God enough for what he has done for you! We greatly rejoice over you when we pray to our God!"
 before our God
 Paul speaks as if he and his companions were physically in God's presence. He is probably referring to the activity of praying.
 1 Thessalonians 3:10
 very hard
 "ferently"
 see your face
 The word "face" refers to their whole person. Alternate translation: "visit you"
 1 Thessalonians 3:11
 May our God ... our Lord Jesus
 Paul includes the Thessalonian believers with his ministry team.
 May our God
 "We pray that our God"
 direct our way to you
 Paul speaks as if he wants God to show him and his companions the route to take to visit the Thessalonian Christians. He means that he wants God to make it possible for them to do so.
 direct our way to you
 The word "our" refers to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy but not the Thessalonian believers.
 Father himself
 Here "himself" refers back to "Father" for emphasis.
 1 Thessalonians 3:12
 increase and abound in love
 Paul speaks of love as an object that one could obtain more of.
 1 Thessalonians 3:13
 strengthen your hearts so that they will be
 Here "heart" is a metonym for one's beliefs and convictions. Alternate translation: "strengthen you so that you will be" at the coming of our Lord Jesus
 "when Jesus comes back to earth"
 with all his holy people
 "with all those who belong to him"

Chapter 4

1 Thessalonians 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Sexual immorality

Different cultures have different standards of sexual morality. These different cultural standards may make translating this passage difficult. Translators must also be aware of cultural taboos. These are topics considered improper to discuss.

Dying before the return of Christ

In the early church, people apparently wondered what would happen if a believer died before Christ returned. They may have worried whether those dying before Christ returned would be part of the kingdom of God. Paul answers that concern.

"Caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air"

This passage refers to a time when Jesus calls to himself those who have believed in him. Scholars differ on whether or not this refers to Christ's final glorious return. (See: believe)

Links:

[1 Thessalonians 4:1 Notes](#)

1 Thessalonians 4

4:1-8

Why did Paul write that the Thessalonian Christians must "walk and please God"?

[4:1]

When Paul wrote that the Thessalonian Christians must "walk and please God," he used a metaphor. He used this metaphor to speak about the things they needed to do. He wanted them to do the things that honored God.

Paul taught them to do these things when he lived in Thessalonica. He did not want them to stop doing these things because of false teachers.

See: Metaphor; Walk

Why did Paul write about teaching people "through the Lord Jesus"?

[4:2]

When Paul wrote about teaching people "through the Lord Jesus," he wanted the Thessalonian Christians to know that the things he taught them came from the Lord himself. Paul did not invent them. Nor did other humans invent them.

What did Paul want to write the Thessalonian Christians in verses 4:3-8?

In 4:3-8, Paul wanted to write the Thessalonian Christians that when a person believes in Jesus, it will cause them to do things differently in their lives. He did not want them to do the same things that those who do not believe in Jesus do.

They also needed to do sexual things differently. Because they believed in Jesus, they needed to be sexually pure.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Sexual Immorality

Why did Paul write "your sanctification"?

[4:3]

When Paul wrote "your sanctification," he wanted to write that God wants Christians to be holy people (see: Romans 1:7, 1 Peter 1:16). That is, he wanted them to do things that honor God. Paul did not want to tell readers that they can make themselves holy. Instead, he wanted them to ask God to make them holy. God can help them to want to do things that honor him.

Some scholars think that God sanctifies Christians during a long period of time. Other scholars think that God can sanctify Christians completely at one time when those Christians give themselves completely to Jesus. Still other scholars think that both of these things are true.

See: Sanctify (Sanctification); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

Why did Paul write "possess his own vessel"?

[4:4]

Paul used a metaphor when he wrote "possess his own vessel." This metaphor was used to tell the Thessalonian Christians that they needed to control the things that they did. He wrote "vessel" to get them to think about their bodies.

He wrote "possess" to say that God wants Christians to choose to do the things that honor God.

Paul wanted the Thessalonian Christians to control certain things. He did not want them to sin sexually. He especially wanted the men not to do this.

Advice to translators: The word "vessel" can be translated as wife or male organ. Some scholars think that Paul wanted to say that Christian men need to marry a wife. More scholars think Paul wrote about people controlling the things that they did as well as the things they did sexually.

See: Metaphor; Sexual Immorality

Why did Paul write that "the Lord is an avenger in all these things"?

[4:6]

Paul wrote that "the Lord is an avenger in all these things." He wanted to write the Thessalonian Christians so they would know how important were the things he wrote in 4:1-5. If a person were to harm another Christian in some way, Paul wrote them that God sees these things and will avenge the wrong thing that was done (see: Psalm 94:1). This is because Christians are also God's family members. This was most important for how Christians act sexually.

See: Family of God; Sexual Immorality

Why did Paul write "holiness"?

[4:7]

Paul wrote "holiness" so the Thessalonian Christians would think about God. God is holy. God wants Christians to become holy. God can make Christians holy. This is the opposite of "uncleanness".

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Clean and Unclean

4:9-12

Who were "all the brothers who are in all Macedonia"?

[4:10]

The "brothers who are in all Macedonia" were Christians who lived north of Greece. Macedonia is a place north of Greece. The Christians who lived there were very poor. The Thessalonian Christians sent them money to help them.

See: Family of God

See Map: Greece and surrounding regions

Why did Paul write that Christians should "walk properly before outsiders"?

[4:12]

Paul used a metaphor when he wrote that the Thessalonian Christians must "walk properly before outsiders." He used this to tell them that they needed to do the things that honor God, especially when non-Christians see them. He wanted them to do these things so that those who do not believe in Jesus would know about the things that they did. Then those people would think about God. They might believe in Jesus and change the things that they did.

See: Metaphor; Walk

4:13-18

Why did Paul write "those who sleep" and "those who have fallen asleep"?

[4:13, 4:14, 4:15]

Paul wrote "those who sleep" (4:13) and "those who have fallen asleep" (4:14,15) This was a metaphor. It was used to talk about people who had died. He wrote "sleep" and "fallen asleep" to write that Christians who die will be resurrected. God will resurrect them in the same way Jesus was resurrected. He did not want the Thessalonian Christians to worry about people they loved who died.

See: Metaphor; Sleep (Metaphor) ; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did Paul write "the rest who do not have hope"?

[4:13]

Paul wanted to write about people who did not believe in Jesus when he wrote "the rest who do not have hope." Paul wanted the Thessalonian Christians to remember that they could know that God would resurrect them. Then they would be with God in heaven forever. This was because Jesus was resurrected, and they believed in him. People who do not believe in Jesus will not live with God forever.

See: Hope; Resurrect (Resurrection); Heaven

Why did Paul write "by the word of the Lord"?

[4:15]

When Paul wrote "by the word of the Lord," he wanted to write that he wrote what God told him to write. It was not his own thoughts. He wrote this so the Thessalonian Christians would know what he was saying was very important. Why did Paul write "at the coming of the Lord" (4:15)?

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

What is an "archangel"?

[4:16]

An "archangel" is a special kind of angel.

See: Angel

Why did Paul write "the dead in Christ"?

[4:16] Paul wrote "the dead in Christ" to write about Christians who died. He wrote "in Christ" to say that these people believed in Jesus before they died.

See: In Christ

Why did Paul write that the dead in Christ "will rise first" (4:16) and "be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air"?

[4:17]

When Paul wrote that the dead in Christ "will rise first" (4:16) and "be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (4:17), he wanted readers to think about how Jesus will return to earth. Some scholars think Paul wrote about things that will actually happen when Jesus returns. Scholars call this "the rapture." Other scholars think Paul used metaphors. They think he was not able to actually write about what would happen. This is because it will not be similar to anything that has happened in the past.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Rapture; Kingdom of God; Metaphor

1 Thessalonians 4:1

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.

we earnestly appeal to you and exhort you

Paul uses "earnestly appeal to" and "exhort" to emphasize

how strongly they exhort the believers. Alternate translation: "we strongly exhort you"

you received instructions from us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we taught you"

you must walk

Here "walk" is an expression for the way one is to live.

Alternate translation: "you ought to live"

1 Thessalonians 4:2

through the Lord Jesus

Paul speaks of his instructions as if they were given by Jesus himself.

1 Thessalonians 4:3

you avoid sexual immorality

"you stay away from sexually immoral acts"

1 Thessalonians 4:4

knows how to possess his own vessel

Possible meanings are 1) "know how to live with his own wife" or 2) "know how to control his own body"

1 Thessalonians 4:5

in the passion of lust

"with wrongful sexual desire"

1 Thessalonians 4:6

no man

Here "man" refers to a man or a woman. "no one" or "no person"

transgress and wrong his brother

Possible meanings: 1) The words "transgress" and "wrong" are a doublet that emphasizes the idea of harming the brother. Alternate translation: "do very wrong things to his brother" 2) The word "transgress" refers to sinning against God, and "wrong his brother" refers to harming the brother. Alternate translation: "do what God had forbidden and wrong his brother"

the Lord is an avenger

This can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the Lord will punish the one who transgressed and will defend the one who was wronged"

forewarned you and testified

"told you beforehand and strongly warned against"

1 Thessalonians 4:7

God did not call us to uncleanness, but to holiness

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God called us to cleanness and holiness"

God did not call us

The word "us" refers to all believers.

1 Thessalonians 4:8

he who rejects this

"whoever disregards this teaching" or "whoever ignores this teaching"

rejects not people, but God

Paul stresses that this teaching is not from man, but from God.

1 Thessalonians 4:9

brotherly love

"love for fellow believers"

1 Thessalonians 4:10

you do this for all the brothers who are in all Macedonia

"you show love to the believers throughout Macedonia"

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.

1 Thessalonians 4:11

to aspire

"to try to"

live quietly

Paul uses the word "quietly" as a metaphor to describe living at peace in one's community and not causing strife.

Alternate translation: "live in a calm and orderly way"

take care of your own responsibilities

"do your own work" or "take care of the things that you are responsible for" or "do the things that you are responsible to do." This may also imply that we should not gossip and interfere in other people's concerns.

labor with your hands

This is a metaphor for living a productive life. Alternate translation: "work at your own jobs to earn what you need to live"

1 Thessalonians 4:12

walk properly

Here "walk" is a metaphor for "live" or "behave." Alternate translation: "behave properly"

properly

in a way that shows respect to others and earns their respect

before outsiders

Paul speaks of those who do not believe in Christ as if they are outside, in a place away from the believers. Alternate translation: "in the sight of those who do not believe in Christ"

1 Thessalonians 4:13

General Information:

Paul talks about believers who have died, those who are now alive, and those who will be alive when Christ returns. We do not want you to be uninformed

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "We want you to be informed" or "We want you to know"

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.

those who sleep

Here "sleep" is a euphemism for being dead. Alternate translation: "those who have died"

so that you do not grieve like the rest

"because we do not want you grieve like the rest"

grieve

mourn, be sad about something

like the rest, who do not have hope

Here "hope" means a certainty about the future. What those people do not have confidence about can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "like people who do not have confidence in the future promise" or "like the people who are not sure that they will rise from the dead"

1 Thessalonians 4:14

if we believe

Here "we" refers to Paul and his audience.

rose again

"rose to live again"

those who have fallen asleep in him

Here "fallen asleep" is a polite way to refer to having died.

1 Thessalonians 4:15

by the word of the Lord

"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate translation: "by means of understanding the teachings of the Lord"

at the coming of the Lord
"when the Lord returns"
1 Thessalonians 4:16
the Lord himself will descend
"the Lord himself will come down"
the archangel
"the chief angel"
the dead in Christ will rise first
The "dead in Christ" are those believers who have passed away. Alternate translation: "those who believe in Jesus Christ, but who have already died, will rise first"

1 Thessalonians 4:17
we who are alive
Here "we" refers to all believers who have not died.
with them
The word "them" refers to the dead believers who were made alive again.
be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air
"meet the Lord Jesus in the sky"
1 Thessalonians 4:18
General Information:
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Chapter 5

1 Thessalonians 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul concludes his letter in a way that was typical of letters in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Day of the Lord

The exact time of the coming day of the Lord will be a surprise to the world. This is what the simile "like a thief in the night" means. Because of this, Christians are to live prepared for the coming of the Lord.

Quench the Spirit

To quench the Spirit is to ignore or work against the Holy Spirit's guidance and work.

Links:

[1 Thessalonians 5:1 Notes](#)

1 Thessalonians 5

5:1-11

Why did Paul write "times and seasons"?

[5:1]

When Paul wrote "times and seasons," he wanted his readers to think about when the end of the world would come. This was a common way of saying 'some time in the future.'

See: 1 Thessalonians 5

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Paul write "the day of the Lord is coming like a thief in the night"?

[5:2]

When Paul wrote "the day of the Lord," he wanted his readers to think about the end of the world. That is, he wrote about when Jesus would return to earth at the end of the world.

Paul used the metaphor "coming like a thief in the night" to write that no one but God knows the exact time when this will happen. Thieves come so quietly that no one sees them. So Paul wanted to write that Jesus would return quietly. Nobody will know in advance when he is coming.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Day of the Lord; Rapture; Kingdom of God

What did Paul want his readers to know in 5:3?

[5:3]

In 5:3, Paul wanted his readers to know that the end of the world will come suddenly, without anyone knowing that it is coming. Everyone will see God's power. Paul used the metaphor of a pregnant woman ready to have her baby. She will have pain when the baby is born. She does not know when the pains will start. The day of the Lord will be similar to this. No one knows when this will happen. There will be pain. Also, when it starts, people will not be able to get away from it.

See: Metaphor; Last Days; Day of the Lord

Who were the "sons of the light and sons of the day"?

[5:5]

"Sons of the light and sons of the day" are people who do the things that God wants them to do. They believe in God. They follow God's will. Light and day are two metaphors. They are for believing in God and doing the things that honor God.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Will of God

Who were the "sons of the of night or the darkness"?

[5:5]

"Sons of the night or the darkness" are people who do evil things. They do not believe in God. Often, evil happens at night or in the darkness. So Paul wrote about night and darkness as two metaphors for people doing evil.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why did Paul write "let us not sleep as the rest do"?

[5:6]

Paul wrote the metaphor "let us not sleep" to write about people who are not looking for Jesus' return. He wanted readers to think about non-Christians who do not care about God. He wanted readers not to be like those people.

Advice to translators: This is a metaphor using the word "sleep." But it is a different metaphor than Paul used in 4:13-15.

In those verses, he wrote "sleep" to speak about death. In 5:6, he wrote "sleep" to speak about people not seeing or understanding something that is happening.

See: Metaphor; Sleep (Metaphor)

Why did Paul write "we belong to the day"?

[5:8]

Paul wrote "we belong to the day." This was the same metaphor as in 5:5.

Why did Paul write about a "breastplate" and "helmet"?

[5:8]

Paul used the metaphors "breastplate" and "helmet" to talk about how Christians need to defend themselves from Satan.

A breastplate was a piece of heavy metal armor that soldiers wore so their chest and stomach would not be harmed during battle. A helmet was a metal covering that was placed on top of the head. It stopped the head from being harmed during a battle. So Paul wanted readers to keep believing in Jesus to defend themselves against wrong thoughts or false teaching. He also wanted them to keep trusting God in order to defend themselves.

See: Metaphor; Satan (The Devil)

Why did Paul write about people "appointed to...wrath"?

[5:9]

Paul wanted readers to think about people who refuse to believe in Jesus when he wrote about people "appointed to...wrath." God does not save these people from their sins. This is because they do not believe in him. That is, he will treat them with "wrath" or punish them. This will happen when God judges all people.

Some scholars think that Paul wanted to write that God chose which people he would save and which he would not save before he created the world when he wrote "appointed." Other scholars think he wanted to write that God decided that he would save all people who believe in Jesus. But these scholars do not think God chose the specific people who would or would not believe in Jesus. Still other scholars think that God decides to save people when they choose to believe in Jesus. But these scholars do not think that God chose those people before he created the world.

See: Elect (Election); Judge (Judgment); Wrath; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin

5:12-28

What did Paul write about in 5:12-28?

In 5:12-28, Paul wrote about the things Christians need to do. Paul often ended his letters by telling Christians what they needed to do. Who did Paul write about in 5:12-13? In 5:12-13, Paul wrote about church leaders. He told readers to honor their church leaders.

Why did Paul write that Christians should "not quench the Spirit"?

[5:19]

Paul wanted Christians to know that they could disappoint God when he wrote that Christians should "not quench the Spirit." They do this by disobeying God and not doing the things he has commanded. Paul did not want anyone to stop the work of the Spirit in Thessalonica.

He also wanted them to know that there are false teachers. The Spirit could also be quenched if Christians believed what the false teachers taught.

See: Holy Spirit

Why did Paul write?

[5:21]

In 5:21, Paul wrote "test all things." He wanted to write the Thessalonian Christians that they needed to know what is true or false. Christians needed to read Scripture to know whether or not the things people tell them are true or not. If not, the Christian needed to not listen to what they heard. Paul wrote "hold onto what is good" to write that Christians needed to always do the things that are in the Bible.

5:23

Who is the "God of peace"?

[5:23]

The "God of peace" is God. Paul wrote "God of peace" to tell readers that God wants them not to be worried. Paul was not writing about a different God.

Why did Paul write "make you completely holy"?

[5:23]

Paul wanted his readers to know that God will completely sanctify Christians when he wrote "make you completely holy."

Some scholars think Paul wrote about God doing this after the Christian dies. God will make Christians holy so they can live together with God forever in heaven. Other scholars think Paul wrote about God doing this while the person is alive. This happens when Christians try to completely serve God. Then the Christian will not want to sin. They will also be holy so they can live together with God in heaven forever.

See: Sanctify (Sanctification); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Heaven

Why did Paul write "be preserved without blame"?

[5:23] Paul wanted readers not to sin when he wrote "be preserved without blame." Sin brings "blame" and guilt. But God wants Christians to continue to be blameless. They do this by not sinning. They do this by honoring God instead of sinning.

See: Sin

What is "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

[5:23]

"The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" is the time when Jesus will return to earth.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

What was a "holy kiss"?

[5:26]

A "holy kiss" was the way Christians often greeted each other when Paul was alive. Many people would greet family members or close friends with a light kiss on the mouth. Christians often did this to greet other Christians. This was not the same way a husband and wife kiss.

1 Thessalonians 5:1

General Information:

In this chapter the words "we" and "us" refer to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, unless otherwise noted. Also, the word "you" is plural and refers to the believers at the church of Thessalonica.

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues talking about the day Jesus will come back. concerning the times and seasons

This is a figurative expression which states the same idea twice. It refers to the time when the Lord Jesus will return. Alternate Translation: "the exact time that the Lord will return."

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.

1 Thessalonians 5:2

perfectly well

"very well" or "accurately"

like a thief in the night

Just as one does not know which night a thief may come, we do not know when the day of the Lord will come.

Alternate translation: "unexpectedly"

1 Thessalonians 5:3

When they say

"When the people say"

then sudden destruction

"then unexpected destruction"

like birth pains in a pregnant woman

Just as a pregnant woman's birth pains come suddenly and do not stop until the birth is complete, the destruction will come, and people will not escape.

1 Thessalonians 5:4

you, brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.

are not in darkness

Paul speaks of evil and ignorance about God as if they were darkness. Alternate translation: "you are not unknowing, like people who live in the dark"

so that the day would overtake you like a thief

The Lord will come on a day when believers will not expect him to come, but that day will not "overtake" them—God will not destroy them on that day—because they will be ready for Jesus to return.

1 Thessalonians 5:5

For you are all sons of the light and sons of the day

Paul speaks of the truth as if it were light and day. Alternate translation: "For you know the truth, like people who live in the light, like people during the day"

We are not sons of the night or the darkness

Paul speaks of evil and ignorance about God as if they were darkness. Alternate translation: We are not unknowing, like people who live in the darkness, like people at night"

1 Thessalonians 5:6

let us not sleep as the rest do

Paul speaks of spiritual unawareness as if it were sleep.

Alternate translation: "let us not be like others who are not aware that Jesus is coming back"

let us

The word "us" refers to all believers.

keep watch and be sober

Paul describes spiritual awareness as the opposite of sleep and drunkenness.

1 Thessalonians 5:7

For those who sleep do so at night

Just as when people sleep and do not know what is happening, so the people of this world do not know that Christ will return.

those who get drunk do so at night

Paul is stating that it is at night when people become drunk, so when people are unaware of Christ's return they do not live a self-controlled life.

1 Thessalonians 5:8

General Information:

In verses 8-10 the word "we" refers to all believers.

we belong to the day

Paul speaks of knowing the truth about God as belonging to the day. Alternate translation: "we know the truth" or "we have received the light of truth"

we must stay sober

Paul compares being sober to exercising self-control.

Alternate translation: "let us exercise self-control"

put on faith and love as a breastplate

As a soldier would put on a breastplate to protect his body, a believer who lives by faith and love will find protection.

Alternate translation: "protect ourselves with faith and love" or "protect ourselves by trusting Christ and loving him"

the hope of salvation for our helmet

Here "hope of salvation" means a certainty that Jesus will save his people. Here "helmet" is a metaphor. As a helmet protects a soldier's head, assurance of salvation protects the believer. Alternate translation: "protect ourselves by being certain that Christ will save us"

1 Thessalonians 5:9

General Information:

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1 Thessalonians 5:10

whether we are awake or asleep

These are polite ways of saying alive or dead. Alternate translation: "whether we are alive or dead"

1 Thessalonians 5:11

build each other up

Here "build" is a metaphor that means encourage. Alternate translation: "encourage each other"

1 Thessalonians 5:12

General Information:

Paul begins to give his final instructions to the church in Thessalonica.

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow believers.

to acknowledge those who labor

"to esteem and appreciate those who are involved in leading"

who rule over you in the Lord

This refers to people God appointed to serve as leaders of the local group of believers.

1 Thessalonians 5:13

esteem them highly in love because of their work

Paul exhorts the believers to respect and love their church leaders.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

General Information:

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1 Thessalonians 5:15

General Information:

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1 Thessalonians 5:16

Rejoice always

Paul is exhorting the believers to maintain a spiritual attitude of rejoicing in all things.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray without ceasing

Paul is exhorting the believers to be vigilant in prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

In everything give thanks

Paul is exhorting the believers to express thankfulness in all things.

In everything

In all circumstances

For this is the will of God

Paul is referring to the behavior he just mentioned as being God's will for the believers.

1 Thessalonians 5:19

Do not quench the Spirit

"Do not stop the Holy Spirit from working among you"

1 Thessalonians 5:20

Do not despise prophecies

"Do not have contempt for prophecies" or "Do not hate anything the Holy Spirit tells someone"

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Test all things

"Make sure that all messages that seem to come from God truly come from him"

Hold firmly to what is good

Paul speaks of messages from the Holy Spirit as if they were objects that one could grasp in his hands.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

sanctify you completely

This refers to God making a person sinless and perfect in his sight.

May your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless

Here the phrase "spirit, soul, and body" represents the whole person. If your language does not have three words for these parts you can state it as "your whole life" or "you."

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"May God make your whole life without sin" or "May God keep you completely blameless"

1 Thessalonians 5:24

Faithful is he who calls you

"He is faithful who calls you"

the one who will also do it

"he will be helping you"

1 Thessalonians 5:25

General Information:

Paul gives his closing statements.

1 Thessalonians 5:26

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians.

1 Thessalonians 5:27

I command you by the Lord to have this letter read

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I urge you, as if the Lord were speaking to you, to have people read this letter" or "With the authority of the Lord, I direct you to read this letter"

1 Thessalonians 5:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Introduction to 2 Thessalonians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 Thessalonians

Greetings and thanksgiving (1:1-3) Christians suffering from persecution They are worthy of the kingdom of God and of his promise of relief from trials (1:4-7) God will judge those who persecute Christians (1:8-12)
Some believers' misunderstanding about the second coming of Christ Christ's return has not yet happened (2:1-2)
Instruction about the events that will precede the return of Christ (2:3-12)
Paul's confidence that God will save the Thessalonian Christians His call to "stand firm" (2:13-15) His prayer that God will comfort them (2:16-17)
Paul requests that the Thessalonian believers pray for him (3:1-5) Paul give commands about idle believers (3:6-15)
Closing (3:16-17)

Who wrote 2 Thessalonians?

Paul wrote 2 Thessalonians. He was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.
Paul wrote this letter while staying in the city of Corinth.

What is the Book of 2 Thessalonians about?

Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the city of Thessalonica. He encouraged the believers because they were being persecuted. He told them to continue living in a way that pleased God. And he wanted to teach them again about Christ's return.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 Thessalonians" or "Second Thessalonians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Thessalonica," or "The Second Letter to the Christians in Thessalonica."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the "second coming" of Jesus?

Paul wrote much in this letter about Jesus's eventual return to Earth. When Jesus returns, he will judge all mankind. He will also rule over creation. And he will cause there to be peace everywhere. Paul also explained that a "man of lawlessness" will come before Christ's return. This person will obey Satan and cause many people to oppose God. But Jesus will destroy this person when he returns.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 2 Thessalonians?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"and the man of lawlessness is revealed" (2:3). The ULB and most modern translations read this way. Older versions have, "and the man of sin is revealed." "For God chose you as the firstfruits for salvation" (2:13) The ULB and some other translations read this way. Other versions have, "For God chose you from the first for salvation."

Chapter 1

2 Thessalonians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Verses 1-2 formally introduce this letter. Letters in the ancient Near East commonly had introductions of this type.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. A paradox occurs in verses 4-5: "We talk about your patience and faith in all your persecutions. We talk about the afflictions that you endure. This is a sign of God's righteous judgment." People would not normally think that believing in God while being persecuted is a sign of God's righteous judgment. But in verses 5-10, Paul explains how God will reward those who believe in him and how he will judge those who afflict them. ([2 Thessalonians 1:4-5](#))

Links:

[2 Thessalonians 1:1 Notes](#)

2 Thessalonians intro](../front/intro.md) | [[>>](#)]

2 Thessalonians 1 Commentary

1:1-2

Who were Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy?

[1:1]

Silvanus and Timothy traveled with Paul often. Silvanus was also known as Silas. Silas often wrote the things Paul said in letters to be sent to the churches. Paul taught Timothy and they were good friends.

See: Church; Disciple

See Map: Thessalonica and Greece

1:3-10

Why did Paul write that he and the people travelling with him "should always give thanks"?

[1:3]

Paul wrote that he and the people travelling with him "should always give thanks" for the Thessalonian Christians. He wrote this for several reasons:

Paul was thankful all the time for love and gifts that the church in Thessalonica sent to him. He thanked God that they loved God more and more. He thanked God that they loved each other more and more. Paul also wanted them to give thanks even when other people persecuted them. People told Paul good news about the things being done by the Thessalonian Christians. So Paul was very happy when he wrote this. He wanted to encourage them to continue to do good things. Paul usually started his letters by giving thanks to God. He wanted to start this letter that way also.

See: Church; Persecute (Persecution)

What are "persecutions" and "afflictions"?

[1:4]

"Persecutions" and "afflictions" are two words that mean to harm someone in some way for believing in certain things. Paul told his readers that they will be persecuted and will suffer because they believed in Jesus. However, he wanted them to know that God would bless them because they were persecuted and suffered because they obeyed God (see: 1:5, 1:7; 1 Peter 1:7, 2:20).

See: Persecute (Persecution); Bless (Blessing)

What is "the appearing of the Lord Jesus from heaven"?

[1:7]

Paul wrote "the appearing of the Lord Jesus from heaven" because he wanted his readers to think about when Jesus will return to earth.

See: Heaven; Jesus' Return to Earth

What are "the angels of his power"?

[1:7]

Paul wrote "the angels of his power" because he wanted his readers to think about Jesus, who is the king of the universe (see: Philippians 2:11; Revelation 1:5-8). He has angels serving him because he is the king of the universe. They will come with him when he returns to earth.

See: Angel; Kingdom of God; Jesus' Return to Earth

Who did Paul write about in 1:8-9?

[1:8, 1:9]

In 1:8-9, Paul wrote about the people who persecuted Christians (1:6). Paul wrote the Thessalonian Christians that God knew what happened to them and will severely punish the people who persecuted them.

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Why did Paul write "glory" and "glorified"?

[1:9, 1:10]

See: Glory (Glorify)

1:11-12

Why did Paul write about "calling"?

[1:11]

Paul wrote about "calling" to write about what God wanted for the Thessalonian Christians. Paul wanted them to do the things that honored God. He wanted them to do these things because God saved them. God did this because they believed in Jesus. All of this is how God called the Thessalonian Christians to himself. He also calls all Christians this way.

See: Call (Calling); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did Paul write "glorified"?

[1:12]

In 1:12, Paul wrote the word "glorified" to say two things:

He wanted Christians to honor Jesus by doing the right things. He wanted to say that Jesus will share his love and righteousness with Christians. He does this because of how God loves Christians. Most scholars think Paul wanted to write about Jesus doing this after he returns to earth. Some scholars think that Jesus also shares these things with Christians before then.

See: Glory (Glorify); Righteous (Righteousness); Jesus' Return to Earth

2 Thessalonians 1:1

General Information:

Paul is the author of this letter, but he includes Silvanus and Timothy as senders of the letter. He begins by greeting the church at Thessalonica. The words "we" and "us" refer to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, unless otherwise noted. Also, the word "you" is plural and refers to the believers at the church of Thessalonica.

Silvanus

This is the Latin form of "Silas." He is the same person listed in the book of Acts as Paul's fellow traveler.

2 Thessalonians 1:2

Grace to you

Paul commonly uses this greeting in his letters.

2 Thessalonians 1:3

General Information:

Paul gives thanks for the believers in Thessalonica.

We should always give thanks to God

Paul uses "always" as a generalization meaning "often" or "regularly. The sentence emphasizes the greatness of what God is doing in the lives of the Thessalonian believers.

Alternate translation: "We should often give thanks to God" brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

the love each of you has for one another increases

"you sincerely love one another"

one another

Here "one another" means fellow Christians.

2 Thessalonians 1:4

we ourselves

Here "ourselves" is used to emphasize Paul's boasting.

2 Thessalonians 1:5

you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will consider you worthy to be part of his kingdom"

2 Thessalonians 1:6

Connecting Statement:

As Paul continues, he talks about God being just.

it is righteous for God

"God is right" or "God is just"

for God to return affliction to those who afflict you

Here "to return" is a metaphor that means to cause

someone to experience the same thing they did to someone

else. Alternate translation: "for God to afflict those who afflict you"

2 Thessalonians 1:7

and relief to you

These words continue the description of what God is right "to return" to people

relief to you

"for God to provide relief to you"

2 Thessalonians 1:8

in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who

"punishing with blazing fire those who do not know God and those who"

2 Thessalonians 1:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Thessalonians 1:10

when he comes on that day

Here "that day" is the day when Jesus will return to the world.

to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at by all those who believed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that his holy people will glorify him and all those who believed will marvel at him" or "so that his people will glorify him and all those who believed will stand in awe of him"

2 Thessalonians 1:11

we also pray continually for you

Paul is emphasizing how often he prays for them. Alternate translation: "we also pray regularly for you" or "we continue to pray for you"

calling

Here "calling" refers to God appointing or choosing people to be his children and servants and to proclaim his message of salvation through Jesus.

fulfill every good purpose

"make you able to do good in every way that you desire"

2 Thessalonians 1:12

that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that you may glorify the name of our Lord Jesus"

and you in him

You may need to make explicit who will glorify the readers.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"and Jesus will glorify you"
according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ

"because God and the Lord Jesus Christ have given grace to
you"

Chapter 2

2 Thessalonians 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

"Being gathered together to be with him"

This passage refers to a time when Jesus calls to himself those who have believed in him. Scholars differ on whether or not this refers to Christ's final glorious return. (See: believe)

Man of lawlessness

This is the same as "son of destruction" and "lawless one" in this chapter. Paul associates him with Satan, who is actively working in the world. (See: antichrist)

Sits in the temple of God

Paul could be referring to the Jerusalem temple that the Romans destroyed several years after he wrote this letter. Or he could be referring to a future physical temple, or to the church as the spiritual temple of God.

Links:

[2 Thessalonians 2:1 Notes](#)

2 Thessalonians 2

2:1-3a

Why did Paul write "coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

[2:1]

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Paul write the Christians in Thessalonica not to be "disturbed" and "troubled"?

[2:2]

Paul wrote the Christians in Thessalonica not to be "disturbed" and "troubled" because he did not want them to be afraid. To be disturbed or troubled is to worry and fear in some way. Paul heard that the Thessalonian Christians feared that Jesus had returned already and did not take them with him. They did not understand because some people taught them the wrong things. So Paul wrote them that Jesus had not yet returned. So they did not need to fear.

It was not strange that they were disturbed and troubled. Many difficult things were happening to them. These things seemed to be the things in which Jesus talked about would happen at the end of the world. However, these things were not the end of the world. So Paul did not want the Thessalonians to fear or doubt Jesus' return.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

2:3b-6

Why did Paul write "the falling away"?

[2:3]

Some scholars think Paul wrote "the falling away" because he wanted his readers not to stop believing in Jesus. Scholars call it "apostasy" when someone stops believing in Jesus. Other scholars think Paul was speaking about people who stopped obeying God. Paul used the metaphor of falling to talk about this. He wanted his readers to think about believing in Jesus or obeying Jesus as if they had reached a high place. It would be as if they fell from that high place to a lower place if they stopped believing in or obeying Jesus.

Still other scholars think that Paul was speaking about a time when most people would do evil things. They rejected God by rejecting all of the people God gave permission to rule over them (see: Romans 13:1-7).

See: Metaphor; Fall (Fall Away, Stand)

Who was the person Paul told the Thessalonians to avoid?

[2:3, 2:4, 2:5, 2:6]

Paul told the Thessalonians to avoid "the man of lawlessness" (2:3) (see: Revelation 13; Daniel 7). This is a person who will try to make Christians stop believing in Jesus and will do many evil things. Many people will try to make Christians stop believing in or obeying Jesus. However, this is someone who is more powerful than other people. Paul also called him "the son of destruction" or "the man of sin" (2:3).

Scholars disagree about who is this person. Some scholars think Paul wanted his readers to think about the "antichrist." John wrote about the antichrist (see: 1 John 2, 2 John). Other scholars think Paul wanted his readers to think about the Roman emperor. Some Roman emperors called themselves gods. They wanted Christians to believe in them instead of Jesus. Other scholars think that Paul wrote about a bad person who is written about in Jewish history. Still other scholars think Paul wanted to use a metaphor of a person to talk about a way of thinking in wrong ways.

Advice to translators: When there is lawlessness, people live as if there are no rules about what to do and what not to do.

They do whatever they want to do. This is evil because there are certain things that God tells people not to do.

See: Antichrist; Metaphor

2:7-12

What was "the mystery of lawlessness"?

[2:7]

Paul wrote "the mystery of lawlessness" because he wanted to write about evil in the world. He wrote "lawlessness" so his readers would think about sin. He also wanted them to think about rebellion against God. Many people in the world sin and rebel against God.

Paul wrote "mystery" to speak about things that are hard to understand. But Christians can understand these things because they believe in Jesus. He did not write "mystery" to speak about something secret or hidden.

So Paul wrote about people sinning and rebelling against God for reasons that they did not understand when he wrote about "the mystery of lawlessness." However, Christians could understand them.

Some scholars think Paul also wanted to write about the "man of lawlessness" (see: 2:3). These scholars think that this man caused people to sin and rebel against God. That is, he caused the "lawlessness." These scholars think Paul wrote "mystery" to say that Christians could understand that this man caused the lawlessness.

Advice to translators: When there is lawlessness, people live as if there are no rules about what to do and what not to do. They do whatever they want to do. This is evil because there are certain things that God tells people not to do.

See: Sin; Mystery

Who was "someone who restrains him"?

[2:7]

Paul wrote "someone who restrains him" so his readers would know that "lawlessness" did not completely control the world. This is because a powerful person or thing stopped this.

Scholars disagree about who was this person or thing. Some scholars think it was the Holy Spirit. That is, it was God.

Some scholars think it was people preaching the gospel about Jesus (see: Mark 13:10). Some scholars think Paul wanted readers to think about the different leaders who helped to rule parts of the world (see: Romans 13:1-7). Some scholars think Paul spoke about angels who serve God.

Advice to translators: When there is lawlessness, people live as if there are no rules about what to do and what not to do.

They do whatever they want to do. This is evil because there are certain things that God tells people not to do.

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Angel

Why did Paul write "until he is taken out of the way"?

[2:7]

Paul wrote "until he is taken out of the way" to write that at some period of time the "lawlessness" will end. Jesus will end it (see: 2:8-9).

Advice to translators: When there is lawlessness, people live as if there are no rules about what to do and what not to do.

They do whatever they want to do. This is evil because there are certain things that God tells people not to do.

Who is "the lawless one"?

[2:8]

Paul wrote "the lawless one" because he wanted to write about a person who did things for Satan on earth (see: 2:9). This person will deceive other people. He will do things that are against God. Some scholars think this is the same person as the "man of lawlessness" (see: 2:3-6), that is, the antichrist. Other scholars think it is a different person doing things for Satan.

Advice to translators: When there is lawlessness, people live as if there are no rules about what to do and what not to do.

They do whatever they want to do. This is evil because there are certain things that God tells people not to do.

See: Satan (The Devil); Antichrist

Why did Paul write "kill him" and "bring him to nothing"?

[2:8]

Paul taught that when Jesus returns to earth, he will kill the lawless one. He will also destroy the power the lawless one uses.

Scholars do not agree how Jesus will kill the lawless one. Some scholars say Jesus will kill the lawless one by the "breath of his mouth." That is, he will kill him by speaking a word. Other scholars think "breath of his mouth" is a metaphor for God's power. These scholars think Paul wanted to write that God's power is much greater than Satan's power. It is so much greater that Jesus can kill this man as easily as a person breathes.

Paul wrote that Jesus will destroy the power the lawless one uses by "the revelation of his coming." That is, Jesus will bring with him all of God's power and glory when he returns to earth. This will be so great that nobody can fight against it. Even Satan cannot fight against it. So Jesus will defeat Satan and people who served Satan.

Advice to translators: When there is lawlessness, people live as if there are no rules about what to do and what not to do. They do whatever they want to do. This is evil because there are certain things that God tells people not to do.

See: Antichrist; Metaphor; Jesus' Return to Earth; Satan (The Devil); Glory (Glorify)

Why did Paul write "revelation of his coming"?

[2:8]

Paul wrote "revelation of his coming" to make his readers think about Jesus' return to earth. The "revelation" is that everyone will see Jesus when he comes back to earth. Everyone will know that he is rules everything.

See: Reveal (Revelation); Jesus' Return to Earth

Who are "those who are perishing"?

[2:10]

"Those who are perishing" are people who do not believe in Jesus. These people will "perish" or die because they "did not receive the love of the truth for them to be saved." That is, they hear the truth about Jesus, but they do not believe in him. Instead, they continue to do wrong things (see: 2:12). God will not save these people from their sins because they do not believe in Jesus (see: 2:12).

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What did Paul want his readers to think when they read 2:11?

[2:11]

Paul wrote 2:11 because he wanted his readers to think about how God will punish people who rebel against him. That is, God will not punish them because he hates them. Instead, he will punish them because they rebel against him. They also rebel against him by doing wrong things and not believing in Jesus (see: 2:12).

2:13-17

Who did Paul write about in 2:13?

[2:13]

Scholars disagree about who Paul wrote about in 2:13. Some scholars think he wrote about the Christians in Thessalonica. He wanted to write that they were the first Christians in Macedonia. Other scholars think he wrote about all the people who believed in Jesus while Paul was alive. So they were the first Christians of all people who have become Christians.

See: Map: Greece and Macedonia

Why did Paul write "firstfruits for salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth"?

[2:13]

Paul wrote "firstfruits for salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth" to write to his readers how much God cared for them.

He wrote "firstfruits" to say that God chose them. Firstfruits were the first harvest of grain or fruit each year. People thought of the firstfruits as the very best. Firstfruits were special. So people wanted to choose them to eat. Often they would use firstfruits as offerings to God. So, Paul wrote about firstfruits in this verse to say that God thinks about Christians as special people. This is because they believe in Jesus.

Paul wrote "for salvation" to write that God chose to save people from their sins. He did this by sending Jesus (see: John 3:16-17). God saves someone from their sins when they believe in Jesus.

Paul wrote "in sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth" to write that the Holy Spirit helped them not to sin. He also saved them because they believed in Jesus. They did this when they heard the gospel.

Advice to translators: "in sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth" can also be translated "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth". Use the word in your language that you would use to say that the two things that follow (sanctification and belief) are the methods that God used to do the thing that precedes (salvation).

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sanctify (Sanctification); Offer (Offering); Gospel; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

What did Paul want to write when he wrote his readers to "stand firm" and "hold tightly"?

[2:15]

Paul used a metaphor when he wrote that his readers should "stand firm" and "hold tightly." He wanted them to keep trusting God and the things he taught them. He told them about Jesus. He taught them the gospel. He taught them other things about God. Now he wrote to teach them more things about Jesus. He used the metaphor of a soldier who stays where he is supposed to stay. The soldier stands in that place and holds onto his weapon. In the same way, Christians need to keep trusting in Jesus and what the Bible says about God.

See: Metaphor; Gospel

What were the "traditions" that Paul wrote about in 2:15?

[2:15]

Scholars disagree about what were the "traditions" that Paul wrote about (2:15). Some scholars think he wanted to speak about what he taught in Thessalonica and other churches. Some scholars think he wanted readers to think about what the things the apostles taught.

It is clear that there were teachings about which the Thessalonians knew. Paul wanted them to continue to believe them and follow them.

See: Apostle

Why did Paul write "every good work and word"?

[2:17]

Paul wrote "every good work and word" because he wanted Christians to do things and say things in ways that honor God. He wrote "every good work" to write about doing the things that other people can see. He wrote "and word" to write about what Christians speak that other people can hear.

2 Thessalonians 2:1

General Information:

Paul exhorts believers not to be deceived about the day Jesus will come back.

Now

The word "Now" marks a change of topic in Paul's instructions.

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

2 Thessalonians 2:2

that you not be easily disturbed or troubled, either by a spirit or by a message

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "that no spirit or person easily disturb or trouble you, either by a message"

by a message, or by a letter that seems to be coming from us

"by spoken word or by written letter that pretends to be coming from us"

to the effect that

"saying that"

the day of the Lord

This refers to the time when Jesus will come back to the earth for all believers.

2 Thessalonians 2:3

General Information:

Paul teaches about the man of lawlessness.

it will not come

"the day of the Lord will not come"

the falling away

This refers to a future time when many people will turn away from God.

the man of lawlessness is revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God reveals the man of lawlessness"

the son of destruction

Paul speaks of destruction as a person who bore a son whose goal is to totally destroy everything. Alternate translation: "the one who destroys everything he can"

2 Thessalonians 2:4

all that is called God or that is worshiped

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"everything that people consider to be God or everything that people worship"

exhibits himself as God

"shows himself as God"

2 Thessalonians 2:5

Do you not remember ... these things?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind them of his teaching when he was with them previously. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "I am sure you remember ... these things."

these things

This refers to the return of Jesus, the day of the Lord, and the man of lawlessness.

2 Thessalonians 2:6

what restrains him

"what holds him back" or "what keeps him from doing what he wants to do"

he will be revealed only at the right time

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will reveal the man of lawlessness when the time is right"

2 Thessalonians 2:7

mystery of lawlessness

This refers to a sacred secret that only God knows.

who restrains him

To restrain someone is to hold him back or to keep him from doing what he wants to do.

2 Thessalonians 2:8

Then the lawless one will be revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Then God will allow the lawless one to show himself"

with the breath of his mouth

Here "breath" represents the power of God. Alternate

translation: "by the power of his spoken word"

bring him to nothing by the revelation of his coming

When Jesus returns to earth and shows himself, he will defeat the lawless one.

2 Thessalonians 2:9

with all power, signs, and false wonders

"with all kinds of power, signs, and false wonders"

2 Thessalonians 2:10

with every kind of evil that deceives those who are perishing

This man who is given power by Satan will deceive everyone who does not believe in Jesus.

who are perishing

Here "perishing" has the concept of everlasting or eternal destruction.

they refused to love the truth

This metaphor speaks of these people as if someone had offered them a physical object, like good food, and they had refused to accept or receive it. The abstract noun "love" can be translated as a verb.

2 Thessalonians 2:11

For this reason

"Because the people do not love the truth"

God is sending them a powerful delusion so that they will believe a lie

The powerful delusion is a metonym for the person who will delude the people. Alternate translation: "God is sending the man of lawlessness to delude them"

a powerful delusion

a lie that sounds so true that many people believe it

2 Thessalonians 2:12

they all may be condemned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will judge all of them"

who did not believe the truth but instead took pleasure in unrighteousness

"who took pleasure in unrighteousness because they did not believe the truth" or "who enjoyed doing evil deeds because they did not believe the truth"

2 Thessalonians 2:13

General Information:

Paul gives thanks to God for the believers and encourages them.

Connecting Statement:

Paul now changes topics.

But

Paul uses this word here to mark a change in topic.

we should always give thanks

The word "always" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "we should continually give thanks"

we should

Here "we" refers to Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.

brothers loved by the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the Lord loves you, brothers"

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

as the firstfruits to be saved through the sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth

Being among the first people to be saved is spoken of as if the Thessalonian believers were "firstfruits." This can also be stated to remove the abstract nouns "salvation,"

"sanctification," "belief," and "truth." Alternate translation:

"to be among the first people who believe what is true, whom God has saved and set apart for himself by his Spirit"

2 Thessalonians 2:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Thessalonians 2:15

So then, brothers, stand firm

Paul exhorts the believers to hold fast to their faith in Jesus. hold tightly to the traditions

Here "traditions" refers to the truths of Christ that Paul and the other apostles taught. Paul speaks of them as if his readers could hold on to them with their hands. Alternate translation: "remember the traditions" or "believe the truths"

you were taught

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we have taught you"

whether by word or by our letter

"By word" here is a synecdoche for "by instructions" or "by teachings." You can make clear the implicit information.

Alternate translation: "whether by what we taught you in person or by what we wrote to you in a letter"

2 Thessalonians 2:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul ends with a blessing from God.

Now

Paul uses this word here to mark a change in topic.

Lord Jesus Christ himself

Here "himself" gives additional emphasis to the phrase "Lord Jesus Christ."

may our Lord ... who loved us and gave us

The words "our" and "us" refer to all believers.

gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace

"caused us to have eternal comfort and good hope through grace"

eternal comfort

"comfort that never ends" or "unceasing encouragement"

good hope

Here "hope" means a "certain expectation." Alternate

translation: "certainty that we will receive good things from him" or "confidence that we will good things from him"

through grace

"because of his kindness"

2 Thessalonians 2:17

comfort and strengthen your hearts in

Here "hearts" represents the seat of emotions. Alternate

translation: "comfort you and strengthen you for"

every good work and word

"every good thing you do and say"

Chapter 3

2 Thessalonians 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Idle and lazy persons

In Thessalonica, there apparently was a problem with people in the church who were able to work but refused to do so. What should you do if your brother sins?

In this chapter, Paul teaches that Christians need to live in a way that honors God. Christians should also encourage one another and hold each other accountable for what they do. The church is also responsible for encouraging believers to repent if they sin. (See: repent and sin)

Links:

[2 Thessalonians 3:1 Notes](#)

2 Thessalonians 3

3:1-5

Who is the "evil one"?

[3:3]

The "evil one" is Satan.

See: John 8:44, 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

See: Satan (The Devil)

3:6-12

Why did Paul write "lazy life"?

[3:6]

Paul wrote "lazy life" to make his readers think of people who cause fights in the church or do things that do not honor God.

Advice to translators: The Greek word can be translated as "lazy" or "idle." However, Paul was writing about more than just a person who does not work. He wrote about a person who causes trouble. They can cause trouble because they are not doing good things such as working.

See: Church

What were the "traditions" Paul wrote about in 3:6?

[3:6]

Paul wrote about "traditions" in 3:6 because he reminded his readers that he taught them the things Christians needed to do to honor God. He taught them about working. He taught them to serve other people. He taught them to avoid wrong actions. When Paul was in Thessalonica, he lived this way himself (See: 3:7). He set an example for the Christians there (see: 3:9). These traditions are part of the "traditions" he wrote about in 2:15.

Why did Paul write "not because we have no authority" (3:9)? Paul wrote "not because we have no authority" because he wanted to be sure his readers knew God gave him permission to tell them about the things he wrote to them. He heard that some people said God did not give him permission to say these things. However, God gave him permission as an apostle (see: 1 Corinthians 1:1, Galatians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1). So, he told his readers that the people who said he did not have authority were wrong.

See: Apostle

Why did Paul write "walk idly"?

[3:11]

Paul wrote "walk idly" because he wanted his readers to think about people who cause trouble or rebel against people who ruled over them. It is similar to what Paul wrote in 3:6.

Why did Paul write "eat their own food"?

[3:12]

Paul wrote "eat their own food" because he wanted to write about people who work to feed themselves. This can be by raising their own food on a farm. Or it can be by working to earn money to buy food. Either way, Paul wanted Christians to work so they could eat. If they were able to work, he wanted them to work. 3:13-15

Why did Paul write "take note of him"?

[3:14]

Paul wrote "take note of him" because he wanted his readers to look for people in their churches like those he wrote about in 3:6-12. If they found people like this, Paul wanted them to not speak to them or do anything with them. However, Paul did not want his readers to judge too harshly when they did this. So he wrote "do not consider him as an enemy" (3:15). In fact, he wanted readers to "warn him as a brother" (3:15).

See: Ephesians 4:15

See: Church

3:16-18

Why did Paul write "with my own hand"?

[3:17]

Paul wrote "with my own hand" because he wanted his readers to know that he really wrote and sent this letter. Often Paul spoke words that someone else wrote down for him. However, he wrote the last words himself. He did this so that readers could see that the handwriting was his own.

2 Thessalonians 3:1

General Information:

Paul asks the believers to pray for him and his companions.

Now

Paul uses the word "now" to mark a change in topic.

brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"

that the word of the Lord may rush and be glorified, as it also is with

you

Paul speaks of God's word spreading as if it were running from place to place. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "that more and more people will soon hear our message about our Lord Jesus and honor it, as happened with you"

2 Thessalonians 3:2

that we may be delivered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that God may save us" or "that God may rescue us"

for not all have faith
"for many people do not believe in Jesus"
2 Thessalonians 3:3
the evil one
"Satan"
2 Thessalonians 3:4
We have confidence
"We have faith" or "We trust"
2 Thessalonians 3:5
direct your hearts to
Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or mind.
Alternate translation: "cause you to understand"
the love of God and to the endurance of Christ
Paul speaks of God's love and Christ's endurance as if they were destinations on a path. Alternate translation: "how much God loves you and how much Christ has endured for you"
2 Thessalonians 3:6
General Information:
Paul gives the believers some final instructions about working and not being idle.
Now
Paul uses this word to mark a change in topic.
brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"
in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ
"Name" here is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "as if our Lord Jesus Christ himself were speaking"
our Lord
Here "our" refers to all believers.
is idle
This person is not working hard, but is lazy. Alternate translation: "does not do what is right"
2 Thessalonians 3:7
to imitate us
"to act the way that my fellow workers and I act"
we were not idle
"we lived disciplined lives"
2 Thessalonians 3:8
anyone's bread
Bread here is a synecdoche for any kind of food. Alternate translation: "anyone's food"
we worked night and day
"we worked during the night and during the day." Here "night" and "day" are a merism and they mean "all the time." Alternate translation: "we worked all the time"
in labor and toil
Paul emphasizes how hard his circumstances were. The words "difficult labor" imply that Paul and his companions did work that requires great effort. The word "hardship" implies they endured pain and suffering. Alternate translation: "in very difficult circumstances"
2 Thessalonians 3:9
We did this not because we have no authority, but we did this
Paul uses a double negative to correct a misunderstanding

that his readers may have had. It can be stated positively.
Alternate translation: "Even though we have authority, we did this"
2 Thessalonians 3:10
The one who is unwilling to labor must not eat
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Only the one who is willing to work should eat" or "Only people who are willing to work should eat"
2 Thessalonians 3:11
you are idle
"live a lazy life"
but busybodies
Busybodies are people who interfere in the affairs of others without being asked to help.
2 Thessalonians 3:12
with quietness
"in a quiet, peaceful, and mild manner." Paul exhorts the meddlers to stop getting involved in other people's affairs.
eat their own bread
Bread here is a synecdoche for any kind of food. See how "bread" is translated in [2 Thessalonians 3:8]
2 Thessalonians 3:13
But
Paul uses this word to contrast the lazy believers with the hardworking believers.
you, brothers
The word "you" refers to all the Thessalonian believers.
brothers
Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters"
2 Thessalonians 3:14
if anyone does not obey our word
"if anyone does not obey our instructions"
take note of him
Notice who he is. Alternate translation: "publicly identify that person"
2 Thessalonians 3:15
General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.
2 Thessalonians 3:16
General Information:
Paul makes closing remarks to the believers at Thessalonica.
may the Lord of peace himself give you
You can make explicit that this is Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians. Alternate translation: "I pray that the Lord of peace himself gives you"
the Lord of peace himself
Here "himself" emphasizes that the Lord will personally give peace to believers.
2 Thessalonians 3:17
I, Paul, write this with my own hand
Paul makes it clear that this letter is from him and is not a forgery.
2 Thessalonians 3:18
General Information:
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Introduction to 1 Timothy

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 1 Timothy

Greetings (1:1,2) Paul and Timothy
Warning about false teachers (1:3-11) Paul thankful for what Christ has done in his ministry (1:12-17) He calls Timothy to fight in this spiritual battle (1:18-20)
Prayer for all (2:1-8) Roles and responsibilities in the church (2:9-6:2)
Warnings
Second warning about false teachers (6:3-5) Money (6:6-10)
Description of a man of God (6:11-16) Note to the wealthy people (6:17-19) Closing words to Timothy (6:20,21)

Who wrote the Book of 1 Timothy?

Paul wrote 1 Timothy. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

This book is the first letter Paul wrote to Timothy. Timothy was his disciple and close friend. Paul probably wrote it near the end of his life.

What is the Book of 1 Timothy about?

Paul had left Timothy in the city of Ephesus to help the believers there. Paul wrote this letter to instruct Timothy about various matters. The topics he addressed included church worship, qualifications for church leaders, and warnings against false teachers. This letter shows how Paul was training Timothy to be a leader among the churches.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "1 Timothy" or "First Timothy." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's First Letter to Timothy."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is discipleship?

Discipleship is the process of encouraging people to live the way Jesus wants them to live, to be more like Christ. This letter gives many instructions about how a leader should train a less mature Christian. (See: disciple)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. Also, the word "you" is almost always singular and refers to Timothy. The exception to this is 6:21.

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What are the major textual issues in the text of the Book of 1 Timothy?

For the following verse, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"godliness is a way to get more money." Some older versions of the Bible read this way, "godliness is a way to get more money: withdraw from such things." (6:5)

Chapter 1

1 Timothy 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul formally introduces this letter in verses 1-2. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Spiritual children

In this chapter, Paul calls Timothy a "son" and his "child." Paul disciplined Timothy as a Christian and a church leader. Paul may also have led him to believe in Christ. Therefore, Paul called Timothy his "son in the faith."

Genealogies

Genealogies are lists that record a person's ancestors or descendants. Jews used genealogies to choose the right man to become king. They did this because only a son of a king could normally become king. They also showed from what tribe and family they came. For example, priests came from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron. Most important people had records of their genealogies.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Play on words

The phrase "the law is good if one uses it lawfully" ([1 Timothy 1:8](#)) is a play on words. The English words "law" and "lawfully" come from the same root, and they translate words that come from the same root in the original language, so it would be well to translate the clause so as to preserve this word play.

Links:

[1 Timothy 1:1 Notes](#) [1 Timothy intro](#)

1 TIMOTHY 1 Commentary

1:1-2

How is "Christ Jesus our hope"?

[1:1]

Christians have hope because of Jesus. That is, they are confident about something because of Jesus. He gives them this now and in the future. Because Jesus died on the cross and was made alive again, anyone who believes in Jesus can have peace with God now and in the future (see: Romans 5:1-2; Colossians 1:19-22). They will live forever with him in heaven after they die (see: 1 John 3:2-3). Jesus also gives confidence to Christians because he sent the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives inside of Christians. He gives them power, and he caused them to be sanctified. (see: Romans 8:29; Ephesians 1:4-6). See: Atonement; Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit; Sanctify (Sanctification)

Why did Paul call Timothy his "true son in the faith"?

[1:2]

Paul wrote that Timothy was his "true son in the faith." This is a metaphor. He wanted to write he was Timothy's spiritual father. That is, he taught Timothy about how to do the things that honor God in the same way a father teaches his child something. Therefore, Paul knew Timothy did the same types of things that Paul did. These things were because they believed in Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Spirit (Spiritual)

Why did Paul greet the Christians with "grace, mercy, and peace"?

[1:2]

See: Ancient Letters

1:3-7

Why did Paul leave Timothy in Ephesus?

[1:3]

Paul left Timothy in Ephesus to teach people. He also "commanded" ([παράγγελλω/g3853](#)) false teachers not to teach. False teacher taught things that Paul and the other Apostles did not teach. Paul wanted Timothy to stop people from teaching things that he did not teach.

See Map: Ephesus

What were "endless genealogies"?

[1:4]

Some false teachers wanted other people to know their genealogies. That is, they wanted people to know their ancestors were greatly honored. They thought having honored ancestors was better than the gospel (see: Titus 3:9). Scholars think these teachers wanted other people to know that their ancestors were in honored the Old Testament.

See: 6:3-5; 2nd Timothy 2:16-18

See: Ancient Letters; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Gospel

What was "the commandment" about which Paul wrote?

[1:5]

Some scholars think Paul told Timothy to "command" ([παράγγελλω/g3852](#)) false teachers to stop teaching things Paul did not teach. Other scholars think Paul told Timothy to teach the gospel with love. This fulfilled all of God's law (see: Romans 13:10).

See: Law of Moses

What did it mean to have a "pure heart"?

[1:5]

A person with a pure heart does things and thinks things that honor God (see: 2 Timothy 2:22).

How did a person have a "good conscience"?

[1:5]

A person has a good conscience by believing in the gospel and doing the things that Jesus said to do (see: 3:9). They also do not think about things that do not honor God (see: Titus 1:15).

See: Conscience; Gospel

What was “sincere faith”?

[1:5]

A person with “sincere faith” completely trusts in God. Paul wrote that teachers with sincere faith did the things that honor God, and they do not do the things that honor themselves.

See: 1 Thessalonians 2:3-12

See: Gospel

Why did Paul write “miss the mark”?

[1:6]

Scholars think Paul spoke about people those who believed in the gospel then later did not believe in the gospel (see 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 4:4).

What was “foolish talk”?

[1:6]

Some scholars think “foolish talk” is something said that has no meaning. That is, someone said things that did not help Christians honor God.

1:8-11

Why did Paul write, “the law is good”?

[1:8]

Paul wrote that the law is good because God tells people what he wants them to do through the law of Moses(see: Psalm 19:7; Romans 7:12). God made people know their sin and their need to be saved from it through the law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses

Why did Paul write that the, “law is not made for the righteous man”?

[1:9]

Some scholars think Paul wanted to write that the law of Moses was made so that those who were sinning will know that the things they did were wrong. They think it was not made for the people who already do the things that honor God. Other scholars think Paul wrote to the people who did good things, but they did not do them to honor God. Instead, they did these good things so other people would think they were righteous, but they were not righteous. They think Paul wanted them to know that the law of Moses was not given to make people righteous, but it was given so that people would know that the things they were doing did not honor God (see: 1:9-11; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

See: 2 Timothy 3:1-5

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

How were people “godless and profane” in the days of Paul?

[1:9]

A “godless” person did not want to honor God in any way. A profane person knew what God wanted them to do, but they continued to sin anyway because they wanted to sin more than they wanted to honor God.

See: Sin

What was “faithful instruction”?

[1:10]

Faithful instruction taught the things God wanted people to do to honor him with their lives. It taught them what they needed to know about God the Father and Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit. Faithful instruction helped Christians to do more things that honor God.

See: Titus 1:9

See: God the Father; Holy Spirit

What was the “glorious gospel” about which Paul spoke?

[1:11]

Some scholars think the “glorious gospel” was when people told the story of the glory of the “blessed God.” That is, God is “blessed” because he is perfect. He lives in perfect joy. He is the one who gives all blessings.

See: Glory (Glorify); Gospel; Bless (Blessing); Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

1:12-17

Why was Paul considered to be “faithful”?

[1:12]

Some scholars think Jesus did not choose Paul to be an apostle because he was already a “faithful”(πιστός/g4103) man. They think Jesus chose Paul because he knew Paul would be faithful in the future (see: Acts 9:1-16). Other scholars think Christ considered Paul to be faithful because of what God graciously did in Paul’s life. That is, his grace allowed Paul to repent from sinning and allowed Paul to do the things that honored and served God.

See: Apostle; Grace; Repent (Repentance)
What was a “blasphemer” and “persecutor”?
[1:13]

Paul wrote he used to be a “blasphemer” and a “persecutor.” A blasphemer was a person who insulted God by saying things that were not true about God. They spoke evil about Jesus. They even cursed him. Paul also wrote he used to be a “persecutor”(διδάσκων/g1376). He harmed Christians (see: Acts 8:3; 22:4).

See: Repent (Repentance; Persecute (Persecution); Curse
How did Paul “act ignorantly in unbelief”?

[1:13]
Paul wrote he was ignorant in unbelief. Paul persecuted Christians. But he did not know this was wrong. He thought this was right. Paul believed in God. But, he did not believe that Jesus was the messiah. Paul thought he honored God when he persecuted Christians.

See: Messiah (Christ); Persecute (Persecution)
What was the “faith and love” about which Paul spoke?
[1:14]

See: Faith (Believe in); Love
How was what Paul taught “reliable and worthy of all acceptance”?
[1:15]

Paul knew what he taught was “reliable”(πιστός/g4103) and true. He knew all people needed to trust the things he taught. What he wrote was spoken by Jesus himself (see: Matthew 9:13; Luke 19:9-10).
Why did Paul write, “I am the worst” of sinners?

[1:15]
Paul wrote he was the worst of sinners. He persecuted Christians. He knew he sinned against God himself. Paul knew God forgave him, but this did not make him forget his sinning.
See: Persecute (Persecution); Sin
Why did Paul write, “demonstrate all patience”?

[1:16]
Jesus demonstrated with all patience by using Paul as an example. Paul was an example of how God has great patience for sinners. God wanted people to know that he forgives even the greatest sinner if the sinner repents (see: 2 Peter 3:9). Advice to translators: Someone who waits for something when they should wait, they are patient. They are only patient if they are peace with waiting.
See: Repent (Repentance; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

1:18-20

What were the “prophecies previously made” about Timothy?
[1:18]

Many scholars think Paul wrote about a time when the church leaders prayed for Timothy. They trusted him to always serve the church in the way God wanted him to serve (see: 4:14-16).
See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Church

Why did Paul say, “some have shipwrecked their faith”?
[1:19]

Paul used a metaphor. In the same way a ship can be damaged too badly to be used anymore, so can false teachers damage a Christian. That is, these Christians do not know the truth and do not trust God.
See: Church

What is “blasphemy”?
[1:20]

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

1 Timothy 1:1

General Information:

In this book, unless otherwise noted, the word “our” refers to Paul and Timothy

Paul, an apostle

“I, Paul, wrote this letter. I am an apostle.” Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. Immediately after introducing the writer, you may want to indicate to whom the letter was written, as in the UDB.

according to the commandment of

“by the command of” or “by the authority of”

God our Savior

“God who saves us”

Christ Jesus our hope

Here “our hope” refers to the person in whom we have confidence. Alternate translation: “Christ Jesus, who is the one in whom we have confidence” or “Christ Jesus, whom we trust”

1 Timothy 1:2

true son in the faith

Paul speaks of his close relationship to Timothy as though they were father and son. This shows Paul’s sincere love and approval of Timothy. It is also likely that Timothy was

converted to Christ by Paul, and so this is why Paul considers him like his own child. Alternate translation: "who is truly like a son to me"

Grace, mercy, and peace

"May grace, mercy, and peace be yours," or "May you experience kindness, mercy, and peace"

God the Father and

"God, who is our Father, and." Here "Father" is an important title for God.

Christ Jesus our Lord

"Christ Jesus, who is our Lord"

1 Timothy 1:3

General Information:

The word "you" in this letter is singular and refers to Timothy.

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages Timothy to reject the wrong use of the law and instead to use good teaching from God.

As I urged you

"As I pleaded with you" or "As I asked you very strongly" remain in Ephesus

"wait for me there in the city of Ephesus"

a different doctrine

The implied information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "a different doctrine from what we teach"

1 Timothy 1:4

Neither should they pay attention

"And I also want you to command them not to pay attention"

to stories

These may have been stories about their ancestors.

endless genealogies

With the word "endless" Paul uses exaggeration to emphasize that the genealogies are very long.

genealogies

the written or verbal record of a person's parents and ancestors

These promote arguments

"These make people angrily disagree." The people debated about stories and genealogies about which no one could know the truth for certain.

rather than the plan of God, which is by faith

Possible meanings are 1) "rather than helping people to understand God's plan to save us, which we learn by faith" or 2) "rather than helping us to do God's work, which we do by faith."

1 Timothy 1:5

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Paul explains the purpose of what he is commanding Timothy.

the commandment

Here this does not mean the Old Testament or the Ten Commandments but rather the instructions that Paul gives in 1 Timothy 1:3 and 1 Timothy 1:4.

is love

Possible meanings are 1) "is to love God" or 2) "is to love people."

from a pure heart

Here "pure" means the person does not have hidden motives to do wrong. Here "heart" refers to a person's mind and thoughts. Alternate translation: "from a mind that is honest"

good conscience

"a conscience that chooses right instead wrong"

sincere faith

"genuine faith" or "a faith without hypocrisy"

1 Timothy 1:6

have gone astray from these things

Paul speaks of people who no longer try to "love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith"

turned to worthless talk

"begun to have useless discussions"

1 Timothy 1:7

teachers of the law

Here "law" refers to the law of Moses.

but they do not understand

"even though they do not understand" or "and yet they do not understand"

what they so confidently affirm

"what they so confidently state is true"

1 Timothy 1:8

we know that the law is good

"we understand that the law is useful" or "we understand that the law is beneficial"

if one uses it lawfully

"if a person uses it correctly" or "if a person uses it the way God intended"

1 Timothy 1:9

We know this

"Because we realize this" or "We also know this"

that law is not set in place for a righteous man

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that God did not set the law in place for the righteous man" a righteous man

Here "man" includes both male and female. Alternate translation: "a righteous person" or "a good person"

1 Timothy 1:10

sexually immoral people

This refers to anyone who sleeps with someone to whom they are not married.

homosexuality

"sexual activity with other members of the same sex." The Greek word specifies males, but it probably is intended here to include females as well.

those who kidnap people for slaves

"those who kidnap people to sell as slaves" or "those who take people to sell as slaves"

whatever else is opposed to truthful teaching

The Greek has "healthy" but that term is a figure for "truthful" here. It is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation: "whatever other things people do that we teach is wrong"

1 Timothy 1:11

the glorious gospel of the blessed God

"the gospel about the glory that belongs to the blessed God" or "the gospel of the glorious and blessed God"

with which I have been entrusted
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "which God has given me and made me responsible for"
 1 Timothy 1:12
 he considered me faithful
 "he considered me trustworthy" or "he regarded me as reliable"
 he appointed me to service
 "he assigned me to serve him" or "he appointed me as his servant"
 1 Timothy 1:13
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul begins to tell how he acted in the past.
 I was a blasphemer
 "I was a person who spoke evil against Christ." Paul is referring to his character before he was a Christian.
 a persecutor
 "a person who persecuted those who believed in Christ"
 a violent man
 "a person who was cruel to other people" or "a person who believed I had the right to hurt others"
 But I received mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief
 "But because I did not believe in Jesus, and I did not know what I was doing, I received mercy from Jesus"
 I received mercy
 "Jesus showed me mercy" or "Jesus had mercy on me"
 1 Timothy 1:14
 the grace of our Lord overflowed
 Paul speaks of God's grace as if it were a liquid that could fill a container and spill out of the top when the container is full. Alternate translation: "God showed me much grace" overflowed with the faith and the love that is in Christ Jesus
 This is the result of God showing much grace to Paul.
 Alternate translation: "overflowed, which caused me to trust in Christ Jesus and love him"
 that is in Christ Jesus
 This speaks about Jesus as if he were a container that holds a liquid. Here "in Christ Jesus" refers to having a relationship with Jesus. Alternate translation: "that Christ Jesus enables me to give to God because I am united to him"
 1 Timothy 1:15
 This message is reliable
 "This statement is true"
 worthy of all acceptance
 "we should receive it without any doubt" or "deserves for us to accept it with full confidence"
 sinners, of whom I am chief
 "sinners, of whom I am the chief sinner" or "sinners, of whom I am the worst." Paul is saying that he has sinned more than any other sinner, not that he has been the leader of a group of sinners.
 1 Timothy 1:16
 I was given mercy
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "God showed me mercy" or "I obtained mercy from God"
 the chief
 "the chief sinner" or "the worst sinner." Paul is saying that

he has sinned more than any other sinner, not that he has been the leader of a group of sinners. See how you translated this in 1 Timothy 1:15.
 1 Timothy 1:17
 Now ... Amen
 The word "Now" is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Paul praises God.
 the king of the ages
 "the eternal king" or "the chief ruler forever"
 Now to the king of the ages, the immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever
 The abstract nouns "honor" and "glory" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "Now may people forever honor and glorify the king of the ages, who is immortal, invisible, and the only God"
 1 Timothy 1:18
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul begins to encourage Timothy to trust God.
 I am placing this command before you
 Paul speaks of his instructions as if he could physically put them in front of Timothy. Alternate translation: "I am entrusting you with this command" or "This is what I am commanding you"
 my child
 Paul speaks of his close relationship to Timothy as though Paul is the father and Timothy is the child. It is also likely that Timothy was converted to Christ by Paul, and so this is why Paul considered him like his own child. Alternate translation: "who is truly like my child"
 in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "in agreement with what other believers prophesied about you"
 fight the good fight
 Paul speaks about Timothy working for the Lord as if he were a soldier fighting a battle. Alternate translation:
 "continue to work hard for the Lord"
 1 Timothy 1:19
 a good conscience
 "a conscience that chooses right instead wrong." See how you translated this in 1 Timothy 1:5.
 some have shipwrecked their faith
 Paul speaks of these people's faith as if it were a ship that could be wrecked at sea. He means that they have ruined their faith and no longer believe in Jesus. You should use this or a similar metaphor if it will be understood in the project language.
 1 Timothy 1:20
 Hymenaeus ... Alexander
 These are names of men.
 whom I delivered over to Satan
 Paul has cast the men out of the community, so Satan now has power over them and can harm them.
 they may be taught
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
 "God may teach them"

1 Timothy 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Peace

Paul encourages Christians to pray for everyone. They should pray for rulers so that Christians can live peacefully, in a godly and dignified way.

Women in the church

Scholars are divided over how to understand this passage in its historical and cultural context. Some scholars believe men and women are perfectly equal in all things. Other scholars believe God created men and women to serve in distinctly different roles in marriage and the church. Translators should be careful not to let how they understand this issue affect how they translate this passage.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings"

These terms overlap each other in what they mean. It is not necessary to view them as distinct categories.

Links:

[1 Timothy 2:1 Notes](#)

1 Timothy 2

2:1-4

What was an "intercession"?

[2:1]

An intercession was a prayer. This was a prayer made to God for a specific person or was asking God to help because a specific thing that was happening to a person.

How did a person live a "peaceful and quiet" life?

[2:2]

Scholars think someone had a "peaceful" life when they were at peace. They were at peace with themselves or had peace inside of themselves. These scholars think someone had a "quiet" life when they were at peace with others. The government did not cause them problems.

What was godliness?

[2:2]

See: Godly (Godliness)

How did a person live with "dignity"?

[2:2]

A person lived with "dignity"(σεμνότης/g4587) when they lived in a way that others respected. That is, Christians and non-Christians thought the things they did were good for everyone.

Why did Paul write that he "desires all people to be saved"?

[2:4]

Many people in Ephesus thought that only the Jewish people were saved from sinning. Certain people taught only the most spiritual people could be saved from sinning. This is not true. Paul wanted Timothy to know God did not save only certain groups of people. God wants all people to be saved from sinning. However, not every person wants to be saved from sinning.

See: Spirit (Spiritual)

How did a person "come to the knowledge of the truth"?

[2:4]

The truth about which Paul wrote was the gospel. People who "came to the knowledge of the truth" were people who believed in the gospel.

See: Gospel

2:5-7

Why did Paul write, "there is one God"?

[2:5]

People thought there were many gods when Paul lived. However, in the Bible there is only "one God." The Israelites knew there was only one God (see: Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

How is Jesus the "one mediator" between God and humans?

[2:5]

Jesus is the mediator between God and humans because he died for people's sinning. A "mediator"(μεσίτης/g3316) was a

person who helped people with a conflict to be at peace with one another. Because of man's sinning, God and man were separated. Jesus' death and resurrection allowed for man to not be separated from God. Jesus was both God and human. This made him the perfect mediator between God and humans.

See: Mediator; Resurrect (Resurrection); Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

What did Paul mean that "Jesus...gave himself as a ransom for all"?

[2:6]

Jesus gave himself as a ransom to God to be able to free people from the punishment of sinning (see: Romans 5:12-21). A "ransom" (ἀντίλυτρον/g0487) was a price paid to free someone from slavery. All humans are slaves to sin. That is, they cannot choose not to do the things that do not honor God. God must punish all sin. The price that needed to be paid for sinning was death (see: Romans 6:23). Therefore, Jesus paid this price of sin for every human when he died on the cross. Why did Paul write, "a testimony at the right time"?

[2:6]

The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus served as a "testimony" that God's word was true. That is, it proved that what Jesus said about himself was true. Paul said this testimony was given "at the right time." That meant God made a specific time for the gospel to be made known (see: Galatians 4:4-7).

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Gospel

What was a "herald"?

[2:7]

Often, a ruler used someone to speak for him. This person was a herald. The herod told things to the ruler's people. Paul wrote that God made Paul speak for God. He told all people the gospel.

What was an "apostle"?

[2:7]

See: Apostle

Who were the "Gentiles"?

[2:7]

See: Gentile

Why did Paul write, "in faith and truth"?

[2:7]

Paul wrote "in faith and truth." Scholars think Paul meant he taught the Gentiles about the faith and the truth. That is, he taught the Gentiles what they needed to know about Jesus and what was true.

2:8-10

What did it mean to "lift up holy hands without anger or arguing"?

[2:8]

Paul said, "lift up holy hands without anger or arguing." Some scholars think Christians prayed standing with their arms and hands lifted up in front of them. The Jewish people also did this in the synagogues. These scholars think lifting "holy" (ὅσιος/g3741) hands meant Christians' prayers were committed to God. They think this also meant that Christians were committed to doing the things that honor God. That is, this made their hands holy. Christians also prayed without "anger or arguing." They did not want to have arguments and thoughts that did not honor God. They wanted to live a holy life. That is, they only wanted to do the things that honored God.

See: Synagogue

What was "proper clothing"?

[2:9]

Proper clothing meant that a woman wore clothes that were "modest" (αἰδώς/g0127). Paul did not want women to dress in a way that others would be looking at their clothes. For a woman to wear modest clothes meant that she wore things that did not upset other people. Also she wore things that did not make men look at her in a sexual way. A woman using self-control in the things that she wore wanted to do the things that honored God instead of worrying about the things that other people thought about her. Advice to translators: When a man looks at a woman in a sexual way, he thinks about having sex with her and wants to have sex with her.

See: Self-Control

How did a woman clothe herself with "good works"?

[2:9, 2:10]

Paul used a metaphor. In the same way clothing is seen by other people, so good works are seen by other people also. Paul wanted women to worry about the things they did for God not about the things that they wore.

See: Metaphor

2:11-15

Why did Paul write for women to, "learn in silence"?

[2:11]

Some scholars think Paul did not allow women to speak when Christians gathered together to worship God. Other

scholars think Paul taught women to be quiet while the Bible was being taught. This was so they could listen and learn what was being taught. These scholars think Paul used the word “silence”(ἥσυχ(α/g2271) in the same way that he used it when he spoke about praying for leaders. That is, so they might live a quiet and peaceful life (see: 2:2).

See: Worship

How did a woman learn “with all submission”?

[2:11]

Paul wanted women to submit to the teaching elders. These elders taught the truth of the Bible and corrected errors being taught.

See: Submit (Submission); Elder

Why was a woman not allowed to “teach or to exercise authority over a man”?

[2:12]

Some scholars think Paul did not allow women to teach men about what the Bible taught while Christians were gathered together. These scholars also think Paul did not allow women to teach men about the things they needed to do to honor God while Christians gathered together. Other scholars think Paul allowed women to teach when Christians gathered together only if they did not try “exercise authority”(αὐθεντέω/g0831) over the men in the gathering. That is, the women did not need to tell the men how to know the scriptures. They did not need to take control of the elders in a gathering.

See: Elder

Why did Paul write women “will be saved through bearing children”?

[2:15]

Some scholars think Paul wrote about a promise made in Genesis. This was the promise that the a descendant of the woman would defeat Satan (see: Genesis 3:15). This promise was a prophecy of Jesus. Other scholars think the words meant that women, in general, would not die during childbirth. Other scholars think Paul wrote that women preserve humans by having more children.

See: Satan (The Devil); Prophecy (Prophecy)

1 Timothy 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages Timothy to pray for all people.

first of all

"most importantly" or "before anything else"

I urge that humble requests, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be made

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I urge all believers to make requests, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving to God"

I urge

"I plead" or "I ask"

1 Timothy 2:2

a peaceful and quiet life

Here "peaceful" and "quiet" mean the same thing. Paul wants all believers to be able to live calm lives without trouble from the authorities.

in all godliness and dignity

"that honors God and that other people will respect"

1 Timothy 2:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Timothy 2:4

He desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God desires to save all people and for them to come to the knowledge of the truth"

to come to the knowledge of the truth

Paul speaks of learning the truth about God as if it were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "to know and accept what is true"

1 Timothy 2:5

one mediator for God and man

A mediator is a person who helps negotiate a peaceful settlement between two parties who disagree with each other. Here Jesus helps sinners enter into a peaceful relationship with God.

1 Timothy 2:6

gave himself

"died willingly"

as a ransom

"as a price of freedom" or "as a payment to obtain freedom"

as the testimony at the right time

It can be made explicit that this was the testimony that God wants to save all people. Alternate translation: "as the proof at the right time that God wants to save all people"

at the right time

This means that this was the time that God had chosen.

1 Timothy 2:7

For this purpose

"For this" or "For this reason"

I was appointed a herald and an apostle

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Christ appointed me to be a herald and an apostle" or

"Christ made me a preacher and an apostle"

a herald

"an official messenger." A herald is an official messenger who is sent to bring news.

I am telling the truth, I am not lying

With these two comments Paul emphasizes that he is telling the truth when he says that he was appointed to be a herald, an apostle, and a teacher. Some translators may prefer to put these comments at the end of the verse.

in faith and truth

This probably refers to what Paul was to teach about. He may be using "faith" and "truth" to express one idea.

Alternate translation: "about the message of faith and

truth" or "about the true faith"

1 Timothy 2:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul finishes his instructions on prayer and then gives some special instructions for women.

I want men in every place to pray and to lift up holy hands

Here "holy hands" is a metonym for a holy person.

Alternate translation: "I want holy men in every place to lift up their hands and pray"

men in every place

"the males in all places" or "the males everywhere." Here the word "men" refers specifically to males.

lift up holy hands

It was a normal posture for people to raise their hands while praying.

1 Timothy 2:9

with modesty and self-control

Both of these words mean basically the same thing. Paul is emphasizing that women should wear clothes that are appropriate and do not attract improper attention from men.

not with braided hair

During Paul's time, many Roman women braided their hair to make themselves attractive. Braiding is only one way a woman can give undue attention to her hair. If braided hair is unknown, it can be stated in a more general way.

Alternate translation: "not having fancy hairstyles" or "not having elaborate hairstyles that attract attention"

pearls

These are beautiful and valuable white balls that people use as jewelry. They are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean.

1 Timothy 2:10

General Information:

Possible meanings of this verse are 1) the words "through good works" tell how the women Paul is talking about "proclaim godliness" or 2) those words tell how women are to "dress," a metaphor that refers to what people are to see and think about when they look at the women to whom Paul is writing. Alternate translation: "but with good works, as is proper for women who proclaim godliness"

who proclaim godliness through good works

"who want to show that they honor God by doing good deeds"

1 Timothy 2:11

in silence

"in quietness"

and with all submission

"and submit to what is taught"

1 Timothy 2:12

I do not permit a woman

"I do not allow a woman"

1 Timothy 2:13

Adam was formed first

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Adam is the one God formed first" or "God created Adam first"

then Eve

The understood information can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "and then God formed Eve" or "and then God created Eve"

1 Timothy 2:14

Adam was not deceived

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"And Adam was not the one whom the serpent deceived"

but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but it was the woman who disobeyed God when the serpent deceived her"

1 Timothy 2:15

she will be saved through bearing children

Here "she" refers to women in general. Possible meanings

are 1) God will keep women physically safe as they give birth to children, or 2) God will save women from their sins through their role as child bearers.

she will be saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will save her" or "God will save women"

if they continue

"if they remain" or "if they continue living." Here "they" refers to women.

in faith and love and sanctification

The abstract nouns here can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "in trusting Jesus and loving others and living a holy life"

with self-control

Other possible meanings are 1) "with good judgment" or 2) "with modesty."

Chapter 3

1 Timothy 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

[1 Timothy 3:16](#) was probably a song, poem, or creed the early church used to list important doctrines that believers all shared.

Special concepts in this chapter

Overseers and deacons

The church has used different titles for church leaders. Some titles include elder, pastor, and bishop. The word "overseer" reflects the meaning of the original language in verses 1-2. Paul writes about "deacons" in verses 8 and 12 as another kind of church leader.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Character qualities

This chapter lists several qualities that a man must have if he is to be an overseer or deacon in the church.

Links:

[1 Timothy 3:1 Notes](#)

1 TIMOTHY 3

3:1-7

What did the word “desires” mean?

[3:1]

Paul used the word “desires”(ὁρέγω/g3713) in two different ways in this passage. First, someone desired to do certain things so that other people would know they wanted to serve God. He also used the word “desires”(ἐπιθυμέω/g1937) when talking about a man wanting to serve God by serving God’s church

What was an “overseer”?

[3:1]

Christians called leaders of the church “overseers”(ἐπίσκοπος/g1985). People use many different English words to translate this Greek word. The word “elder” and overseer mean the same thing (see: 5:17, 19; Titus 1:5-9). The leaders were men who guided the church. They taught Christians about God. They showed Christian how to live in a way that honors God.

See: Overseer; Elder

What did it mean to be “above reproach”?

[3:2]

A person who was “above reproach” was not accused of doing any wrong things. Christians and non- Christians respected them.

See: Blameless

Why did Paul write, “husband of one wife”?

[3:2]

The words “husband of one wife” can also be translated as “a one-woman man.” Some scholars think Paul wrote that an overseer must be a married man. Other scholars think Paul wrote that an overseer must have only one wife. Other scholars think Paul meant that an overseer must not commit adultery. That is, he will be faithful in his marriage. Advice to Translators: in English, a person cannot “do” adultery. They “commit” adultery.

See: Overseer; Elder; Adultery

What did the word “moderate” mean?

[3:2]

Paul wrote that an overseer must be a “moderate”(νηφάλιος/g3524) man. That is, he must be a man who controlled the things that he did and the things that he said.

See: Titus 2:2

How was a man “sensible”?

[3:2]

A sensible man was a man who thought about spiritual matters in life. That is, he thought about how to honor and obey God. It was a man who acted calmly and orderly in every situation.

See: Spirit (Spiritual)

How was a man “orderly”?

[3:2]

Someone was orderly when they did things he wanted to do and did not do the things he did not want to do. Other christians respected an orderly person.

What did it mean to be “hospitable”?

[3:2]

Paul wrote that an overseer must also be hospitable. That is, he must be willing to have people in his home, whether they were travelling Christians or people going to a church meeting.

See: Hospitable (Hospitality)

How was an overseer supposed to “be able to teach”?

[3:2]

Paul wrote that an overseer must be “able to teach”(διδάκτικός/g1317) That is, someone must be able to teach others about the Bible. Also, they must be able to teach in a way that was easy for people to understand. Some scholars think Paul wrote about a person who was already teaching the Bible before becoming an overseer. The overseer had to be able to know when someone did not teach the Bible in the right way. He was then able to correct those teaching the wrong thing by speaking the truth.

See: Overseer; Elder

What was meant by the words, “addicted to wine”?

[3:3]

Most scholars think Paul wrote that an overseer must not be a man who often drank wine to become drunk (see: Titus 1:7). They do not think Paul told people not to drink wine. He wrote that an overseer should not drink too much.

See: Overseer; Elder; Wine (Winepress)

How was a man a “brawler”?

[3:3]

A “brawler” was someone who often caused arguments and fights. Some scholars think a “brawler” was a person who started physical fights. Other scholars think the fights were more often people arguing and yelling at other people.

What was a “lover of money”?

[3:3]

A “lover of money” was someone who was only interested in getting as much money as they could get. Paul said an overseer must not be a man who is a lover of money (see: Hebrews 13:5; 2 Timothy 3:1-2).

See: Overseer; Elder

Why did Paul write that he needed to, “manage his own household”?

[3:4]

Paul said that an overseer must “manage his own household.” Paul meant that an overseer must be a man that leads his family to do the things that honor God.

See: Overseer; Elder

Why did Paul write that an overseer must not be a “new convert”?

[3:6]

A new convert was a person who had only been a Christian for a short period of time. Paul did not want new Christians to lead other Christians because he did not want them to be filled with pride.

See: Pride

What did Paul mean with the words, “condemnation as the devil”?

[3:6]

Some scholars think Paul wrote about God judging Satan. It was God who judged the devil because he was prideful and deceived others. The people Paul talked about think that in a similar way. God judged overseers who were prideful and deceive others because they lead other Christians.

See: Satan (The Devil); Pride

How did a man have a “good reputation with those outside”?

[3:7]

Paul wrote that an overseer must have a “good reputation with those outside.” He wanted to write that non- Christians must think an overseer is honest and does the right types of things. He was a man who was respected, even by those that did not believe in Jesus.

3:8-13

What was a deacon?

[3:8]

Certain people in the church were “deacons”(διακονος/g1249). They served and helped other Christians (see: 3:10, 13).

See: Philippians 1:1

See: Deacon

What did it mean to be “dignified”?

[3:8]

People respected a “dignified”(σεμνός/g4586) man. He was respected because of the things he did. This meant that he was wise, did not get angry easily, and did the things that honored God.

What was a “double-talker”?

[3:8]

A “double-talker” was a man who said something to one person and then said something different to another person. They also said things and then did things that were different than what they said. That is, they said good things but then did bad things. A “double-talker” knows the truth, but he says what is not true.

What was the “revealed truth of the faith”?

[3:9]

Paul wrote about the “revealed truth of the faith.” This was the truth about Jesus. The apostles told people about this truth so they could know it (see: Ephesians 3:1-13). They told Christians the things they needed to believe about Christ. They also told them how to do the things that honored God.

See: Faith (Believe in); Apostle

How could someone be “blameless”?

[3:10]

See: 1 Timothy 3:2

Who were the women about whom Paul wrote?

[3:11]

In the Greek language, the word for “women”(γυνή/g1135) can also mean wives. Because of this, some scholars think Paul wrote about the wives of the deacons. That is, they too must live in a way that honors God. Other scholars think Paul wrote about women who served as deaconesses.

See: Deacon

What did it mean to be “dignified”?

[3:11]

People respected a “dignified”(σεμνός/g4586) woman. People respected her because of the good things that she did. This meant that she was wise, did not get angry easily, and did the things that honored God.

What was a “slanderer”?

[3:11]

Someone who talked about other people in a hurtful way was a “slanderer.” A slanderer did not care whether or not the things they spoke were true.

3:14-16

What was the “household of God”?

[3:15]

The “household of God” was a metaphor. Paul was talking about a group of Christians. Paul was not writing about a building (see: Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 3:6).

See: Metaphor

How was the church the “pillar of support of the truth”?

[3:15]

Paul wrote about the church being a “pillar of support of the truth.” This was a metaphor. In the same way a foundation and pillars supported a building, so Christians support the gospel. Paul wrote in other letters that the apostles were like a foundation. Some of the apostles were even called “pillars” in the church (see: Galatians 2:9; Ephesians 2:19-20).

See: Church; Metaphor; Gospel; Apostle

What was the “revealed truth of godliness”?

[3:16]

Paul wrote about the “revealed truth of godliness.” This is this gospel. God revealed this to His people. It was the truth about how people can be at peace with God and doing the things that honored God.

See: Gospel

Why did Paul say God “appeared in the flesh”?

[3:16]

Paul wrote that God “appeared in the flesh.” Paul meant that God came to earth as a human being (see: John 1:1-4, 14-15; 14:8-13). He did this in Jesus.

How was Christ “justified by the Spirit”?

[3:16]

The Holy Spirit made it clear that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus also said this (see: Romans 1:3-5).

See: Holy Spirit; Son of God

How was Jesus “taken up in glory”?

[3:16]

After Jesus suffered on the cross, was crucified, buried, and then made alive again, he returned to heaven (see: Acts 1:9-11).

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection); Heaven; Glory (Glorify)

1 Timothy 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives some special instructions on how the overseers of the church should act and be.

a good work

"an honorable task"

1 Timothy 3:2

husband of one wife

An overseer must have only one wife. It is unclear if this excludes men who have been previously widowed or divorced, or never married.

He must be moderate, sensible, orderly, and hospitable

"He must not do anything to excess, must be reasonable and behave well, and must be friendly to strangers"

1 Timothy 3:3

He must not be addicted to wine, not a brawler but instead gentle, peaceful

"He must neither drink too much alcohol nor like to fight and argue, but instead he must be gentle and peaceful"

a lover of money

"greedy for money"

1 Timothy 3:4

He should manage

"He should lead" or "He should take care of"

he should make sure his children obey and respect him in every way

Possible meanings are 1) the overseer's children should obey and show respect to their father or 2) the overseer's

children should show respect to everyone or 3) the

overseer should show respect to those in his household as he leads them.

1 Timothy 3:5

For if a man does not know how to manage

"For when a man cannot manage"

how will he care for a church of God?

Paul uses a question to teach Timothy. Alternate translation: "he cannot take care of a church of God." or "he will not be able to lead a church of God."

a church of God

Here "church" refers to a local group of God's people.

Alternate translation: "a group of God's people" or "the believers over whom he is in charge"

1 Timothy 3:6

He should not be a new convert

"He should not be a new believer" or "He must be a mature believer"

fall into condemnation as the devil

Paul speaks of a person being condemned for having done wrong as if he were falling into a hole. Alternate translation: "have God condemn him as he condemned the devil"

1 Timothy 3:7

those outside

"those outside of the church." Paul speaks of the church as though it were a place, and of unbelievers as though they were physically outside of it. Alternate translation: "those who are not Christians"

he does not fall into disgrace and the trap of the devil

Paul speaks of disgrace and the devil causing someone to sin as if they were a hole or a trap into which a person falls.

Here "fall into" means to experience. Alternate translation: "nothing causes him shame before the unbelievers and so that the devil does not cause him to sin"

1 Timothy 3:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives some special instructions on how the deacons of the church and their wives should act and be.

In the same way, deacons

"Deacons, like overseers,"

should be dignified, not double-talkers

Paul speaks about some people as if they were "double-talkers" who could say two things at once. He is talking about people who say one thing but mean something else. Alternate translation: "should act properly and mean what they say"

1 Timothy 3:9

They should keep the mystery of the faith with a clean conscience

"They must continue to believe, with a clean conscience, the true message God has revealed to us." This refers to a truth that had existed for some time but that God was showing to them at that moment. Paul speaks of true teaching about God as if it were an object that a person could keep with himself.

the mystery of the faith

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the truth of the faith that God revealed"

faith with a clean conscience

Paul speaks of a person's knowledge that he has done no

wrong as if that knowledge or conscience were clean.

Alternate translation: "faith, knowing they have tried their hardest to do what is right"

1 Timothy 3:10

They should also be approved first

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Other believers should approve of them first" or "They should prove themselves first"

be approved

This means other believers should evaluate those who want to be a deacon and determine if they are fit to serve in the church.

1 Timothy 3:11

In the same way, their wives

Possible meanings of "their wives" are 1) the wives of deacons or 2) female deacons or 3) women in general. be dignified

"act properly" or "be worthy of respect"

should be dignified, not slanderers, but sober and faithful

"should be dignified; they should not speak evil about other people, and they should not do anything to excess; rather, they should be faithful"

sober

"moderate." See how you translated "moderate" in 1 Timothy 3:2.

1 Timothy 3:12

husbands of one wife

A man must have only one wife. It is unclear if this excludes men who have been previously widowed, divorced, or never married. See how you translated this in 1 Timothy 3:2.

manage well their children and household

"properly take care of and lead their children and others who live in their homes"

1 Timothy 3:13

For those

"For those deacons" or "For these church leaders"

acquire for themselves

"receive for themselves" or "gain for themselves"

a good standing

The implied meaning may be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "a good reputation among other believers"

great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) they will trust in Jesus with even more confidence or 2) they will speak confidently to other people about their faith in Jesus.

1 Timothy 3:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells Timothy the reason he wrote to him and then describes Christ's godliness.

I hope to come to you soon

Paul expected that his desire to visit them soon would happen. Alternate translation: "I expect to come to you soon"

1 Timothy 3:15

But if I delay

"But in case I cannot go there soon" or "But if something prevents me for being there soon"

so that you may know how to conduct yourself in the household of God

Paul speaks of the group of believers as if they were a family. Possible meanings are 1) Paul is referring only to Timothy's behavior in the church. Or 2) Paul is referring to believers in general. Alternate translation: "so that you all may know how to conduct yourselves as members of God's family"

household of God, which is the church of the living God

This phrase gives us information about "the household of God" rather than making a distinction between a household of God which is the church and one that is not the church. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "household of God. Those who belong to the family of God are the community of believers in the living God"

which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth
Paul speaks of the believers bearing witness to the truth about Christ as if they were a pillar and a base supporting a building. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "which is the church of the living God. And, by keeping and teaching God's truth, these members of the church support the truth just as a pillar and base support a building"

the living God

Here this expression may be speaking of God as the one who gives life to all, as in the UDB.

1 Timothy 3:16

We all agree

"No one can deny"

that the mystery of godliness is great

"that the truth that God has revealed is great"

He was revealed ... up in glory

This is most likely a song or poem that Paul is quoting. If your language has a way of indicating that this is poetry you could use it here. If not, you could translate this as regular prose rather than poetry.

He was revealed

Some modern translations read, "God was revealed" or "God appeared." If Paul is quoting a song or poem, the word "he" refers to Jesus Christ. If he is not quoting, the word "he" could refer to either God or Jesus Christ.

in the flesh

Paul uses "flesh" here to mean a human being. Alternate translation: "as a true human being"

was vindicated by the Spirit

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit confirmed that he was who he said he was"

was seen by angels

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the angels saw him"

was proclaimed among nations

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people in many nations told others about him"

was believed on in the world

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people in many parts of the world believed in him"

was taken up in glory

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God the Father took him up to heaven in glory"

in glory

This means he received power from God the Father and he is worthy of honor.

Chapter 4

1 Timothy 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

1 Timothy 4:1 is a prophecy. (See: prophet)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Later times

This is another way of referring to the last days. (See: lastday)

Links:

[1 Timothy 4:1 Notes](#)

1 TIMOTHY 4

4:1-5

Why did Paul write, "the Spirit clearly says"?

[4:1]

Paul wrote, "the Spirit clearly says." Some scholars think God gave Paul a prophecy about the future. Other scholars think Paul warned Timothy (see: Acts 20:29-30). Other scholars think Paul wrote about Jesus. This was about the last days (see: Mark 13:5-6, 21-22).

See: 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3

See: Holy Spirit; Prophecy (Prophecy); Last Days

What did "in later times" mean?

[4:1]

The words "in later times" are similar to the words "in the last days" (see: 2 Timothy 3:1).

Some scholars think Paul was writing about sometime after Paul wrote the letter to Timothy. Other scholars Paul wanted to say that Jesus is about to return to the earth. Other scholars think Paul wanted to say that the church has been in the last days since Jesus was born. And it will stay in the last days until Jesus returns (see: Acts 2:16-17).

See: 2 Timothy 3:1-9

See: Last Days; Church

What did it mean “to leave the faith”?

[4:1]

Paul wrote about leaving the faith. Some people who said they were Christians no longer believed in Jesus. They now followed the teachings of demons (see: 2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Someone who “left”(ἀφίστημι/0868) rebelled against God or rejected God. It was a frequent Jewish and Christian teaching that in the last days many people would reject God.

See: Matthew 24:4-6, 10-12; 2 Peter 2:1-22; 1 John 2:18-19

See: Church; Last Days

Why did Paul write “their own consciences will be branded”?

[4:2]

Paul wrote about false teachers. They taught the wrong things. When Paul wrote about this, he said that it was as if their consciences were burned. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say that they could not tell if they were teaching the right things or the wrong things. Some scholars think Satan “branded”(καυστηριάζω/g2743) these teachers. That is, he marked them as his slaves. Other scholars think that Satan “burned” their consciences, leaving them unable to know what God wanted them to do (see: 1:19).

See: Metaphor; Conscience; Serve (Servant, Slave)

What did these false teachers teach?

[4:3]

False teachers taught that people needed to be unmarried to be at peace with God. These teachers also taught that Christians needed to stop eating certain foods. Paul taught someone could be at peace with God if they are married and no matter what they eat. Some scholars think the false teachers taught that the everything on the earth is evil. Therefore, they did not want to touch certain things in the world (see: Colossians 2:16-23). Other scholars think the false teachers taught that Christians were already resurrected and living in a place of peace (see: 2 Timothy 2:18). Therefore, they thought should live as Adam and Eve did, without sex and eating no meat. However, Paul taught that everything God created was good. Nothing God created should be rejected if people thanked God for it.

See: Romans 14:1-15:7

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

4:6-10

Why did Paul write, “place these things before the brothers”?

[4:6]

Paul told Timothy to “place these things before”(ὑποτίθημι/g5294) the people of the church. That is Timothy was to teach the church. Some scholars think “these things” meant everything that Paul wrote and said to Timothy (see: 2 Timothy 2:1-2).

See: Church

Why did Paul write to be “nourished by the words of faith”?

[4:6]

Paul used the word “nourished”(ἐντρέφω/g1789). This was a metaphor. He wanted Timothy to know the things God said. He wanted him to learn them by studying them. This would train Timothy. Studying the Bible taught Paul to do the things that honored God and how to teach others to do the same.

See: Metaphor

What were “worldly stories loved by old women”?

[4:7]

Some scholars think Paul used the words “worldly stories”(βέβηλος/g0952) to write about stories that did not need to be told. These stories did not honor God. And they did not teach other people to honor God either.

Advice to Translators: Stories “loved by old women”(γρᾶώδης/g1126) in 4:7 was a common insult when Paul was alive. However, today it could insult women and the elderly. The translator should find a way of writing this idea without needlessly insulting other people.

See: World

Why did Paul write that “bodily training is a little useful”?

[4:8]

Paul wanted to write that someone training their body benefited them, but only useful while living on earth. However, training to do things that honor God benefited people would last forever.

Advice to translators: Someone who trains does something many times in the same way for a reason. It benefits them.

That is, it helps them to be better in some way.

How is God the Savior of all people, but especially of Christians?

[4:10]

Scholars think many different things about what Paul wrote to Timothy about God. people, for example, gentiles.

Some scholars think Paul meant that God does not save every individual. He saves all kinds of

Some scholars think Paul was not writing of eternal salvation. But, God gives daily blessings to all people in the world. They think Paul wrote about God's common grace to all people. This was a temporary grace. However, for those who believe in Jesus, God is their Savior. This is eternal grace. Other scholars think God offers to save everyone, but only saves those who have believe in Jesus.

4:11-16

Why did Paul write Timothy, "let no one despise your youth"?

[4:12]

In ancient times, people respected people older person. They did not think younger people did many things, therefore they did not know as much as older people. Timothy was about 30 years old when Paul wrote this letter. However, because Timothy spent many years with Paul, he did many different things and learned how to teach others about God and the gospel. Because of this, Paul gave Timothy permission to teach and wanted other CHristians to do the types of things that Timothy did.

See: Gospel

How was Timothy to "attend to the reading, to the exhortation, and to the teaching"?

[4:13]

Paul wanted Timothy "attend to the reading, to the exhortation, and to the teaching." Paul meant that Timothy was to read the scriptures to those who believed in Jesus when they gathered together. He encouraged Christians by reading the Bible. Paul also wrote Timothy to carefully "teach" the truth to the church. That is, he wanted him to teach so the church would know the Bible well.

How did God prepare Timothy to serve him?

[4:14]

God gave Timothy a spiritual "gift"(χάρισμα/g5486). That is, he gave him a special ability to serve God. Timothy served God using the gift God gave him. However, he also worked to get better as serving God using gift. The group of "elders"(πρεσβυτέριον/g4244) earlier laid their hands on him. God gave a prophecy about how he wanted Timothy to serve him.

See: 1:18;; 2 Timothy 1:6

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Elder; Laying on of Hands ; Prophecy (Prophecy)

Why did Paul write, "you will save yourself and those who listen to you"?

[4:16]

Paul wrote, "you will save yourself and those who listen to you." Some scholars think Paul wrote Timothy that as he continued to be a faithful teacher he would see more people believe in Jesus. Also, he himself would know a closer, know Jesus better. Fewer scholars think Paul wrote about God saving Christians and resurrecting their bodies.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:35-54

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

1 Timothy 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells Timothy what the Spirit says will happen and encourages him in what he should teach.

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here Paul starts to tell a new part of the teaching. in later times

These words could refer to 1) a time after Paul dies or 2) a later time in Paul's own life.

leave the faith

Paul speaks of people ceasing to trust in Christ as if they were physically leaving a place or an object. Alternate translation: "stop trusting in Jesus"

and pay attention

"and give attention" or "because they are paying attention" deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons

"spirits who trick people and the things that demons teach"

1 Timothy 4:2

by the hypocrisy of liars

This can be stated as a separate sentence if verse 1 is ended with a period. Alternate translation: "They will learn these things by the hypocrisy of liars" or "They will learn these

things from hypocritical liars"

their own consciences having been seared

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is speaking of people who can no longer tell that they are doing wrong as if their minds were ruined. He speaks of their minds being ruined as if their minds were skin that someone had burned with a hot iron. Or 2) Paul is speaking of these people as if Satan had put a mark on them with a hot iron to indicate that they belong to him.

seared

touched with a hot object until it burns brown or black

1 Timothy 4:3

They will

"These people will"

forbid people to marry

It is implied that they will forbid believers to marry.

Alternate translation: "forbid believers to marry"

require them to abstain from foods

It is implied that they will forbid only certain foods.

Alternate translation: "they will not allow people to eat certain foods"

1 Timothy 4:4

For every creation of God is good

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"everything that God has created is good"

nothing received with thanksgiving is to be rejected

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we should not refuse anything for which we give thanks to God" or "everything that we eat with thanksgiving is acceptable"

1 Timothy 4:5

it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer

Here "word of God" and "prayer" are used together to express one idea. The prayer is in agreement with the truth that God has revealed. Alternate translation: "it is dedicated for God's use by praying in agreement with his word"

it is sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we sanctify it" or "we have set it apart"

word of God

Here "word" refers to God's message or what he has revealed.

1 Timothy 4:6

If you place these things before the brothers

Paul speaks of his instructions as if they were objects that could be physically presented to the believers. Here, to place before means to instruct or to remind. Alternate translation: "If you help the believers remember these things"

these things

This refers to the teaching that started in 1 Timothy 3:16.

the brothers

This refers to all believers whether male or female.

you are being nourished by the words of faith and by the good teaching that you have followed

Paul speaks of God's word and its teaching as if it could physically feed Timothy and make him strong. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the words of faith and the good teaching that you have followed are causing you to trust more strongly in Christ"

words of faith

"words that cause people to believe"

1 Timothy 4:7

profane stories loved by old women

"ungodly stories and old wives' tales." "Profane" here refers to stories that purposely dishonor God. Translate "stories" as you did in 1 Timothy 1:4.

loved by old women

This is probably an expression that means "silly" or "absurd." Paul is not purposely insulting women in his reference to "old women." Instead, he and his audience knew that men die younger than women, so there are more women than men whose minds have become feeble due to old age.

train yourself in godliness

"train yourself to honor God" or "train yourself to act in ways that please God"

1 Timothy 4:8

bodily training

"physical exercise"

holds promise for this life

"is beneficial to this life"

1 Timothy 4:9

worthy of full acceptance

"worthy of your complete belief" or "worthy of your full trust"

1 Timothy 4:10

For it is for this

"This is the reason"

labor and struggle

The word "labor" here refers to working very hard, and "struggle" is a metaphor for dealing with difficulties and dangers.

For we hope in the living God ... believers

Paul and his fellow workers confidently expect that God will do all that he has promised to do. Alternate translation: "For we confidently expect that the living God... believers, will do what he promised to do" or "For we fully trust in the living God ... believers"

the living God

Possible meanings are 1) "the God who is alive," as opposed to idols, who are not alive, or 2) "God, who acts," as opposed to idols that do nothing, or 3) "God, who gives life to all living beings."

but especially of believers

The ellipsis can be filled in. Alternate translation: "but he is especially the Savior of those people who believe"

1 Timothy 4:11

Instruct the people and teach these things

"Command and teach these things" or "Instruct and teach these things I just mentioned"

1 Timothy 4:12

Let no one despise your youth

"Do not let anyone consider you less important because you are young"

in speech, conduct, love, faithfulness, and purity

Paul wanted Timothy to be an example in these things.

Alternate translation: "by speaking and doing what is right, by loving others, and by being faithful and pure"

1 Timothy 4:13

attend to the reading, to the exhortation, and to the teaching

The words "reading," "exhortation," and "teaching" can be translated with verbal phrases. The implied information can also be supplied in translation. Alternate translation:

"continue reading the scripture to the people, exhorting the people, and teaching the people"

1 Timothy 4:14

Do not neglect the gift that is in you

Paul speaks of Timothy as if he were a container that could hold God's gifts. This can be stated in positive form.

Alternate translation: "Do not neglect your spiritual gift"

Do not neglect

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Be sure to use"

which was given to you through prophecy

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "which you received when leaders of the church spoke God's word"

laying on of the hands of the elders

This was a ceremony in which the church leaders put their hands on Timothy and prayed that God would enable him

to do the work he had commanded him to do.

1 Timothy 4:15

Care for these things. Be in them

Paul speaks of God's gifts to Timothy as if he could physically be in them. Alternate translation: "Do all these things and live according to them"

so that your progress may be evident to all people

Paul speaks of Timothy's increasing ability to serve God as if it were a physical object that others could look at.

Alternate translation: "so other people will know that you are serving God better and better"

1 Timothy 4:16

Give careful attention to yourself and to the teaching

"Conduct yourself carefully and give attention to the teaching" or "Control your own behavior and give attention to the teaching"

Continue in these things

"Continue to do these things"

you will save yourself and those who listen to you

Possible meanings are 1) Timothy will save himself and those who hear him from God's judgment or 2) Timothy will save himself and those who hear him from the influence of false teachers.

Chapter 5

1 Timothy 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Honor and respect

Paul encourages younger Christians to honor and respect older Christians. Cultures honor and respect older people in different ways.

Widows

In the ancient Near East, it was important to care for widows, because they could not provide for themselves.

Links:

[1 Timothy 5:1 Notes](#)

1 TIMOTHY 5

5:1-2

How was Timothy to treat older people?

[5:1, 5:2]

Paul told Timothy to respect older men and women in the same way he would respect a father or mother. Paul wrote Timothy not to "scold" an older man. That is, Timothy was not to speak harshly or disrespect an older man.

See: Leviticus 19:32

How was Timothy to treat younger people?

[5:1, 5:2]

Paul told Timothy to treat younger people in the same way he treated his own brothers and sister. Particularly, Paul told Timothy to encourage younger women with all "purity." That is, Timothy was to honor and to protect younger women. Also, Timothy was to treat younger women with moral purity. That is, he was not to commit sexual immorality, by thinking or doing the wrong things.

Advice to Translator: in English, a person cannot do sexual immorality, they "commit" sexual immorality.

See: Sexual Immorality

5:3-16

What was a "real widow"?

[5:3]

Any woman whose husband died was a "widow." However, Paul was writing about a widow who did not have anyone to care for her and not a widow whose family was able to help her (see: 5:16). The church was to help only widows who had no one and nothing to help them.

See: Deuteronomy 10:18, 14:29, 24:17-22; Isaiah 1:17; James 1:27

See: Church

Advice to Translators: Since every woman who has lost a husband is a widow, the translator needs to make a way to say that this is a "widow who is in need of someone to care for her."

Why did Paul write that families need to care for a widowed mother or grandmother?

[5:4]

Paul wrote that children and grandchildren need to "honor" the widows in their family. Also, they needed to she had food and a place to live. If Christians cared for widows in their family, this was "pleasing to God".

Advice to translators: A woman whose husband died was "widowed."

Why did Paul write, "puts her certain hope in God"?

[5:5]

Paul wrote that a widow “puts her certain hope in God.” Some scholars think Paul wrote about a widow who placed her trust in God’s promises. She trusted God, not only for the promise to live with him in heaven forever, but also that God would help her during her life. Other scholars think Paul described a widow as someone who completely depended on God for her needs. For these reasons, a real widow prayed constantly for God to give her what she needed.

See: 1 Timothy 4:10; Isaiah 40:31; Romans 5:5

Why did Paul write, “dead, even though she is still alive”?

[5:6]

Paul wrote about certain widows as women who lived simply for their own “pleasure.” That is, they had a lot of money and did what they thought would make them happy. He said they were “dead, even though they were still alive.” That is, though they had life physically, they did not have spiritual life. That is, they did not worship God or depend on Him for their needs.

See: Ephesians 2:3; James 5:5;

See: Die (Death); Spirit (Spiritual); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

Why did Paul write, “denied the faith”?

[5:8]

Paul wrote that people “denied the faith.” Scholars think Paul wrote to “deny” the faith to write about people that said they believed in Jesus but they did not do the things that honor God.

See: Faith (Believe in)

What did the word, “enrolled” mean?

[5:9]

The word “enrolled”(καταλέγω/g2639) was used to talk about making someone a part of a group. Scholars think two different things about why widows were enrolled in the church.

Some scholars think the church made a list of widows (and perhaps also some women who never married). These women did special things for the church. Other scholars think that the list was simply the widows the church supported. These women did not do anything special for the church.

See: Church

Why did Paul write “wife of one husband”?

[5:9]

Paul wrote “wife of one husband.” This can also be written “a husband of one wife” (see: 3:2), “a woman of one man” or “of one husband.” Some scholars think Paul wrote about a woman who married only once. Other scholars think Paul wrote about women who remained faithful to their husbands during their marriage.

How did a widow wash the feet of the saints?

[5:10]

In the ancient world, people washed the feet of people who came to their home. This honored the people who came to their home. Usually, slaves or women did this (see: Genesis 18:4; 1 Samuel 25:41; John 13:4- 12). Some scholars think Paul wrote about a woman who washed other Christian’s feet. Other scholars think this was a metaphor. They think it was a woman who served other Christians in a humble way.

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write not to enroll younger widows on the list?

[5:11]

Paul wrote not to put the names of younger widows on the list. Some scholars think Paul did not want to help younger widows for a long time. However, they think Paul did want to help younger widows in some way. Fewer scholars think Paul wrote not to give younger widows any help from the church.

Why did Paul write for widows to “revoke their first commitment”?

[5:12]

Paul wrote for widows to “revoke their first commitment.” To “revoke” was used to talk about someone not doing the things they said they would do. “Commitment”(πίστις/g4102) can also be translated as “faith.” Scholars do not agree on why Paul wrote these words.

Some scholars think that a widow dishonored her dead husband if she wanted to marry another man. Some scholars think that she had made a “commitment” to the church to remain single so she could serve the church more, but then later did not do this. Some scholars think that she had taken a “vow” of to not have sex again or get married again. Then, she could serve the church greatly. Some scholars think that she no longer served Jesus because she married a man who did not believe in Jesus. In ancient times, a man could decide what god or gods his family worshipped.

See: Church; Vow

What was a “busybody”?

[5:13]

A “busybody” was a person who wanted to know things about other people. These were things they did not need to know about these other people (see: 2 Thessalonians 3:11). This was a sin. It hurt the church.

See: 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12

See: Sin; Church

Why did Paul write, “some have already turned aside to Satan”?

[5:15]

Someone “turned aside”(ἐκτρέπω/g1624) by no longer doing the things that honored God. Satan always tried to get Christians to do the things he wanted them to do (see: 4:1; 2 Timothy 2:26).

Some scholars think Paul wrote about widows who lived in a way that dishonors God or married someone who did not believe in Jesus. Others scholars think some widows were doing things with magic. Other scholars think some widows began to do the things demons wanted them to do (see: 4:1)

See: Genesis 3:1, 13; Acts 5:3; 2 Corinthians 11:14-15

See: Satan (The Devil); Demon

5:17-25

What was an elder?

[5:17]

See: 3:1-7

See: Elder

Why did Paul write, “you shall not muzzle an ox”?

[5:18]

Paul said the same things as Deuteronomy 25:4. On a farm, an ox walked around in a circle to crush grain. It was allowed to eat some of that grain. Paul wrote that an ox is fed with the grain on which he works. Therefore, it is also right to give the elders of the church things so they can live because they serve other Christians in a special way (see: 1 Corinthians 9:7-11).

See: Church; Grain (Grain Offering); Elder

Where did someone write, “The laborer is worthy of his wages”?

[5:18]

See: Matthew 10:10; Luke 10:7

Why did Paul write about “two or three witnesses”?

[5:19]

Paul said the same thing as Deuteronomy 19:15. This verse spoke about evil things such as murder. In order to punish a person, at least two or three people needed to see the person who did the evil thing. In the same way, saying that an elder sinned is a serious thing. It must be seen by people who have seen the sin.

See: Matthew 18:16; 2 Corinthians 13:1

See: Elder; Sin

Who were the “chosen angels”?

[5:21]

Paul wrote about the “chosen angels.” Some scholars think the “chosen angels” were those angels God made to care for the church. They think Paul wrote about God, Jesus, and the angels so they would know that the command Paul gave Timothy was serious. Other scholars think Paul wrote about certain angels who are near God in heaven.

See: Revelation 4-5

See: Angel; Elect (Election); Church; Heaven

What did Paul write to Timothy to “keep these commands without partiality”?

[5:21]

Paul wrote Timothy not to give “partiality” when judging something. That is, when he judged something for the elders. Paul wrote Timothy to treat every elder in the same way. In the same way, Timothy was not to favor a certain elder for any reason.

Advice to translators: Timothy helped the elders to know what to do when they did not know what to do. This is how he judged something.

See: Galatians 2:6; James 2:1-13

See: Elder

Why did Paul warn Timothy not to lay hands on anyone too “hastily”?

[5:22] When the church made someone a new leader, the current elders laid their hands on them and prayed with them. Paul wanted Timothy to know for sure whether or not someone needed to be a leader before he made them into one. He did not need to make people into leaders too quickly.

See: 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6

See: Elder; Laying on of Hands

Why did Paul write “share in the sins of another person”?

[5:22]

Paul wanted Timothy to know that Timothy would be guilty if he made someone a leader in the church too quickly. That is, if he made someone a leader that did not need to be one. Perhaps Paul wrote about a leader who continues to sin.

See: Sin

Why did Paul write Timothy to "take a little wine"?

[5:23]

Paul told Timothy to "take a little wine." Paul was not writing Timothy to stop drink water. Instead, he wrote him not to drink only water. Paul wrote Timothy to "take a little wine" as well as to drink water. Some scholars think Paul wrote this to Timothy because Timothy had an illnesses. Some people thought this could make someone feel better when they were ill. Other scholars think Paul wrote this to Timothy to because sometimes the water was not good to drink where Timothy was.

What were sins that went before a person "into judgment"?

[5:24]

Paul wrote about sins that went before a person "into judgment." Some of the people they thought could be church leaders had sinned in a certain way. They sinned in a way where everyone knew they sinned. Because everyone knew about their sins, Timothy and the other leaders judged that they could not serve in this way. However, Paul wrote that there were people who sinned secretly. These sins were sometimes found out at a later time. Therefore, Timothy had to be careful when he chose new leaders for the church.

See: Psalm 90:8; Jeremiah 16:17

See: Sin; Church

1 Timothy 5:1

General Information:

Paul was giving these commands to one person, Timothy. Languages that have different forms of "you" or different forms for commands would use the singular form here.

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to tell Timothy how to treat the men, women, widows, and younger women in the church.

Do not rebuke an older man

"Do not speak harshly to an older man"

Instead, exhort him

"Instead, encourage him"

as if he were a father ... as brothers

Paul uses these similes to tell Timothy that he should treat fellow believers with sincere love and respect.

1 Timothy 5:2

older women ... younger women

You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "exhort older women ... exhort younger women" or "encourage older women ... encourage younger women"

in all purity

"with pure thoughts and actions" or "in a holy way"

1 Timothy 5:3

Honor widows

"Respect and provide for widows"

the real widows

"widows with no one to provide for them"

1 Timothy 5:4

let them first learn

"first of all they should learn" or "let them make it a priority to learn"

in their own household

"to their own family" or "to those living in their homes"

Let them repay their parents

"Let them do good to their parents in return for the good things their parents have given them"

1 Timothy 5:5

But she who is a real widow, who is left all alone

"But one who is truly a widow, who has no family"

has set her hope in God

The widow confidently expected that God would do what he promised to do. Alternate translation: "confidently expects that God will do what he promised to do" or "fully trusts in God"

continues in offering earnest appeals and prayers

"continues to make requests and prayers"

offering earnest appeals and prayers

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Paul uses them together to emphasize how much these widows pray. night and day

The words "night" and "day" are used together to mean "at all times." Alternate translation: "all the time"

1 Timothy 5:6

is dead

Paul speaks about people who do not seek to please God as if they were dead. Alternate translation: "is like a dead person; she does not respond to God"

she lives

This refers to physical life.

1 Timothy 5:7

Instruct them in these things

"Teach them these things, too" or "Command them to do these things, too"

so that they may be blameless

"so that no one can find fault with them." Possible

meanings of "they" are 1) "these widows and their families" or 2) "the believers." It might be best to leave the subject as "they."

1 Timothy 5:8

does not provide for his own relatives, especially for those of his own household

"does not help with his relatives' needs, especially for those family members living in his home"

he has denied the faith

"he has acted contrary to the truth we believe"

is worse than an unbeliever

"is worse than those who do not believe in Jesus." Paul means this person is worse than an unbeliever because even unbelievers take care of their relatives. Therefore, a believer should certainly take care of his relatives.

1 Timothy 5:9

be enrolled as a widow

There seems to have been a list, written or not, of widows. The church members met these women's needs for shelter, clothing, and food, and these women were expected to devote their lives to serving the Christian community.

who is not younger than sixty

As Paul will explain in 5:11-16, widows who were younger than 60 years old might get married again. Therefore the Christian community was to care only for widows who were older than 60.

a wife of one husband

Possible meanings are 1) she was always faithful to her husband or 2) she had not divorced her husband and then married another man.

1 Timothy 5:10

She must have a reputation for doing good deeds

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"People must be able to tell others about her good deeds"

has been hospitable to strangers

"has welcomed strangers into her home"

has washed the feet of God's holy people

Washing the dirty feet of people who have been walking in the dirt and mud is one way of meeting other people's needs and making life more enjoyable for them. This probably means she did humble work in general. Alternate translation: "has done common work to help other believers"

God's holy people

Some versions translate this word as "the believers" or "saints." The essential idea is to refer to Christian believers.

has relieved the afflicted

Here "the afflicted" is a nominal adjective that can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "has helped those who are suffering"

has been devoted to every good work

"has given herself to doing all kinds of good deeds"

1 Timothy 5:11

But as for younger widows, refuse to enroll them in the list

"But do not include younger widows in the list." The list was of widows aged 60 years and older whom the Christian community would help.

For when they give in to bodily desires against Christ, they want to marry

"For when they prefer to fulfill their sensual desires and get married, they go against their promise to serve Christ as widows"

1 Timothy 5:12

set aside their first commitment

"do not keep their prior commitment" or "do not do what they promised before to do"

commitment

The commitment of the widows was their agreement to serve the Christian community for the rest of their lives if the community would supply the widows' needs.

1 Timothy 5:13

learn to be lazy

"get into the habit of doing nothing"

talk nonsense and are busybodies, saying things they should not say

These three phrases are probably three ways of speaking of

the same activity. These people should not be looking into other people's private lives and telling about them to others who are no better off after hearing.

nonsense

words that do not help those who hear them

busybodies

people who look into other people's private lives for their own good and not for the good of the other people

1 Timothy 5:14

to manage the household

"to take care of everyone in her house"

the enemy

These words could refer to 1) Satan or 2) unbelievers who are hostile to Christians.

to slander us

Here "us" refers to the entire Christian community, including Timothy.

1 Timothy 5:15

turned aside after Satan

Paul speaks of living in faithfulness to Christ as if it were a path to be followed. This means the women stopped obeying Jesus and started obeying Satan. Alternate translation: "left the path of Christ to follow Satan" or "decided to obey Satan instead of Christ"

1 Timothy 5:16

any believing woman

"any Christian woman" or "any woman who believes in Christ"

has widows

"has widows among her relatives"

so that the church will not be burdened

Paul speaks of the community having to help more people than they are able as if they were carrying too much weight on their backs. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that the church will not have more work to do than they can" or "so that the Christian community will not have to help widows whose families could provide for them"

real widows

"those women who have no one to provide for them"

1 Timothy 5:17

Connecting Statement:

Paul again talks of how elders (overseers) should be treated and then gives Timothy some personal instructions.

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "All believers should think of the elders who are good leaders as worthy"

double honor

Possible meanings are 1) "respect and payment" or 2) "more respect than others receive"

those who labor with the word and in teaching

Paul speaks about the word as if it is an object that a person can work with. Alternate translation: "those who work hard preaching and those who teach God's word"

1 Timothy 5:18

For the scripture says

This is personification that means that this is what someone has written in the scriptures. Alternate translation: "For we

read in the scriptures that"

You must not put a muzzle on an ox while it threshes the grain

Paul is using this quotation as a metaphor meaning that church leaders deserve to receive payment from the Christian community for their work.

muzzle

place a sleeve over an animal's snout and mouth to prevent it from eating

threshes the grain

An ox "threshes the grain" when it walks on or pulls a heavy object over the cut grain to separate the grain from the stalks. The ox was allowed to eat some of the grain as it worked.

is worthy of

"deserves"

1 Timothy 5:19

Do not receive an accusation

Paul speaks of accusations as if they were objects that could be physically accepted by people. Alternate translation: "Do not accept as true any accusation that someone speaks"

two or three

"at least two" or "two or more"

1 Timothy 5:20

sinners

This refers to anyone doing anything that disobeys or displeases God, even things that other people do not know about.

before all

"where everyone can see"

so that the rest may be afraid

"so that others will be afraid to sin"

1 Timothy 5:21

the chosen angels

This means the angels whom God and Jesus have chosen to serve them in a special way.

to keep these commands without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism

The words "partiality" and "favoritism" mean basically the same thing. Paul is emphasizing that Timothy must judge honestly and be fair to everyone. Alternate translation: "to keep these rules without being partial or showing favor to anyone"

these commands

The phrase "these commands" could refer to 1) the rules Paul just told Timothy or 2) the rules Paul is about to tell Timothy.

1 Timothy 5:22

Place hands

The placing of hands was a ceremony in which one or more church leaders would place their hands on people and pray

that God would enable those people to serve the church in a way that would please God. Timothy was to wait until the person had shown good character for a long time before officially setting that person apart to serve the Christian community.

Do not share in the sins of another person

Paul speaks of someone's sin as if it were an object that could be shared with others. Alternate translation: "do not join in another person's sin" or "do not participate when another person sins"

Do not share in the sins of another person

Possible meanings are 1) if Timothy chose someone who was guilty of sin to be a church worker, God would hold Timothy responsible for that person's sin or 2) Timothy should not commit sins he saw others committing.

1 Timothy 5:23

You should no longer drink water

It is implied that Timothy should not drink only water. Paul is telling Timothy to use wine as medicine. The water in that area often caused sickness.

for the stomach and your frequent sicknesses

"because of your stomach and your frequent sicknesses" or

"to help your stomach and to stop your frequent illnesses"

1 Timothy 5:24

The sins of some people are openly known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The sins of some people are very obvious"

they go before them into judgment

"their sins go before those people into judgment." Paul

speaks of sins as if they were moving. Possible meanings

are 1) Their sins are so obvious that everyone will know

they are guilty even before anyone testifies against them or

2) Their sins are evident, and God judges them now.

But some sins follow later

"But some sins follow people later." Paul speaks of sins as if they were moving. Possible meanings are 1) Timothy and the Christian community will not know about certain sins until later or 2) God will not judge some sins until the final judgment.

1 Timothy 5:25

some good works are openly known

"some good works are obvious"

good works

The works are considered "good" because they fit with God's character, purposes, and will.

but even the others cannot be hidden

Paul speaks of good works as if they were objects that someone cannot hide. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "but people will later find out about even the good deeds that are not obvious"

Chapter 6

1 Timothy 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Slavery

Paul does not write in this chapter about whether slavery is good or bad. Paul teaches about honoring, respecting, and diligently serving masters. Paul teaches all believers to be godly and content in every situation.

Links:

1 TIMOTHY 6

6:1-2

What was a slave?

[6:1]

A “slave” (δοῦλος/g1401) was a person owned by another person. The slave worked for the owner. A slave was not paid for the work they did. However, a “slave” was taken care of by his owner. The owner gave them food to eat, clothes to wear, and a place to live.

See: Ephesians 6:5-8; Colossians 3:22-25;

See: Serve (Servant, Slave)

What did it mean to be “under the yoke”?

[6:1]

A yoke (ζυγός/g2218) was a piece of wood that was placed around the necks of two large animals to join them together. This allowed them to pull heavy loads. To be “under the yoke” was a metaphor. That is, it was used to talk about how slaves were owned by a master and made to do work.

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write, “worthy of all honor”?

[6:1]

Paul wanted Christian slaves to respect their master by obeying him.

How might the “name of God” be blasphemed?

[6:1]

The word “blaspheme” was used to say that someone said something bad about God or another person in some way. Some scholars think Paul wrote about God being spoken against when he wrote Christians not to do things to blaspheme. That is, If slaves were disobedient, it gave reason for non-Christians to speak bad things about God and the things Christians taught.

See: Romans 2:24; Titus 2:9-10

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

6:3-10

What was teaching that did “not agree” with Paul’s message?

[6:3]

Throughout the book of 1st Timothy, Paul wrote Timothy about how the church was to work together. Paul wanted Timothy to know that anything someone taught that did “not agree” (ἐτεροδιδασκαλέω/g2085) with the things Paul wrote in this letter was false teaching.

See: Galatians 1:6-9

See: Church

What were “controversies and arguments about words”?

[6:4]

Paul wrote again what he had already written about false teachers. They taught about things that did not matter much. They also taught wrong things about the Old Testament (see: 1:4, 6-7; 4:7). These things caused arguments about things which were not things about which they needed to worry. Paul warned Timothy that false teachers harmed the church.

See: Proverbs 20:3; Titus 3:9

See: Church

What was a “depraved” person?

[6:5]

Some scholars think a “depraved” person was someone who did not know the truth or they no longer believed the things that were true. Other scholars think a “depraved” person does not know the difference between right and wrong.

Why did Paul write the word “contentment”?

[6:6]

“Contentment” was used to talk about a person who had enough of the things he needed to live. He had no need for help from other people. Also, it was used to talk about a person who did not want anything more in their life. In Paul’s letters, Christians were content because they knew God provided their needs.

See: Matthew 6:25-26; Philippians 4:11-13

See: Greed (Covet)

How were godliness and contentment “great gain”?

[6:6]

Paul wrote that godliness and contentment were “great gain” because doing the things that honored God were good for a person both now and forever.

See: Godly (Godliness)

Why did Paul write “the world”?

[6:7]

In the same way that newborn babies have nothing in this world, people cannot take anything from this world with them when they die.

See: Job 1:21; Matthew 6:33-34

See: World

What was “the love of money”?

A person with “love of money” only wanted to have much money and things they could buy with it.

How was the love of money “a root of all kinds of evil”?

[6:10]

Paul used the metaphor of a “root.” That is, the love of money causes much evil in the same way a root causes a plant to grow.

See: Ecclesiastes 5:10; Luke 16:13-15

See: Metaphor

How did people who loved money “pierce themselves with much grief”?

[6:10]

When a person pierced or stabbed themselves with a knife or other sharp thing, it caused pain. Paul used that idea to say that people who have a love for money often times cause themselves to have pain, such as the loss of friendships.

6:11-21

What was a “man of God”?

[6:11]

Some scholars think Paul wrote about Timothy as a man of God because Timothy was a Christian. Also, Timothy wanted to do the things that honored God. Other scholars think Paul wrote “man of God” to write that Timothy was similar to a prophet. In the Old Testament, the words “man of God” were often used to write about Moses, Samuel and Elijah.

See: 2 Timothy 3:17; Deuteronomy 33:1; 1 Kings 17:18

See: Prophet

Why did Paul write Timothy to “flee these things”?

[6:11]

Paul told Timothy to “flee” certain things. He wrote this to tell Timothy not do the things that trap people who do these things because they love money. However, Paul wrote Timothy to “pursue” other things. He told him to do the things that make him to live in a way that honors God.

See: 2 Timothy 2:22

What was the “good fight of faith”?

[6:12]

Paul wanted Timothy to know that a Christian will be persecuted by people who do not believe in Jesus.

See: Persecute (Persecution)

What was the “good confession” made by Timothy?

[6:12, 6:13]

Some scholars think the “good confession” about which Paul wrote was when Timothy told others that he believed in Jesus. Other scholars think Timothy made the “good confession” when he began preaching the gospel (see: 2 Timothy 1:14).

See: Romans 10:9-10

See: Confess (Confession); Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Why did Paul write Timothy to “keep the commandment without spot or blame”?

[6:14]

Paul wrote Timothy to obey God’s commandment “without spot.” That is, he needed to obey God perfectly. To be “without blame” meant Timothy was to do things in such a way that no one could accuse him of doing the wrong things.

See: 4:11-16; 2 Peter 3:14

Why did Paul write “reveal Christ’s appearing”?

[6:14]

Paul wrote “reveal Christ’s appearing” to write that God decided when Christ will return. God will cause it to happen (see: Acts 1:6-7). “Appearing”(ἐπιφάνεια/g2015) was one of the words used to talk about when Jesus came to earth the first time (see: 2 Timothy 1:10). The same Greek word for “appearing” is also used for the second time Jesus will come in the future (see: 2 Thessalonians 2:8; 2 Timothy 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13).

See: Matthew 16:27; 24:30; Colossians 3:4

See: Reveal (Revelation); Jesus' Return to Earth; Glory (Glorify)

What was “immortality”?

[6:16]

God has “immortality.” That is, only God has always lived and will live forever and never dies (see: 1:17). God promised Christians that they will live forever with God also (1 Corinthians 15:53-54).

See: Immortal (Immortality)

What was “unapproachable light”?

[6:16]

God’s presence is so bright that people cannot be physically close to him. This was the light of God’s glory at Mount Sinai (see: Exodus 24:16-17).

See: Psalm 104:1-2

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Presence of God; Glory (Glorify))

See Map: Mount Sinai

How was someone “rich in good works”?

[6:18]

When Paul wrote to Timothy about people being “rich in good works,” he wanted people to do many good things.

See: Acts 9:36; Titus 3:8;

What was a “good foundation”?

[6:19]

Paul wrote about a “good foundation.” This was a metaphor. In the same way cement and large rocks made a foundation to build a solid house, so the things taught in the Bible is the foundation for a Christian to live.

See: Matthew 6:19-21

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write to Timothy to “protect” what was given to him?

[6:20]

Paul told Timothy the truth, and Timothy needed to “protect”(φυλάσσω/g5442) it. Also, Timothy needed to teach Christians the truth in the same way that Paul taught Timothy. Some scholars think that this was all the things Christians taught. Other scholars think that it was only the things Paul wrote Timothy in this letter.

See: 1:11, 18; 2 Timothy 1:14

Why did Paul write some men “missed the faith”?

[6:21]

Some scholars think Paul wrote the words “miss”(ἀστοχέω/g0795) the faith to write about people who did not fully understand the message about believing in Jesus. Therefore, they began to teach false things about what was faith. Fewer scholars think Paul used the words to “miss” the faith to write about people who no longer believed the message of faith.

See: 1:6, 19; 2 Timothy 2:18

1 Timothy 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives some specific instructions to slaves and masters and then continues with instructions on living in a godly way.

Let all who are under the yoke as slaves

Paul speaks of people working as slaves as if they are oxen carrying a yoke. Alternate translation: "Let all who are working as slaves"

Let all who are

It is implied that Paul is speaking about believers. Alternate translation: "Let all who are believers"

the name of God and the teaching might not be blasphemed

This can be stated in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "the unbelievers might always speak respectfully about the name of God and the teaching"

the name of God

Here "name" refers to God's nature or character. Alternate translation: "the character of God" or "God"

the teaching

"the faith" or "the gospel"

1 Timothy 6:2

The slaves who have believing masters should not show them disrespect because they are brothers

Possible meanings are 1) it is because the believing masters

are brothers that their slaves should not show them disrespect or 2) slaves should not think that because their masters are believers they can therefore show them disrespect.

they are brothers

Here "brothers" means "fellow believers."

those who receive the benefit

You may need to add the words omitted by the ellipsis.

Alternate translation: "the masters whom the slaves help with their good work"

and beloved

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "and the slaves should love them" or 2) "whom God loves"

1 Timothy 6:3

the truthful words of our Lord Jesus Christ

The word "truthful" is a figure of speech from the Greek word for "healthy."

truthful words

The word translated as "truthful" comes from the term "healthy" here, and it is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. See how you translated the word "healthy" in [1 Timothy 1:10]

1 Timothy 6:4

he is proud ... He has an unhealthy interest

Here "he" refers to anyone in general that teaches what is

not correct. To make this clear, you can translate "he" as "they."

understands nothing
 "understands nothing about God's truth"

He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and arguments
 Paul speaks of people who feel compelled to engage in useless arguments as if they were ill. Such people greatly desire to argue, and they do not really want to find a way to agree. Alternate translation: "All he wants to do is argue" or "He craves arguments"

controversies and arguments about words that result in envy
 "controversies and arguments about words, and these controversies and arguments result in envy"

about words
 "about the meanings of words"

strife
 arguments, fights
 insults
 bad things that people falsely say about each other
 evil suspicions
 evil beliefs that innocent people have done something wrong or are planning on doing something wrong

1 Timothy 6:5
 morally corrupt minds
 "wicked minds"

They have lost the truth
 Here the word "They" refers to anyone who teaches anything that does not agree with the teaching of Jesus. The phrase "have lost the truth" represents ignoring it or forgetting it. Alternate translation: "They have ignored the truth" or "They have forgotten the truth"

1 Timothy 6:6

Now
 This marks a break in the teaching. Here Paul begins to contrast the kind of riches the wicked people seek through godliness (1 Timothy 6:5) and the true kind of gain people receive through godliness. Alternate translation: "Of course"

godliness with contentment is great gain
 The words "godliness" and "contentment" are abstract nouns. Alternate translation: "it is great gain for people to do what is godly and to be content with what they have"

is great gain
 "provides great benefits" or "does many good things for us"

1 Timothy 6:7
 we brought nothing into the world
 "we brought nothing into the world when we were born"

we can take nothing out of it
 "we can take nothing out of the world when we die"

1 Timothy 6:8
 let us
 "we should"

1 Timothy 6:9

Now
 This word marks a break in the teaching. Here Paul returns to the topic about those who think being godly will make them wealthy (1 Timothy 6:5).
 to become wealthy fall into temptation, into a trap
 Paul speaks about those who let the temptation of money

cause them to sin as if they were animals that fall into holes that hunters use as traps. Alternate translation: "to become wealthy will encounter more temptation than they can resist, and they will be like an animal in a trap"

They fall into many foolish and harmful desires, and into whatever else sinks

Paul continues the trap metaphor and speaks of people who give in to their foolish and harmful desires and do evil as if they were animals who fall into a trap. Alternate translation: "They desire many foolish and harmful things and then do things that sink"

harmful desires
 These are probably desires to do things that will harm those who do them as much as or more than they will harm other people.

into whatever else sinks people into ruin and destruction
 Paul speaks about people who suffer because of their sins as if sin were a person who had put them under water or in mud. Alternate translation: "into other kinds of evil that ruin and destroy people"

1 Timothy 6:10
 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil
 Paul speaks of the love of money as if it were the root of a plant whose fruit is all kinds of evil. Alternate translation: "This happens because loving money is a cause of all kinds of evil"

who desire it
 "who desire money"

have been misled away from the faith
 Paul speaks of wrong desires as if they were evil guides who intentionally guide people down the wrong path. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "have let their desires lead them away from the truth" or "have stopped believing the truth"

have pierced themselves with much grief
 Paul speaks about grief as if it were swords that people have used to stab themselves. Alternate translation: "have caused themselves to be very sorrowful"

1 Timothy 6:11
 But you
 Here "you" is singular and refers to Timothy.
 man of God
 "servant of God" or "person who belongs to God"

flee from these things
 Paul speaks of these temptations and sins as if they were things that a person could physically run away from. Alternate translation: "completely avoid these things"

these things
 Possible meanings of "these things" are 1) the "love of money" or 2) the different teachings, pride, arguments, and the love of money.

Pursue righteousness
 "Run after righteousness" or "Chase righteousness." Paul speaks of righteousness and other good qualities as if they were things that a person could run after. This metaphor is the opposite of "flee from." It means to try your best to obtain something. Alternate translation: "Seek to gain" or "Do your best to act in"

1 Timothy 6:12

Fight the good fight of faith

Here Paul speaks about a person continuing in faith as if he were an athlete fighting to win a contest or a warrior fighting a battle. Alternate translation: "Try your hardest to obey Christ's teachings with as much energy as an athlete uses in a contest"

Take hold of the everlasting life

This continues the metaphor. Paul speaks about a person receiving eternal life as if he were a victorious athlete or warrior taking their prize. Alternate translation: "Take eternal life as your reward as a victorious athlete takes his prize"

to which you were called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to which God has called you"

you gave the good confession

"you confessed what is good" or "you confessed the truth"

before many witnesses

Paul expresses the idea of location in order to signal the idea of the people to whom Timothy was speaking.

Alternate translation: "to many witnesses"

1 Timothy 6:13

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks of Christ's coming, gives specific instructions to the rich, and lastly closes with a special message to Timothy.

I give these orders to you

"This is what I command you"

before God, who gives life to all things

"in the presence of God, who causes all things to live." It is implied that Paul is asking God to be his witness. Alternate translation: "with God, who causes all things to live, as my witness"

and before Christ Jesus, who testified before Pontius Pilate

"in the presence of Christ Jesus, who spoke ... Pilate." It is implied that Paul is asking Jesus to be his witness. Alternate translation: "with Christ Jesus, who spoke ... Pilate, as my witness"

1 Timothy 6:14

without spot or blame

The phrase "without spot" is a metaphor for being without moral fault. Possible meanings are 1) Jesus will not find fault with Timothy or blame him for doing wrong or 2) other people will not find fault with Timothy or blame him for doing wrong.

until the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ

"until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again"

1 Timothy 6:15

God will reveal Christ's appearing

It is implied that God will reveal Jesus. Alternate translation: "God will reveal Jesus"

the blessed and only Sovereign

"the One worthy of praise who rules over the world"

1 Timothy 6:16

Only he has immortality

"Only he has the power to live forever"

dwells in inapproachable light

"dwells in a light so bright that no one can approach him"

1 Timothy 6:17

Instruct the rich in this world

Here "rich" is a nominal adjective. It can be stated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "Solemnly charge those who are rich in this world"

not to hope in riches, which are uncertain

Paul tells rich people not to confidently expect that their wealth will always provide what they need. Alternate translation: "not to confidently expect that they will always have what they need, because it is uncertain how long they may have their many possession"

they should hope in God

Paul tells rich people that they should confidently expect God to do what he has promised to do. Alternate translation: "they should confidently expect that God will do what he has promised to do" or "they should fully trust in God"

all the true riches

"all the things that will make us truly happy." The reference here may include physical objects, but it more likely refers to states like love, joy, and peace that people try to obtain by means of physical objects.

1 Timothy 6:18

be rich in good works

Paul speaks of spiritual blessings as if they were earthly wealth. Alternate translation: "serve and help others in many ways"

1 Timothy 6:19

they will store up for themselves a good foundation for what is to come
Here Paul speaks about the blessings that God gives in heaven as if they were riches that a person is storing away for later use. Also, the certainty of these blessings that people will never lose is spoken of as if it were the foundation of a building. Alternate translation: "it will be as though they were storing up for themselves many things that God will give them"

take hold of real life

This recalls the sports metaphor of 1 Timothy 6:12, where the prize is something that the winner can actually hold in his hands. Here the "prize" is "real" life.

1 Timothy 6:20

protect what was given to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "faithfully proclaim the true message that Jesus has given to you"

Avoid the profane and empty talk

"Do not pay attention to the ungodly and useless talk"

of what is falsely called knowledge

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "of what some people falsely call knowledge"

1 Timothy 6:21

they have gone astray from the faith

Paul speaks of those who stop obeying Christ as if they were children or animals who have gone away from where they belong and are safe. Alternate translation: "they have stopped believing the truth"

May grace be with you

"May God give grace to all of you." The "you" is plural and refers to the whole Christian community.

Introduction to 2 Timothy

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 Timothy

Paul greets Timothy and encourages him to endure hardship as he serves God (1:1-2:13). Paul gives general instructions to Timothy (2:14-26). Paul warns Timothy about future events and instructs him about how to carry out his service to God (3:1-4:8). Paul makes personal remarks (4:9-24).

Who wrote the Book of 2 Timothy?

Paul wrote 2 Timothy. He was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

This book is the second letter Paul wrote Timothy. Timothy was his disciple and close friend. Paul wrote this letter while in prison in Rome. Paul would die soon after writing this letter.

What is the Book of 2 Timothy about?

Paul had left Timothy in the city of Ephesus to help the believers there. Paul wrote this letter to instruct Timothy about various matters. The topics he addressed include warnings about false teachers and enduring difficult situations. This letter also shows how Paul was training Timothy to be a leader among the churches.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 Timothy" or "Second Timothy." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Second Letter to Timothy" or "The Second Letter to Timothy."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is the soldier imagery in 2 Timothy?

As Paul waited in prison, knowing he would die soon, he often spoke of himself as a soldier of Jesus Christ. Soldiers answer to their leaders. In the same way, Christians answer to Jesus. As "soldiers" of Christ, believers are to obey his commands, even if they die as a result.

What does it mean that God inspired Scripture?

God is the true author of Scripture. He inspired the human authors who wrote the books. That means God in some way caused the people to write what they wrote. This is why it is also referred to as God's word. This implies several things about the Bible. First, the Bible is free from error and can be trusted. Second, we can rely on God to protect the scripture from those who want to distort it or destroy it. Third, God's word should be translated into all the world's languages.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. Here the word "you" is almost always singular and refers to Timothy. The exception to this is 4:22.

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What are the major textual issues in the text of the Book of 2 Timothy?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"Because of this, I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher" (1:11). Some older translations read, "Because of this, I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher to the Gentiles." "Warn them before God" (2:14). Some older translations read, "Warn them before the Lord."

Chapter 1

2 Timothy 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul formally introduces this letter in verses 1-2. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Spiritual children

Paul disciplined Timothy as a Christian and a church leader. Paul may also have led him to believe in Christ. Therefore, Paul calls Timothy "beloved child." (See: disciple and spirit)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Persecution

Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter. Paul encourages Timothy to be willing to suffer for the gospel.

Links:

[2 Timothy 1:1 Notes](#) [2 Timothy intro](#)

2 Timothy 1 Commentary

1:1-2

How was Paul an apostle by "the will of God"?

[1:1]

Paul was an apostle "through the will of God." He wanted people to know that God chose to make Paul an apostle (see: Galatians 1:15-16). Paul did not choose this for himself.

See: 1 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1

See: Apostle; Will of God

Advice to Translators: Another way of saying this is, "God decided to make me an apostle".

What was the "promise of the life"?

[1:1]

God promised to give Christians life. Some scholars think Paul wrote about the things Christians do while they are living (see: 1 Timothy 4:8). Others scholars think Paul wrote about the life Christians will have after they die and go to heaven (see: 1 Timothy 1:16, 6:19).

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Eternal Life; Heaven

1:3-5

How did Paul serve God from his "forefathers"?

[1:3]

In the same way Paul's "forefathers" or ancestors served God, Paul also served the God of Israel. Scholars think Paul spoke about his ancestors from many generations in the past serving the God of Israel. They served God by obeying the Law of Moses (see: Luke 2:37; Acts 27:23).

See: Acts 24:14

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Law of Moses

Advice to Translators: Forefathers refers to many generations of ancestors.

What "tears" did Paul remember?

[1:4]

Paul remembered seeing Timothy weep in sadness when they separated from one another. Some scholars think this was just before Paul went to prison.

See: Acts 20:36-38

Why did Paul say, "I long to see you"?

[1:4]

Paul "longed" to see Timothy again. That is, he really wanted to see Timothy again.

See: 2 Corinthians 9:14; Philippians 1:8, 2:26; 1 Thessalonians 3:6

What did it mean that faith "lived first" in Lois and Eunice"?

[1:5]

"Live in" (ἐνοικέω/g1774) was a word Paul often used to speak of God living in a Christian (see: Romans 8:11; 2 Timothy 1:14). Timothy's mother and grandmother had faith in God before Timothy did; his father was not a Christian (see: Acts 16:1, 3). Some scholars think Paul wanted to write that Lois and Eunice were Jewish and Christians. Other scholars think Paul wanted to write they were Jewish but not Christians.

See: Faith (Believe in)); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

1:6-14

What did it mean for Timothy to "rekindle the gift of God"?

[1:6]

Timothy rekindled the gift of God. The word "rekindle" (was used to talk about a fire burning brightly again. Here Paul used a metaphor to write to Timothy to remember the spiritual gift God gave him and to use his gift completely.

See: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Timothy 4:14; 1 Peter 4:10-11

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Metaphor

What was the “laying on of hands”?

[1:6]

The “laying on of hands” meant that Paul put his hands on Timothy’s head or shoulders and prayed for him. Some scholars think that this happened when Timothy became a Christian. Others scholars think it was when Paul appointed Timothy to preach the gospel.

See: Acts 13:3; 1 Timothy 4:14

See: Laying on of Hands ; Preach (Preacher); Gospel

What was a “spirit of fear”?

[1:7]

Paul wrote about a “spirit of fear.” Some scholars think God gave Timothy the special ability to be a leader in the church. However, Timothy was afraid to do the work of a leader. Other scholars think Paul made a distinction between the spirit of man and the Holy Spirit. The spirit of man can fear things, but the Spirit of God helps Christians live like God wants them to without fear.

See: 28:31; Romans 8:15; 1 Corinthians 16:10;

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit

Why did Paul tell Timothy not to be “ashamed”?

[1:8]

Even though Paul was put into prison for preaching the gospel, he didn’t want Timothy to be ashamed of the things Paul preached. That is, Paul did not want Timothy to stop learning about Jesus. Paul also did not want Timothy to stop telling other people about Jesus. As well, Paul did not want Timothy to be ashamed of knowing Paul (see: 1:12; 2:15).

See: Psalm 25:2-3; Mark 8:38; Romans 1:16;

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Advice to Translators: For the word “ashamed” choose a word that is similar to fear of being rejected by other people, not a feeling of embarrassment

What was a “holy calling”?

[1:9]

Some scholars think the words “holy calling” were used to write about a calling from God by which a person became a Christian. Other scholars think Paul was writing that because God saved Christians, they must live a life that is holy.

See: Romans 8:30; Ephesians 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:12

See: Call (Calling); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

What did Paul mean with the words, “not according to our works”?

[1:9]

God did not call people to be Christians, because they did good “works” or good things. Instead, he called them because of his own plan and will.

See: Romans 8:29-30; 9:11-12; Ephesians 1:4, 2:8-9; Titus 3:5

See: Call (Calling); Will of God

What did “before times ever began” mean?

[1:9]

When Paul spoke about “before times ever began,” he was speaking about the time before God created the world (see: Genesis 1:1).

See: John 1:1-2, 17:24; Titus 1:2;

Why did Paul write about the “appearing of our Savior”?

[1:10]

When Paul wrote about the “appearing” of our Savior, he wrote about the birth of Jesus. Jesus appeared on the earth exactly how God planned it and at the exact time that God planned. Jesus appeared to save people.

See: Isaiah 7:14

See: Incarnation; Savior; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

How did Jesus “put an end to death”?

[1:10]

When Jesus was made alive again he “put an end” to death. That is, he stopped the power of death. This is a metaphor. Christians still die, but they live in heaven after they die. Christians will also be made alive again with a new body when Jesus returns a second time.

See: Isaiah 25:8; 1 Corinthians 15:25-26;

See: Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection); Heaven; Jesus’ Return to Earth

What was “life that never ends”?

[1:10]

God will resurrect all those who believe in Jesus so that they will have a life that “never ends.” They will live together with God in heaven forever.

See: Daniel 12:2-3; John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:42

See: Resurrect (Resurrection); Heaven; Eternal Life

How was God able to “keep” that which Paul entrusted to God?

[1:12]

Paul wrote that God was able to “keep”(φυλάσσω/g5442) that which Paul had entrusted to God. That is, God would guard the gospel from being harmed. Paul was appointed to preach the gospel, and he trusted God to give him the wisdom to preach about the gospel. Paul himself was careful to “keep” God’s word in the scriptures, and he taught Timothy to do the same (see: 1 Timothy 6:20).

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel; Wise (Wisdom, Fool); Word of God

What was “that day” written by Paul in 1:12 and 1:18?

[1:12, 1:18]

Some scholars think Paul spoke about the Day of the Lord. This is a specific time when Jesus will return to judge all people (see: Joel 2:31; 1 Thessalonians 5:2). Other scholars think Paul simply spoke about the second coming of Jesus.

See: 4:8; Romans 2:16; 2 Thessalonians 2:3

See: Day of the Lord; Day of the Lord

1:15-18

Who were “all who live in Asia”?

[1:15]

Paul wrote about “all who live in Asia.” When Paul wrote that “all” people abandoned him, he meant to say that all kinds of people abandoned him. This did not mean that everyone had abandoned him. For example, Onesiphorus remained faithful to Paul.

See Map: Asia

What did Paul mean when he said people “turned away” from him?

[1:15]

People “turned away”(ἀποστρέφω/g3654) from following Paul. This was a metaphor. Some scholars think Paul spoke about people no longer wanting him to be a leader. Other scholars think Paul wrote about those who stopped listening to the gospel (see: 4:4).

See: Metaphor; Gospel

How was Paul “refreshed” by Onesiphorus?

[1:16]

People in prison needed food and clothing and other help. In ancient times, prisoners were not given food or clothing. Some scholars think Paul wrote about Onesiphorus providing his food and clothing needs while he was in prison.

What were Paul’s “chains”?

[1:16]

During his imprisonment, Paul was chained to his guards. “Chain” was used as a metaphor to say that someone was in prison.

See: Acts 28:20; Ephesians 6:20

See: Metaphor

2 Timothy 1:1

General Information:

In this book, unless otherwise noted, the word "our" refers to Paul and Timothy

Paul

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. Also, immediately after introducing the author, you may need to tell to whom the letter is written, as in the UDB.

through the will of God

"because of God's will" or "because God wanted it." Paul became an apostle because God wanted him to be an apostle and not because a human being chose him.

according to

Possible meanings are 1) "for the purpose of." This means that God appointed Paul to tell others about God's promise of life in Jesus or 2) "in keeping with." This means that just as God promises that Jesus gives life, he has made Paul an apostle.

of the life that is in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks of "the life" as if it were an object inside of

Jesus. This refers to the life people receive as a result of belonging to Christ Jesus. Alternate translation: "of the life that we receive as a result of belonging to Christ Jesus"

2 Timothy 1:2

to Timothy

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the person who receives a letter. Also, immediately after introducing the author, you may need to tell to whom the letter is written.

beloved child

"dear child" or "child whom I love."" Here "child" is a term of great love and approval. It is also likely that Timothy was converted to Christ by Paul, and so this is why Paul considered him like his own child. Alternate translation: "who is like my beloved child"

Grace, mercy, and peace from

"May grace, mercy, and peace be yours from" or "May you experience kindness, mercy, and peace within from"

God the Father and

"God, who is our Father, and." This is an important title for God.

Christ Jesus our Lord
 "Christ Jesus, who is our Lord"
 2 Timothy 1:3
 whom I serve from my forefathers
 "whom I serve as my ancestors did"
 with a clean conscience
 Paul speaks of his conscience as if it could be physically clean. This means that a person does not feel guilty because he has always tried to do what was right. Alternate translation: "knowing I have tried my hardest to do what is right"
 as I constantly remember you
 "when I remember you continually" or "while I remember you all the time"
 night and day
 Here "night and day" are used together to mean "always."
 Alternate translation: "always" or "constantly"
 2 Timothy 1:4
 I long to see you
 "I want very much to see you"
 I may be filled with joy
 Paul speaks of himself as if he were a container that someone could fill. This can be stated in active form.
 Alternate translation: "I may be full of joy" or "I may have complete joy"
 I remember your tears
 Here "tears" represents crying. Alternate translation: "I remember how you cried for me"
 2 Timothy 1:5
 I have been reminded of your
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I also remember your" or "I also recall your"
 your genuine faith
 "your faith that is real" or "your faith that is sincere"
 faith, which lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am convinced that it lives in you also
 Paul is speaking of their faith as if it were something that is alive and lives in them. Paul means they have the same sort of faith. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "faith. Lois, your grandmother, and Eunice, your mother, first had genuine faith, and I am confident that you have genuine faith as well"
 Lois ... Eunice
 These are names of women.
 2 Timothy 1:6
 Connecting Statement:
 Paul encourages Timothy to live in power, love, and discipline and not to be ashamed because of Paul's suffering in prison because of his (Paul's) faith in Christ.
 This is the reason I am
 "For this reason I am" or "Because of your sincere faith in Jesus, I am"
 to rekindle the gift
 Paul speaks about Timothy's need to start using his gift again as if he were restarting a fire. Alternate translation: "to start using again the gift"
 the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands
 "the gift of God that you received when I laid my hands on you." This refers to a ceremony in which Paul placed his

hands on Timothy and prayed that God would enable him to do the work he had commanded him to do.
 2 Timothy 1:7
 God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and discipline
 Possible meanings are 1) "spirit" refers to the "Holy Spirit." Alternate translation: "God's Holy Spirit does not cause us to be afraid. He causes us to have power and love and discipline" or 2) "spirit" refers to a characteristic. Alternate translation: "God does not cause us to be afraid but to have power and love and discipline"
 discipline
 Possible meanings are 1) the power to control ourselves or 2) the power to correct other people who are doing wrong.
 2 Timothy 1:8
 of the testimony
 "of testifying" or "of telling others"
 his prisoner
 "a prisoner for his sake" or "a prisoner because I testify about the Lord"
 share in suffering for the gospel
 Paul speaks of suffering as if it were an object that could be shared or distributed among people. Alternate translation: "suffer with me for the gospel"
 gospel according to the power of God
 "gospel, allowing God to make you strong"
 2 Timothy 1:9
 with a holy calling
 "with a calling that set us apart as his people" or "to be his holy people"
 He did this
 "He saved and called us"
 not according to our works
 "not because we did anything to deserve it"
 but according to his own plan and grace
 "but because he planned to show us kindness"
 in Christ Jesus
 "through our relationship to Christ Jesus"
 before times ever began
 "before the world began" or "before time began"
 2 Timothy 1:10
 God's salvation has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus
 Paul speaks of salvation as if it were an object that could be uncovered and shown to people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has shown how he will save us by sending our Savior Christ Jesus"
 who put an end to death
 Paul speaks of death as if it were an independent process instead of the event of people dying. Alternate translation: "who destroyed death" or "who made it possible for people not to remain dead forever"
 brought life and immortality to light through the gospel
 Paul speaks of teaching about eternal life as if it were an object that could be brought from darkness into light so that people could see it. Alternate translation: "taught what life that never ends is by preaching the gospel"
 2 Timothy 1:11
 I was appointed a herald
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God chose me to be a herald"
a herald
a person who proclaims important or official messages
2 Timothy 1:12
For this cause
"Because I am an apostle"
I also suffer these things
Paul is referring to being a prisoner.
to keep that which I have entrusted to him
Paul is using a metaphor of a person leaving something
with another person who is supposed to protect it until he
gives it back to the first person. Possible meanings are 1)
Paul is trusting Jesus to help him remain faithful, or 2) Paul
is trusting that Jesus will ensure that people continue
spreading the gospel message.
I am convinced
"I am certain" or "I know for sure"
that day
This refers to the day when God judges all people.
2 Timothy 1:13
Keep the example of the truthful words that you heard from me
"Keep teaching the correct ideas I have taught you" or "Use
how I taught you as a pattern for what and how you should
teach"
truthful words
The Greek word translated "truthful, is a word meaning
"healthy" and here is a dead metaphor for true,
trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation:
"trustworthy words"
with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus
"as you trust in Jesus Christ and love him"
2 Timothy 1:14
The good thing
This refers to the work of proclaiming the gospel correctly.
guard it

Timothy needs to be alert because people will oppose his
work, try to make him stop, and distort what he says.
through the Holy Spirit
"with the power of the Holy Spirit"
2 Timothy 1:15
turned away from me
This is a metaphor that means they stopped helping Paul.
They abandoned Paul because the authorities had thrown
him into prison. Alternate translation: "have stopped
helping me"
Phygelus and Hermogenes
These are names of men.
2 Timothy 1:16
Onesiphorus
This is the name of a man.
to the household
"to the family"
was not ashamed of my chain
Here "chain" is a metonym for being in prison. Onesiphorus
was not ashamed that Paul was in prison but came to visit
him frequently. Alternate translation: "was not ashamed
that I was in prison"
2 Timothy 1:17
General Information:
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2 Timothy 1:18
May the Lord grant to him to find mercy from him
"May Onesiphorus receive mercy from the Lord" or "May
the Lord show him mercy"
to find mercy from him
Paul speaks of mercy as if it were an object that could be
found.
on that day
This refers to the day when God will judge all people.

Chapter 2

2 Timothy 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set words farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with verses 11-13.
Paul may be quoting a poem or hymn in these verses.

Special concepts in this chapter

We will reign with him

Faithful Christians will reign with Christ in the future. (See: faithful)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Analogies

In this chapter, Paul makes several analogies to teach about living as a Christian. He uses analogies of soldiers, athletes, and farmers. Later in the chapter, he uses the analogy of different kinds of containers in a house.

Links:

[2 Timothy 2:1 Notes](#)

2 Timothy 2

2:1-13

How was Timothy to "be strengthened"?

[2:1]

Paul did not write about physical strength. Paul was encouraging Timothy to trust God. This would make him strong in

some way. Paul wanted Timothy to let God strengthen him that he might be courageous and even endure suffering.

See: 2 Corinthians 12:9; Ephesians 6:10; 2 Timothy 1:7

Who were the “many witnesses”?

[2:2]

A “witness” was a person who saw or heard something. They could then tell other people about what they saw or heard. These were people who heard Paul teaching at the same time that Timothy heard Paul. They confirmed what Paul said.

See: 1 Thessalonians 2:10; 1 Timothy 6:12

See: Witness (Martyr)

What did it mean to “entrust”?

[2:2]

In the ancient world, people “entrusted” their valuable things with a friend so that they could care for them. Paul and others entrusted the things they taught to Timothy (see: 1:13-14; 3:10). He was to teach the same things. He was to teach other people the teachings of Paul so that those people could teach others also.

What did it mean to be “entangled in the affairs of this life”?

[2:4]

Paul used the metaphor of a soldier. He did this to speak about how Timothy must do all things to honor God. Roman soldiers were not allowed to be “entangled” in the things of this life. That is, they were only supposed to do the things that their leaders told them to do. In the same way, Timothy was not to do any other work except serve God as a leader of the church.

See: Metaphor

How was an athlete “crowned” in Paul’s day?

[2:5]

Paul spoke about a certain crown. This was not the same type of crown that a king wore. When an athlete won something, they were given a crown. That is, a circle made of flowers was put on the head of the person who won something. A crown was the same as a prize or a reward.

See: 1 Corinthians 9:24-25; 2 Timothy 4:7-8; Revelation 2:10

See: Crown

Why did Paul use the words, “competes by the rules”?

[2:5]

Paul used the metaphor of an athlete who competed “by the rules.” This made Timothy know that the person who served God did the things God wanted him to do. That is, he obeyed God’s commands.

See: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

See: Metaphor

What was David’s “seed”?

[2:8]

Paul wrote about David’s “seed.” That is, Jesus was a descendent of David. This was especially significant because the Jews knew that the Messiah was going to be someone who was a descendent of David.

See: Matthew 1:1; 22:42; Romans 1:3-4; Revelation 5:5; 22:16

See: Messiah (Christ); Son of David

What did it mean to be “bound with chains as a criminal”?

[2:9]

People in prison had their hands and feet put in a large chain. Paul was chained in prison because he preached the gospel. However, the gospel was not “bound.” That is, the message of the gospel could not be stopped. People would continue to tell other people about the gospel.

See: Acts 28:20; Ephesians 6:18-20

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel

Who were the “chosen”?

[2:10]

Paul wrote about the people God “chose”(ἐκλεκτός/g1588). These are the people God chose to be his own people.

See: 1 Peter 2:9

See: Elect (Election); People of God

How did Christians die with Christ?

[2:11]

Paul wrote about Christians dying with Christ. This was a metaphor. Some scholars think Paul wrote that a person who “died”with Jesus stopped doing the bad things they did before they became a Christian. Instead, followed Jesus. Other scholars think Paul wrote about people who actually “died.” In the Bible, dying is being separated from something. When non-Christians die, they die a second time (see: Romans 6:3-5). This is when they are separated from God forever. If those people believed in Jesus, they will live again when Jesus returns at his second coming.

See: Metaphor; Metaphor; Baptize (Baptism); Jesus’ Return to Earth

Why did Paul tell Timothy to “endure”?

[2:11]

The word “endure”(ὑπομένω/g5278) is used to talk about continuing to do something even when it is hard to do it. Christians must continue to do things that honor God throughout their whole lives even if they suffered because of it.

See: Mark 13:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:5;

Why did Paul write that people will “reign” with Christ?

[2:12]

Paul wrote about an event that will happen in the future. Jesus will reign over all creation and Christians will reign with him. People “reign”(συμβασιλεύω/g4821) with Jesus by ruling with him in the kingdom of God.

See: Matthew 19:28; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Revelation 20:4-6

See: Kingdom of God

How did someone “deny” Jesus?

[2:12]

When someone denied Jesus, they said that they did not know Jesus and were not his followers. They rejected Jesus. If people deny Jesus, then Jesus will deny them on judgment day or the day of final judgment (see: 2 Timothy 4:1).

See: Matthew 10:33; Mark 8:38

See: Day of Judgment

How was someone “unfaithful”?

[2:13]

Scholars think different things about 2:13.

Some scholars think Paul wanted people to know that some Christians stop obeying the teachings of Jesus in some way. That is they continue to sin. Some scholars think Paul wanted people to know that if a person does not have any faith, they will not be saved. Other scholars think Paul wrote about people who stopped believing in the things Jesus taught.

See: Romans 3:3; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:3

See: Faithful; Sin; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

2:14-18

Why did Paul write not to “quarrel about words”?

[2:14]

Some scholars think Paul reminded Timothy to tell Christians not to be friends with people who only want to argue about words and their meanings (see: 1 Timothy 6:4). Other scholars think Paul wrote about certain false teachers who argued about old stories and who their ancestors were (see: 1 Timothy 1:4-7; 4:7). Still other scholars think Paul wrote Timothy to tell Christians to not have discussions that were not taught by Jesus or in the Bible.

See: Proverbs 20:3; 1 Timothy 6:20

Why did Paul tell Timothy to “present yourself to God”?

[2:15]

Some scholars think Paul wanted Timothy to “present” himself to God every day. That is, Timothy needed to serve God every day. Other scholars think Paul wrote about Timothy standing in front of God at the time of judgment; Therefore, Timothy must continue to serve God.

See: 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Timothy 5:21; 6:13-16

See: Day of Judgment

Why was Timothy not “to be ashamed”?

[1:15]

Paul wanted Timothy to know there was no shame in teaching the gospel because God chose Timothy to do this.

See: Psalm 25:2-3; Romans 1:16

See: Shame (Ashamed); Gospel

How was Timothy to teach the truth “accurately”?

[2:15]

Paul told Timothy to teach the word of truth “accurately”(ὀρθοτομέω/g3718). That is, Timothy needed to teach the gospel correctly.

See: Ephesians 4:11-15; 1 Timothy 6:3

See: Gospel

How did talk “spread like cancer”?

[2:17]

Cancer is a disease that is dangerous and moves quickly throughout the body. Paul used the word “cancer” as a metaphor to write that false teaching was dangerous, and it could spread quickly if it was not corrected.

See: 2 Timothy 4:3

See: Metaphor

Why did people say “the resurrection has already happened”?

[2:18]

Paul wrote about people who said that “the resurrection has already happened.” This was an example of false teaching. Those people taught that the resurrection happened when people believed in Jesus. They believed it was a type of metaphor. In the church at Corinth, there were people who taught there is no resurrection (see: 1 Corinthians 15:12).

See: Acts 23:8;

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

See Map: Corinth

2:19-26

What was the “firm foundation of God”?

[2:19]

A foundation is something on which a building is built. It is the first layer of the building. That is, the first part built on the very bottom. Some scholars think Paul used the word foundation as a metaphor to write about the church (see: 1 Timothy 3:15). Other scholars think Paul wrote about God, Jesus, or maybe the gospel (see: 1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:19-20). Foundations sometimes had an “inscription.” That is, something written on the stones so other people would know who owned the building. In the same way, God has marked his church. This allows other people to know who truly belongs to God (see: Numbers 16:5).

See: Isaiah 28:16

See: Metaphor; Gospel; Church

What were the “containers” about which Paul spoke?

[2:20]

A container is something used to store things. They were also used for cooking or serving food (see: Romans 9:21). Paul used the word “containers” as a metaphor to write about people who served God.

See: Metaphor

Why did Paul write about “honorable” and “dishonorable” uses?

[2:20]

Some scholars think Paul used the words “honorable” and “dishonorable” to write about two types of people in the church. Honorable containers in a home were generally made of gold or silver and were only used for special things. In the same way, God thought of those who believe in Jesus as honorable. That is, they were for a special purpose. However, there were also people who did not believe in Jesus. These, God thought of as dishonorable. Paul wrote that people needed to become honorable people. That is, they needed to believe in Jesus and do the things that honored God.

See: 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:3

See: Church; Purify (Pure)

What were “youthful lusts”?

[2:22]

Paul wrote about “youthful lusts.” Some scholars think Paul wrote about the kinds of things younger people want to do. Other scholars think Paul wrote about people who were young in their faith. That is, they had not been Christians for a long time and they still really wanted to do things that did not honor God. Paul was not writing only about sexual things when he wrote the word “lusts.” Paul also wrote about people wanting money and power. Timothy also needed to not want or do these things.

See: 1 Peter 2:11

What did it mean to “pursue righteousness”?

[2:22]

To “pursue” righteousness was to go toward it. This is, everything Timothy did needed to honor God. Timothy needed to want to do things that honor God.

See: 1 Peter 3:11

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

What did it mean to “give birth” to arguments?

[2:23]

Paul wrote Timothy that foolish questions “give birth” to arguments. This was a metaphor. That is, foolish questions make arguments happen.

Why did Paul write to “become sober”?

[2:26]

Paul wrote to become sober. That is, he wanted people to think clearly and correctly about spiritual things.

See: 2 Timothy 4:5; 1 Peter 4:7

See: Spirit (Spiritual)

What was the “devil’s trap”?

[2:26]

Paul wrote about the "devil's trap." Some scholars think "the devil's trap" was the same as the devil's lies (see: Genesis 3:4-6; John 8:44).

See: 1 Timothy 6:9-10; Revelation 12:9

See: Satan (The Devil)

2 Timothy 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul pictures Timothy's Christian life as a soldier's life, as a farmer's life, and as an athlete's life.

my child

Here "child" is a term of great love and approval. It is also likely that Timothy was converted to Christ by Paul, and so this is why Paul considered him like his own child.

Alternate translation: "who is like my child"

be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks about the motivation and determination that God's grace allows believers to have. Alternate translation: "let God use the grace he gave you through your relationship to Christ Jesus to make you strong"

2 Timothy 2:2

among many witnesses

"with many witnesses there to agree that what I said is true"

entrust them to faithful people

Paul speaks of his instructions to Timothy as if they were objects that Timothy could give to other people and trust them to use correctly. Alternate translation: "commit them" or "teach them"

2 Timothy 2:3

Suffer hardship with me

Possible meanings are 1) "Endure suffering as I do" or 2) "Share in my suffering"

as a good soldier of Christ Jesus

Paul compares suffering for Christ Jesus to the suffering that a good soldier endures.

2 Timothy 2:4

No soldier serves while entangled in the affairs of this life

"No soldier serves when he is involved in the everyday business of this life" or "When soldiers are serving, they do not get distracted by the ordinary things that people do." Christ's servants should not allow everyday life to keep them from working for Christ.

while entangled

Paul speaks of this distraction as if it were a net that tripped people up as they were walking.

his superior officer

"his leader" or "the one who commands him"

2 Timothy 2:5

as an athlete, he is not crowned unless he competes by the rules

Paul is implicitly speaking of Christ's servants as if they were athletes.

he is not crowned unless he competes by the rules

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they will crown him as winner only if he competes by the rules"

he is not crowned

"he does not win the prize." Athletes in Paul's time were crowned with wreaths made from the leaves of plants when they won competitions.

competes by the rules

"competes according to the rules" or "strictly obeys the rules"

2 Timothy 2:6

It is necessary that the hard-working farmer receive his share of the crops first

This is the third metaphor Paul gives Timothy about working. The reader should understand that Christ's servants need to work hard.

2 Timothy 2:7

Think about what I am saying

Paul gave Timothy word pictures, but he did not completely explain their meanings. He expected Timothy to figure out what he was saying about Christ's servants.

in everything

"about everything"

2 Timothy 2:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives Timothy instructions on how to live for Christ, how to suffer for Christ, and how to teach others to live for Christ.

who was raised from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God caused to live again" or "whom God raised from the dead"

according to my gospel message

Paul speaks of the gospel message as if it were especially his. He means that this is the gospel message that he proclaims. Alternate translation: "according to the gospel message that I preach"

2 Timothy 2:9

to the point of being bound with chains as a criminal

Here "being chained" represents being a prisoner. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to the point of wearing chains as a criminal in prison"

the word of God is not bound

Here "bound" speaks of what happens to a prisoner, and the phrase is a metaphor that means no one can stop God's message. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one can put the word of God in prison" or "no one can stop the word of God"

2 Timothy 2:10

for those who are chosen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for the people whom God has chosen"

may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks of salvation as if it were an object that could be physically grasped. Alternate translation: "will receive salvation from Christ Jesus"

with eternal glory

"and that they will be forever with him in the glorious place where he is"

2 Timothy 2:11

This is a trustworthy saying

"These are words you can trust"

If we have died with him, we will also live with him

This is most likely the beginning of a song or poem that Paul is quoting. If your language has a way of indicating that this is poetry, you could use it here. If not, you could translate this as regular prose rather than poetry.

died with him

Paul uses this expression to mean that people share in Christ's death when they trust in him, deny their own wants, and obey him.

2 Timothy 2:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Timothy 2:13

if we are unfaithful ... he cannot deny himself

This is most likely the end of a song or poem that Paul is quoting. If your language has a way of indicating that this is poetry you could use it here. If not, you could translate this as regular prose rather than poetry.

if we are unfaithful

"even if we fail God" or "even if we do not do what we believe God wants us to do"

he cannot deny himself

"he must always act according to his character" or "he cannot act in ways that are the opposite of his real character"

2 Timothy 2:14

General Information:

The word "them" may refer to "the teachers" or "the people of the church"

before God

Paul speaks of God's awareness of Paul as if he is in God's physical presence. This implies that God will be Timothy's witness. Alternate translation: "in God's presence" or "with God as your witness"

not to quarrel about words

Possible meanings are 1) "not to argue about foolish things that people say" or 2) "not to quarrel about what words mean"

it is of no value

"this does not benefit anyone"

2 Timothy 2:15

to present yourself to God as one approved, a laborer who has no reason to be ashamed

"to present yourself to God as a person who has proven to be worthy and has no cause for shame"

a laborer

Paul presents the idea of Timothy correctly explaining God's word as if he were a skilled workman. Alternate translation: "like a workman" or "like a worker"

accurately teaches the word of truth

Possible meanings are 1) "explains the message about the truth correctly" or 2) "explains the true message correctly."

2 Timothy 2:16

Avoid profane and empty talk

"Do not pay attention to ungodly and useless talk"

which leads to more and more godlessness

Paul speaks of this kind of talk as if it were something that

could physically move to another location, and he speaks of godlessness as if it were that new location. Alternate translation: "which causes people to become more and more ungodly"

2 Timothy 2:17

Their talk will spread like cancer

Cancer quickly spreads in a person's body and destroys it.

This is a metaphor that means what those people were saying would spread from person to person and harm the faith of those who heard it. Alternate translation: "What they say will spread like an infectious disease" or "Their talk will spread quickly and cause destruction like cancer"

Hymenaeus and Philetus

These are names of men.

2 Timothy 2:18

who have gone astray from the truth

Here "gone astray from the truth" is a metaphor for no longer believing or teaching what is true. Alternate translation: "who have started saying things that are not true"

the resurrection has already happened

"God has already raised dead believers to eternal life"

they destroy the faith of some

"they cause some people to stop believing"

2 Timothy 2:19

General Information:

Just as precious and common containers can be used for honorable ways in a wealthy house, any person who turns to God can be used by God in honorable ways in doing good works.

the firm foundation of God stands

Possible meanings are 1) "God's truth is like a firm foundation" or 2) "God has established his people like a building on a firm foundation" or 3) "God's faithfulness is like a firm foundation." In any case, Paul speaks of this idea as if it were a building's foundation laid in the ground.

this inscription

Possible meanings of "inscription" are 1) words written into stone with a chisel or 2) words impressed in wax by a king's ring.

who names the name of the Lord

"who calls on the name of the Lord." Here "name of the Lord" refers to the Lord himself. Alternate translation: "who calls on the Lord" or "who says he is a believer in Christ"

depart from unrighteousness

Paul speaks of unrighteousness as if it were a place from which one could leave. Alternate translation: "stop being evil" or "stop doing wrong things"

2 Timothy 2:20

containers of gold and silver ... containers of wood and clay

Here "containers" is a general word for bowls, plates, and pots, which people put food or drink into or on. If your language does not have a general word, use the word for "bowls" or "pots." Paul is using this as a metaphor to describe different types of people.

honorable use ... dishonorable

Possible meanings are 1) "special occasions ... ordinary times" or 2) "the kinds of activities people do in public ... the

kinds of activities people do in private."

2 Timothy 2:21

cleans himself from dishonorable use

Possible meanings are 1) "separates himself from dishonorable people" or 2) "makes himself pure." In any case, Paul speaks of this process as if it were a person washing himself.

he is an honorable container

Paul speaks about this person as if he were an honorable container. Alternate translation: "he is like the container that is useful for special occasions" or "he is like the container that is useful for activities good people do in public"

He is set apart, useful to the Master, and prepared for every good work

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The Master sets him apart, and he is ready for the Master to use him for every good work"

He is set apart

He is not set apart physically or in the sense of location, but instead to fulfill a purpose. Some versions translate this "sanctified," but the text signals the essential idea of being set apart.

2 Timothy 2:22

Flee youthful lusts

Paul speaks about youthful lusts as if they were a dangerous person or animal that Timothy should run away from. Alternate translation: "Completely avoid youthful lusts" or "Absolutely refuse to do the wrong things that young people strongly desire to do"

Pursue righteousness

Here "Pursue" means the opposite of "Flee." Paul speaks of righteousness as if it were an object that Timothy should run towards because it will do him good. Alternate translation: "Try your best to obtain righteousness" or "Seek after righteousness"

with those

Possible meanings are 1) Paul wants Timothy to join with other believers in pursuing righteousness, faith, love, and peace, or 2) Paul wants Timothy to be at peace and not argue with other believers.

those who call on the Lord

Here "call on the Lord" is an idiom that means to trust and worship the Lord. Alternate translation: "those who worship the Lord"

out of a clean heart

Here "clean" is a metaphor for something pure or sincere.

And, "heart" here is a metonym for "thoughts" or

"emotions." Alternate translation: "with a sincere mind" or "with sincerity"

2 Timothy 2:23

refuse foolish and ignorant questions

"refuse to answer foolish and ignorant questions." Paul means that the people who ask such questions are foolish and ignorant. Alternate translation: "refuse to answer the questions that foolish people who do not want to know the truth ask"

they give birth to quarrels

Paul speaks of ignorant questions as if they were women giving birth to children. Alternate translation: "they cause arguments"

2 Timothy 2:24

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Timothy 2:25

correcting his opponents with gentleness

"gently correcting those who oppose him"

his opponents

"people who say that what he teaches is not true"

Perhaps God may give them repentance

Paul speaks of repentance as if it were an object that God could give people. Alternate translation: "God may give them the opportunity to repent"

for the knowledge of the truth

"so that they will know the truth"

2 Timothy 2:26

They may become sober again

Paul speaks of sinners learning to think correctly about God as if they were drunk people becoming sober again.

Alternate translation: "They may think correctly again"

leave the devil's trap

Paul speaks of the devil's ability to convince Christians to sin as if it were a trap. Alternate translation: "stop doing what the devil wants"

after they have been captured by him for his will

Convincing Christians to sin is spoken of as if the devil had physically captured them and made them his slaves. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after he has deceived them into obeying his will"

Chapter 3

2 Timothy 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The "last days" could mean in the future just before Jesus returns. If so, Paul is prophesying in verses 1-9 and 13 about those days. The "last days" could also mean the Christian age, including Paul's time. If so, what Paul teaches about being persecuted applies to all Christians. (See: prophet and lastday)

Links:

[2 Timothy 3:1 Notes](#)

2 Timothy 3

3:1-9

What were the “last days”?

[3:1]

See: Last Days

How were people “lovers of themselves”?

[3:2]

Paul wrote about people who did not love God when he wrote about people who were “lovers of themselves.” They did not love other people either. People who only loved themselves only cared about himself and did not care for the needs of other people. They loved money. That is, they really wanted to have money because they could use it to get what they wanted (see: Psalm 10:3; Philippians 2:21).

What were “blasphemers”?

[3:2]

A “blasphemer” was someone who spoke blasphemy. They spoke evil things. Some scholars think Paul spoke about people insulting other people (see: Ephesians 4:31). Other scholars think Paul spoke about speaking evil things about God (see: Acts 6:11).

See: 1 Timothy 1: 6:4

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

What did it mean to be “without natural affection”?

[3:3]

A person who was “without natural affection” was a person who was unwilling to be peaceful with anyone. Some scholars think they did not even have love to their own families.

Advice to Translators: Seek a word for “affection” that has to do with emotions, not with sexual attraction

See: Titus 3:3

What did it mean to have a “shape of godliness”?

[3:5]

Paul spoke about people who had a “shape of godliness.” This was a metaphor. Scholars think when Paul wrote about people who did certain things to make other people think they worshipped God. However, they did not believe in Jesus. They only appeared to honor God. They wanted other people to honor them because of the things they did.

See: Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 23:27-28; 2 Corinthians 11:14-15; Titus 1:16

See: Godly (Godliness)

What did Paul mean when he wrote Timothy to “turn away” from certain people?

[3:5]

Paul told Timothy to “turn away”(ἀποτρέπω/g0665) from certain people. Paul wanted Timothy to avoid certain types of people. He did not want Timothy to be friends with these people or to argue with them.

See: 2:23; Titus 3:10; 2 John 10-11

How did false teachers “enter into households”?

[3:6]

Paul wrote about false teachers entering into people’s households. Some scholars think that false teachers got people to trust them. These people then let the false teachers into their homes. In Paul’s day, it was common for a Christians to gather together in someone’s home.

See: Titus 1:10-11; Jude 3-4

See: False Teacher

How did some men “captivate foolish women”?

[3:6]

Paul said that some men “captivate foolish women.” Some scholars think Paul wrote about certain women who did not know many things taught by the apostles and in the Bible. They would listen to false teachers. They would do whatever the false teachers told them to do. Some scholars think these women stopped thinking for themselves. They believed everything the false teachers told them.

Advice to Translators: This should be translated so people will know that only some women believed false teachers.

See: Titus 2:3-5

See: Apostle; False Teacher

Why were those women “never able to come to the knowledge of the truth”?

[3:7]

Paul said that these women were “never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” Scholars think that even though those women heard some of the truth, they also heard many lies. They heard so many lies that they were not able to know what was true and what was a lie (see: 2 Timothy 4:3-4).

Who were Jannes and Jambres?

[3:8]

The book of Exodus told how certain Egyptians tried to do the miracles that Moses did (see: Exodus 7-9). Eventually, they were not able to do the same miracles as Moses (see: Exodus 8:7; 9:11). The Jews taught that these Egyptians were named

Jannes and Jambres. The Bible does not record their names. Paul said that these false teachers were like these Egyptians. They were the enemies of God even though they seemed to worship God.

Paul wrote that the false teachers did not “advance very far” to write that their teachings would eventually fail in the same way that the Egyptian false teachers failed.

Advice to Translators: In a dynamic translation, this might be rendered “Jannes and Jambres the Egyptian magicians who stood against Moses.”

See: Exodus 7-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:9

See: Miracle

3:10-17

Where were the cities of Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra?

[3:11]

See Map: Antioch; Iconium; Lystra

What was an “imposter”?

[3:13]

An “imposter” was a person who acted like they were someone else. They did this to deceive others. Jannes and Jambres were also imposters. In this epistle, an imposter was a teacher who only pretended to serve God.

What did Paul consider to be “childhood” for Timothy?

[3:15]

Paul used the word “childhood”(βρέφος/g1025) to talk about when Timothy was a young child. The Jews thought that a child needed to learn about the Bible after age five.

See: Psalm 71:17; Proverbs 22:6; 2 Timothy 1:5

What were the “sacred writings”?

[3:15]

The books of the Old Testament were called the “sacred writings”.

See: Luke 24:27; Romans 1:2

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

What did it mean that “all scripture has been inspired by God”?

[3:16]

When Paul said that all scripture was “inspired” by God, he said that God put his words into the minds of men so that they could write the Bible. Therefore, it was as if God wrote the Bible

See: 2 Peter 1:19-21

See: Inspired

How was scripture “profitable”?

[3:16]

Scripture is “profitable.” That is, Scripture gives knowledge to someone who studied and obeyed it. It helped them and gave them something worth having.

See: Psalm 19:7-11; Romans 15:4

Advice to Translators: “Profitable” can sometimes mean a source of money. It is better to use a word that means helpful.

How were God’s servants “equipped” by the scriptures?

[3:17]

The scriptures “equipped”(ἐξαρτίζω/g1822) Christian by teaching them about what God is like. God’s will and plan for the church were in the scriptures. Studying the scriptures helped Christian to know how to lead the church and to encourage people who believe in Jesus (see: Ephesians 4:11-13).

See: Will of God; Church

2 Timothy 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul lets Timothy know that in the future people will stop believing the truth, but he should continue trusting God’s word even when he is persecuted.

In the last days

Possible meanings are 1) this is a time later than Paul’s time. Alternate translation: “in the future just before Jesus returns” or 2) this refers to the Christian age, including Paul’s time. Alternate translation: “during this period of time before the end”

difficult times

These will be days, months, or even years when Christians will endure suffering and danger.

2 Timothy 3:2

lovers of themselves

Here “lovers” refers to brotherly love or love for a friend or family member, a natural human love between friends or relatives. This is not the kind of love that comes from God. Alternate translation: “self-centered”

2 Timothy 3:3

without natural affection

“unloving even to their own families”

unable to reconcile

“unwilling to live peacefully with others”

not lovers of good

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: “haters of good”

2 Timothy 3:4

reckless

doing things either without thinking about what bad things could happen or without even knowing that bad things could happen

prideful

thinking they are better than other people

2 Timothy 3:5

They will have a shape of godliness, but they will deny its power
Paul speaks of godliness, the habit of honoring God, as if it were a physical object that had a shape and had physical power. Alternate translation: "They will appear to honor God, but the way they act will show that they do not really believe in God's power"

have a shape of godliness

"appear to have godliness" or "appear to honor God"

Turn away from these people

"Turn away" here is a metaphor for avoiding someone.

Alternate translation: "Avoid these people"

2 Timothy 3:6

enter into households and captivate

"enter into houses and greatly influence"

foolish women

"women who are spiritually weak." These women may be spiritually weak because they fail to work at becoming godly or because they are idle and have many sins.

who are loaded up with sins

Paul speaks of the attraction of sin as if sin were loaded on the backs of these women. Possible meanings are 1) "who sin often" or 2) "who feel terrible guilt because they continue to sin." The idea is that these men can easily influence these women because the women are unable to stop sinning.

are led away by various desires

Paul speaks about these various desires as if they could lead another person away. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they desire to sin in various ways rather than obey Christ"

2 Timothy 3:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Timothy 3:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives an example of two false teachers from the time of Moses—men who are not mentioned in the Old Testament—and applies it to the way people will be. Paul encourages Timothy to follow his own example and stay in God's word.

Jannes and Jambres

These are names of men.

stood against

Paul speaks of those who argued against Moses as if they had stood against him. Alternate translation: "opposed"

stand against the truth

"oppose the gospel of Jesus"

They are men corrupt in mind

"Their minds are corrupt" or "They cannot think rightly"

and with regard to the faith they are rejected

Possible meanings are 1) here "the faith" represents the

false teachers' personal faith in God. Alternate translation:

"and they have shown that their faith is not sincere" or 2)

here "the faith" represents the true Christian teachings

about God. Alternate translation: "and, according to the

true teachings of the Christian faith, God has rejected them"

2 Timothy 3:9

they will not advance very far

Paul uses an expression about physical movement to mean

that the false teachers will not have much success among

the believers. Alternate translation: "they will not have

much success"

obvious to all

"easily seen by all" or "something everyone will see"

of those men

"of Jannes and Jambres"

2 Timothy 3:10

you have followed my teaching

Paul speaks of giving close attention to these things as if

one were physically following them as they moved.

Alternate translation: "you have observed my teaching" or

"you have paid close attention to my teaching"

my teaching

"what I have taught you to do"

conduct

the way a person lives his life

longsuffering

one person being patient with those people who do things

of which he does not approve

2 Timothy 3:11

Out of them all, the Lord rescued me

Paul speaks of God having stopped him from suffering

these hardships and dangers as if God had carried him out

of a physical location.

2 Timothy 3:12

to live in a godly manner in Christ Jesus

"to live godly lives as followers of Jesus"

will be persecuted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"will certainly have to endure persecution"

2 Timothy 3:13

impostors

An imposter is a person who wants other people to think he

is someone other, usually more important, than who he is.

will go from bad to worse

"will become even more evil"

leading others astray and being led astray

Here, to lead someone astray is a metaphor for persuading

someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate

translation: "deceiving and being deceived" or "teaching

lies and believing lies"

2 Timothy 3:14

remain in the things that you have learned

Paul speaks of biblical instruction as if it were a place that

Timothy could stay in. Alternate translation: "do not forget

what you learned" or "continue doing what you have

learned"

2 Timothy 3:15

the sacred writings. These are able to make you wise for salvation

through faith in Christ Jesus

Paul speaks of the message contained in the sacred writings as if it were the writings themselves and of those writings as if they were a person whose words could make a person wise. Alternate translation: "what is in the sacred writings. When you read the word of God, you can become wise so as to receive salvation from Christ Jesus by faith"

2 Timothy 3:16

All scripture has been inspired by God

Some Bibles translate this as "All scripture is God-breathed."

This means God produced the scripture through his Spirit by telling people what to write. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has spoken all scripture by his Spirit"

It is profitable

"It is useful" or "It is beneficial"

for conviction

"for pointing out errors"

for correction

"for fixing errors"

for training in righteousness

"for training people to be righteous"

2 Timothy 3:17

the man of God

This means any believer in God whether male or female.

Alternate translation: "all believers"

may be competent, equipped

"may be completely prepared"

Chapter 4

2 Timothy 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

"I give this solemn command"

Paul begins to give personal instructions to Timothy.

Special concepts in this chapter

Crown

Scripture uses different kinds of crowns as images for different things. It appears Christ will award the crown in this chapter to believers as a reward for living rightly.

Links:

[2 Timothy 4:1 Notes](#)

2 Timothy 4

4:1-8

What was a "solemn command before God and Jesus"?

[4:1]

Paul spoke about a "solemn command before God and Jesus." Scholars think Paul gave Timothy this "command" to warn Timothy about making a promise in the presence of God and Jesus. If someone made this type of promise, they really needed to do what they promised. He wanted Timothy to know that God and Jesus watched him at every moment.

See: Numbers 30:2; 6:13-14

See: Command (Commandment)

Why did Paul write that Jesus will "judge the living and the dead"?

[4:1]

Paul wrote that Jesus will "judge the living and the dead." Scholars think Paul wrote about Jesus judging people when he returned to the earth. At this time, Jesus will "judge" every person. The living will be judged. That is, those who are alive when Jesus returns to earth. The dead are all those people who died before Jesus returned to earth.

See: Matthew 16:27; Acts 10:42; Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 4:3-5

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Day of Judgment

Why did Paul write "his appearing and his kingdom"?

[4:1]

In the New Testament, the word "appearing" was the word used to write about the second coming of Christ (see: 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1). That is, the time would Jesus would again appear on the earth. Scholars think Paul not only wrote about judgement at Jesus' second coming, but also his kingdom when he will rule all people in the world.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Kingdom of God

Why did Paul write "convenient"?

[4:2]

Paul wrote about preaching the gospel when it was convenient and when it was not convenient. Some scholars think Paul was writing Timothy to preach the gospel whether people wanted to listen to it or not. Other scholars think Paul wrote Timothy to preach the gospel whether he wanted to do it or not. Still other scholars think Paul wrote Timothy to preach the gospel message even if people rejected it.

See: 1 Timothy 4:11-16

See: Preach (Preacher); Gospel

What was “sound teaching”?

[4:3]

“Sound” teaching was all the things the apostles taught and accepted (see: Titus 1:9, 2:1).

See: 1 Timothy 6:3; 2 Timothy 1:13

See: Apostle

How did people “heap up for themselves teachers according to their own desires”?

[4:3]

Paul said that people “heap up for themselves teachers according to their own desires.” The words “heap up” were used to talk about being around many different kinds of teachers (see: Acts 17:18-21). Paul wanted Timothy to know that people will continue to search for teachers who teach the things they want to hear and do.

Why did Paul write “itching ears”?

[4:3]

Paul used the words “itching ears” as a metaphor. It was used to write about people who always wanted to hear new ideas. Scholars think these people only wanted to hear what sounded good to them.

See: Acts 17:21

What were “myths”?

[4:4]

“Myths” were stories about events that did not really happen. Some scholars think Paul wrote about things people believed that went against the things the apostles taught.

See: 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7; 6:3-5; Titus 3:9; 2 Peter 1:16

See: Apostle

Advice to Translators: Seek a word for “myth” that is not just a story, but a story which all people know but would be bad to actually believe to have happened.

What was the “work of an evangelist”?

[4:5]

An “evangelist”(εὐαγγελιστής/g2099) was a person who told other people about Jesus. They also told people that they needed to believe in Jesus.

See: Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

Why did Paul write “I am already being poured out”?

[4:6]

According to the Law of Moses, people often poured wine over an offering just before it was burned up. Paul used the idea of “being poured out” as a metaphor to say that he had offered his life to Jesus. That is, he served Jesus in everything he did. He was now close to finishing his work because he thought he would die soon.

See: Number 15:4-10; Philippians 2:17

See: Law of Moses; Offer (Offering); Metaphor

What was Paul’s “departure”?

[4:6]

Paul wrote that the end of his life would be soon when he wrote that the time of his “departure” was soon. This is the time when he would leave the earth and go to live with God in heaven forever.

See: Philippians 1:21-24; 2 Peter 1:14-15

See: Heaven

How did Paul compete in the “good contest” and “finished the race”?

[4:7]

Many times an athlete had difficulties to reach his goal. However, they continued to work hard and never quit. Paul used this idea as a metaphor to write about his work to tell other people about the gospel. Paul, too, faced many difficult times. However, he continued to serve God with everything he had. He worked hard to finish the work God gave him to do (see: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27).

See: Acts 20:24; 1 Timothy 6:12

See: Metaphor; Gospel

What was the “crown of righteousness”?

[4:8]

Athletes who won an athletic event received a prize. Often times that prize was a crown of leaves and branches. Here again, Paul used a metaphor to write that God has a crown waiting for Paul in heaven. Some scholars think Paul thought of the crown as a reward for those who did many things that honored God. Other scholars think Paul wrote about a different crown, which someone received when they were at peace with God.

See: 1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 2:5; James 1:12; 1 Peter 5:4; Revelation 2:10

See: Crown; Heaven; Reward

4:9-22

How did Demas love “this present world”?

[4:10]

Demas left Paul. Paul wrote that Demas loved the “present” world. That is, he loved the world, which sinned against God. Demas wanted to do the things he wanted to do more than he wanted to do the things that honored God.

See: 1 John 2:15-17

See: World; Sin

What was Paul’s “cloak”?

[4:13]

A cloak was an outer garment, a piece of clothing someone wore outside of their other clothes. It was round, with a hole in the middle for the head. It was made of heavy fabric and was used to keep warm. Paul wanted his cloak since winter was coming (see: 4:21).

Advice to translators: A cloak was a type of coat. However, it did not look like the coats that people wear today.

What were Paul’s “books” and “parchments”?

[4:13]

Paul wrote about books and parchments. These were notebooks or scrolls or books. Some scholars think the parchments were Paul’s own writings, perhaps unfinished letters that were not yet sent out to other people.

See: Scroll

Why did Paul write “the Lord will repay” Alexander?

[4:14]

Alexander did many wrong things against Paul. Instead of taking revenge, Paul wrote that the Lord will “repay” Alexander. That is, he will give Alexander what he deserves. Paul wrote specifically about the punishment Alexander would receive on the day of judgment when God judges the world.

See: Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6, 12:19; Revelation 22:12

See: Day of Judgment

What was Paul’s “first defense”?

[4:16]

Paul wrote about his “first defense.” Some scholars think Paul wrote about his defending himself during his first imprisonment in Rome (see: Introduction to 2 Timothy). Other scholars think it was used to write about the first part of his trial. That is, the defense he gave at that time.

See: Acts 22:1; 24:10; 25:16

What was the “lion’s mouth”?

[4:17]

The Roman government in Paul’s day sometimes punished people by putting them in a den with lions. The lions attacked and killed the person being punished. Paul used this idea as a metaphor to write that he was about to be punished himself, but the Lord saved him from dying.

Advice to translators: A den is an area with many lions in it. It is close so that no one or no lion can escape.

See: 2 Corinthians 1:8-10

See: Rome (Roman Empire, Caesar); Metaphor

What was the Lord’s “heavenly kingdom”?

[4:18]

See: Heaven; Kingdom of God

2 Timothy 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind Timothy to be faithful and that he, Paul, is ready to die.

this solemn command before God and Christ Jesus

"this solemn command in the presence of God and Christ Jesus." It is implied that God and Jesus will be Paul's witnesses. Alternate translation: "this solemn command, having as my witnesses God and Christ Jesus"

solemn command

"serious command"

the living and the dead

Here "the living" and "the dead" are used together to mean all people. Alternate translation: "all people who have ever lived"

the dead, and because of his appearing and his kingdom

Here "kingdom" stands for Christ's rule as king. Alternate

translation: "the dead when he returns to rule as king"

2 Timothy 4:2

the word

"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate translation: "the message about Christ"

when it is not

Here the word "convenient" is understood. Alternate translation: "when it is not convenient"

Reprove

tell someone he is guilty of doing wrong

exhort, with all patience and teaching

"exhort, and teach the people, and always be patient with them"

2 Timothy 4:3

For the time will come when

"Because at some time in the future"

people

The context indicates that these will be people who are a part of the community of believers.

will not endure sound teaching

"will no longer want to listen to true teaching" or "will not want to listen to reliable teaching"

they will heap up for themselves teachers according to their own desires

Paul speaks of people obtaining many teachers as if they were putting them into a heap or pile. Alternate translation: "they will listen to many teachers who assure them that there is nothing wrong with their sinful desires" who say what their itching ears want to hear

Paul speaks of people strongly wanting to hear something as if their ears itched and could only be satisfied if teachers taught them what they wanted to hear. Alternate translation: "who say only what they want so much to hear" 2 Timothy 4:4

They will turn their hearing away from the truth

Paul speaks about people no longer paying attention as if they were physically turning away so they cannot hear.

Alternate translation: "They will no longer pay attention to the truth"

they will turn aside to myths

Paul speaks about people starting to pay attention to myths as if they were physically turning towards them to listen. Alternate translation: "they will pay attention to teachings that are not true"

2 Timothy 4:5

be sober-minded

Paul wants Timothy to think correctly about everything, and he speaks about him as if he wanted him to be sober, that is, not drunk with wine. Alternate translation: "think clearly"

the work of an evangelist

This means to tell people about who Jesus is, what he did for them, and how they are to live for him.

2 Timothy 4:6

I am already being poured out

Paul speaks of his readiness to die as if he were a cup of wine being poured out as a sacrifice to God.

The time of my departure has come

Here "departure" is a polite way of referring to death.

Alternate translation: "Soon I will die and leave this world"

2 Timothy 4:7

I have fought the good fight

Paul speaks of his hard work as if he had been an athlete competing for a prize. Alternate translation: "I have done my best"

I have finished the race

Paul speaks of his life of service to God as if he had been running a race on foot. Alternate translation: "I have completed what I needed to do"

I have kept the faith

Paul speaks of his trust in Christ and his obedience to God as if they were a valuable object that he kept in his possession. Possible meanings are 1) "I have been faithful in doing my ministry" or 2) "I have kept the teachings about what we believe from any error"

2 Timothy 4:8

The crown of righteousness has been reserved for me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has reserved the crown of righteousness for me"

crown of righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) the crown is the prize that God gives to people who have lived the right way or 2) the crown is a metaphor for righteousness. Just as the judge of a race gives a crown to the winner, when Paul finishes his life, God will declare that Paul is righteous.

crown

a wreath made of laurel tree leaves that was given to winners of athletic contests

on that day

"on the day when the Lord comes again" or "on the day when God judges people"

but also to all those who have loved his appearing

Paul speaks about this event as if it has already happened.

It can be stated as a future event. Alternate translation: "but also he will give it to those who are eagerly waiting for him to return"

2 Timothy 4:9

Connecting Statement:

Paul talks of specific people and how they behaved, of God's work for and to him, and then closes with greetings to and from certain people.

come ... quickly

"come ... as soon as possible"

2 Timothy 4:10

Demas ... Crescens ... Titus

These are names of men.

He loves this present world

Here "world" refers to worldly things as opposed to the things of God. Possible meanings are 1) he loves the temporary comforts of this world or 2) he is afraid he will die if he remains with Paul.

Crescens went ... and Titus went

These two men had left Paul, but Paul is not saying that they also "love this present world" like Demas.

Dalmatia

This is the name of a land region.

2 Timothy 4:11

he is useful to me in the service

Possible meanings are 1) "he can help me in the ministry" or 2) "he can help me by serving me."

2 Timothy 4:12

General Information:

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2 Timothy 4:13

cloak

a heavy garment worn over clothes

Carpus

This is the name of a man.

the books

This refers to scrolls. A scroll was a type of book made of one long sheet of papyrus or leather. After writing on a scroll or reading it, people rolled it up using rods on the ends

especially the parchments

This may refer to a specific type of scroll. Alternate

translation: "especially those made from animal skins"
2 Timothy 4:14
Alexander the coppersmith displayed
"Alexander, who works with metal, displayed"
Alexander
This is the name of a man.
displayed many evil deeds against me
Paul speaks of doing evil deeds as if they were put on display. Alternate translation: "did many evil things to me"
The Lord will repay him according to his deeds
Paul speaks of punishment as if it were payment. Alternate translation: "The Lord will punish him for what he has done"
him ... his
Alexander
2 Timothy 4:15
him ... he
Alexander.
opposed our words
Here "words" refers to a message or teaching. Alternate translation: "opposed the message that we teach"
2 Timothy 4:16
At my first defense
"When I first appeared in court and explained my actions"
no one stood with me
"no one stayed with me and helped me"
May it not be counted against them
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May God not count it against them" or "I pray that God does not punish those believers for leaving me"
2 Timothy 4:17
the Lord stood by me
Paul is speaking as if the Lord had physically stood with him. Alternate translation: "the Lord helped me"
so that, through me, the proclamation of the message might be fully accomplished ... the Gentiles might hear
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that I was able to speak all of the Lord's message ... the Gentiles heard"
I was rescued out of the lion's mouth
Paul is speaking about danger as if he had been threatened by a lion. This danger could have been physical, spiritual, or both. Alternate translation: "I was rescued from great danger"

2 Timothy 4:18
General Information:
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2 Timothy 4:19
house of Onesiphorus
Here "house" stands for the people who live there.
Alternate translation: "family of Onesiphorus"
Priscilla
This is the name of a woman.
Aquila
This is the name of a man.
Onesiphorus
This is the name of a man. See how you translated this name in 2 Timothy 1:16.
2 Timothy 4:20
Erastus ... Trophimus
These are names of men.
Miletus
This is the name of a city to the south of Ephesus.
2 Timothy 4:21
Eubulus ... Pudens, Linus
These are all names of men.
Do your best to come
"Try hard to come"
before winter
"before the cold season"
greet you, also Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers
This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "greet you. Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brothers also greet you"
Claudia
This is a female name.
all the brothers
Here "brothers" means all believers whether male or female. Alternate translation: "all the believers here"
2 Timothy 4:22
May the Lord be with your spirit
"I pray that the Lord makes your spirit strong." Here "you" is singular and refers to Timothy.
May grace be with you
"I pray that the Lord shows his grace to all of you there."
Here "you" is plural and refers to all the believers there with Timothy.

Introduction to Titus

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Titus

Paul instructs Titus to appoint godly leaders (1:1-16) Paul instructs Titus to train people to live godly lives (2:1-3:11) Paul ends by sharing some of his plans and sending greetings to various believers (3:12-15)

Who wrote the Book of Titus?

Paul wrote the Book of Titus. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

What is the Book of Titus about?

Paul wrote this letter to Titus, his fellow worker, who was leading the churches on the island of Crete. Paul instructed him about selecting church leaders. Paul also described how the believers should behave towards each other. And he

encouraged them all to live in a way that pleases God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Titus." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to Titus" or "A Letter to Titus."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

In what roles can people serve within the church?

There are some teachings in the Book of Titus about whether a woman or divorced man can serve in positions of leadership within the church. Scholars disagree about the meaning of these teachings. Further study on these issues may be necessary before translating this book.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. Also, the word "you" is almost always singular and refers to Titus. The exception to this is 3:15.

What is the meaning of "God our Savior?"

This is a common phrase in this letter. Paul meant to make the readers think about how God forgave them in Christ for sinning against him. And by forgiving them he saved them from being punished when he judges all people. A similar phrase in this letter is "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

Chapter 1

Titus 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul formally introduces this letter in verses 1-4. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.

In verses 6-9, Paul lists several qualities that a man must have if he is to be an elder in the church. Paul gives a similar list in 1 Timothy 3.

Special concepts in this chapter

Elders

The church has used different titles for church leaders. Some titles include overseer, elder, pastor, and bishop.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Should, may, must

The ULB uses different words that indicate requirements or obligations. These verbs have different levels of force associated with them. The subtle differences may be difficult to translate. The UDB translates these verbs in a more general way.

Links:

[Titus 1:1 Notes](#) [Titus intro](#)

Titus 1 Commentary

1:1-4

What is the purpose of 1:1-4?

[1:1, 1:2, 1:3, 1:4]

Titus 1:1-4 is a type of greeting. In the letters of the ancient Near East, this type of greeting was common.

Who are God's Chosen?

[1:1]

See: Elect (Election)

What time was Paul talking about?

[1:3]

Paul talked about "before all the ages of time," that is, a time before something happened. Some scholars think Paul was talking about the time when the events of the Old Testament occurred. Other scholars think that Paul was talking about the time before he created the earth.

Advice to translators: Some translations may talk about a time that was a long time ago. Other translations may choose to translate this same phrase as "before time began," that is, before God created anything.

What does it mean when Paul calls Titus his true son?

[1:4]

Paul called Titus his "true" son because he taught Titus about Jesus. In Scripture, Christians who teach other Christians and helped them to live in a way that honors God are called "fathers." They were often older than the people they taught.

Those who are taught by other Christians are called “sons.” Paul called Titus a true son because Titus obeyed God.

1:5-9

Who are the elders?

[1:5]

Leaders in the church were called “elders (πρεσβύτερος/g4245)” and “overseers (ἐπίσκοπος/g1985).” They were responsible for leading and guiding the church. In order for a Christian to become an elder or an overseer, he must live in a way that honors God.

Advice to translators: Churches in different places use different names for people who lead the church. Use the name for church leaders that the local church uses.

See: 1 Timothy 3

See: Elder; Overseer

What is the Jewish and Cretan background of Paul’s teaching?

[1:5]

Paul described a mature Christian who honored God in the way that they live. Perhaps the way Paul described them was based on the things the Jews believed and in the Law of Moses.

Some scholars also think that Paul used commonly accepted standards or qualifications for a person to be considered honorable or for a person to be worth following.

What is a “one-woman man”?

[1:6]

Paul said that an elder (πρεσβύτερος/g4245) must be a “one-woman man” or “the husband on one wife.” This is because Paul assumed that all elders would be men. In ancient Israel, only men could serve as religious leaders. Some scholars think that an elder must be a man who has never been married or only married once. Other scholars think that the elder must be a man who is only married to one woman at a time. Other scholars think that, today, an elder can be a man or woman who is not married to more than one person.

Advice to translators: This is a potential point of great debate, that is, different groups of Christians have different and often strong opinions about what this means. Because of this, this question could be adapted to meet the needs of the local church.

How does Paul use “without Blame?”

[1:6]

In general, a person who is “without blame (ἀνέγκλητος/g410)” was, in general, innocent and did not do much wrong. The blameless person did not need to be corrected or rebuked. This is because they knew when they did the wrong thing, they would make things right, and they would learn from their mistakes.

What is a child who believes?

[1:6]

Paul said that elders needed to have children who believe something. Many scholars think that Paul taught that elders should have children who believe in Jesus. Other scholars think that Paul taught that elders should have children who obey God.

See: Elder

Advice to translators: Some translations will use the word faithful, while other believing, when talking about the children of elders.

Does a leader in the church have to be all of the things Paul talked about?

[1:6, 1:7, 1:8, 1:9]

Some scholars think that Paul gave general instructions describing a church leader who honors God. They believe that candidates do not need to meet all of these qualifications. Other scholars think that Paul gave Timothy a list of qualifications. That is, someone who wants to be an elder must consistently meet every item on this list

See: Elder

What is the difference between elder and overseer?

[1:7]

The words elder and overseer do not mean the same thing, but their meaning is similar. Some scholars think “elders” and “overseers” were leaders who serve the church in the same way.

Other scholars think that the elder and overseer serve the church in different ways. An elder is a church leader who leads other Christians. They also believe that overseer are church leaders who lead other church leaders.

See: Elder; Overseer

1:10-16

Who were the people who promoted circumcision?

[1:10]

The “circumcision,” that is, people who wanted people to be circumcised were probably a group of Jewish-Christians who wanted the non-Jewish people who believed in Jesus to follow the Law of Moses. This was common in the early church,

but it was clearly rejected by Paul.

See: Judaizer; Law of Moses; Circumcise (Circumcision)

Advice to translators: "Those of the circumcision" were people who wanted Christians to be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses. They are often called "Judaizers."

Titus 1:1

for the faith of

to strengthen the faith of

that agrees with godliness

"that is suitable for honoring God"

Titus 1:2

with the hope of everlasting life

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "with the confidence of receiving everlasting life"

before all the ages of time

"before time began"

Titus 1:3

At the right time

"At the proper time"

he revealed his word

Paul speaks of God's message as if it were an object that could be visibly shown to people. Alternate translation: "He caused people to understand his message"

with which I have been entrusted

This can be translated in active form, and what God trusted Paul to do can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "that he trusted me to deliver"

God our Savior

"God, who saves us"

Titus 1:4

a true son

Though Titus was not Paul's biological son, they share a common faith in Christ. Thus, in Christ, Paul considers Titus as his own son. Alternate translation: "you who are like a son to me"

our common faith

Paul expresses the same faith in Christ that they both share. Alternate translation: "the teachings that we both believe"

Grace and peace

This was a common greeting Paul used. You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "May you experience kindness and peace within"

Christ Jesus our Savior

"Christ Jesus who is our Savior"

Titus 1:5

For this purpose I left you in Crete, that you might set

"This is the reason I left you in Crete: I wanted you to set"

I left you in Crete

"I told you to stay in Crete"

set in order things not yet complete

"finish arranging things that needed to be done"

ordain elders

"appoint elders" or "designate elders"

elders

In the early Christian churches, Christian elders gave spiritual leadership to the assemblies of believers.

Titus 1:6

Connecting Statement:

Having told Titus to ordain elders in every city on the island of Crete, Paul gives the requirements for elders.

An elder must be blameless, the husband

To be "blameless" is to be known as a person who does not do bad things. Alternate translation: "An elder must not have a bad reputation and must be the husband"

the husband of one wife

This means that he has only one wife, that is, he does not have any other wives or concubines. It may also imply that he does not commit adultery and that he has not divorced a previous wife. Alternate translation: "a man who has only one woman" or "a man who is faithful to his wife"

faithful children

Possible meanings are 1) children who believe in Jesus or 2) children who are trustworthy.

Titus 1:7

overseer

This is another name for the same position of spiritual leadership that Paul referred to as "elder" in 1:6.

a manager of the household of God

Paul speaks of the church as if it were God's household and the overseer as if he were a servant in charge of managing the household.

not addicted to wine

"not an alcoholic" or "not one who drinks much wine"

not a brawler

"not one who is violent" or "not one who likes to fight"

Titus 1:8

Instead

Paul is changing his argument from what an elder is not to be to what an elder is to be.

Titus 1:9

hold tightly to

Paul speaks of devotion to the Christian faith as if it were grasping the faith with one's hands. Alternate translation: "be devoted to" or "know well"

truthful teaching

The Greek word translated "truthful" is a word meaning "healthy" and here is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation: "trustworthy words"

Titus 1:10

Connecting Statement:

Because of those that would oppose God's word, Paul gives Titus reasons to preach God's word and warns him about false teachers.

rebellious people

These are rebellious people who oppose Paul's gospel message.

empty talkers and deceivers

This phrase describes the rebellious people mentioned in the previous phrase. Here "empty" is a metaphor for useless, and "empty talkers" are people who say useless or foolish things. Alternate translation: "people who say

useless things and deceive others"

those of the circumcision

This refers to the Christian Jews who taught that men must be circumcised in order to follow Christ.

Titus 1:11

It is necessary to stop them

"They must be prevented from spreading their teachings" or "They must be stopped from influencing others by their words"

what they should not teach

These are things that are not proper to teach regarding Christ and the Law because they are not true.

for disgraceful profit

This refers to profit that people make by doing things that are not honorable.

are upsetting whole families

"are ruining whole families." The issue was that they were upsetting families by destroying their faith. This may have caused the members of the families to argue with one another.

Titus 1:12

One of their own prophets

"A prophet from Crete itself" or "A Cretan that they themselves consider to be a prophet"

Cretans are always liars

"Cretans lie all the time." This is an exaggeration that means that many Cretans lie often.

evil beasts

This metaphor compares the Cretans to dangerous wild animals.

Titus 1:13

Therefore, correct them severely

"You must use strong language that the Cretans will understand when you correct them"

so that they may be truthful in the faith

The Greek word translated "truthful" is a word meaning "healthy" and here is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation: "trustworthy words"

Titus 1:14

Jewish myths

This refers to the false teaching of the Jews.

turn away from the truth

Paul speaks of the truth as if it were an object that one could turn away from or avoid. Alternate translation: "reject the truth"

Titus 1:15

To those who are pure, all things are pure

"If people are pure on the inside, everything they do will be pure"

To those who are pure

"To those who are acceptable to God"

to those who are corrupt and unbelieving, nothing is pure

Paul speaks of sinners as if they were physically dirty.

Alternate translation: "if people are morally defiled and do not believe, they cannot do anything pure"

Titus 1:16

they deny him by their actions

"how they live proves that they do not know him"

They are detestable

"They are disgusting"

Chapter 2

Titus 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Gender roles

Scholars are divided over how to understand this passage in its historical and cultural context. Some scholars believe men and women are perfectly equal in all things. Other scholars believe God created men and women to serve in distinctly different roles in marriage and the church. Translators should be careful not to let how they understand this issue affect how they translate this passage.

Slavery

Paul does not write in this chapter about whether slavery is good or bad. Paul teaches slaves to faithfully serve their masters. He teaches all believers to be godly and live rightly in every situation.

Links:

[Titus 2:1 Notes](#)

Titus 2

2:1-5

How can someone teach the right things about God?

[2:1]

Paul often selected and trained leaders when he went to a church. He said that church leaders must teach correct or right things about God. This means that they teach things that were the same as everything else taught in Scripture. The things that they teach must be true and not contain any errors.

Why did Paul speak about older men and women?

[2:2, 2:3]

It is possible that Paul spoke to older men and women. However, Paul was probably not addressing these people because

of their age. Instead, he was talking about more mature Christians as if they were older men and women. This is because “mature” Christians grow to act more like Jesus.

How did Paul teach these Christians to live?

[2:2, 2:3, 2:4, 2:5]

Paul taught all of the Christians to live in a way that honors God. However, Paul taught different groups of people to act in different ways. The older men were supposed to help the younger men and the older women were supposed to help the younger women.

Are women able to work outside the home?

[2:5]

In ancient Israel, a woman needed to take care of their home and their children. Scholars now disagree about whether this remains true today.

Advice to translators: The role of women in society, and in the home, is different between different groups of people.

Often, this topic can be very controversial. Remember that this question and response can be adapted to meet the needs of the local church, or it can be omitted.

2:6-10

What Paul say about people having slaves?

[2:9]

In 2:9, Paul did not say whether slavery was good or bad. Instead, he taught about how Christians are to live, whether they were slaves or masters. Christian slaves are to honor God by serving their masters as best as they can. Christians serve God in the way they live regardless of their circumstances.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave)

Advice to translators: In different groups of people, there are many different types of servants and slaves. Here, some translation will use the word “servants” while other translations will use the word “slaves.”

2:11-15

Who did Paul mean by “all people”?

[2:11]

God saves all men. Some scholars think that God made it so that anyone could live with him in heaven forever. Other scholars think that Paul said that God saves people from every different people group.

How does Paul speak about “in this age”?

[2:12]

In 2:12, Paul told the Christians how to live in this age, that is, while they are alive. Paul often spoke about the present time as evil and corrupt. They are supposed to live in a way that is different than the rest of the world. They should also live with the confidence that, one day, God will deliver this world. He will deliver everything from the curse of sin, that is, the bad things sin caused. This Paul calls the “blessed (μακάριος/g3107) hope or confidence (ἐλπίς/g1680).”

Titus 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving Titus reasons to preach God's word, and explains how the older men, older women, young men, and slaves or servants should live as believers.

But you, speak what fits

Paul implies what is in contrast. Alternate translation: "But you, Titus, in contrast with the false teachers, be sure to say those things that fit"

truthful instruction

The Greek word translated "truthful" is a word meaning "healthy" and here is a dead metaphor for true, trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation: "trustworthy words"

Titus 2:2

to be temperate

"to be sober-minded" or "to be self-controlled"

temperate, dignified, sensible

"temperate and dignified, to control their desires

and sound in faith, in love, and in perseverance

The word "sound" means to be firm and unwavering. The abstract nouns "faith," "love," and "perseverance" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "and they must firmly

believe the true teachings about God, truly love others, and continually serve God even when things are difficult"

Titus 2:3

slanderers

This word refers to people who say bad things about other people whether they are true or not.

or being slaves to much wine

People who cannot control themselves and who drink too much wine are spoken of as if they were slaves to the wine.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"and not drinking too much wine" or "and not addicted to wine"

Titus 2:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Titus 2:5

so that God's word may not be spoken of as evil

"Word" here is a metonym for "message," which in turn is a metonym for God himself. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "so that no one insults God's word" or "so that no one insults God by saying bad things about his

message"

Titus 2:6

In the same way, encourage
"Also be sure to encourage"
Titus 2:7
present yourself as
"show yourself to be"
an example of good works
"an example of one who does right and proper things"
Titus 2:8
a truthful message
The Greek word translated "truthful, is a word meaning
"healthy" and here is a dead metaphor for true,
trustworthy, and morally good. Alternate translation:
"trustworthy words"
Titus 2:9
their masters
"their own masters"
in everything
"in every situation" or "always"
please them
"make their masters happy" or "satisfy their masters"
Titus 2:10
demonstrate all good faith
"show that they are worthy of their masters' trust"
in every way
"in everything they do"
they may bring credit to the teaching about God our Savior
"they may make the teaching about God our Savior
attractive" or "they may cause people to understand that
the teaching about God our Savior is good"
God our Savior
"our God who saves us"
Titus 2:11
Connecting Statement:
Paul encourages Titus to look for Jesus's coming and
remember his authority through Jesus.
the grace of God has appeared
Paul speaks of the grace of God as if it were a person who
goes to other people.
Titus 2:12
trains us

Paul speaks of the grace of God
trains us to reject godlessness
"teaches us not to dishonor God"
worldly desires
"strong desires for the things of this world" or "strong
desires for sinful pleasures"
in this age
"as we live in this world" or "during this time"
Titus 2:13
we look forward to receiving
"we eagerly wait to receive" or "we eagerly wait to
welcome"
our blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of our great God and
Savior Jesus Christ
Here "glory" represents Jesus himself, who will appear
gloriously. Here "hope" means "confidently expectation."
Alternate translation: "the good thing for which we
confidently wait, that is, the glorious appearance of our
great God and Savior Jesus Christ"
Titus 2:14
gave himself for us
This refers to Jesus dying willingly. Alternate translation:
"gave himself to die for us"
to redeem us from all lawlessness
Paul speaks of Jesus as if he were setting slaves free from
their evil master.
a special people
A group of people that he treasures.
are eager
"have a strong desire"
Titus 2:15
give correction with all authority
This statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation:
"correct with all authority those people who do not do these
things"
Let no one
"Do not allow anyone to"
disregard you
This statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation:
"refuse to listen to your words" or "refuse to respect you"

Chapter 3

Titus 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul gives Titus personal instructions in this chapter.

Verse 15 formally concludes this letter. This is a common way of ending a letter in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Genealogies

Genealogies are lists that record a person's ancestors or descendants. Jews used genealogies to choose the right man to become king. They did this because only a son of a king could normally become king. They also showed from what tribe and family they came. For example, priests came from the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron.

Links:

[Titus 3:1 Notes](#)

Titus 3

3:1-11

When are Christians to obey non-Christians leaders?

[3:1]

Paul told Christians to obey leaders in the government, even if they were not Christians. Christians must obey these leaders because they God made them leaders. They serve God, even if they are not aware of it. However, there are times when a Christian must not obey a leader. For example, when a leader tries to get a Christian to do something that is God says not to do in Scripture or would not honor God, then they must not obey these leaders.

Paul does not say when a Christian can disobey a leader in the government. Some scholars think that a Christians must obey leaders in the government, even if it costs them their life. Others scholars think that a Christian can disobey a leader in the government if their life is in danger. Other scholars think that a Christian can disobey a leader in the government if the government does not protect or care for its people.

See: Romans 13:1-7

What did Paul reminding the Cretans about?

[3:3]

In 3:3, Paul told Titus to remind the Cretans about what they were like before they came to believe in Jesus. By remember these things, the Cretans would better understand those who were not Christians and be patient with other people. It also helped them to remember to live in a way that it was different than they used to live.

See: Cretans

What is the “washing of new birth”?

[3:5]

In general, Paul speaks about baptism as if it is a type of washing. In this passage, Paul talked about a type of washing or baptism. This washing happened when a person believes in Jesus. Because, most scholars think that Paul was talking about spirit baptism and not water baptism.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Baptize (Baptism)

How are Christians heirs of eternal life?

[3:7]

Christians are called “heirs with the certain hope eternal life.” Usually, an heir is a person who receives money or land when another person died. The Jews were also heirs of the land promised to Abraham. Because of this, scholars think that Paul was talking about the way God blesses people. This means that God blesses Christians by giving them the confidence that they will one day get to live with him forever. This is what they are to inherit.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Canaan (Promised Land)

Advice to translators: Christians will live together with God in heaven. In Scripture, this is spoken about as if it were a thing called “eternal life.” Translate “eternal life” in the way that your local translation does.

How did Paul speak about the Law of Moses?

[3:9]

Paul often spoke about the Law of Moses. However, he did not speak to Titus about whether a Christian needed to obey the Law of Moses. Instead, Paul rejected the common ways teachers used the Law of Moses. In ancient Israel, it was common for people to argue the meaning of the Law of Moses. Most of these arguments were not worth talking about. Some Jewish teachers even believed that knowing their ancestors helped them to know on how to please God.

See: Law of Moses

3:12-15

How can Christians be “unfruitful” or not productive (ἀκαρπος/#g0175)?

[3:14]

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

Titus 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues giving Titus instructions on how to teach the elders and people under his care in Crete.

Remind them to submit

"Tell our people again what they already know, to submit" or "Keep reminding them to submit"

submit to rulers and authorities, to obey them

"do as the political rulers and government authorities say by obeying them"

rulers and authorities

These words have similar meanings and are used together to include everyone who holds authority in the government.

be ready for every good work

"be ready to do good whenever there is opportunity"

Titus 3:2

to insult no one

"to speak evil of no one"

Titus 3:3

For once we ourselves

"This is because we ourselves were once"

once

"formerly" or "at some time" or "previously"

we ourselves

"even we" or "we also"

were thoughtless

"were foolish" or "were unwise"

We were led astray and enslaved by various desires and pleasures
Desires and pleasures are spoken of as if they were masters over people and had made those people into slaves by lying to them. This can be translated in active form. Alternate

translation: "Various desires and pleasures had lied to us and so led us astray" or "We had allowed ourselves to believe the lie that various desires and pleasures could make us happy, and then we were unable to control our feelings or stop doing things we thought would give us pleasure"

We lived in evil and envy

"We were always doing evil things and not wanting others to have good things"

We were detestable

"We caused others to hate us"

Titus 3:4

when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared

Paul speaks of God's kindness and love as if they were people that came into our sight.

Titus 3:5

by his mercy

"because he had mercy on us"

washing of new birth

Paul is probably speaking of God's forgiveness for sinners as if God were physically washing them. He is also speaking of sinners who become responsive to God as if they had been born again.

Titus 3:6

whom God richly poured on us

It is common for New Testament writers to speak of the Holy Spirit as a liquid that God can pour out in large amounts. Alternate translation: "whom God gave to us generously"

through our Savior Jesus Christ

"when Jesus saved us"

Titus 3:7

having been justified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"since God has declared us to be without sin"

we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were heirs, inheriting property and wealth from a family member. Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "we might become like God's heirs, confidently waiting to inherit eternal life" or "we might have the confident expectation that God will cause us to live forever"

Titus 3:8

This message

This refers to God giving the believers the Holy Spirit through Jesus in Titus 3:7.

may be careful to engage themselves in good works

"may seek to do good works"

Titus 3:9

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains what Titus should avoid.

But avoid

"So avoid" or "Therefore, avoid"

foolish debates

"arguments concerning unimportant matters"

genealogies

This is the study of family kinship relationships.

strife

arguments or fights

the law

"the law of Moses"

Titus 3:10

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how Titus should treat those who cause contention among the believers.

Reject anyone

"Have everyone stay away from anyone"

after one or two warnings

"after you have warned that person once or twice"

Titus 3:11

such a person

"a person like that"

has turned from the right way

Paul speaks of someone who has rejected the truth as if he had left the correct path on which he had been walking.

condemns himself

"brings judgment on himself"

Titus 3:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes the letter by telling Titus what to do after he appoints elders in Crete and by giving greetings from those with him.

When I send

"After I send"

Artemas ... Tychicus

These are men's names.

hurry and come

"come quickly"

spend the winter

"stay until winter has ended"

Titus 3:13

Zenas ... Apollos

These are men's names.

Titus 3:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains why it is important to provide for Zenas and Apollos.

Our people

Paul is referring to the believers in Crete.

that provide for urgent needs

"that help people who need important things immediately"

needs, and so not be unfruitful

Paul speaks of people doing good work as if they were trees bearing good fruit. This double negative means they should be fruitful or productive. Alternate translation: "needs; in this way they will be fruitful" or "needs, and so they will do good works"

Titus 3:15

General Information:

Paul ends his letter to Titus.

All those

"All the people"

those who love us in faith

Possible meanings are 1) "the believers who love us" or 2)

"the believers who love us because we share the same

belief."

Introduction to Philemon

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Philemon

Paul greets Philemon (1:1-3) Paul makes requests of Philemon about Onesimus (1:4-21) Conclusion (1:22-25)

Who wrote the Book of Philemon?

Paul wrote Philemon. Paul was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul was in a prison when he wrote this letter.

What is the Book of Philemon about?

Paul wrote this letter to a man named Philemon. Philemon was a Christian who lived in the city of Colossae. He owned a slave named Onesimus. Onesimus had run away from Philemon and possibly stole something from him as well.

Onesimus went to Rome and visited Paul in prison.

Paul told Philemon that he was sending Onesimus back to him. Philemon had the right to execute Onesimus according to Roman law. But Paul said that Philemon should accept Onesimus back as a Christian brother. He even suggested that Philemon should allow Onesimus to come back to Paul and help him in prison.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Philemon." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Letter to Philemon" or "The Letter Paul wrote to Philemon."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Does this letter approve of the practice of slavery?

Paul sent Onesimus back to his former master. But that did not mean Paul thought slavery was an acceptable practice. Instead, Paul was more concerned with people serving God in whatever situation they were in.

What does Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: [inchrist](#))

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. The word "you" is almost always singular and refers to Philemon. The two exceptions to this are 1:22 and 1:25. There "you" refers to Philemon and the believers that met at his house.

Chapter 1

Philemon 1 Commentary

1:1-3

Why did Paul say he was a prisoner of Christ Jesus?

[1:1]

When Paul said he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ, he wanted to say that he was servant of Jesus. Paul was often locked in prison for speaking publicly about Jesus. Many scholars think Caesar, the ruler of Rome, arrested Paul and placed him in a house to be guarded. However, Paul thought of himself as primarily the prisoner of Christ (see: Acts 28:16-31). He knew that he was in prison as a way to serve Jesus.

How did Paul greet Philemon?

[1:1, 1:2, 1:3]

Paul greeted Philemon, his household, and the "church" (ἐκκλησία/g1577) that gathered in his house. This was how Paul often began his letters. Paul greeted them in the form of a prayer that begins with God's "favor" (χάρις/g5485). God's favor speaks about all the gifts God gives his children. That is, he gives favor to all those who believe in him. Paul also greeted Philemon and the church with "peace." Many scholars think that peace comes from God's favor. This peace makes God and man friends.

See: Church

1:4-7

How did Paul pray for Philemon?

[1:4, 1:6]

Paul told Philemon that he thanked God for him. Paul told Philemon that he thanked God for the “love”(ἀγάπη/g0026) Philemon had for others, the love he had for God, and for the “faith”(πίστις/g4102) he had in God.. Others people saw that Philemon had these things.

Paul also prayed that people would serve Jesus because of Philemon’s “participation”(κοινωνία/g2842) in the faith. Some scholars think Paul prayed for Philemon to be effective in his participation, or sharing, about the faith. That is, others were able to understand how to believe in Jesus. Other scholars think Paul prayed for Philemon’s “faith”(πίστις/g4102) to be effective. That is, Paul wanted Philemon to know and use all the good things God gives to Christians for them to follow Jesus.

When he ended his prayer, Paul told Philemon he had much “joy”(χαρά/g5479) because Philemon showed love to the “people who belong to God”(ἅγιος/g0040). Some scholars think Philemon’s love encouraged Paul because he saw Philemon’s faith when he loved others and God. Because of this, Philemon “refreshed”(ἀναπαύω/g0373) the hearts of the Christians. That is, he encouraged them and helped them to want to love other people. It is good for Christians to give new energy, joy, and peace to other Christians in the same way as Philemon.

1:8-11

Why did Paul command Philemon to obey him?

[1:8, 1:9]

Jesus made Paul an apostle and gave him permission to tell Christians what they needed to do to follow Jesus’ commands. Jesus commanded apostles to rule and to teach Christians. For this reason, Paul commanded Philemon.

See: Apostle

Why did Paul appeal to Philemon?

[1:9]

When Paul made an “appeal”(παρακαλέω/g3870), he made a serious request of Philemon. Paul spoke to Philemon as a brother and not as someone he ruled. Paul wanted Philemon to respond to his request because Philemon loved Paul. For this reason, Paul appealed to Philemon as a trusted brother instead of commanding him.

See: Family of God

How did Paul talk about himself to Philemon?

[1:9]

Paul said he was an old man locked in prison for Christ Jesus. Some scholars think Paul did not speak about his age in years. They think this was a type of metaphor. He spoke about his experience of living for Christ for a long period of time.

See: Metaphor

How was Paul the father of Onesimus?

[1:10]

Paul said that while he was a prisoner, he became a father to Onesimus. At the time in which Paul wrote, people called spiritual leaders or teachers a father. Onesimus became Paul’s student. Paul taught him about how to live as a Christian.

See: Family of God

What does the name Onesimus mean?

[1:10]

The name Onesimus is the Greek word for “useful” (Ὀνήσιμος/g3682). Some scholars said that many people in ancient times named their slaves Onesimus. Some scholars think Paul told Philemon that Onesimus was not useful in the work of the gospel when he first met him. But after becoming a Christian he became very useful to both Paul and Philemon. He was useful because he now helped in the work of the gospel.

See: Gospel

1:12-16

Why did Paul say he was sending his own heart?

[1:12]

Paul told Philemon he was sending his very “heart”(σπλάγχνον/g4698). That is, Paul called Onesimus his heart because he became a close, personal friend and helper while Paul was in prison. Paul’s love for Onesimus came from deep within his soul and spirit. Paul decided to send Onesimus back to Philemon. But, he told Philemon he wanted to keep Onesimus with him. That is, he wanted his help in sharing the gospel. But, Paul did not want to do anything without Philemon agreeing with it. Paul did not want to force Philemon to allow Onesimus to help him. Paul wanted Philemon to “willingly” (ἐκούσιος/g1595) allow Onesimus to serve him because Philemon felt it was good for both Paul and Onesimus.

See: Soul; Spirit (Spiritual); Gospel

What reason does Paul suggest for Onesimus’ separation from Philemon?

[1:15]

Some scholars think Paul said that God wanted Onesimus to run away from Philemon. That is, God wanted Onesimus to become a Christian. These scholars think God worked in the same way in the Old Testament with Joseph (see: Genesis 50:20). Paul also said to Philemon that God wanted to give him Onesimus back “forever”(αἰώνιος/g0166). Most scholars think Paul said that Philemon and Onesimus were now brothers in the Lord forever.

See: Family of God

What did Paul mean by stating “no longer as a slave”?

[1:16]

Paul told Philemon that Onesimus was “no longer a slave” but now a “beloved”(ἀγαπητός/g0027) brother. That is, Philemon needed to accept Onesimus in the same way he accepts a brother. Most scholars think Paul told Philemon that Onesimus was now much more than simply a “slave”(δοῦλος/g1401). They do not think Paul told Philemon to free Onesimus from being his slave. Paul spoke about slaves and masters in other books he wrote (see: Colossians 3:22-4:1; 1 Corinthians 7:22).

See: Family of God

Why did Paul say that Onesimus was a beloved brother in the flesh and in the Lord?

[1:16]

Paul told Philemon that Onesimus was beloved brother “in the flesh.” That is, Onesimus was now a better servant to Philemon. Paul spoke about Onesimus now being a more responsible servant. While Paul was in prison, Onesimus helped him with the work of the gospel. So, Paul told Philemon to receive Onesimus as a beloved brother in the Lord too.

See: Gospel;Flesh; Family of God

1:17-21

How were Paul and Philemon partners?

[1:17]

Paul and Philemon were “partners”(κοινωνός/g2844) because of their work together for the gospel. Paul spoke of Philemon as a fellow worker with him. Also, he spoke of him in the same way as his brother (see: 1:7). A “church”(ἐκκλησία/g1577) met in Philemon’s house. Because Onesimus became a partner with Paul in the work of the gospel, Paul asked Philemon to welcome Onesimus back to his home with love and respect. That is, take him back into his house in the same way he took Paul into his home.

See: Gospel;Family of God

Why was Paul willing to pay to Philemon whatever Onesimus owed Philemon?

[1:18]

Paul was willing to pay Onesimus’ debt to Philemon because he loved and respected both men. They were his friends and brothers in Christ. Some scholars think Philemon owed a debt to Paul, to work in the service of the gospel with him. But, Onesimus served in the place of Philemon (see: 13). They think Paul said that for this reason he now paid any debt Onesimus might owe to Philemon.

Advice to Translators: A debt is an amount of money that someone owes to another person.

See: Family of God

Why did Paul state that he wrote this letter with his own hand?

[1:19]

Some scholars think Paul wrote this letter himself because it was personal. In some of his letters, Paul only wrote the greetings with his own hands. Someone else wrote the rest of the letter while Paul told them what to write. Other scholars think Paul said that he wrote this letter with his own hand because it made a legal promise to Philemon to repay any debt Onesimus owed Philemon.

Advice to Translators: A debt is an amount of money that someone owes to another person.

Why did Paul say Philemon owed Paul?

[1:19]

Perhaps Philemon owes Paul his very life because Philemon believed in Jesus after he heard Paul teaching about Jesus. Philemon was unable to pay this debt with money. Instead, Paul knew Philemon continued to be a faithful partner in the work of the gospel.

Advice to Translators: A debt is an amount of money that someone owes to another person.

See: Gospel

In what way did Philemon refresh Paul’s heart?

[1:20]

In the same way Paul gave thanks to Philemon for “refreshing”(ἀναπαύω/g0373) other believers, he asked Philemon to refresh his heart (see: 1:7). Paul said that Philemon was going to refresh Paul’s heart by taking Onesimus back into his home. And, Paul wanted Philemon to take Onesimus back not only as a valuable servant, but as a brother in the Lord.

See: Family of God

1:21-22

In what way was Paul confident of Philemon's obedience?

[1:21]

Some scholars think Paul said he was confident Philemon was going to be "obedient" (ὕπακοή/g5218) to what he told Philemon to do. That is, he knew Philemon was going to take Onesimus back as a valued servant and a brother in the Lord. These scholars think Paul also knew that any of Onesimus' debt to Philemon was going to be transferred to Paul's account. Other scholars think that Paul was confident in Philemon that Philemon would obey God and that he believed in the gospel (see: Romans 1:5; 16:26). These scholars think Paul spoke good things of Philemon and because of Philemon's faith in the gospel, Paul knows he will do more than what Paul requested. Paul was to be released from prison soon, so he also asked Philemon to make a room for him to stay in (see: Philippians 2:19-24). In stating that he hoped to soon be "given" (χαρίζομαι/g5483) to Philemon, Paul was expressing his confidence in the favor of God to release him from prison. Advice to Translators: A debt is an amount of money that someone owes to another person.

See: Gospel; Family of God

1:23-25

In what way was Epaphras Paul's fellow prisoner?

[1:23]

Many scholars think that Epaphras was a prisoner in the same way Paul was a prisoner. That is, he was arrested and placed in prison. However, scholars do not know if Epaphras was in prison at the time Paul wrote the letter to Philemon. Although Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke were called fellow workers, Aristarchus was also called a fellow prisoner in Christ along with Paul (see: Colossians 4:10).

How does Paul end his letter to Philemon?

[1:25]

When Paul ended his letter, he asked God to "favor" (χάρις/g5485) Philemon. He asked that this favor be with Philemon's "spirit" (πνεῦμα/g4151). Most scholars think Paul spoke about the human spirit of Philemon. Paul prayed that Philemon experienced the Lord's favor within himself, his household, and with all the Christians in his home.

Philemon 1:1

General Information:

Three times Paul identifies himself as the author of this letter. Evidently Timothy was with him and probably wrote the words down as Paul said them. Paul greets others who meet for church at Philemon's house. All instances of "I," "me," and "my" refer to Paul. Philemon is the main person to whom this letter is written. All instances of "you" and "your" refer to him and are singular unless otherwise noted.

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and the brother Timothy, to Philemon
Your language may have a particular way of introducing the authors of a letter. Alternate translation: "I, Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy, our brother, are writing this letter to Philemon"

a prisoner of Christ Jesus

"a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus." People who opposed Paul's preaching had punished him by putting him into prison.

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian.

our dear friend

The word "our" here refers to Paul and those with him but not to the reader.

and fellow worker

"who, like us, works to spread the gospel"

Philemon 1:2

our sister ... our fellow soldier

The word "our" here refers to Paul and those with him but not to the reader.

Apphia our sister

Here "sister" means she was a believer, and not a relative.

Alternate translation: "Apphia our fellow believer" or

"Apphia our spiritual sister"

Archippus our fellow soldier

Paul speaks here of Archippus as if they were both soldiers in an army. He means that Archippus works hard, as Paul himself works hard, to spread the gospel. Alternate translation: "Archippus our fellow spiritual warrior" or "Archippus, who also fights the spiritual battle with us" Archippus

This is the name of a man in the church with Philemon.
Philemon 1:3

May grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

"May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace." This is a blessing.

God our Father

The word "our" here refers to Paul, those with him, and the reader.

our Father

This is an important title for God.

Philemon 1:4

General Information:

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Philemon 1:5

General Information:

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Philemon 1:6

the sharing of your faith may be effective

Possible meanings are 1) "the way you tell others what you believe may cause them to believe also" or 2) "the way you believe the same way we do will cause good things to happen."

be effective, so you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have

"have a good result, and you will completely understand all the good things we have"

in Christ

"because of Christ" or "because we are Christ's people"

Philemon 1:7

the hearts of God's holy people have been refreshed by you

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's emotions or inner being. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you have encouraged believers" or "you have helped the believers"

you, brother

"you, dear brother" or "you, dear friend." Paul called Philemon "brother" because they were both believers and he was emphasizing their friendship.

Philemon 1:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins his plea and the reason for his letter.

all the boldness in Christ

Possible meanings are 1) "authority because of Christ" or 2) "courage because of Christ." Alternate translation: "courage because Christ has given me authority"

Philemon 1:9

yet because of love

Possible meanings: 1) "because I know that you love God's people" 2) "because you love me" or 3) "because I love you"

Philemon 1:10

General Information:

Onesimus is the name of a man. He was apparently Philemon's slave and had stolen something and run away. my child Onesimus

"my son Onesimus." Paul speaks of the way he is friends with Onesimus as if it were the way a father and his son love each other. Onesimus was not Paul's actual son, but he received spiritual life when Paul taught him about Jesus, and Paul loved him. Alternate translation: "my spiritual son Onesimus"

Onesimus

The name "Onesimus" means "profitable" or "useful."

whom I have fathered in my chains

Here "fathered" is a metaphor that means Paul converted Onesimus to Christ. Alternate translation: "who became my spiritual son when I taught him about Christ and he received new life while I was in my chains" or "who became like a son to me while I was in my chains"

in my chains

Prisoners were often bound in chains. Paul was in prison when he taught Onesimus and was still in prison when he wrote this letter. Alternate translation: "while I have been in prison" or "while I was in prison"

Philemon 1:11

General Information:

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Philemon 1:12

I have sent him back to you

Paul was probably sending Onesimus with another believer who carried this letter.

who is my very heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions. The phrase "who is my very heart" is a metaphor for someone whom the speaker loves dearly. Paul was saying this about Onesimus. Alternate translation: "whom I love dearly"

Philemon 1:13

so he could serve me for you

"so that, since you cannot be here, he might help me" or "so that he could help me in your place"

while I am in chains

Prisoners were often bound in chains. Paul was in prison when he taught Onesimus and was still in prison when he wrote this letter. Alternate translation: "while I am in prison"

for the sake of the gospel

Paul was in prison because he preached the gospel publicly. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "because I preach the gospel"

Philemon 1:14

But I did not want to do anything without your consent

Paul states a double negative to mean the opposite.

Alternate translation: "But I wanted to make sure that you approved of everything I did"

I did not want your good deed to be from necessity but from good will

"I did not want you to do this good deed because I commanded you to do it, but because you wanted to do it"

but from good will

"but because you freely chose to do the right thing"

Philemon 1:15

Perhaps for this he was separated from you for a time, so that

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Perhaps the reason God took Onesimus away from you for a time was so that"

for a time

"during this time"

Philemon 1:16

better than a slave

"more valuable than a slave"

a beloved brother

"a dear brother" or "a precious brother in Christ"

much more so to you

"he means even more to you"

in both the flesh

"both as a man." Paul is referring to Onesimus' being a trustworthy servant.

in the Lord

"as a brother in the Lord" or "because he belongs to the Lord"

Philemon 1:17

if you have me as a partner

"if you think of me as a fellow worker for Christ"

Philemon 1:18

charge that to me

"say that I am the one who owes you"

Philemon 1:19

I, Paul, write this with my own hand

"I, Paul, write this myself." Paul wrote this part with his own hand so that Philemon would know that the words were really from Paul. Paul really would pay him.

not to mention

"I do not need to remind you" or "You already know." Paul says he does not need to tell Philemon this, but then continues to tell him anyway. This emphasizes the truth of what Paul is telling him.

you owe me your own self
"you owe me your own life." Paul was implying that Philemon should not say that Onesimus or Paul owed him anything because Philemon owed Paul even more. The reason Philemon owed Paul his life can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "you owe me much because I saved your life" or "you owe me your own life because what I told you saved your life"

Philemon 1:20

refresh my heart in Christ

Here "refresh" is a metaphor for comfort or encourage. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's feelings, thoughts, or inner being. How Paul wanted Philemon to refresh his heart can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "encourage me in Christ" or "comfort me in Christ" or "refresh my heart in Christ by accepting Onesimus kindly"
Philemon 1:21

General Information:

Here the words "your" and "you" are singular and refer to Philemon.

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes his letter and speaks a blessing on Philemon and the believers that meet for church in Philemon's house.

Confident about your obedience

"Because I am sure that you will do what I ask"

Philemon 1:22

At the same time

"Also"

prepare a guest room for me

"make a room in your house ready for me." Paul is

addressing Philemon here, so the word "prepare" is singular.

for I hope that through your prayers I will be returned to you
Paul is confident that he will return to Philemon and the other Christians there. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for I confidently expect that God will answer your prayers and send me back to you"

your ... you

These words are plural and refer to Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and the other Christians that meet in their home.

Philemon 1:23

Epaphras

This man is a fellow believer and prisoner with Paul.

my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus

"who is in prison with me because he serves Christ Jesus"

Philemon 1:24

So do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers

"Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers, also greet you"

Mark ... Aristarchus ... Demas ... Luke

These are names of men.

my fellow workers

"the men who work with me" or "who all work with me."

Philemon 1:25

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit

The word "your" here refers to Philemon and all who met in his house and so is plural. The words "your spirit" are a synecdoche and represent the people themselves. Alternate translation: "May our Lord Jesus Christ be kind to you"

Introduction to Hebrews

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Hebrews

Jesus is superior to God's prophets and angels (1:1-4:13) Jesus is superior to the priests who serve in the temple in Jerusalem (4:14-7:28) Jesus's ministry is superior to the old covenant that God made with his people (8:1-10:39) What faith is like (11:1-40) Encouragement to be faithful to God (12:1-29) Concluding encouragements and greetings (13:1-25)

Who wrote the Book of Hebrews?

No one knows who wrote Hebrews. Scholars have suggested several different people who could possibly be the author. Possible authors are Paul, Luke, and Barnabas. The date of writing is also not known. Most scholars think it was written before A.D. 70. Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70, but the writer of this letter spoke about Jerusalem as if it had not yet been destroyed.

What is the Book of Hebrews about?

In the Book of Hebrews, the author shows that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. The author did this in order to encourage the Jewish Christians and to explain that Jesus is better than anything that the old covenant had to offer. Jesus is the perfect High Priest. Jesus was also the perfect sacrifice. Animal sacrifices became useless because Jesus's sacrifice was once and for all time. Therefore, Jesus is the one and only way for people to be accepted by God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Hebrews." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Letter to the Hebrews" or "A Letter to the Jewish Christians."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Can readers understand this book without knowing about the sacrifices and the work of the priests required in the Old Testament?

It would be very difficult for readers to understand this book without understanding these matters. Translators might consider explaining some of these Old Testament concepts in notes or in an introduction to this book.

How is the idea of blood used in the Book of Hebrews?

Beginning in [Hebrews 9:7]

Beginning in [Hebrews 9:19]

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in Hebrews in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, the ULB uses the following principles:

Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God views Christians as sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is perfect and faultless. A third fact that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless, faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULB uses "holy," "holy God," "holy ones," or "holy people." Sometimes the meaning indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 6:10; 13:24) Sometimes the meaning implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "sanctify," "set apart," "dedicated to," or "reserved for." (See: 2:11; 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12)

The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Hebrews?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"you crowned him with glory and honor" (2:7). Some older translations read, "you crowned him with glory and honor and you have put him over the works of your hands." "those who did not unite in faith with those who obeyed" (4:2). Some older translations read, "those who heard it without joining faith to it." "Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come" (9:11). Some modern versions and older translations read, "Christ came as a high priest of the good things that are to come." "on those who were prisoners" (10:34). Some older translations read, "of me in my chains." "They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed with the sword" (11:37). Some older translations read, "They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were tempted. They were killed with the sword." "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned" (12:20). Some older translations read, "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned or shot with an arrow."

Chapter 1

Hebrews 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter describes how Jesus is more important to us than the angels are.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 1:5, 7-13, which is from the Old Testament.

"Our ancestors"

The writer wrote this letter to Christians who had grown up as Jews. This is why the letter is called "Hebrews."

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

The author uses rhetorical questions as a way of proving Jesus is better than the angels. Both he and the readers know the answers to the questions, and the writer knows that as the readers think about the answers to the questions, they will realize that God's Son is more important than any of the angels.

Poetry

Jewish teachers, like the Old Testament prophets, would put their most important teachings in the form of poetry so that the hearers would be able to learn and remember them.

Links:

[Hebrews 1:1 Notes](#) [Hebrews intro](#)

Hebrews 1 Commentary

1:1-4

How did God change the way he spoke to people?

[1:1, 1:2]

The author wrote about God and the things God wanted to do as if God was speaking to mankind. Normally, people cannot see or hear God. They could only see God when Jesus came to the earth. However, God sometimes sent messages to prophets using visions, dreams, spoken prophecies, written prophecies, and in many other ways. The prophets told people the things God wanted them to know. However, people did not completely understand when the prophets told

them these messages from God.

Therefore, God changed the way he spoke to people by sending his son, Jesus. God came to earth as the man Jesus. He came to tell all people clearly and completely who God is and the things that God wanted them to do. People can now know more about God because of what Jesus said and did. He walked and talked the way other people do. He spoke truth about God in ways that people could understand. He did miracles and healed many people. This showed people that he cared about them.

Then, Jesus died so that people could have peace with God and live together with God in heaven forever. In this way, he saved everyone who will believe in him. This is a type of gift from God. It showed how much God loves all people.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Prophet; Vision; Miracle; Son of God

What are the last days?

[1:2]

See: Last Days

How did the author explain why Jesus could speak for God to mankind?

[1:2, 1:3, 1:4]

The author wrote about seven things that showed people that Jesus is the Son of God. This means Jesus could speak for God because he is God. The seven things are:

God appointed Jesus heir of all things (See: Psalm 2:7-8). This means that in the end, he will possess and rule the whole world without anyone fighting against him. Jesus created the universe. (See: John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16) The author wrote about Jesus as if he was special light that comes from God. This means that God shows people his power through Jesus. Jesus is the "representation" (χαρακτήρ/g5481) of God's "essence" (ὁπόστασις/g5287). Jesus is God. So, when he came to earth, he showed people who God is. He did not just do the things that God did. He is God. Jesus keeps everything in the world going. Jesus spoke and created the world and everything in it. By his speaking, he enables all things to accomplish his purpose. (See: Colossians 1:17) Jesus made "payment" (καθαρισμός/g2512) for people's sins. This is something the book of Hebrews talks about many times. In the Bible, when someone sins, it makes unclean, that is, they cannot please God. However, Jesus can make people clean, that is, take away their sin. Nobody else could pay for everyone's sins. Only God could do this. The author wrote about Jesus sitting at the right hand of God, that is, on the right side of God in heaven. The people who wrote the Bible often used the metaphor of sitting when they wanted to say someone was ruling like a king or leader rules. Also, they wrote about the right hand when they wanted to talk about using power or giving power. God the Father gave Jesus permission to rule with him. Some scholars also believe that Jesus is seated because he finished doing the things that he wanted to do. He is now resting while he reigns over his new kingdom. (See: Luke 22:69, 1 Corinthians 15:24, and Psalm 110:1)

See: Son of God; Jesus is God); Clean and Unclean; Kingdom of God; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

How did the author say that Jesus can speak for God?

[1:1, 1:4]

The author wrote that Jesus could speak for God. He did this by comparing Jesus to others who spoke for God in the past. He could also speak for God because he is God.

How did the author begin to compare Jesus to others?

[1:4]

The author used the word "better" (κρείττων/g2909) many times in this book to compare Jesus to other people. The author said Jesus is better than all other people or creatures. In verses 1-2, the author wanted to say that Jesus was better than any ancestor of the Jews or any prophet. In the rest of Hebrews 1 and 2, the author explained how Jesus is better than the angels.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Prophet; Angel

1:5-14

How is Jesus better than angels?

[1:5, 1:6, 1:7]

God sent angels to give messages to people. The author talked about five things that proved Jesus is better than angels.

Jesus is better than the angels because God says Jesus is his Son. The author wanted to say that God never called any angels his son. However, many times in Hebrews, the author wrote about Jesus, the son of God. In verse 5, the author asked, "When did God ever say angels were God's sons?" (See: Psalm 2:7 and 2 Samuel 7:14). This question expects an answer of "not one angel." The author expected that people reading to know these Scripture verses and understand that he wanted to say that God had never done this. The author wrote that God was talking about Jesus when he said, "Let all the angels of God worship Him" (see: Deuteronomy 32:43). Jesus is God and deserves to be worshipped. The angels do not deserve to be worshipped. Therefore, Jesus is better than the angels. The lesser being worships the greater one. The angels worship the Son. Therefore, Jesus is greater than angels. The author wrote that angels were created to serve God. This makes them like any other thing created by God. Jesus was not created. Instead, he has always existed. Therefore, Jesus is better than the angels (See: Psalm 104:4). God honored Jesus in special ways. The author wrote in verses 8-9 that God spoke to Jesus directly. God said that Jesus rules forever in a way that honors God (see: Psalm 45:6-7). Jesus created

the world. The world he created includes the angels. The angels are a part of creation and may change, but Jesus will never change (see: Psalm 102:25-27).

At the end of this section, the author wrote another question contained in Scripture. This question was, "Did God ever ask angels to watch while God defeated their enemies?" (see: Psalm 110:1). This question expects an answer, "not one angel." Instead, God did for Jesus, the messiah.

See: Angel; Messiah (Christ)

Hebrews 1:1

General Information:

Although this letter does not mention to whom it was sent, the author wrote particularly to Hebrews (Jews), who would have understood the many Old Testament references. This prologue provides the background for the whole book: the unsurpassing greatness of the Son, who is greater than all. The book begins by emphasizing that the Son is better than the prophets and the angels.

Hebrews 1:2

in these last days

"in these final days." This phrase refers to the time when Jesus began his ministry, extending until God establishes his complete rule in his creation.

through a Son

"Son" here is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God. to be the heir of all things

The author speaks of the Son as if he will inherit wealth and property from his Father. Alternate translation: "to possess all things"

It is through him that God also made the universe

"It is through the Son that God also made all things"

Hebrews 1:3

the brightness of God's glory

"the light of his glory." God's glory is associated with a very bright light. The author is saying that the Son embodies that light and fully represents God's glory.

glory, the exact representation of his being

"glory, the image of God's being." The phrase "the exact representation of his being" is similar in meaning to "the brightness of God's glory." The Son embodies the character and essence of God and fully represents everything that God is. Alternate translation: "glory and is just like God" or "glory, and what is true about God is true about the Son"

the word of his power

"his powerful word." Here "word" refers to a message or command. Alternate translation: "his powerful command"

After he had made cleansing for sins

The abstract noun "cleansing" can be expressed as a verb: "making clean." Alternate translation: "After he had finished making us clean from sins" or "After he had finished purifying us from our sins"

he had made cleansing for sins

The author speaks of forgiving sins as if it were making a person clean. Alternate translation: "he had made it possible for God to forgive our sins"

he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate translation: "he sat down at the place of honor and authority beside the Majesty on high"

the Majesty on high

Here "Majesty" refers to God. Alternate translation: "God Most High"

Hebrews 1:4

He has become

"The Son has become"

as the name he has inherited is more excellent than their name

Here "name" refers to honor and authority. Alternate translation: "as the honor and authority he has inherited is superior to their honor and authority"

he has inherited

The author speaks of receiving honor and authority from his father as if it were inheriting wealth and property from his father. Alternate translation: "he has received"

Hebrews 1:5

General Information:

The first prophetic quotation (You are my Son) comes from the Psalms. The prophet Samuel wrote the second one (I will be a Father to him). The words "You" and "he" refer to Jesus, and the words "I" and "me" refer to God the Father.

For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son ... a Son to me"?

This question emphasizes that God does not call any angel his Son. Alternate translation: "For God never said to any of the angels, 'You are my Son ... a Son to me.'"

You are my Son ... I have become your Father

These two phrases mean essentially the same thing.

Hebrews 1:6

General Information:

The quotation, "All God's angels ... him," comes from one of the books that Moses wrote.

the firstborn

This means Jesus. The author refers to him as the "firstborn" to emphasize the Son's importance and authority over everyone else. It does not imply that there was a time before Jesus existed or that God has other sons like Jesus. Alternate translation: "his honored Son, his only Son"

he says

"God says"

Hebrews 1:7

General Information:

The quotation, "He is the one who makes ... fire," is from the Psalms.

He is the one who makes his angels spirits, and his servants flames of fire

Possible meanings are 1) "God has made his angels to be spirits who serve him with power like flames of fire" or 2) God makes the wind and flames of fire his messengers and servants. In the original language the word for "angel" is the same as "messenger," and the word for "spirits" is the same as "wind." With either possible meaning, the point is that the angels serve the Son because he is superior.

Hebrews 1:8

General Information:

This scriptural quotation comes from the Psalms.

But to the Son he says

"But God says this to the Son"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

Your throne, God, is forever and ever

The Son's throne represents his rule. Alternate translation:

"You are God, and your reign will last forever and ever"

The scepter of justice is the scepter of your kingdom

Here "scepter" refers to the Son's rule. Alternate

translation: "And you will rule over your kingdom with

justice" or "And you will rule over the people of your

kingdom justly"

Hebrews 1:9

has anointed you with the oil of joy more than your companions

Here "oil of joy" refers to the joy that the Son felt when God

honored him. Alternate translation: "has honored you and

made you more joyful than anyone else"

Hebrews 1:10

General Information:

This quotation comes from another Psalm.

Connecting Statement:

The author continues explaining that Jesus is superior to the angels.

In the beginning

"Before anything existed"

you laid the earth's foundation

The author speaks of God creating the earth as if he built a

building on a foundation. Alternate translation: "you

created the earth"

The heavens are the work of your hands

Here "hands" refer to God's power and action. Alternate

translation: "You made the heavens"

Hebrews 1:11

They will perish

"The heavens and earth will disappear" or "The heavens

and earth will no longer exist"

wear out like a piece of clothing

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were

a piece of clothing that will get old and eventually become useless.

Hebrews 1:12

roll them up like a cloak

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were a robe or another kind of outer garment.

they will be changed like a piece of clothing

The author speaks of the heavens and earth as if they were clothing that could be exchanged for other clothing.

they will be changed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"you will change them"

your years do not end

Periods of time are used to represent God's eternal

existence. Alternate translation: "your life will never end"

Hebrews 1:13

General Information:

This quotation comes from another Psalm.

But to which of the angels has God said at any time ... feet?"

The author uses a question to emphasize that God has never said this to an angel. Alternate translation: "But God

has never said to an angel at any time ... feet."

Sit at my right hand

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of

receiving great honor and authority from God. Alternate

translation: "Sit in the place of honor beside me"

until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet

Christ's enemies are spoken of as if they will become an

object on which a king rests his feet. This image represents

defeat and dishonor for his enemies.

Hebrews 1:14

Are not all angels spirits ... inherit salvation?

The author uses this question to remind the readers that angels are not as powerful as Christ, but they have a

different role. Alternate translation: "All angels are spirits

who ... inherit salvation."

for those who will inherit salvation

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as

if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family

member. Alternate translation: "for those whom God will

save"

Chapter 2

Hebrews 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 2:6-8, 12-13, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers

The author probably uses the term "brothers" to refer to Christians who grew up as Jews.

[Hebrews 2:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 2

2:1-4

Why do Christians need to "give more attention"?

[2:1]

The author told Christians to "give more attention" (προσεχω/g4337) to what Jesus said. Jesus was greater than any other messenger from God. So what he said was greater than what any other messenger from God had said before. If people believed in what the other messengers of God said, but not in what Jesus said, God will punish them more.

Some scholars think that the author wrote that Christians were going to have a greater punishment if they stopped believing in Jesus and started following the Law of Moses again. Because they knew about Jesus the messiah, they would be punished more than people who did not know about Jesus and just disobeyed the law of Moses. They think that these Christians would no longer be at peace with God. Other scholars think that the author wanted to say that people who might "drift away" (παράρρηω/g3901) from believing in God never really believed in God. If they believed in God and were at peace with him, then they would not "drift away." Other scholars think Christians might "drift away" from obeying God. If they did this, they would not be punished. Instead, God would not reward them.

The author wanted readers to remember how God had severely punished people who disobeyed the laws given through angels. Also, He wanted readers to know that God will punish people who ignore the things Jesus said to them.

Advice to Translators: A messenger is someone who is sent by someone else. They tell people the things the person who sent them want to tell them.

See: Law of Moses; Messiah (Christ); Punish (Punishment); Reward

Why is Jesus' message better than the angel's message?

[2:2, 2:3]

The author said that Jesus was better than angels. Several things make the things Jesus said better than the what the angels said.

Jesus said these things while he was on earth. People who heard the things Jesus said told other people about the things Jesus said. People told the author of this letter about the things Jesus said. These people heard it when Jesus said these things. They also told the people who read this letter about the things Jesus said. God "testified" (συνεπιμάρτυρέω/g4901) while all of this was happening. God proved the things Jesus said were true. He also gave special gifts through the Holy Spirit. God did all of these things. He did not just send people to say things. They also did things and served Jesus and served other people.

See: Angel; Sign; Testify (Testimony)

2:5-18

What is God's plan for the world?

[2:5]

The author wrote about the "world to come." That is, God will end the world people live in now and create a new one that is perfect. That is, this new world will not have any suffering and nothing will die. Some scholars think God started this new world when he raised Jesus from the dead and gave him permission to rule over all things. This will continue until God makes the earth and heaven "new" (see Revelation 21). This "new heaven and new earth" will last forever. Other scholars think John was only talking about the "new heaven and new earth." God has not yet begun to make the world new. Other scholars think John was talking about the world when Jesus would rule for 1000 years (see: Revelation 20:1-7). Angels will not rule the world to come. Jesus will rule. God the Father has given him permission to rule the world to come.

See: Kingdom of God; Angel; God the Father

What did Jesus do after he went back to heaven?

[2:7]

After Jesus died and came back to living, he went back to heaven. When he did this, God gave him great honor. He was honored more than anything or anyone else. God's plan for Jesus did not end when Jesus died and rose from the dead. When Jesus suffered and died on the cross, he was made lower than angels. This is a metaphor. He wanted to say that Jesus was humiliated by dying on the cross. However, after Jesus rose from the dead and went back to heaven, God gave him glory and honor above all things and all people. Jesus will never stop ruling over all things. He will rule all things when God creates the new heaven and earth. He will always be the king of all kings.

See: Heaven; Resurrect (Resurrection); Cross; Metaphor; Glory (Glorify)

How did Jesus save people who believe in him from their sins?

[2:10]

Jesus is able to save people who believe in him from their sins because he is different from every other person. Jesus and people are the same because Jesus was human in the same way that people are human. Also, Jesus and people are different because Jesus is also God. People are not God. This difference is what made Jesus able to save people who believe in him from their sins.

The author used Psalm 8:4-6 to tell how God first planned for people to rule the earth. When God created the world, he gave Adam and Eve permission to rule over the earth. God gave these two people nearly the same power and honor as the angels. They ruled over all things on earth. However, they did not do what honored God. This was the first sin. Because they did not honor God, God said that they will suffer and die. Also, their descendants will suffer and die. That is, all mankind. Adam and Eve lost their special permission from God to rule. They were no longer just a little lower than the angels, but a lot lower. This is because they did not honor God.

When people do not trust God and they do not do what honors him, this is a very bad thing. God must punish those who do not honor him. This punishment is "death" (see: Romans 6:23). The author wrote that Jesus died so that people did not have to die. That is, he was punished for them. Like Adam, Jesus was a man. Unlike every other person, Jesus did not sin once. That is, Jesus always did what honored God. Also, Jesus is God, and he is holy. When he came to earth, Jesus the Son did everything God the Father wanted him to do. Because Jesus always honored God, he was always holy. Because of this, he could die for those who did sin. Jesus did not die because of sins he committed. Jesus chose to honor God and die to be punished for everyone who believes in him.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Jesus is God; Angel; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Punish (Punishment); Die (Death); Atone (Atonement); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); God the Father

What does God do for those who believe in Jesus?

[2:11, 2:12]

God makes those who believe in Jesus "children of God." Before believing in Jesus, people fight against God in some way. But after they believe in Jesus, they are God's children. Jesus calls Christians his brothers and sisters. Jesus was a person in the same way they are people. He was born, he suffered, and he died. He lived in the same way as people, but he did not sin. Because of this, he had the power to save other people. That is, he could bring them to God and make them at peace with God. In the same way the high priest of the Old Testament brought sacrifices so that God would forgive them, Jesus brought his own sacrifice to God so that God would forgive people. That is, because Jesus died, God forgives people because Jesus was punished for them. Jesus is the greatest high priest. In the same way the high priest brought people to God, Jesus brings people to God. He is still there to help those who suffer and are tempted to sin. He helps them. Jesus also saves people from the power of the devil. The devil wants to make people slaves to do the things he wants them to do, things that do not honor God. However, Jesus makes them free this when someone believes in him.

See: Family of God; Children of God; Sin; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); High Priest; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Sacrifice; Tempt (Temptation); Tempt (Temptation); Serve (Servant, Slave); Free (Freedom)

Will Christians be greater than angels?

[2:16]

Jesus has made it so that people can live with God in heaven. Men and women are children of God. God honors his children more than angels. People will rule with Jesus in the world to come. Angels will serve them and help them. Jesus died to save men and women, not angels.

See: Heaven; Children of God; Angel; Atone (Atonement)

Hebrews 2:1

Connecting Statement:

This is the first of five urgent warnings the author gives. we must

Here "we" refers to the author and includes his audience. so that we do not drift away from it

Possible meanings for this metaphor are 1) people who stop believing in God's word are spoken of as if they were drifting away, like a boat drifts from its position in the water. Alternate translation: "so that we do not stop believing it" or 2) people who stop obeying God's words are spoken of as if they were drifting away, like a boat drifts from its position in the water. Alternate translation: "so that we do not stop obeying it"

Hebrews 2:2

For if the message that was spoken through the angels

The Jews believed that God spoke his law to Moses through angels. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For if the message that God spoke through the angels"

For if the message

The author is certain that these things are true. Alternate translation: "Because the message"

every transgression and disobedience receives just repayment

Here "transgression" and "disobedience" stand for the people who are guilty of these sins. Alternate translation: "every person who sins and disobeys will receive just repayment"

transgression and disobedience

These two words mean basically the same thing. repayment

This is a general term, but you may need to make explicit that the "repayment" here is just punishment. Alternate translation: "punishment"

Hebrews 2:3

how then can we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?

The author uses a question to emphasize that the people will certainly receive punishment if they refuse God's salvation through Christ. Alternate translation: "then God will certainly punish us if we do not pay attention to his message about how God will save us!"

ignore

"pay no attention to" or "consider unimportant"

This is salvation that was first announced by the Lord and confirmed to us by those who heard it

This can be stated in active form. The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated with a verbal phrase.

Alternate translation: "The Lord himself first announced the message about how God will save us and then those who heard the message confirmed it to us"

Hebrews 2:4

according to his will

"in just the way he wanted to do it"

Hebrews 2:5

Connecting Statement:

The writer reminds these Hebrew believers that the earth will one day be under the rule of the Lord Jesus.

For it was not to the angels that God subjected

"For God did not make the angels rulers over"

the world to come

Here "world" refers to the people who live there. And "to come" means that this is the world in the next age after Christ returns. Alternate translation: "the people who will live in the new world"

Hebrews 2:6

General Information:

The quotation here is from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament. It continues on through verse 8.

What is man, that you are mindful of him?

This rhetorical question emphasizes the insignificance of humans and expresses surprise that God would pay attention to them. Alternate translation: "Humans are insignificant, and yet you are mindful of them!"

Or a son of man, that you care for him?

The idiom "son of man" refers to human beings. This rhetorical question means basically the same thing as the first question. It expresses surprise that God would care for humans, who are insignificant. Alternate translation: "Human beings are of little importance, and yet you care for them!"

Or a son of man

The verb may be supplied from the previous question.

Alternate translation: "Or what is a son of man"

Hebrews 2:7

a little lower than the angels

The author speaks of people being less important than angels as if the people are standing in a position that is lower than the angels' position. Alternate translation: "less important than the angels"

made man ... crowned him

Here, these phrases do not refer to a specific person but to humans in general, including both males and females.

Alternate translation: "made humans ... crowned them"

you crowned him with glory and honor

The gifts of glory and honor are spoken of as if they were a wreath of leaves placed on the head of a victorious athlete. Alternate translation: "you have given them great glory and honor"

Hebrews 2:8

his feet ... to him

Here, these phrases do not refer to a specific person but to humans in general, including both males and females.

Alternate translation: "their feet ... to them"

You put everything in subjection under his feet

The author speaks of humans having control over everything as if they have stepped on everything with their feet. Alternate translation: "You have given them control over everything"

He did not leave anything not subjected to him

This double negative emphasizes the positive. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "God made everything subject to him"

we do not yet see everything subjected to him

"we know that humans are not in control of everything yet"

Hebrews 2:9

Connecting Statement:

The writer reminds these Hebrew believers that Christ

became lower than the angels when he came to earth to suffer death for forgiveness of sins, and that he became a merciful high priest to believers.

we see him

"we know there is one"

who was made

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God made"

lower than the angels ... crowned with glory and honor

See how you translated these words in Hebrews 2:7.

he might taste death

The experience of death is spoken of as if it were food that people can taste. Alternate translation: "he might experience death" or "he might die"

Hebrews 2:10

bring many sons to glory

The gift of glory is spoken of here as if it were a place to which people could be brought. Alternate translation: "save many sons"

many sons

Here this refers to believers in Christ, including males and females. Alternate translation: "many believers"

the founder of their salvation

Possible meanings of this metaphor are 1) the author speaks of Jesus as the one who establishes salvation, or makes it possible for God to save people. Alternate translation: "the one who makes their salvation possible" or 2) the word translated here as "founder" can mean "leader" and the writer speaks of salvation as if it were a destination and of Jesus as the person who goes before the people on the road and leads them to salvation. Alternate translation: "the one who leads people to salvation"

complete

Becoming mature and completely trained is spoken of as if a person were made complete, perhaps complete in all his body parts.

Hebrews 2:11

the one who sanctifies

"the one who makes others holy" or "the one who makes others pure from sin"

those who are sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom he makes holy" or "those whom he makes pure from sin"

have one source

Who that source is can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "have one source, God himself" or "have the same Father"

he is not ashamed

"Jesus is not ashamed"

is not ashamed to call them brothers

This litotes means that he will claim them as his brothers.

Alternate translation: "is pleased to call them brothers"

brothers

Here this refers to all who have believed in Jesus, including both men and women.

Hebrews 2:12

General Information:

This prophetic quotation comes from a Psalm of King

David.

I will proclaim your name to my brothers

Here "name" refers to the person's reputation and what they have done. Alternate translation: "I will proclaim to my brothers the great things you have done"

from inside the assembly

"when believers come together to worship God"

Hebrews 2:13

General Information:

The prophet Isaiah wrote these quotations.

And again,

"And a prophet wrote in another scripture passage what Christ said about God:"

the children

This speaks about those who believe in Christ as if they were children. Alternate translation: "those who are like my children"

Hebrews 2:14

the children

This speaks about those who believe in Christ as if they were children. Alternate translation: "those who are like his children"

share in flesh and blood

The phrase "flesh and blood" refers to people's human nature. Alternate translation: "are all human beings"

he shared in those things in the same way

"Jesus in the same way shared in flesh and blood" or "Jesus became human in the same way they did"

through death

Here "death" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "by dying"

has the power of death

Here "death" can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "has the power to cause people to die"

Hebrews 2:15

This was so that he would free all those who through fear of death lived all their lives subject to slavery

The fear of death is spoken of as if it were making people live as slaves. Taking away someone's fear is spoken of as it were freeing that person from slavery. Alternate translation: "This was so he might free all people. For we lived like slaves because we were afraid of dying"

Hebrews 2:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 2:17

it was necessary for him

"it was necessary for Jesus"

like his brothers

Here "brothers" refers to people in general. Alternate translation: "like human beings"

he could make atonement for the sins of the people

Christ's death on the cross means that God can forgive sins. Alternate translation: "he could make it possible for God to forgive people's sins"

Hebrews 2:18

was tempted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Satan tempted him"

who are tempted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom Satan is tempting"

Chapter 3

Hebrews 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is about how Jesus is better than Moses, the greatest Israelite in the Old Testament.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 3:7-11,15, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Brothers

The author probably uses the term "brothers" to refer to Christians who grew up as Jews.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Harden your hearts

A person who hardens his heart is a person who will not listen to or obey God.

Rhetorical questions

The author uses rhetorical questions as a way of warning his readers. Both he and the readers know the answers to the questions, and the writer knows that as the readers think about the answers to the questions, they will realize that they need to listen to God and obey him.

Links:

[Hebrews 3:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 3

3:1-6

How is Jesus a high priest?

[3:1]

The author called Jesus a high priest. That is, he does the same things the high priest in the Old Testament did. Jesus helps

people to be at peace with God. He helps Christians. He talks to God for Christians. However, Jesus does these things better than the high priest because he is God's son. He is perfect, so he can go to God all the time. The high priest was unable to do this because they were sinners in the same way other people were sinners.

See: High Priest

Why is Jesus greater than Moses?

[3:3]

The author said that Jesus was greater than Moses because he was the son of God. He wrote this letter to people who were Jewish. Jewish people thought Moses was the most important prophet in their history. God chose Moses to be a great leader. Moses trusted God and did what God wanted. He spoke what God told him to speak. He spoke about things coming in the future. He was completely obeyed God. So, God greatly honored God.

However, Jesus came after Moses. Jesus deserves greater honor than Moses. Jesus is the messiah. This makes him greater than even the greatest leader and prophet. Jesus perfectly trusted and honored God. He did everything God wanted him to do. Jesus obeyed God more than Moses. So, Jesus deserves even greater honor than Moses.

The author used the metaphor of a house to tell how Jesus was greater than Moses (see: Numbers 12:7). He wrote that Moses was to obey God in the same way an honored "servant" (θεράπων/g2324) did in God's house. However, Jesus is God's son. God chose his son, Jesus, to rule over God's house, that is, all Christians. So, Jesus is much more than a faithful servant. In fact, Jesus actually created God's house, the temple, in which Moses served. In all these ways, Jesus was even more faithful than Moses.

The author called Jesus "apostle" and "high priest" of God. He called Jesus an apostle because God sent Jesus to tell people about the gospel. Jesus was able to speak for God better than other apostles or prophets. This is because he is God's son, not just a prophet. He is God.

Advice to translators: The word "faithful" is used throughout this chapter. The desired meaning is what is described in the last paragraph above. Use a word or phrase that has that meaning, in each place that "faithful" occurs in the commentary.

See: Son of God; Prophet; Messiah (Christ); Metaphor; Apostle; Jesus is God

3:7-19

Why must Christians obey God?

[3:12, 3:15, 3:18]

The author wrote that Christians must obey God. If they are not, God will punish them. He wanted readers to know how God will think if they stop believing and trusting in him. He called this having an "evil heart of unbelief" (see: 3:12). That is, Christians need to always keep believing the things God said. If they did this, then they will do the things that honor him.

The author used Israel's history to talk about obeying God. He said the same thing as Psalm 95 (see: Psalm 95:1-7). The writer of this psalm wrote about when the Israelites left Egypt and followed Moses into the wilderness. God chose Moses as their leader. Moses told them what God wanted them to do. But the people did not do what Moses told them to do. When they disobeyed Moses, they disobeyed God. Because they did this, God punished them.

The author of Hebrews told them that the Holy Spirit spoke the words in the psalm. That is, God spoke these words. The author wanted his readers to know God said to them "do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion" (see: 3:15). That is, what happened to the Israelites can happen to Christians if they do not obey God.

In 3:16-19, the author wrote three questions so that his readers might better know what Psalm 95 was talking about:

All the Israelites who Moses led disobeyed God. That is, the people who God took out of Egypt disobeyed God. God was angry with all the people of Israel, except Moses, because they sinned. They forgot how God helped them to leave Egypt, and they did not honor him. He punished them by letting them die in the desert. God made a promise to the people who rejected him. He said that they will never enter his "rest." That is, he did not reward them, but he punished them. He punished them by keeping them from going into the promised land. Also, some scholars think the author wanted his readers to think about heaven when he wrote about God's "rest." So, God kept the Israelites from going into the promised land because they stopped believing in him. They committed sins and did not do what God wanted. The author wanted his readers to know God will also punish them if they do not do what he wants them to do.

See: Holy Spirit; Holy Spirit; Psalm; Sin; Punish (Punishment); Reward; Canaan (Promised Land)

Hebrews 3:1

Connecting Statement:

This second warning is longer and more detailed and includes chapters 3 and 4. The writer begins by showing that Christ is better than his servant Moses.

holy brothers

Here "brothers" refer to fellow Christians, including both men and women. Alternate translation: "holy brothers and sisters" or "my holy fellow believers"

you share in a heavenly calling

Here "heavenly" represents God. Alternate translation: "God has called us together"

the apostle and high priest

Here the word "apostle" means someone who has been sent. In this passage, it does not refer to any of the twelve apostles. Alternate translation: "the one whom God sent and is the high priest"

of our confession

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "confession" is expressed as the verb "confess." Alternate translation:

"whom we confess" or "in whom we believe"

Hebrews 3:2

in all the house of God

The Hebrew people to whom God revealed himself are spoken of as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "to all of God's people"

Hebrews 3:3

Jesus has been considered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has considered Jesus"

Hebrews 3:4

the one who built everything

God's acts of creating the world are spoken of as if they were the actions of building a house.

every house is built by someone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "every house has someone who built it"

Hebrews 3:5

in God's entire house

The Hebrew people to whom God revealed himself are spoken of as if they were a literal house. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:2]

house, bearing witness about the things

This phrase probably refers to all of Moses's work. This can be stated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "house. Moses's life and work pointed to the things"

were to be spoken of in the future

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God would speak about in the future"

Hebrews 3:6

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

who is in charge of the house of God

This speaks about God's people as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "who rules over God's people"

We are his house

This speaks of God's people as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "We are God's people"

if we hold firmly to our courage and the hope of which we boast

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Here "courage" and "hope" are abstract nouns and can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "if we continue to be courageous and joyfully expect God to do what he has promised"

Hebrews 3:7

General Information:

This quotation comes from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament.

Connecting Statement:

The warning here is a reminder that the Israelites' unbelief kept almost all of them from entering into the land that God had promised them.

if you hear his voice

God's "voice" represents him speaking. Alternate translation: "when you hear God speak"

Hebrews 3:8

do not harden your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "harden your hearts" is a metaphor for being stubborn.

Alternate translation: "do not be stubborn" or "do not refuse to listen"

as in the rebellion, in the time of testing in the wilderness

Here "rebellion" and "testing" can be stated as verbs.

Alternate translation: "as when your ancestors rebelled against God and tested him in the wilderness"

Hebrews 3:9

General Information:

This quotation is from the Psalms.

your ancestors

Here "your" is plural and refers to the people of Israel.

by testing me

Here "me" refers to God.

Hebrews 3:10

forty years

"40 years"

I was angry

"I was greatly unhappy"

They have always gone astray in their hearts

Here "gone astray in their hearts" is a metaphor for not being loyal to God. Here "hearts" is a metonym for minds or desires. Alternate translation: "They have always rejected me" or "They have always refused to obey me"

They have not known my ways

This speaks of a manner of conducting one's life as if it were a way or a path. Alternate translation: "They have not understood how I want them to conduct their lives"

Hebrews 3:11

They will never enter my rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "They will never enter the place of rest" or "I will never allow them to experience my blessings of rest"

Hebrews 3:12

brothers

Here this refers to fellow Christians, including males and females. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" or "fellow believers"

that none of you has an evil heart of unbelief, a heart that turns away from the living God

Here "heart" is a metonym that represents a person's mind or will. Refusing to believe and obey God is spoken of as if the heart did not believe and it physically turned away from God. Alternate translation: "that none of you refuses to believe the truth and stops obeying the living God"

the living God

"the true God who is really alive"

Hebrews 3:13

as long as it is called "today,"

"while there is still opportunity,"

no one among you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the deceitfulness of sin will not harden any of you"

no one among you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin

Being stubborn is spoken of as being hard or having a hard heart. The hardness is a result of being deceived by sin.

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun

"deceitfulness" is expressed as the verb "deceive." Alternate

translation: "no one among you will be deceived by sin and become stubborn" or "you do not sin, deceiving yourselves so that you become stubborn"

Hebrews 3:14

For we have become

Here "we" refers to both the writer and the readers.

if we firmly hold to our confidence in him

"if we continue to confidently trust in him"

from the beginning

"from when we first began to believe in him"

to the end

This is a polite way of referring to when a person dies.

Alternate translation: "until we die"

Hebrews 3:15

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the same psalm that was also quoted in Hebrews 3:7.

it has been said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the writer wrote"

if you hear his voice

God's "voice" represents him speaking. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:7]

as in the rebellion

Here "rebellion" can be stated as a verb. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:8]

Hebrews 3:16

Who was it who heard God and rebelled? Was it not all those who came out of Egypt through Moses?

The author uses questions to teach his readers. These two questions can be joined as one statement, if needed.

Alternate translation: "All those who came out of Egypt with

Moses heard God, yet they still rebelled."

Hebrews 3:17

With whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose dead bodies fell in the wilderness?

The author uses questions to teach his readers. These two questions can be joined as one statement, if needed.

Alternate translation: "For forty years, God was angry with those who sinned, and he let them die in the wilderness."

forty years

"40 years"

Hebrews 3:18

To whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if it was not to those who disobeyed him?

The author uses this question to teach his readers.

Alternate translation: "And it was to those who disobeyed that he swore they would not enter his rest."

they would not enter his rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "they would not enter the place of rest" or "they would not experience his blessings of rest"

they

The word "they" refers to the disobedient Israelites.

Hebrews 3:19

General Information:

Here "we" refers to the author and readers.

because of unbelief

The abstract noun "unbelief" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "because they did not believe him"

Chapter 4

Hebrews 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter tells why Jesus is the greatest high priest.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 4:3-4, 7, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's rest

The word "rest" seems to refer to at least two things in this chapter. It refers to a place or time when God will allow his people to rest from their work ([Hebrews 4:3](#)), and it refers to God resting on the seventh day ([Hebrews 4:4](#)).

Links:

[Hebrews 4:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 4

4:1-13

What is "God's rest"?

[4:1]

When the author wrote about God's "rest," some scholars think he wanted readers to think about living together with God in heaven. This is because people in the Old Testament time period spoke of heaven in this way. (see: Exodus 33:14; Psalm 95:11; Isaiah 55:11). That is, heaven is a place of rest. Other scholars think he wrote about this because the Old Testament writers sometimes wrote about "rest" when they wanted to talk about Israel going into the promised land of Canaan. So that was "God's rest" because God promised peace to the people of Israel.

Other scholars think the author wanted to say that God himself rested. And people will join him in his rest. The rest of

God began when God stopped creating the world. People who enter God's rest will rest from their good works in the same way God rested (see: Genesis 2:2-3).

See: Heaven; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Israel; Canaan (Promised Land)

Who can enter into the promised "rest" of God?

[4:3]

People who believe in Jesus can enter "God's rest." This is because God invites them. When the author wrote about people "entering" God's rest, he wanted to say they will be with God forever in heaven.

When they were in the wilderness, God promised the people of Israel that if they did all he told them to do they will enter into his rest when they came into the promised land. But the people who fled slavery in Egypt disobeyed God. They did not believe the things God promised to them. They did not trust God. They did not keep the commands of God. So, God did not let them enter into the promised land. So, they missed the rest of God.

The author also wrote that the people of God did not enter his rest when the next generation went into the promised land. This was when Joshua led them. This was because they also disobeyed and did not trust God. Many years after the time of Joshua, David wrote many Psalms. In Psalms, David still told the people of Israel to obey God instead of disbelieving or disobeying. So the author wanted his readers to know that Israel never entered God's rest because they kept disobeying God.

However, the author wrote that God did not forget his promise and his promise did not stop. He still tells people who believe in and follow Jesus to enter this rest. This rest will continue forever.

See: Heaven; Wilderness; Canaan (Promised Land); Command (Commandment); People of God; Generation; Israel

What did the author write about the "word of God"?

[4:12, 4:13]

When the author wrote about the "word of God," he wanted readers to think about God's power to see and judge everything people do. Some scholars think that when the author wrote about the "word of God," he wanted to say all of Scripture. Some of these scholars also think that he also wanted to talk about all the different ways God talks to people. Other scholars think that when the author wrote about the "word of God," he wanted people to think about Jesus (see: John 1).

The author wanted readers to think about the word of God. Great things can happen when someone obeys the word of God. No one and nothing can hide from God when he uses the scriptures to change things. God will use it to judge everyone. So nobody will enter God's rest unless they say and do the things that the word of God says to say and do.

See: Word of God; Judge (Judgment)

4:14-16

How can human beings approach God?

[4:16]

The author stated that Christians can approach God because Jesus is their "high priest." The author wanted his readers to think about the Jewish high priest from the Old Testament. He talked to God for the people of Israel. The Jewish high priest went into the most inside part of the tabernacle or the temple to talk to God. Only the high priest entered this part of the temple because anyone else would die. He had to go through certain washings and made sacrifices to be able to cleanse himself before entering this part of the Temple.

Christians do not have high priests like the ones in the Old Testament. But the author wrote that Jesus talks to God the Father for us. So in that same way he is similar to those high priests. Because Jesus is the high priest, all Christians can go directly to God. That is, Jesus will speak for them to God the Father so they will not die.

The author wrote that Christians can trust Jesus. Jesus is the Son of God. That is, he is God. But he is also human. He was born and lived on earth in the same way humans are born and live. So, Jesus knows what it is like to be human. The world tempted him in all the same ways it tempts other people. But he was different from other people in one way. He did not sin. So, Jesus was able to enter heaven and he is there now. So, he can talk directly to God for them. That is, he can talk to God the Father directly because he is God the Son, and because he died on the cross so that Christians can come to God the Father without there being a separation between them and God.

If people keep believing in Jesus and following him, they can talk directly to God the Father. This is what the author wanted to say when he wrote about going to the "throne of grace." We do not need to be afraid to talk to God about anything. Because Jesus is also talking to God for us, we can know that God listens. God will hear and answer.

Advice to translators: When someone talks to another person directly, they talk to them without anyone else helping them. When someone does not talk directly to someone, they talk to someone else first who then talks to the person they want to talk to.

See: High Priest; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Tabernacle; Temple; Sacrifice; Clean and Unclean; God the Father; Son of God; Jesus is God; Tempt (Temptation); Throne; Grace

Hebrews 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Chapter 4 continues the warning to believers starting in

Hebrews 3:7.

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true" or "Since God will

certainly punish those who do not obey"

let us fear

This is probably a hyperbole that refers to being very careful. Alternate translation: "we must be very careful" entering his rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "to enter the place of rest" or "to experience God's blessings of rest" none of you may seem to have fallen short of it

God's promise is spoken of as if it were a place to which people were trying to go. Alternate translation: "none of you fail to enter into God's rest, which he promised to us" or "God allows you all to enter into his rest as he promised us"

Hebrews 4:2

For we were told the good news just as they were

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For we heard the good news just as they did"

as they were

Here "they" refers to the Hebrews' ancestors who were alive during the time of Moses.

But that message did not benefit those who did not unite in faith with those who obeyed

The author is talking about two groups of people, those who received God's covenant with faith, and those who heard it but did not believe. This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "But that message benefited only those who believed and obeyed it"

unite

join

Hebrews 4:3

General Information:

Here the quotation, "As I swore ... rest," is from a psalm.

we who have believed

"we who believe"

we who have believed enter that rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "we who have believed will enter the place of rest" or "we who have believed will experience God's blessings of rest"

just as he said

"just as God said"

As I swore in my wrath

"As I swore when I was very angry"

They will never enter my rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. Alternate translation: "They will never enter the place of rest" or "They will never experience my blessings of rest"

his works were finished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he finished creating" or "he finished his works of creation"

from the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "at the beginning of the world" or "from the time he created the world"

Hebrews 4:4

General Information:

The quotation, "God rested on ... works," is from Moses's writings.

the seventh day

The word "seventh" is the ordinal number for "seven."

Hebrews 4:5

General Information:

This quotation, "They will never enter ... rest," is from a psalm.

Hebrews 4:6

it remains for some to enter that rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were rest that he can give, and as if they were a place to which people could go. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God still allows some people to enter his place of rest" or "God still allows some people to experience his blessings of rest"

Hebrews 4:7

General Information:

Here we find out that this quotation from the Psalms was written by David (Hebrews 3:7-8).

if you hear his voice

God's commands to Israel are spoken of as if he had given them in an audible voice. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:7]

do not harden your hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's mind. The phrase "harden your hearts" is a metaphor for being stubborn. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 3:8]

Hebrews 4:8

Connecting Statement:

Here the writer warns believers not to disobey but to enter into the rest God offers. He reminds them that God's word will convict them and that they can come in prayer with the confidence that God will help them.

if Joshua had given them rest

A person causing someone to rest is spoken of as if the person were giving someone rest. Alternate translation: "if Joshua had been able to cause the people to rest" or "if the Israelites during the time of Joshua had experienced God's blessings of rest"

Hebrews 4:9

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 4:10

he who enters into God's rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they are a place to enter. Alternate translation: "the person who enters into God's place of rest" or "the person who experiences God's blessings of rest"

Hebrews 4:11

let us be eager to enter that rest

The peace and security provided by God are spoken of as if they were a place to enter. Alternate translation: "we should also do everything we can to rest with God where he is"

will fall into the kind of disobedience that they did

Disobedience is spoken of as if it were a hole that a person

could physically fall into by accident. This passage can be reworded so that the abstract noun "disobedience" is expressed as the verb "disobey." Alternate translation: "will disobey in the same way as they did"

that they did

Here "they" refers to the Hebrews' ancestors during the time of Moses.

Hebrews 4:12

the word of God is living ... It pierces ... is able

Here "word of God" refers to anything that God has communicated to humanity, whether through speech or through written messages. Alternate translation: "the words of God are living ... They pierce ... are able"

living and active

This speaks about God's word as if it were alive. It means when God speaks, it is powerful and effective.

sharper than any two-edged sword

A two-edged sword can easily cut through a person's flesh. God's word is very effective in showing what is in a person's heart and thoughts.

two-edged sword

a sword with a blade that is sharp on both edges

It pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow. This continues speaking about God's word as if it were a sword. Here the sword is so sharp that it can cut through and divide parts of the human that are very difficult or even impossible to divide. This means that there is nothing inside us that we can hide from God.

soul and spirit

These are two different but closely related nonphysical parts of a human. The "soul" is what causes a person to be alive. The "spirit" is the part of a person that causes him to be able to know and believe in God.

joints and marrow

The "joint" is what holds two bones together. The "marrow" is the center part of the bone.

is able to discern

This speaks about God's word as if it were a person who could know something. Alternate translation: "exposes" the thoughts and intentions of the heart

"Heart" here is a metonym for "inner self." Alternate translation: "what a person is thinking and intends to do" Hebrews 4:13

No thing that has been created is hidden before God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Nothing that God has created can hide from him"

everything is bare and open

This speaks about all things as if they were a person standing bare, or a box that is open. Alternate translation: "everything is completely exposed"

bare and open

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize that nothing is hidden from God.

to the eyes of the one to whom we must give an account

God is spoken of as if he had eyes. Alternate translation: "to God, who will judge how we have lived"

Hebrews 4:14

who has passed through the heavens

"who has entered where God is"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

let us firmly hold to our confession

The word "confession" is a metonym for what a person believes and confesses. This is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could grasp firmly. Alternate translation: "let us continue to believe confidently in him, as we say that we do"

Hebrews 4:15

we do not have a high priest who cannot feel sympathy ... Rather, we have

This double negative is used to correct an incorrect idea that the reader might have, that the high priest cannot feel sympathy. Alternate translation: "we have a high priest who can feel sympathy ... Rather, we have"

who has in all ways been tempted as we are

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who has endured temptation in every way that we have" or "whom the devil has tempted in every way that he tempts us"

he is without sin

"he did not sin"

Hebrews 4:16

to the throne of grace

"to God's throne, where there is grace." Here "throne" refers to God ruling as king. Alternate translation: "to where our gracious God is sitting on his throne"

we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need

Here "mercy" and "grace" are spoken of as if they were objects that can be given or can be found. Alternate translation: "God may be merciful and gracious and help us in time of need"

Chapter 5

Hebrews 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter is a continuation of the teaching of the previous chapter.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 5:5-6.

Special concepts in this chapter

High priest

Only a high priest could offer sacrifices so that God could forgive sins, so Jesus had to be a high priest. The law of Moses commanded that the high priest be from the tribe of Levi, but Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. God made him a priest like the priest Melchizedek, who lived at the time of Abraham, before there was a tribe of Levi.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Milk and solid food

The writer speaks of Christians who are only able to understand simple things about Jesus as if they were babies, who drink only milk and cannot eat solid food.

Links:

[Hebrews 5:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 5

5:1-4

What did the author want people to think about the Jewish high priest?

[5:1, 5:2, 5:3]

The author wanted people to think about how the Jewish high priests could do only certain things. They did only certain things because they were only men. That is, they could serve God and lead people, however, Jesus could do much more.

See: High Priest

What were “gifts and sacrifices for sins”?

[5:3]

The Jewish people offered “gifts and sacrifices for sins” to God (see: 5:1). They did this to atone for sins they committed. That is, they did this so God would forgive their sins and bless them in some way. The high priest made these sacrifices for the people. God told the people how to make these sacrifices in the Law of Moses.

See: Leviticus

See: Atonement; Sacrifice; Sin; Law of Moses; Bless (Blessing); High Priest

Why did the author write “he is called by God, just as Aaron was”?

[5:4]

When the author wrote “he is called by God, just as Aaron was”, he wanted people to know that God decided who would be the high priest. God wanted Israel to have a high priest, so he gave them a high priest. He gave permission to someone to be the high priest and God said what the high priest would do.

God “called” Aaron. That is, God chose Aaron to be the high priest. This was when Moses led the Jewish people.

See: High Priest; Call (Calling)

5:5-10

Why did the author write, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”?

[5:5]

When the author wrote “You are my Son; today I have become your Father,” he wanted readers to know that Jesus is God. Jesus is the Son of God and a high priest. He is greater than any other high priests. When Jesus was baptized, God the Father said, “You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (see: Matthew 3:17; Luke 3:22). This is very much like the words the author wrote here (see: Psalms 2:7). People who are not Jesus cannot be God’s child in this way. This makes Jesus a unique and special high priest.

See: God the Father; Son of God; Trinity; Jesus is God; Baptize (Baptism); High Priest

Who was Melchizedek?

[5:6]

The author wrote about Melchizedek. In ancient times, Melchizedek was a king of Salem (see: Genesis 14:18-20).

Melchizedek worshipped God. He worshipped God so well that people called him a high priest. His name means “king of righteousness.” Abraham knew and respected Melchizedek. So the Jewish people also respected Melchizedek. This is why the author speaks about a priest “after the manner of Melchizedek”.

Because of all these things, the author spoke about Melchizedek to tell people that Jesus is an even better high priest. He is righteous like Melchizedek. Melchizedek was human, so he had to die. However, Jesus lives forever. In fact, Jesus became the way that people can be forgiven of their sins. That is, he is the “cause of eternal salvation” (5:9). This is more than Melchizedek could do.

See: Worship; Righteous (Righteousness); High Priest; Priest (Priesthood) ; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

See Map: Salem

Why did the author write “During the days of his flesh”?

[5:7]

The author wrote “during the days of his flesh.” He was writing about when Jesus was alive on the earth. This is called the incarnation. He wrote it this way so people would think about how Jesus has always existed. This is because he is God. But at a certain time, he was born as a human being. He lived a human life. Then he was crucified and resurrected.

The author wrote in this way to be sure people would understand that Jesus was both fully God and fully human. Some

false teachers taught that Jesus was not fully God. Other false teachers taught that Jesus was not fully human. The author wanted people to know that all these people were wrong about Jesus.

See: Incarnation; Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection); Jesus is God)

How was God the Son "made perfect"?

[5:8]

Jesus is God the Son. He was "made perfect" because he completed the work God the Father gave him to do on earth. To do this, he completely obeyed everything that God the Father told him to do. This included dying on the cross so God will forgive people of their sins.

The author did not write this to speak about sins. Jesus did not commit any sins. However, some scholars think God the Father made Jesus "perfect" or complete when Jesus obeyed him completely. He did this when he was crucified.

See: Son of God; God the Father; Cross; Atonement (Atonement); Sin; Crucify (Crucifixion)

How did Jesus become "the cause of eternal salvation"?

[5:9]

Jesus became "the cause of eternal salvation" when he died on the cross. He did this so God the Father would save from their sins anyone who believes in Jesus. That is, Jesus atoned for peoples' sins. This was so that people who believe in him can live forever with God in heaven forever.

See: Cross; God the Father; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Crucify (Crucifixion); Atonement (Atonement); Heaven

5:11-14

Why did the author write "dull in hearing"?

[5:11]

The author wrote "dull in hearing" to speak about people who did not know as much about God and Jesus as they should. He used the metaphor of someone who is not able to hear well. He used this metaphor to remind people they had been taught about Jesus. However, they were not showing they understood. They were not living in the way Christians should live. They were not doing what Jesus and the apostles taught. In fact, they were not even doing the most basic things they were taught. So in this way, it was as if they had not heard the things they were taught.

See: Metaphor; Apostle

Why did the author write "You need milk, not solid food!"?

[5:12]

The author wrote "you need milk, not solid food!" This is a metaphor. He wanted people to know that they did not understand as much about God and Jesus as they should. This metaphor spoke about infants who cannot eat solid food. They can eat only milk. The author wrote about food to speak about the things of God and Jesus they were taught. In this way, he told them they needed to be more mature as Christians. That is, they needed to live in a way that honors God. The author continued to use this metaphor in 5:13-14.

See: Grow in Faith

Why did the author write "inexperienced with"?

[5:13]

The author wrote "inexperienced with" to tell people that they behaved wrongly. They heard the gospel. They believed in Jesus. But they did not do the right things. They did not live in a way that honored God.

Gospel

Why did the author write "message of righteousness"?

[5:13]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote "message of righteousness." Some scholars think he spoke about the gospel. That is, the message of righteousness was the good news about Jesus. Other scholars think he spoke about people knowing the difference between right and wrong. That is, the message of righteousness was about how a person must live in a way that honors God.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Gospel

Hebrews 5:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer describes the sinfulness of the Old Testament priests, and then he shows that Christ has a better kind of priesthood, one not based on Aaron's priesthood but on the priesthood of Melchizedek.

chosen from among people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom God chooses from among the people"

is appointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God appoints"

to act on the behalf of people

"to represent the people"

so that he may offer

The word "he" refers to a high priest.

Hebrews 5:2

He can deal gently

"The high priest can deal gently"

those ... who have been deceived

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those ... whom others have deceived" or "those ... who

believe what is false"

who have been deceived

"who believe false things and so behave badly"

is subject to weakness

The high priest's own weakness is spoken of as if it were a another person who rules over him. Alternate translation: "is spiritually weak" or "is weak against sin"

weakness

the desire to sin

Hebrews 5:3

he also is required

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God also requires him"

Hebrews 5:4

takes this honor

Honor is spoken of as if it were an object that a person could grasp in his hands.

takes this honor

The "honor" or praise and respect that people gave to the high priest stand for his task.

he is called by God, just as Aaron was

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God calls him, just as he called Aaron"

Hebrews 5:5

General Information:

This quotation is from the Psalms in the Old Testament.

the one speaking to him said

"God said to him"

You are my Son; today I have become your Father

These two phrases mean essentially the same thing. See how you translated them in [Hebrews 1:5]

Son ... Father

These are important titles that describe the relationship between Jesus and God the Father.

Hebrews 5:6

General Information:

This prophecy is from a Psalm of David.

he also says

To whom God is speaking can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "he also says to Christ"

in another place

"in another place in the scriptures"

after the manner of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

Hebrews 5:7

During the days of his flesh

Here "the days" stands for a period of time. And, "flesh" stand for Jesus's earthly life. Alternate translation: "While he lived on earth"

prayers and requests

Both of these words mean basically the same thing.

the one able to save him from death

Possible meanings are 1) God was able to save Christ so that he would not die. Alternate translation: 'to save him from dying" or 2) God was able to save Christ after Christ's death by making him alive again. If possible, translate this in a way that allows both interpretations.

he was heard

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God heard him"

Hebrews 5:8

a Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

Hebrews 5:9

He was made perfect

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God made him perfect"

made perfect

Here this means being made mature, able to honor God in all aspects of life.

became, for everyone who obeys him, the cause of eternal salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be stated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "now he saves all who obey him and causes them to live forever"

Hebrews 5:10

He was designated by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God designated him" or "God appointed him"

as high priest after the manner of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "to be the sort of high priest that Melchizedek was"

Hebrews 5:11

Connecting Statement:

Here the writer begins his third warning. He warns these believers that they are still not mature and encourages them to learn God's word so they can understand right from wrong.

We have much to say

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation:

"I have much to say"

you have become dull in hearing

The ability to understand and obey is spoken of as if it were the ability to listen. And the ability to listen is spoken of as if it were a metal tool that becomes dull with use. Alternate translation: "you have trouble understanding it"

Hebrews 5:12

elementary principles of God's messages

Here "elementary principles" refers to the first things people should be able to understand. Alternate translation: "basic truths of God's messages" or "beginning lessons of God's word"

You need milk

Truths about God that are easy to understand are spoken of as if they were milk, the only food that infants can take.

Alternate translation: "You have become like babies and can drink only milk"

milk, not solid food

Truths about God that are difficult to understand are spoken of as if they were solid food, suitable for adults.

Alternate translation: "milk instead of solid food that adults can eat"

Hebrews 5:13

takes milk

Here "takes" stands for "drinks." Alternate translation: "drinks milk"

because he is still a little child

Spiritual maturity is compared with the kind of food that a growing child eats. Solid food is not for a tiny baby, and that is a figure describing a young Christian who only learns simple truths; but later, more solid food is given to the little child, just as when a person matures he can learn about matters that are more difficult.

Hebrews 5:14

who because of their maturity have their understanding trained for distinguishing good from evil

People trained to understand something are spoken of as if their ability to understand had been trained. Alternate translation: "who are mature and can distinguish between good and evil"

Chapter 6

Hebrews 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Abrahamic Covenant

In the covenant that God made with Abraham, God promised to make Abraham's descendants into a great nation. He also promised to protect Abraham's descendants and to give them land of their own. (See: covenant)

Links:

[Hebrews 6:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 6

6:1-3

What was the "message of Christ"?

[6:1]

The author wrote about the message of Christ. Some scholars think the "message of Christ" was everything Jesus and the apostles taught when they were alive. Other scholars think it was the gospel.

See: Messiah (Christ); Apostle; Gospel

Why did the author speak about "maturity"?

[6:1]

The author spoke about "maturity." He wanted to make readers think they need to know God very well and always do things that honor God. The "maturity" he spoke about is spiritual. That is, he did not speak about physical growth. Nor did he speak about how many years a person has lived.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Grow in Faith

What is laying a "foundation"?

[6:1]

When the author wrote about laying a "foundation", he used a metaphor to speak about the most important things a Christian learns about God. A "foundation" is the firm base for a building. Laying a foundation is when a builder creates this base. Sometimes foundations are made of very large stones. These will not move. They can support the rest of the building. This helps keep the building from falling down.

The most important things a Christian learns about God will keep them trusting in Jesus. In verse 2, the author wrote about other important things a Christian needs to know. The Christian who really learns these things will not stop trusting in Jesus. They will not do things that dishonor God.

See: Metaphor; Spirit (Spiritual)

Why did the author write "let us not lay again" the foundation?

[6:1]

When the author wrote "let us not lay again" the foundation, he continued to use the metaphor about the important things Christians learn about God. He wanted to tell Christians that they need to always remember these important things. Then they can do things that honor God. This is because they know what those things are.

See: Metaphor

What are "dead works"?

[6:1]

When the author wrote about "dead works", he wanted people to think about ways that people who are not Christians try to live in the right way. That is, he wanted Christians to know that these things do not serve God. He wanted them to know it was useless to do these things.

Scholars disagree about what the "dead works" are. Some scholars think the author spoke about Jewish people trying to do righteous things to please God. Perhaps the author was thinking about certain things the Jews did to follow the Law of Moses. Other scholars think the author spoke about people who worship idols. Other scholars think the author spoke about people who do things that cause them to die.

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses; Idolatry (Idol)

What is "repentance from" dead works?

[6:1]

When the author wrote about "repentance from" dead works, he wanted people to remember when they believed in Jesus. When they believed in Jesus, they stopped trying to do the right things without serving God. That is, they "repented from" doing things without wanting to honor God. The author wanted people to know that if they keep trusting in Jesus, they do not need to repent this way over and over.

See: Repent (Repentance)

6:4-6

What was the "heavenly gift"?

[6:4]

When the author wrote about the "heavenly gift", he spoke about when God saves a person from his sins. Some scholars think the author was also thinking about the Holy Spirit. God gave the Holy Spirit to live in Christians. This is a gift.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

How can a person "taste" the heavenly gift?

[6:4]

When the author wrote about a person "tasting" the heavenly gift, he used the metaphor of eating food. He did this to speak about God really saving that person. He wanted to say that the person is completely saved from their sins when God does this. That is, he did not want people to think about the "taste" as just a small sample.

See: Metaphor; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What are "sharers of the Holy Spirit"?

[6:4]

Christians are "sharers of the Holy Spirit" are Christians. When a person believes in Jesus, the Holy Spirit begins to live with them. That is to say, the Holy Spirit shares himself with all Christians.

See: Holy Spirit; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

What was "God's good word"?

[6:5]

"God's good word" is the gospel about Jesus.

See: Gospel

What are "powers of the age to come"?

[6:5]

Scholars disagree about what the "powers of the age to come" are. Some scholars think the author wanted people to know that they will see God's power more completely in the future. Other scholars think the author wanted people to think about angels. Other scholars think the author wrote about people who lead the church.

See: Angel

Why did the author write "then fall away"?

[6:6]

See: Fall (Fall Away, Stand)

6:7-8

What are the "land", "plants", and "thorns and thistles" the author writes about?

[6:7]

When the author wrote about "land", "plants", and "thorns and thistles", he used the metaphor of plants growing. When the author wrote "useful" plants, he wanted people to think of Christians. When the author wrote "thorns and thistles" he spoke about people who are not Christians. Scholars think the "thorns and thistles" are also Christians who fall away. The rain is the gospel. So the author wanted to say that the gospel makes Christians grow in some way like rain makes plants grow.

See: Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15

See: Metaphor; Gospel; Grow in Faith

6:9-12

What is "hope"?

[6:11]

See: Hope

How does a Christian "make your hope certain"?

[6:11]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote "make your hope certain." Some scholars think he spoke about the time when God will reward Christians who live in a way that honors him. That is, these scholars think the "certain" hope is because God will certainly do this. Other scholars think the author spoke about Christians having complete assurance that God will end this world and create a new, perfect world (see: Revelation 21). In that world, all people who believe in Jesus

will have eternal life with him. That is, these scholars think the "certain" hope is when each Christian keeps on trusting in Jesus (see: Colossians 2:2, 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

See: Hope; Reward; Faith (Believe in); Eternal Life; Heaven

6:13-18

Why did a person "swear by someone greater than themselves"?

[6:13]

A person would "swear" (ὀμνύω/g3660) by someone more powerful than they were. To swear meant to confirm that something a person said was true. To swear "by someone greater" was to tell people the oath was stronger than even the person making it. In this passage, the author said people swore by God (see: Deuteronomy 6:13). God is the strongest and most powerful. That is, there is nobody stronger by whom God can swear. So, God swore by himself.

See: Swear (Oath)

Why did God tell Abraham he would "increase you"?

[6:14]

God told Abraham he would "increase" Abraham to say he would give Abraham many descendants (see: 11:12; Genesis 22:17).

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Why did people speak an "oath"?

[6:17]

People spoke an "oath" (ὀρκος/g3727) to say they would do things exactly as they promised. When this happened, people stopped arguing among themselves.

See: Swear (Oath)

Who were the "heirs of the promise"?

[6:17]

The "heirs of the promise" were people who received the benefits of God's promise after Abraham was dead. That is, God blessed other people because of Abraham. Scholars disagree about who these people are. Some scholars think the author spoke about the Jewish people. Christians do not inherit these promises. Other scholars think the author spoke about Christians. Christians inherit God's promise because of what Jesus did. Other scholars think the author spoke about both the Jewish people and Christians.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Bless (Blessing); Covenant with Abraham

What was the "unchangeable quality" of God's purpose?

[6:18]

When the author wrote about the "unchangeable quality" of God's purpose, he wanted people to know that God will never change his mind. That is, God will never break the promise he made to Abraham. God also meant this promise for Christians through Abraham and Jesus.

See: Covenant with Abraham

Why did the author write that people "fled for refuge"?

[6:18]

The author wrote that people "fled for refuge." This was a metaphor to speak about Christians. The author wanted people to think about someone trying to escape danger. When a person believes in Jesus, in some way he escapes from the danger of sin. Some scholars think that the people who "fled for refuge" were people who believed the message about Jesus, and escaped the sinful ways of the world. That is, they stopped living in sinful ways and started living in ways that honor God.

See: Colossians 1:13

See: Metaphor; Sin

How does a person have "strong encouragement"?

[6:18]

A person has "strong encouragement" because he trusts that God keeps his promises. That is, he knows that God does what God says he will do.

6:19-20

What is a "secure and reliable anchor for the soul"?

[6:19]

When the writer said that Christians have a "secure and reliable anchor (ἄγκυρα/g0045) for the soul," he wanted Christians to know God strongly supports Christians. He used the metaphor of an anchor that holds a boat in place. When a person believes in Jesus, God begins to help him. God makes him braver. God makes him able to resist temptation. The author wanted people to think that this is like a ship's anchor. It is something that will never go away.

See: Metaphor; Tempt (Temptation)

What was the "inner place behind the curtain"?

[6:19]

The "inner place behind the curtain" was the most special place in the tabernacle and temple. For the ancient Jewish people, it is where God dwelled on earth. It is called the "Holy of Holies" in the Old Testament.
See: Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Temple; Temple; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)
How did Jesus enter "behind the curtain?"

[6:20]

When the writer to the Hebrews said that Jesus entered "behind the curtain", this was a metaphor. The high priest in the days of Israel entered behind the curtain of the holy of holies once a year to carry the blood of the atoning sacrifice for the sins of Israel. The author wanted to say that in some way, when Jesus was crucified, it was as if he did what the high priest did.

However, when Jesus shed his blood on the cross, he atoned for the sins of every person who believes in him. That is, he himself was the sacrifice. Jesus' sacrifice was made once and it atoned for sins for all time (see: 10:11-14). So it did not have to be repeated. This is why the author wrote that Jesus is a high priest "forever".

See: Metaphor; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Crucify (Crucifixion); High Priest; Atone (Atonement); Sin; Sacrifice
What was a high priest?

[6:20]

See: High Priest

Why did the author write "after the order of Melchizedek"?

[6:20]

Long after Melchizedek lived, God declared that all priests would be descendants of Levi. God did this starting with Aaron. So people called them priests after the "order of Aaron".

Jesus did not come from the tribe of Levi, so he was not of the order of Aaron. He was a descendant of Judah. Because of this, Jesus could be the king of Israel and the messiah. Jesus was the high priest of God, in the same way that Melchizedek was the priest of God.

See: Hebrews 5:6

See: High Priest; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Messiah (Christ); Messiah (Christ)

Hebrews 6:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer continues with what immature Hebrew believers need to do to become mature Christians. He reminds them of the foundational teachings.

let us leave the beginning of the message of Christ and move forward to maturity

This speaks about the basic teachings as if they were the beginning of a journey and the mature teachings as if they were the end of a journey. Alternate translation: "let us stop only discussing what we first learned and start understanding more mature teachings as well"

Let us not lay again the foundation

The teachings of the faith are spoken of as if they were a building, and the basic, elementary teachings are the foundation. Alternate translation: "Let us not repeat the basic teachings"

dead works

Sinful deeds are spoken of as if they belonged to the world of the dead.

Hebrews 6:2

nor the foundation of teaching

The teachings of the faith are spoken of as if they were a building, and the basic, elementary teachings are the foundation. Alternate translation: "nor the basic teachings"

laying on of hands

This practice was done to set someone apart for special service or position.

Hebrews 6:3

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 6:4

those who were once enlightened

Understanding is spoken of as if it were illumination.

Alternate translation: "those who once understood the message about Christ"

who tasted the heavenly gift

Experiencing salvation is spoken of as if it were tasting food. Alternate translation: "who experienced God's saving power"

who were sharers of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit, who comes to believers, is spoken of as if he were an object that people could share. Alternate translation: "who received the Holy Spirit"

Hebrews 6:5

who tasted God's good word

Learning God's message is spoken of as if it were tasting food. Alternate translation: "who learned about God's good message"

the powers of the age to come

This means the power of God when his kingdom is fully present in all the world. In this sense, "the powers" refer to God himself, who holds all power. Alternate translation: "how God will work powerfully in the future"

Hebrews 6:6

it is impossible to restore them again to repentance

"it is impossible to bring them back to repent again"

they crucify the Son of God for themselves again

When people turn away from God, it is as though they crucify Jesus again. Alternate translation: "it is like they crucify for themselves the very Son of God again"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

Hebrews 6:7

the land that drinks in the rain

Farmland that benefits from much rain is spoken of as if it were a person who drinks in the rainwater. Alternate translation: "the land that absorbs the rain"

that gives birth to the plants

Farmland that produces crops is spoken of as if it gives birth to them. Alternate translation: "that produces plants" the land that receives a blessing from God

Rain and crops are seen as proof that God has helped the farmland. The farmland is spoken of as if it were a person who could receive God's blessing.

a blessing from God

Here "blessing" means help from God, not spoken words.

Hebrews 6:8

is near to a curse

This speaks of "curse" as if it were a place to which a person could draw near. Alternate translation: "is in danger of God cursing it"

Its end is in burning

The farmer will burn everything in the field.

Hebrews 6:9

we are convinced

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "I am convinced" or "I am certain"

about better things concerning you

This means they are doing better than those who have rejected God, disobeyed him, and now can no longer repent so that God will forgive them ([Hebrews 6:4-6](#)). Alternate translation: "that you are doing better things than what I have mentioned"

things that concern salvation

The abstract noun "salvation" can be stated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "things that concern God saving you"

Hebrews 6:10

For God is not unjust. He will not forget

This double negative can mean that God in his justice will remember what good things his people have done.

Alternate translation: "For God is just. He will certainly remember"

for his name

God's "name" is a metonym that stands for God himself.

Alternate translation: "for him"

Hebrews 6:11

We greatly desire

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "I greatly desire"

diligence

careful, hard work

to the end

The implicit meaning can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "to the end of your lives"

in order to make your hope certain

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "in order to have complete certainty that you will receive what God has promised you"

Hebrews 6:12

imitators

An "imitator" is someone who copies the behavior of

someone else.

inherit the promises

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "receive what God promised them"

Hebrews 6:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 6:14

He said

God said

Hebrews 6:15

what was promised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"what God promised him"

Hebrews 6:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 6:17

to the heirs of the promise

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member. Alternate translation: "to those who would receive what he promised"

the unchangeable quality of his purpose

"that his purpose would never change" or "that he would always do what he said he would do"

Hebrews 6:18

we, who have fled for refuge

Believers, who trust in God for him to protect them, are spoken of as if they were running to a safe place. Alternate translation: "we, who have trusted him"

will have a strong encouragement to hold firmly to the hope set before us

The phrase "to hold firmly to the hope set before us" is a metaphor meaning to continue to hope in what God has promised to do. Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "will continue to trust in God just as he encouraged us to do"

set before us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that God has placed before us"

Hebrews 6:19

Connecting Statement:

Having finished his third warning and encouragement to the believers, the writer of Hebrews continues his comparison of Jesus as priest to Melchizedek as priest.

as a secure and reliable anchor for the soul

Just as an anchor keeps a boat from drifting in the water, Jesus keeps us secure in God's presence. Alternate translation: "that causes us to live securely in God's presence"

a secure and reliable anchor

Here the words "secure" and "reliable" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the complete reliability of the anchor. Alternate translation: "a completely reliable anchor"

hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain

Confidence is spoken of as if it were a person who could go into the most holy place of the temple.

the inner place

This was the most holy place in the temple. It was thought to be the place where God was most intensely present among his people. In this passage, this place stands for

heaven and God's throne room.

Hebrews 6:20

after the order of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

Chapter 7

Hebrews 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 7:17, 21, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

High priest

Only a high priest could offer sacrifices so that God could forgive sins, so Jesus had to be a high priest. The law of Moses commanded that the high priest be from the tribe of Levi, but Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. God made him a priest like the priest Melchizedek, who lived at the time of Abraham, before there was a tribe of Levi.

Links:

[Hebrews 7:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 7

7:1-3

Who was Melchizedek?

[7:1]

See: Hebrews 5:6; 6:20

Why did the author write that Melchizedek was the "king of Salem"?

[7:1]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that Melchizedek was the "king of Salem." Some scholars think Melchizedek was the king of Jerusalem. Salem was an older name for Jerusalem. Other scholars think he was the king of the city of Salem that John wrote about (see: John 3:23). Still other scholars think the author wanted readers to think that Melchizedek was the king of peace. This is because Salem can be translated "peace."

Why did the author write that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother, without ancestors"?

[7:3]

The author wrote that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother, without ancestors." Some scholars think he did not want to say that Melchizedek did not have physical parents or ancestors. They think that no one knows who his parents or ancestors are. Moses wrote about Melchizedek but he did not write about these things. Fewer scholars think Melchizedek may have been a kind of angel. He was not human. So he did not have parents. These scholars think this because the author wrote that Melchizedek had "neither beginning of days nor end of life". They think the author wanted to say that Melchizedek was not born and did not die.

See: Genesis 14:18-20

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Angel

7:4-10

Why did the author call Abraham a "patriarch"?

[7:4]

The author called Abraham a "patriarch" because he started a nation, that is Israel. That is to say, the author used the metaphor of being a father to speak about this. However, the Bible also says that Abraham is the father of all people who believe in Jesus (see: Romans 4:11-17).

See: Metaphor; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Why did Abraham give Melchizedek a "tenth" of the things he took from battle?

[7:4]

Abraham gave to Melchizedek a tenth of the things he took from battle. He did this because he thought Melchizedek was greater than he was. In ancient times, when people defeated another group of people when they fought in a war, they took things from the people they defeated.

Why did the Law of Moses command the people to give a tithe to the sons of Levi?

[7:5]

The Law of Moses commanded the people to give a tithe to the tribe of Levi. The tribe of Levi served as priests for the nation of Israel. God said they did not have the right to own land. They needed to devote their time to helping people worship God. Therefore God provided for the priests. He did this by commanding the other eleven tribes to contribute tithes to the tribe of Levi.

See: Law of Moses; Tithe; Worship; Priest (Priesthood)

How was Melchizedek greater than Abraham?

[7:7]

The author wrote that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham because he was a priest of God. So, he was able to give Abraham a blessing from God. That is why the author wrote "the lesser person is blessed by the greater person." The author did not want to say that Melchizedek obeyed God more than Abraham.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Bless (Blessing)

How did Levi "pay tithes through Abraham"?

[7:9]

Scholars disagree about how Levi could "pay tithes through Abraham." Some scholars think that when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek, he did it for all his future family. This included Levi. Other scholars think Abraham subjected himself to the priesthood of Melchizedek. Therefore Abraham's ancestors were also subject to Melchizedek.

See: Tithe; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

7:11-21

Why did the author write the word "perfection"?

[7:11]

The author wrote the word "perfection" (τελείωσις/g5050) to get people to think of doing no sin and living in a right way. This can happen only when the person is reconciled to God, that is when God saves them from their sins. This happens only when the person believes in Jesus. So the author told people that these priests could not save anyone (see: 7:11).

See: Priest (Priesthood); Reconcile (Reconciliation); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin

What was the "manner of Melchizedek"?

[7:11]

See: Hebrews 6:20

Why did the author write "the law must also be changed"?

[7:12]

The author wrote "the law must also be changed" so people know that God does not save people because of the Law of Moses. God changed things and people did not need to try to obey the Law of Moses (see: Galatians 2:16-21, Galatians 3:19-26)

The priesthood of Aaron was established by the Law of Moses. The priests offered sacrifices to atone for peoples' sins. That is to say, so God would forgive their sins. But when Jesus came to earth, this changed. Jesus atoned for all sins when he died on the cross. Now, God forgives sins when someone believes in Jesus.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Law of Moses; Priest (Priesthood); Atonement (Atonement); Sin; Cross

Who was the one who belonged "to another tribe"?

[7:13]

Jesus was the one who belonged "to another tribe." Jesus belonged to the tribe of Judah. He did not belong to the tribe of Levi. There was never a priest before who was from the tribe of Judah. So the author wrote this to say that Jesus did not come under the priesthood of Aaron.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Tribes of Israel

Why did the author write "served at the altar"?

[7:13]

The author wrote "served at the altar" to speak about when the priests led the people of Israel in worship. When they did this, they made sacrifices and offerings to God at the altar.

See: Altar; Priest (Priesthood); Worship; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

Why did the author write that Jesus was a priest "based on the power of an everlasting life"?

[7:16]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that Jesus was a priest "based on the power of an everlasting life." Some scholars think that the priesthood of Aaron was based only on the Law of Moses. However, the priesthood of Jesus was based on the promise of God. Jesus demonstrated the "power of an everlasting life" when he rose from the dead. Other scholars simply say that the priesthood of Aaron was limited. It came to an end because the priests died. However, Jesus lives forever, so his priesthood will never end.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Law of Moses; Eternal Life; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What was the "former regulation"?

[7:18]

The "former regulation" was the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses

How was the former regulation “weak and useless”?

[7:18]

The former regulation, that is to say the Law of Moses, is "weak and useless." This is because it could not save a person from their sins. It could not change a person and give them new life. It could not make someone part of God's family. It could not make a person righteous. Only when a person believes in Jesus can these things happen to them.

See: Law of Moses; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Sin; Spirit (Spiritual); Righteous (Righteousness); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Family of God

What was the “better hope”?

[7:19]

The “better hope” was Jesus. The author wrote that Jesus established a different priesthood (see: 7:4-17). This new priesthood allowed people to truly draw near to God. Some scholars think the “better hope” accomplished what the Law of Moses could not. That is, the new hope lets everyone who believes in Jesus talk to God without needing a priest.

See: Hope; Priest (Priesthood)

What is to “come near to God”?

[7:19]

To “come near” (ἐγγίζω/g1448) meant to approach God. Jesus made it possible for everyone who believes in him to do this. The priesthood of Jesus allows all Christians to “come near to God”. This is because the sacrifice of Jesus was perfect. It completely atoned for peoples' sins. So, it gave Christians direct access to God.

This is different than the old way. The priesthood of Aaron was designed to keep people at a distance from God. Only the high priest, once a year, could come close to God.

See: Atonement (Atonement); Priest (Priesthood); High Priest

7:22-28

What is the “guarantee of a better covenant”?

[7:22]

The "guarantee of a better covenant" is Jesus. The "guarantee of a covenant" is a way of making certain that people fulfill the covenant. That is, another person may promise to fulfill the covenant if one of the people fails to fulfill it. Jesus, who is the Son of God, guaranteed a "better" covenant. He did this when he died. This new covenant is "better" because it lasts forever. It is also "better" because it will never be broken. God will never break his promise. Also, Christians now have Jesus as their "guarantee." That is, when they sin, God accepts Jesus' sacrifice to fulfill the new covenant. So, God forgives them of their sins. He does not think that a Christian ends the covenant by sinning.

See: Covenant; Son of God; Crucify (Crucifixion); Fulfill (Fulfillment); Atonement (Atonement); New Covenant; Sin; Sacrifice

How was Jesus “able to save completely” those who came to God through him?

[7:25]

Jesus was able to "save completely" everyone who believes in him. This is because he fulfilled all of God's requirements for people to be saved from their sins. He did this when he died. Scholars think that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. So, there was nothing else needed for people to be saved from their sins.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Crucify (Crucifixion); Fulfill (Fulfillment); Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

Why did the author write that Jesus “lives to intercede” for his people?

[7:25]

The author wrote that Jesus "lives to intercede" for his people. To intercede is to defend a person when they do something wrong. So the author wanted to say that when Christians sin, Jesus defends them from God's judgement. Because Jesus lives forever, he is always able to do this for Christians.

See: Judge (Judgment); Sin

How was Jesus “sinless” and “blameless”?

[7:26]

The author wrote that Jesus was "sinless" and "blameless" because Jesus never committed a sin.

See: Sin; Blameless

How was Jesus “pure”?

[7:26]

See: Purify (Pure)

How was Jesus “separated from sinners”?

[7:26]

Jesus was "separated from sinners" because he never committed a sin. That is, God the Father never had a reason to say that Jesus was a sinner. So Jesus is "separated" or different than every other person.

See: Sin; God the Father

How is Jesus “higher than the heavens”?

[7:26]

The author wrote that Jesus is "higher than the heavens" to say that he is in some way not in the world any longer. Some scholars think that Jesus now exists "higher," that is, he is somewhere outside of everything he created. He is the Son of God. He talks to God the Father directly. Other scholars think the words "higher than the heavens" mean that Jesus is now at the right hand of God (see: Philippians 2:11). He is in the most honored place next to God.

See: Heaven; Son of God

How was the sacrifice of Jesus a "once for all" sacrifice?

[7:27]

The sacrifice of Jesus was "once for all" because it never needs to be repeated. That is to say, Jesus died once. When he died, he atoned for the sins of all people (see: John 3:16). He does not need to do this over and over.

In ancient Israel, priests made sacrifices for the people. However, the priests also committed sins. They needed to offer sacrifices for their own sins as well as for the sins of the people. Jesus is different. He never sinned and is the Son of God. So he did not have to offer a sacrifice for himself. Instead, he offered himself as the sacrifice for everyone else. It was the final, perfect sacrifice which atoned for the sins of everyone who believes in Jesus.

See: Sacrifice; Atonement; Sin; Priest (Priesthood); Son of God

How was Jesus "made perfect forever"?

[7:28]

See: Hebrews 5:9

Hebrews 7:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer of Hebrews continues his comparison of Jesus as priest to Melchizedek as priest.

Salem

This is the name of a city.

Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings

This is refers to when Abraham and his men went and defeated the armies of four kings in order to rescue his nephew, Lot, and his family.

Hebrews 7:2

It was to him

"It was to Melchizedek"

king of righteousness ... king of peace

"righteous king ... peaceful king"

Hebrews 7:3

He is without father, without mother, without ancestors, with neither beginning of days nor end of life

It is possible to think from this passage that Melchizedek was neither born nor did he die. However, it is likely that all the writer means is that the Scriptures provide no information about Melchizedek's ancestry, birth, or death.

Hebrews 7:4

Connecting Statement:

The writer states that the priesthood of Melchizedek is better than Aaron's priesthood and then reminds his readers that the priesthood of Aaron did not make anything perfect.

this man was

"Melchizedek was"

Hebrews 7:5

The descendants of Levi who receive the priestly office

The author says this because not all of Levi's sons became priests. Alternate translation: "the descendants of Levi who become priests"

from the people

"from the people of Israel"

from their brothers

Here "brothers" means they are all related to each other through Abraham. Alternate translation: "from their relatives"

Hebrews 7:6

whose descent was not traced from them

"who was not a descendant of Levi"

the one who had the promises

The things that God promised to do for Abraham are spoken of as if they were objects that he could possess.

Alternate translation: the one to whom God had spoken his promises"

Hebrews 7:7

the lesser person is blessed by the greater person

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the more important person blesses the less important person"

Hebrews 7:8

In this case ... in that case

These phrases are used to compare the Levite priests with Melchizedek. Your language may have a way to emphasize that the author is making a comparison.

is testified that he lives on

It is never explicitly written in scripture that Melchizedek dies. The author of Hebrews speaks of this absence of information about Melchizedek's death in scripture as if it were a positive statement that he is still alive. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "scripture shows that he lives on"

Hebrews 7:9

Levi, who received tithes, also paid tithes through Abraham

Since Levi had not been born yet, the author speaks of him as still being in Abraham's body. In this way, the author argues that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham.

Hebrews 7:10

Levi was in the body of his ancestor

Since Levi had not been born yet, the author speaks of him as still being in Abraham's body. In this way, the author argues that Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham.

Hebrews 7:11

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

what further need would there have been for another priest to arise

after the manner of Melchizedek, and not be considered to be after the manner of Aaron?

This question emphasizes that it was unexpected that priests come after the order of Melchizedek. Alternate translation: "no one would have needed another priest, one who was like Melchizedek and not like Aaron, to arise."

to arise

"to come" or "to appear"

after the manner of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

not be considered to be after the manner of Aaron

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not be after the manner of Aaron" or "who is not a priest like Aaron"

Hebrews 7:12

For when the priesthood is changed, the law must also be changed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For when God changed the priesthood, he also had to change the law"

Hebrews 7:13

For the one

This refers to Jesus.

about whom these things are said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"about whom I am speaking"

Hebrews 7:14

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

it is from Judah that our Lord was born

The words "our Lord" refer to Jesus.

from Judah

"from the tribe of Judah"

Hebrews 7:15

when another priest arises

"when another priest comes"

in the likeness of Melchizedek

This means that Christ as a priest has things in common with Melchizedek as a priest. Alternate translation: "in the same way that Melchizedek was a priest"

Hebrews 7:16

This one became a priest

The words "This one" refer to the one who became priest in the likeness of Melchizedek.

not based on a law of physical requirement

He became priest, but it was not because he met the physical requirement.

a law of physical requirement

This physical requirement is that only the descendants of priests could become priests. Alternate translation: "a law of human descent" or "a law that required priests to be descendants of priests"

Hebrews 7:17

General Information:

This quote comes from a psalm of King David.

For scripture witnesses about him

This speaks about scripture as if it were a person who could

witness about something. Alternate translation: "For God witnesses about him through the scriptures" or "For this is what was written about him in the scripture"

according to the order of Melchizedek

There were two groups of priests. One was made up of the descendants of Levi. The other was made up of Melchizedek and Jesus Christ. Alternate translation:

"according to the line of Melchizedek" or "according to the priesthood of Melchizedek"

Hebrews 7:18

Connecting Statement:

The writer gives the first of two statements that explain

[Hebrews 7:17](#).

has the former command been set aside

Here "set aside" is a metaphor for making something invalid. This can be stated in active form. Alternate

translation: "has God made the commandment invalid"

Hebrews 7:19

Connecting Statement:

After a short statement that explains [Hebrews 7:18](#), the writer gives the second of two statements that explain

[Hebrews 7:17](#).

the law made nothing perfect

The law is spoken of as if it were a person who could act.

Alternate translation: "no one could become perfect by obeying the law"

a better hope is introduced

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." This can be

stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has

introduced a better hope" or "God has given us reason for a more confident hope"

through which we come near to God

Worshiping God and having his favor are spoken of as coming near to him. Alternate translation: "and because of

this hope we approach God" or "and because of this hope

we worship God"

Hebrews 7:20

And it was not without an oath!

The word "it" refers to the act of God choosing Jesus to be the eternal priest. This can be stated in positive form, and it

can be stated clearly who made the oath. Alternate

translation: "And God did not choose this new priest

without swearing an oath!" or "And God showed how

important it was by swearing an oath!"

Hebrews 7:21

General Information:

This quote comes from the same psalm of David as

Hebrews 7:17.

Hebrews 7:22

has given the guarantee of a better covenant

"has told us that we can be sure that there will be a better covenant"

Hebrews 7:23

Connecting Statement:

The writer then assures these Jewish believers that Christ has the better priesthood because he lives forever and the

priests that descended from Aaron all die, stopping them from continuing to be priests.

Hebrews 7:24

he has a permanent priesthood

A priest's work is spoken of as if it were an object that the priest possesses. This can be worded to avoid the abstract noun. Alternate translation: "he is a priest permanently" Hebrews 7:25

Therefore he

You can make explicit what "Therefore" implies. Alternate translation: "Because Christ is our high priest who lives forever, he"

those who approach God through him

"those who come to God because of what Jesus has done" Hebrews 7:26

exalted above the heavens

"whom God has raised up to the highest heavens." The author speaks of possessing more honor and power than anyone else as if it were a position that is up above all things. Alternate translation: "whom God has given more honor and power than anyone else"

Hebrews 7:27

General Information:

Here the words "He," "his," and "himself" refer to Christ. Hebrews 7:28

the law appoints as high priests men who have weaknesses

Here "the law" is a metonym for the men who appointed the high priests according to the law of Moses. The focus is not on the men who did this, but on the fact that they did this according to the law. Alternate translation: "according to the law, men appoint as high priests men who have weaknesses" or "for according to the law, men who have weaknesses are appointed as high priests"

men who have weaknesses

"men who are spiritually weak" or "men who are weak against sin"

the word of the oath, which came after the law, appointed a Son

The "word of the oath" represents God, who made the oath. Alternate translation: "God appointed a Son by his oath, which he made after he gave the law, a Son" or "after he had given the law, God swore an oath and appointed his Son"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

who has been made perfect

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who has completely obeyed God and become mature"

Chapter 8

Hebrews 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author finishes describing how and why Jesus is the most important high priest. Then he begins to speak about how the new covenant is better to the covenant God made with Moses. (See: covenant)

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 8:8-12, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

New covenant

The author tells how Jesus has established a new covenant that is better than the covenant that God established with the Israelites. (See: covenant)

Links:

[Hebrews 8:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 8

8:1-6

Who is the "high priest" the author writes about?

[8:1]

The author wrote about a "high priest." He was writing about Jesus.

See: Hebrews 7

Why did the author write that Jesus "sat down at the right hand" of the Majesty?

[8:1]

The author wrote that Jesus "sat down at the right hand" of the majesty to say that in some way, God the Father gave Jesus the highest possible honor. In ancient times, rulers invited someone to sit "at their right hand", that is to say their right side. They did this when they wanted to greatly honor that person. So the author used this as a metaphor for how God honored Jesus.

See: God the Father; Son of God; Metaphor

Who is "the Majesty in the heavens?"

[8:1]

The "Majesty in the heavens" is God. It was a name that told people that God has great honor. That is, there is no one greater than God. Why did the author write that Jesus "is a servant in the holy place?"

When the author wrote that Jesus "is a servant in the holy place". He wrote that Jesus is a "servant" so people would know that Jesus still does things to help people. He does this to serve God the Father. The author wrote that Jesus is a servant "in

the holy place" to speak about where God is. That is to say, heaven.

The author did not write "the holy place" to speak about the Holy of Holies in the temple or tabernacle.

See: God the Father; Heaven; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Temple; Tabernacle

What is the "true tabernacle"?

[8:2]

The "true tabernacle" (8:2) is the original, or real tabernacle. The "true tabernacle" is eternal and was created in some way by God. It is in heaven. The Israelites built a tabernacle on earth. God gave them instructions on how to build this temple. In some way, it was a copy of the tabernacle in heaven.

The author did not write "true" tabernacle to say that the earthly tabernacle of the Old Testament was false. Instead, he wanted people to know that it was temporary. He wrote that it was a "copy and shadow" of the real one (see: Hebrews 8:5). But there is another tabernacle that lasts forever.

See: Tabernacle; Heaven

What were the "gifts and sacrifices" about which the writer spoke?

[8:3]

See: Hebrews 5:1

If Jesus was here on earth, why would he "not be a priest at all"?

The author wrote that if Jesus was still on earth, he would "not be a priest at all." He wrote this to say again that Jesus is greater than human priests. Some scholars think that Jesus could not be a priest on the earth because he was not a descendant of Levi (see: Hebrews 7:13-14). He could not be a priest according to the Law of Moses. Other scholars think that Jesus is a priest in heaven. That is to say, he does not replace priests on earth. Instead, he is a different kind of priest. He is a priest in heaven. Heaven has no other priests.

See: Priest (Priesthood); Law of Moses; Heaven

Why did the author write that the earthly tabernacle was a "copy and shadow of the heavenly things"?

[8:5]

The author wrote that the earthly tabernacle was a "copy and shadow of the heavenly things." He wrote this so people would think only about God and where God is. That is, he wanted them to stop worshipping things on earth. God designed the earthly tabernacle to be only a copy of the real tabernacle (see: Hebrews 8:2). That is, it was a pattern of what God showed Moses (see: Exodus 25:9, 40; 26:30; 27:8). When the author wrote that it was a "shadow" (σκιά/g4639), he used a metaphor. He wanted people to know that the earthly tabernacle was much less than the true tabernacle in heaven. A shadow is a thing people can see. But it is not the real thing, that is, the thing which casts the shadow. In the same way, the earthly tabernacle was a thing people can see, but it was not the real tabernacle.

See: Tabernacle; Heaven; Metaphor

What did a "mediator" do?

[8:6]

A "mediator" (μεσίτης/g3316) was a person who helped other people to solve a disagreement. The author used this metaphor to speak about how Jesus helps people with God. He speaks to God for people. When people disobey God, Jesus helps them to reconcile with God.

See: Mediator; Metaphor; Reconcile (Reconciliation)

What is the "better covenant, which is based on better promises"?

[8:6]

When the author wrote about the "better covenant, which is based on better promises," he wanted people to think about Jesus. He wanted people to know that Jesus started a new covenant between God and people. Under this new covenant, God blesses everyone who believes in Jesus. This is not like the old covenant God made with Moses. The old covenant required people to follow the Law of Moses. Only if a person kept the Law of Moses perfectly would God bless him. However, nobody could do this. So, the new covenant is better because people can be blessed if they believe in Jesus. God "writes it on the hearts of his people" (see: 8:10). This is a metaphor to say that God fulfills the covenant for Christians. This promise is better because people's sins are completely forgiven.

See: New Covenant; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Law of Moses; Metaphor

8:7-13

How did God put his laws into the "minds" of Christians?

[8:10]

The author wrote that God promised to put his laws into the "minds" of Christians. That is, he used a metaphor to say that people would understand what God wanted them to do. The Law of Moses was written on stones. People could not perfectly obey the Law of Moses. This is because of sin. However, now God helps his people to know what he wants. He helps them do this using the Holy Spirit. He helps them do this when they read the Bible. He also gives them the ability to live in a way that honors God.

See: Metaphor; Law of Moses; Holy Spirit

How did God write his laws on the "hearts" of Christians?

[8:10]

The author wrote that God promised to write his laws on the "hearts" of Christians. That is, he used a metaphor to say that people would want to obey God. That is, Christians want to live in a way that honors God. They want this because God changes them. He changes them when they believe in Jesus.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

Why did the author write that the old covenant would "soon disappear"?

[8:13]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that the old covenant would "soon disappear." Some scholars think the author wanted people to think that the old covenant was fading. That is, it had not disappeared yet but would soon disappear. The old covenant would stop. These scholars think this because God spoke about a new covenant to the prophet Jeremiah (see: Jeremiah 31:31-34). They think that ever since Jeremiah lived, the old covenant had been fading and would soon disappear. Other scholars think that when God established the new covenant, it made the old covenant of no value. That is, the promises and conditions of the old covenant disappeared when Jesus came to earth.

See: Covenant; Prophet; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant)

Hebrews 8:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer, having shown that Christ's priesthood is better than the earthly priesthood, shows that the earthly priesthood was a pattern of heavenly things. Christ has a superior ministry, a superior covenant.

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

we are saying

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Because the writer does not include his readers here, the word "we" is exclusive. Alternate translation: "I am saying" or "I am writing"

We have a high priest

The author is including the readers here, so the word "we" is inclusive.

sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3]

Hebrews 8:2

the true tabernacle that the Lord, not a man, set up

People built the earthly tabernacle out of animal skins fastened to a wooden framework, and they set it up in the manner of a tent. Here "true tabernacle" means the heavenly tabernacle that God created.

Hebrews 8:3

For every high priest is appointed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God appoints every priest"

Hebrews 8:4

Now

This does not mean "at this moment," but is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

according to the law

"as God requires in the law"

Hebrews 8:5

They serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things

The words "copy" and "shadow" have similar meanings and are metaphors meaning that something is not the real thing but it is similar to the real thing. These words emphasize that the priesthood and the earthly temple were images of

Christ, the true high priest, and the heavenly temple.

Alternate translation: "They serve what is a vague image of the heavenly things" or "They serve what is only similar to the heavenly things"

It is just as Moses was warned by God when he was

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It is just as God warned Moses when Moses was"

was about to construct the tabernacle

Moses did not construct the tabernacle himself. He ordered the people to construct it. Alternate translation: "was about to command the people to construct the tabernacle"

See that

"Make sure that"

to the pattern

"to the design"

that was shown to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that I showed you"

on the mountain

You can make explicit that "mountain" refers to Mount Sinai. Alternate translation: "on Mount Sinai"

Hebrews 8:6

Connecting Statement:

This section begins to show that the new covenant is better than the old covenant with Israel and Judah.

Christ has received

"God has given Christ"

mediator of a better covenant

A mediator is a person who helps two parties come to an agreement. Christ, as mediator, made it possible for a better covenant between God and humans to exist.

covenant, which is based on better promises

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"covenant. It was this covenant that God made based on better promises" or "covenant. God promised better things when he made this covenant"

Hebrews 8:7

first ... second

The words "first" and "second" are ordinal numbers.

Alternate translation: "old covenant ... new covenant"

had been faultless

"had been perfect"

no occasion for a second would have been sought

The word "second" also describes a "covenant." Alternate

translation: "no one would have sought a way to establish a second covenant" or "there would have been no reason to establish a second covenant"

Hebrews 8:8

General Information:

In this quotation the prophet Jeremiah foretold of a new covenant that God would make.

with the people

"with the people of Israel"

See

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

the house of Israel and with the house of Judah

The people of Israel and Judah are spoken of as if they were houses. Alternate translation: "the people of Israel and with the people of Judah"

Hebrews 8:9

I took them by their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt

This metaphor represents God's great love and concern.

Alternate translation: "I led them out of Egypt like a father leads his young child"

Hebrews 8:10

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah.

the house of Israel

The people of Israel are spoken of as if they were a house.

Alternate translation: "the people of Israel"

after those days

"after that time"

I will put my laws into their minds

God's requirements are spoken of as if they were objects that could be placed somewhere. People's ability to think is spoken of as if it were a place. Alternate translation: "I will enable them to understand my laws"

I will also write them on their hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's inner being. The phrase "write them on their hearts" is a metaphor for enabling people to obey the law. Alternate translation: "I will also put them in their hearts" or "I will enable them to obey my law"

I will be their God

"I will be the God they worship"

they will be my people

"they will be the people for whom I care"

Hebrews 8:11

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah.

They will not teach each one his fellow citizen and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord.'

This direct quotation can be stated as an indirect quotation.

Alternate translation: "They will not need to teach their neighbors or brothers to know me"

citizen ... brother

Both of these refer to a fellow Israelite.

Know the Lord ... will all know me

"Know" here stands for acknowledge.

Hebrews 8:12

toward their evil deeds

This stands for the people who committed these evil deeds.

Alternate translation: "to those who did evil deeds"

their sins I will not remember any longer

Here "remember" stands for "think about."

Hebrews 8:13

he declared the first covenant to be obsolete

"he declared that the first covenant was no longer useful"

what has become obsolete

"what is no longer useful"

obsolete

Something that is obsolete is no longer useful because people can now use something better.

Chapter 9

Hebrews 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter describes how Jesus is better than the tabernacle and all its laws and rules. This chapter will be difficult to understand if the first five books of the Old Testament have not yet been translated.

Special concepts in this chapter

Will

A will is a legal document that describes what will happen to a person's property after he dies.

Blood

In the Old Testament, God had commanded the Israelites to offer sacrifices so that he would forgive their sins. Before they could offer these sacrifices, they had to kill animals and then offer not only the animal's body but also its blood. Shedding blood is a metaphor for killing an animal or person. Jesus offered his life, his blood, as a sacrifice when he allowed men to kill him. The writer of the Book of Hebrews is saying in this chapter that this sacrifice is better than the sacrifices of the Old Testament. (See: and covenant)

Return of Christ

Jesus will return to finish the work that he began when he died so that God would forgive his people's sins. He will finish saving those people who are waiting for him. (See: save)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

First covenant

This refers to the covenant that God made with Moses. However, before he made this covenant, God had made a covenant with Abraham. But this was the first covenant that God had made with the people of Israel. You may decide to translate "the first covenant" as "the earlier covenant."

Links:

[Hebrews 9:1](#)

Hebrews 9

9:1-5

What was the “earthly sanctuary”?

[9:1]

The “earthly sanctuary” was the tabernacle that the people of Israel built. The earthly sanctuary was a place where people worshipped God. This was the temple in Jerusalem. It was destroyed about 40 years after Jesus died.

See: Tabernacle; Temple

What was the “lampstand”?

[9:2]

The “lampstand” was something in the temple. It was made of gold. It had six branches connected to the main stem. The main stem and each branch had a candle holder. Therefore, it held seven candles in all.

See: Exodus 25:31-39

See: Temple

What was the “bread of the presence”?

[9:2]

The “bread of the presence” was special bread that in some way was dedicated to God. It was used in the temple in Jerusalem. Some scholars think the “bread of the presence” was bread that in some way was offered to God. Other scholars think the bread was twelve loaves, baked with very fine flour. The loaves were placed on the table each Sabbath day. The loaves were for the priests to eat. The priests had to eat the loaves in the temple.

See: Exodus 24:5-9

See: Temple; Sabbath; Holy Place; Offer (Offering); Sacrifice; Priest (Priesthood)

What was the “second curtain”?

[9:3]

There were two curtains in the tabernacle. The first curtain was a linen screen. This first curtain was the entrance into the holy place. The second curtain was made of very fine linen. The high priest, once a year, entered through the second curtain to offer a special sacrifice.

See: Tabernacle; Temple; Holy Place; High Priest; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

What was the “most holy place”?

[9:3]

The “most holy place” was the place where the glory of the Lord dwelled. It was located behind the second curtain in the temple. Only the high priest entered into the most holy place, and he only did this only once every year.

See: Glory (Glorify); Temple; Presence of God; High Priest

What was the “golden altar for incense”?

[9:4]

Scholars think the “golden altar for incense” was an altar that held burning coals. The priest took coals from the altar and placed the coals in a pan, called a censer. He sprinkled incense into the pan. He did this so that the coals would burn the incense. This produced an aroma. Scholars think the “golden altar for incense” was in the holy place, just outside the entrance to the “most holy place” (see: Leviticus 16:12).

See: Altar; Priest (Priesthood); Holy Place; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies)

What was the “ark of the covenant”?

[9:4]

See: Ark of the Covenant

Why was there a “golden jar” inside the ark of the covenant?

[9:4]

There was a golden jar inside the ark of the covenant to hold special things. This was to remind the Israelites how God took care of them when they traveled in the wilderness (see: Exodus).

See: Ark of the Covenant

What was the “manna” inside the golden jar?

[9:4]

The “manna” inside the golden jar was special food that God gave the Israelites when they traveled in the wilderness. The author wanted them to remember how God took care of them. So, Moses instructed Aaron to place some manna into a jar and place it in the ark. It was to remain in the ark for years to come (see: Exodus 16:33).

See: Ark of the Covenant; Manna

What was “Aaron’s rod that budded”?

[9:4]

When Moses lived, God told Moses to get twelve “rods”(ῥάβδος/g4464), one rod from each leader of the twelve tribes of Israel. God told Moses that the man who owned the “rod that budded” would be the man to stop the complaining of the people of Israel. The rod of Aaron is the rod that budded (See: Numbers 17:1-11.)

See: Tribes of Israel

What were the “tablets of the covenant”?

[9:4]

The “tablets of the covenant” were the stone tablets upon which were written the ten commandments. These were the commandments that God engraved on tablets for Moses. (See: Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5:1-22.)

See: Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Ten Commandments

What were “cherubim”?

[9:5]

The “cherubim” (Χερούβ/g5502) were carvings on top of the ark of the covenant. A cherub was a two-winged creature that people thought were with God. The carvings of these creatures were placed on the Ark of the covenant (see: Exodus 25:18-22).

See: Ark of the Covenant

What was the “atonement lid”?

[9:5]

The “atonement lid” was a gold lid covering the ark. People also called this the mercy seat. On the day of atonement, once a year, God appeared in a cloud over the atonement lid (see: Leviticus 16:2). When the high priest offered the blood of the sacrifice, once a year, he would sprinkle the blood onto the atonement lid. This was a sign a covering of sin (see: Leviticus 16:14).

See: Atone (Atonement); Ark of the Covenant; High Priest; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering); Sign; Sin

Why did the author say there were things “which we cannot now talk about in detail”?

[9:5]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that there were things “which we cannot now talk about in detail”. Some scholars think that the people who read this book already knew about the furnishings and the practices within the temple. Therefore, the writer did not take time to write about everything in detail. Other scholars think the writer did not think he needed to write about every part of the temple and the things the priests did in the temple.

See: Temple

9:6-10

Why did the author write “not without blood”?

[9:7]

The author wrote, “not without blood.” It was against the Law of Moses for the high priest to pass through the second curtain, into the most holy place, without taking the blood of animals for a sacrifice. The blood of the sacrifice was offered for the sins of the high priest and the sins of the people.

See: Law of Moses; High Priest; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Sacrifice; Offer (Offering); Sin

What were “unintentional sins”?

[9:7]

Scholars disagree about what “unintentional sins” were. Some scholars think that “unintentional sins” were the kind of sins that were committed in ignorance. That is, the people did not know that they had sinned. Other scholars think that the writer used the words “unintentional sins” to speak about all sins that were committed by the people.

Who is the “Holy Spirit”?

[9:8]

See: Holy Spirit

Why were the gifts and sacrifices “not able to perfect the worshipper’s conscience”?

[9:9]

The gifts and sacrifices made under the Law of Moses were “not able to perfect the worshipper’s conscience.” That is, they did not make a person clean. Therefore, the person who worshipped was always reminded of his sin. The sacrifices only served to cover over sins.

See: Law of Moses; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering); Clean and Unclean; Worship; Sin; Atone (Atonement)

Why were sacrifices offered concerning “food and drink”?

[9:10]

The Law of Moses included laws about what kinds of “food and drink” were clean and unclean (See: Leviticus 11:1-47). Sometimes a person ate or touched food that he was not permitted to eat. When he did this, he became unclean. So, he had to make sacrifices for breaking the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

What were “ceremonial washings”?

[9:10]

A "ceremonial washing" was when a person washed themselves in a special way so they could worship God. In ancient times, if a person touched a dead animal, he became unclean. Therefore, he had to wash in a certain way in order to be made clean again. Until he did this, he could not worship with the rest of the people. The high priest, before and after making the atoning, once a year sacrifice, also bathed in water as a "ceremonial washing". That is, it showed his obedience to God, by following the Law of Moses.

See: Worship; Clean and Unclean; High Priest; Atone (Atonement); Sacrifice

Why did the author write "the time of the new order"?

[9:10]

The author wrote "the time of the new order" to speak about the ending of the old covenant and the beginning of the new covenant. That is, he wanted people to think about when God will end the world and create a new world. The new world will be perfect. It is the "new order", that is a perfect place for people to live.

See: Covenant; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); New Covenant

9:11-14

What were the "good things that have come"?

[9:11]

Scholars disagree about the "good things that have come." Some scholars think the writer spoke about Christians knowing they will live together with God in heaven forever. Other scholars think writer was speaking about how God ended the old "order." That is, God changed the world and now Jesus is the high priest.

See: Eternal Life; High Priest

What was the "greater and more perfect tabernacle"?

[9:11]

See: Hebrews 8:2

Why did the author write "once for all"?

[9:12]

The author wrote "once for all" to tell people that they can stop offering sacrifices. The priests under the old covenant had to offer the atoning sacrifice every year. They offered the blood of goats and bulls for that sacrifice. When Jesus, as the high priest, offered his own blood on the cross, he did it "once for all". That is, by one sacrifice Jesus atoned for the sins of people and no other sacrifice is needed.

See: Atone (Atonement); Covenant; High Priest; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering); Priest (Priesthood); Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Law of Moses; Cross

What were the "heifer's ashes"?

[9:13]

The "heifer's ashes" were used to cleanse a person who had sinned or become unclean in some way. In the time when Moses lived, God commanded that the priest slaughter a red heifer outside of the camp. Some of the blood was sprinkled toward the tabernacle. Afterward, the heifer was burned completely. Its ashes were mixed with water and used to cleanse someone who had become unclean (See: Numbers 19:1-22).

Advice to translators: A heifer is a young female cow.

See: Clean and Unclean; Sin; Law of Moses; Priest (Priesthood); Tabernacle

How did the ashes provide for the "cleansing of their flesh"?

[9:13]

The author wrote that the ashes provided for the "cleansing of their flesh" so people would think about God forgiving them. When a person became unclean, he needed to be separated from other people. When the unclean person was sprinkled with the mixture of ashes and water, God saw him as being clean once again. That is, God would forgive him. He did not need to be separated from the rest of the Israelites.

See: Clean and Unclean; Flesh

Why did the author write "how much more"?

[9:14]

The author wrote "how much more" to speak about much greater Jesus' sacrifice was then the sacrifices under the old covenant.

See: Covenant; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

How was Jesus "without blemish"?

[9:14]

Jesus was "without blemish" because he never disobeyed God. The author did not speak about Jesus' body. Instead, he said that Jesus never sinned. Therefore he was "without blemish", that is, without any imperfection. According to the Law of Moses, every sacrifice needed to be an animal without blemish. If it had a blemish it could not be sacrificed to God.

See: Isaiah 53:9

See: Sin; Law of Moses; Sacrifice; Offer (Offering)

What are "dead works"?

[9:14]

“Dead works” are the things people do and think that disobey or dishonor God. They lead to spiritual death, that is, to the person being separated from God forever. Dead works are things that do not serve God. They only separated people from God.

See: Spirit (Spiritual)

Who is “the living God”?

[9:14]

The “living God” is the real God. The author says God is “living” so people will not think he is an idol that is not real.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

9:15-22

What was a “mediator”?

[9:15]

See: Hebrews 8:6

Who are those who are “called”?

[9:15]

See: Call (Calling)

What is “the promise of an eternal inheritance”?

[9:15]

“The promise of an eternal inheritance” is a way of speaking about eternal life. God first gave it to the people living in the days of the Old Testament. The prophet Jeremiah spoke about this promise as being a new covenant that God was to make with people (see: Jeremiah 31:31-34).

See: Eternal Life; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Prophet; New Covenant

What is a “will”?

[9:16]

A “will” (διαθήκη/g1242) is a written document that tells people who should inherit a dead person's property. The author used this as a metaphor to speak about the promise God made to his people. That is, the promise of an eternal inheritance. This promise was put into effect after the death and resurrection of Jesus. So, it was like a “will” for people who believe in Jesus to inherit eternal life from him.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Metaphor; People of God; Eternal Life; Resurrect (Resurrection)

Why did the author write, “not even the first covenant was established without blood”?

[9:18]

The author wrote “not even the first covenant was established without blood” so people would think about the Old Testament sacrifices. The first covenant, that is, the covenant with Moses, required sacrifices (see: Exodus 24:3-8).

See: Covenant; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Sacrifice

Why did the author write about the blood, water, red wool, and hyssop?

[9:19]

The author wrote about the blood, water, red wool, and hyssop so people would think about the ceremony Moses performed when God gave him the Law. Scholars think the water was mixed with the blood as a symbol of cleansing. Then red wool and hyssop were wrapped around a stick. The wool absorbed the mixture of water and blood. The hyssop helped to brush or sprinkle the blood.

See: Symbol; Law of Moses; Clean and Unclean; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

Why did Moses sprinkle both the scroll and the people with the water and blood mixture?

[9:19]

Scholars think that Moses sprinkled all things that had to do with the covenant God made with Moses. The writer to the Hebrews mentioned two things that were sprinkled, that is the scroll and the people. The sprinkling of blood represented setting things apart to serve God. The scroll was made clean and set apart by the blood because it contained the words of God's promise to his people. The people were made clean and set apart by the blood to do everything God said in the scroll.

See: Covenant; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant); Clean and Unclean; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); People of God; Blood

What was “the blood of the covenant”?

[9:20]

The “blood of the covenant” represented the sacrifices of animals. The blood was then offered to God. Lastly it was sprinkled on the people who received the covenant. This was to show the power and the purpose of God. It showed how serious God was about the covenant with his people.

See: Blood; Covenant; Sacrifice

What were the “containers used in the service”?

[9:21]

The “containers used in the service” were the altar, the laver, the incense censers, dishes, bowls, and utensils. These were

things used in the temple to worship God. Anything that the people of Israel used to sacrifice animals and atone for sin was sprinkled with blood to make it clean. The "containers" were used to do this.

See: Atone (Atonement); Israel; Altar; Temple; Sin; Clean and Unclean

Why did the author write that "almost everything is cleansed with blood"?

[9:22]

The author wrote that "almost everything is cleansed with blood." This is because in the Old Testament, God gave ways for people to be forgiven without sacrificing an animal. Often, an atonement was made with the shedding of blood.

However, if a person was very poor, he was allowed to bring flour to the priest as an offering (see: Leviticus 5:11). Some things were even purified with fire or water (see: Numbers 31:22-24).

See: Atone (Atonement); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Purify (Pure); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Sacrifice; Priest (Priesthood)

Why did the author write "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness"?

[9:22]

Scholars think that God did not forgive any sins without the shedding of blood, that is sacrificing an animal. They think that the shedding of blood actually made atonement for the souls of the people (see: Leviticus 17:11). When people used other things to sacrifice to God, they represented the blood sacrifice in some way.

See: Atone (Atonement); Sin; Sacrifice; Soul

9:23-28

What were the "copies of the things in heaven"?

[9:23]

See: Hebrews 8:5

What were "much better sacrifices"?

[9:23]

The author wrote "much better sacrifices" to speak about Jesus. He really wanted people to think about Jesus being crucified and resurrected. In the temple, the priests made sacrifices using the blood of animals. The temple was only a copy of the tabernacle in heaven (see: Hebrews 8:5-6). The heavenly tabernacle required a "much better sacrifice" than the blood of animals. It required Jesus to die. This is because only the blood of Jesus cleanses a person's conscience. The blood of Jesus cleanses a person from all uncleanness.

See: Clean and Unclean; Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Temple; Priest (Priesthood); Sacrifice; Tabernacle; Heaven; Conscience

Why did the author write that Jesus entered heaven "to appear now in God's presence for us"?

[9:24]

The author wrote that Jesus entered heaven "to appear now in God's presence for us". He wrote this so people would know that Jesus continually speaks to God the Father for Christians (see: Hebrews 7:25). When the high priest served in the Temple, he only entered into the most holy place once every year. This was to take the blood of the atoning sacrifice into the most holy place. It was to sprinkle the blood there to atone for the sins of the people. He carried with him a censer filled with coals and incense. This was like a veil to hide the priest's face from God's presence. Jesus, however, entered into the heavenly tabernacle after he was resurrected. He is in the very presence of God the Father, face to face. So, Jesus continually speaks to God for Christians.

See: Messiah (Christ); Heaven; [Intercede (Intercession)] (../articles/intercede.md); High Priest; Tabernacle; Atone (Atonement); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Temple; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Sacrifice; Sin; Presence of God; God the Father

Why did the author write "since the beginning of the world"?

[9:26]

The author wrote "since the beginning of the world" to speak about all of history. Some scholars think he spoke about all time since God created the world. Other scholars think he spoke about the time that there have been people on the earth. The author wrote this so people would know that Jesus completely atoned for all the sins of all people who believe in him. That is, he only needed to be sacrificed once.

See: Atone (Atonement); Sin; Sacrifice

Why did the author write "the end of the ages"?

[9:26]

The author wrote "the end of the ages" to in some way speak about the last things God is doing before the end of the world. Some scholars think the "end of the ages" spoke about the last events of Jesus' life. That is, his crucifixion. They think Jesus' resurrection began a new age. Other scholars add that the "end of the ages" was when earthly sacrifices stopped. This is because the sacrifice of Jesus' was the last sacrifice necessary for the forgiveness of sins. They think this was what Paul wanted to say when he spoke about the "fullness of time" (see: Galatians 4:4-5).

Advice to translators: "Ages" is a word that speaks about periods of time. "Ages" are usually long times, but they don't have to be. So, when the author of Hebrews talks about "the ages", he is speaking about all of history. If your language has a

word or phrase to say "all of history", you can use that instead of "ages".

When the author wrote "end of the ages," he did not want to say that history is finished. He wanted to talk about living in the last time before God will end the world. So translate this phrase in a way that tells readers that, even if it takes several words in your language.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Ascend (Ascension); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Last Days; Sacrifice

Why did the author write that "man is appointed to die once"?

[9:27]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that "man is appointed to die once". Some scholars think the author was simply saying that every person dies. People die and God judges them. Other scholars think that death is "appointed" (ἀπόκειται/g0606) for each person. That is, death does not happen by chance. Instead, God has decided when each person will die. Some scholars think the author was saying both of these things.

The author used "man" as a metaphor for all people. That is to say, what he wrote is true for all men and women.

See: Judge (Judgment)

What is the "judgment" that comes after death?

[9:27]

See: Judge (Judgment); Day of Judgment

How did Jesus "take away the sins of many"?

[9:28]

Jesus "took away the sins of many" when he was crucified. That is, God will forgive the sins of anyone who believes in Jesus (see: John 3:16).

See: Messiah (Christ); Crucify (Crucifixion); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

How will Christ "appear a second time"?

[9:28]

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did the author say that when Christ returns, it is "not to deal with sin"?

[9:28]

The author wrote that when Christ returns it will not be to "deal with sin." This is because Christ atoned for peoples' sins. He did this when he was crucified. His return will be to bless the people who have believed in him, and to punish the people who rejected him.

See: Messiah (Christ); Crucify (Crucifixion); Bless (Blessing); Jesus' Return to Earth; Atonement (Atonement); Punish (Punishment)

Hebrews 9:1

Connecting Statement:

The author begins a description of the place in which God's faithful people worshiped during the time of the old covenant. He is describing a "tabernacle," a place where people dwell, in which there are two sections, each of which he also calls a tabernacle.

General Information:

The writer makes clear to these Jewish believers that the laws and the tabernacle of the old covenant were only pictures of the better, new covenant.

Now

This word marks a new part of the teaching.

first covenant

See how you translated this in Hebrews 8:7.

had regulations

"had detailed instructions" or "had rules"

Hebrews 9:2

For

The author is continuing the discussion from Hebrews 8:7. a tabernacle was prepared

A tabernacle was constructed and made ready for use. This idea can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Israelites prepared a tabernacle"

tabernacle

Or "tent." This is perhaps a metaphor for a place in which

the priests set the lampstand and other items.

The first room

"The first room." Some modern translations read the ellipsis as "The first room in the tabernacle" or "The first section of the tabernacle."

the lampstand, the table, and the bread of the presence

These objects are all accompanied by the definite article "the," because the author assumes that his readers already know about these things.

bread of the presence

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "presence" is expressed as the verb "display" or "present." Alternate translation: "bread on display before God" or "bread the priests presented to God"

Hebrews 9:3

Behind the second curtain

The first curtain was the outer wall of the tabernacle, so the "second curtain" was the curtain between the "holy place" and the "most holy place."

second

This is the ordinal word for the number two.

Hebrews 9:4

Inside it

"Inside the ark of the covenant"

Aaron's rod that budded

This was the rod Aaron had when God proved to the people

of Israel that he had chosen Aaron as his priest by making Aaron's rod bud.

that budded

"from which leaves and flowers had grown"

tablets of the covenant

Here "tablets" are flat pieces of stone that had writing on them. This refers to the stone tablets on which the ten commandments were written.

Hebrews 9:5

glorious cherubim overshadowed the atonement lid

When the Israelites were making the ark of the covenant, God commanded them to carve two cherubim facing each other, with their wings touching, over the atonement lid of the ark of the covenant. Here they are spoken of as providing shade for the ark of the covenant. Alternate translation: "glorious cherubim covered the atonement lid with their wings"

cherubim

Here "cherubim" means figures of two cherubim.

which we cannot

Even though the author uses the plural pronoun "we," he is most likely referring only to himself. Alternate translation: "which I cannot"

Hebrews 9:6

After these things were prepared

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"After the priests prepared these things"

Hebrews 9:7

not without blood that he offered

Another possible meaning is "not without blood, which he offered."

not without blood

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "always with blood"

blood

This is the blood of the bull and goat that the high priest had to sacrifice on the Day of Atonement.

Hebrews 9:8

the most holy place

Possible meanings are 1) the inner room of the tabernacle on earth or 2) God's presence in heaven.

the first tabernacle was still standing

Possible meanings are 1) "the outer room of the tabernacle was still standing" or 2) "the earthly tabernacle and the sacrificial system still existed."

Hebrews 9:9

This was an illustration

"This was a picture" or "This was a symbol"

for the present time

"for now"

that are now being offered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that the priests now offer"

are not able to perfect the worshiper's conscience

The writer speaks of a person's conscience as if it were an object that could be made better and better until it was without fault. A person's conscience is his knowledge of right and wrong. It is also his awareness of whether or not he has done wrong. If he knows he has done wrong, we say

that he feels guilty. Alternate translation: "are not able to make the worshiper free from guilt"

the worshiper's conscience

The writer appears to refer to only one worshiper, but he means all those who go to worship God at the tabernacle.

Hebrews 9:10

until the time of the new order

"until God creates the new order"

new order

"new covenant"

Hebrews 9:11

Connecting Statement:

Having described the service of the tabernacle under God's law, the writer makes clear that Christ's service under the new covenant is better because it is sealed with his blood. It is better also because Christ has entered the true "tabernacle," that is, God's own presence in heaven, instead of entering, as other high priests, into the earthly tabernacle, which was only an imperfect copy.

good things

This does not refer to material things. It means the good things that God promised in his new covenant.

the greater and more perfect tabernacle

This refers to the heavenly tent or tabernacle, which is more important and more perfect than the earthly tabernacle.

that was not made by human hands

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that humans hands did not make"

human hands

Here "hands" refers to the whole person. Alternate

translation: "humans"

Hebrews 9:12

most holy place

This means the most holy place in the heavenly tabernacle.

It is most holy because God himself lives there.

Hebrews 9:13

sprinkling of a heifer's ashes on those who have been defiled

The priest would drop small amounts of the ashes on the people who were defiled.

for the cleansing of their flesh

Here "flesh" refers to the entire body. Alternate translation:

"for the cleansing of their bodies"

Hebrews 9:14

how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

The author uses this question to emphasize that Christ's sacrifice was the most powerful. Alternate translation:

"then certainly Christ's blood will cleanse our conscience even more from dead works to serve the living God!"

Because, through the eternal Spirit, he offered himself unblemished to God."

the blood of Christ

The "blood" of Christ stands for his death.

unblemished

A small, unusual spot or defect on a person's body is a metaphor for a small sin or moral fault. Alternate

translation: "without even the smallest fault"

cleanse our conscience

Here "conscience" refers to a person's feeling of guilt. Believers no longer have to feel guilty for the sins they have committed because Jesus sacrificed himself and has forgiven them.

cleanse

Here "cleanse" stands for the action of relieving our consciences from guilt for the sins we have committed.

dead works

Sinful deeds are spoken of as if they belonged to the world of the dead.

Hebrews 9:15

For this reason

"As a result" or "Because of this"

he is the mediator of a new covenant

A mediator is a person who helps two parties come to an agreement. Christ, as mediator, made it possible for a better covenant between God and humans to exist. See how you translated a similar phrase in Hebrews 8:6.

first covenant

See how you translated this in Hebrews 8:7.

to redeem those under the first covenant from their transgressions

"to take away the transgressions of those who were under the first covenant." The abstract noun "transgressions" can be translated using the verb "transgress." Possible meanings are 1) here "their transgressions" is a metonym for the guilt of their transgressions. Alternate translation: "to take away the guilt of those who were under the first covenant." Or 2) here "their transgressions" is a metonym for the punishment for their transgressions. Alternate translation: "to take away the punishment that those who were under the first covenant deserved because they had transgressed"

those who are called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom God has called" or "those whom God has chosen to be his children"

inheritance

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

Hebrews 9:16

will

a legal document in which a person states who should receive his possessions when he himself dies

the death of the person who made it must be proven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone must prove that the person who made the will has died"

Hebrews 9:17

General Information:

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Hebrews 9:18

So not even the first covenant was established without blood

This can be stated in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "So God established even the first covenant with blood"

first covenant

See how you translated this in Hebrews 8:7.

blood

The death of animals sacrificed to God is spoken of as if it were nothing but blood. Alternate translation: "the death of animals sacrificed to God"

Hebrews 9:19

took the blood ... with water ... and sprinkled ... the scroll ... and all the people

The priest dipped the hyssop in the blood and the water and then shook the hyssop so drops of blood and water would fall on the scroll and on the people. Sprinkling was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. Here the scroll and the people's acceptability to God are renewed.

hyssop

a woody shrub with flowers in summer, used in ceremonial sprinkling

Hebrews 9:20

the blood of the covenant

Here "blood" refers to the death of the animals sacrificed to carry out the covenant's requirements. Alternate translation: "the blood that brings into effect the covenant"

Hebrews 9:21

he sprinkled

"Moses sprinkled"

sprinkled

Sprinkling was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 9:19]

all the containers used in the ministry

A container is an object that can hold things. Here it may refer to any kind of utensil or tool. Alternate translation: "all the utensils used in the ministry"

used in the ministry

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the priests used in their work"

blood

Here the animal "blood" represents the animal's death.

Hebrews 9:22

almost everything is cleansed with blood

Making something acceptable to God is spoken of as if it were cleansing that thing. This idea can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the priests use blood to cleanse almost everything"

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness

Here "shedding of blood" refers to something dying as a sacrifice to God. This double negative can mean that all forgiveness comes through the shedding of blood. Alternate translation: "Forgiveness only comes when something dies as a sacrifice" or "God only forgives when something dies as a sacrifice"

forgiveness

You can state explicitly the implied meaning. Alternate translation: "forgiveness of the sins of the people"

Hebrews 9:23

the copies of the things in heaven should be cleansed with these animal sacrifices

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the

priests should use these animal sacrifices to cleanse what are copies of things that are in heaven"

the heavenly things themselves had to be cleansed with much better sacrifices

That is, better than the sacrifices used to cleanse the earthly copies. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as for the heavenly things themselves, God had to cleanse them with much better sacrifices"

Hebrews 9:24

the most holy place made with hands, which

Here "with hands" means "by humans." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the most holy place, which humans made, and which"

of the true one

"of the true most holy place"

Hebrews 9:25

Connecting Statement:

The writer emphasizes that Christ (now in heaven interceding for us) had to die only once for sins and that he will return to earth a second time.

He did not go there

"He did not enter heaven"

year by year

"every year" or "each year"

with the blood of another

This means with the blood of an animal victim, not with his own blood.

Hebrews 9:26

If that had been the case

"If he had had to offer himself often"

since the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since the creation of the world" or "since God created the world"

to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself

Doing away with sin represents having God forgive it.

Alternate translation: "to cause God to forgive sins by sacrificing himself" or "to sacrifice himself so that God can forgive sin"

Hebrews 9:27

General Information:

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Hebrews 9:28

Christ was offered once

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Christ offered himself once"

to take away the sins

The act of making us innocent rather than guilty for our sins is spoken of as if our sins were physical objects that

Christ could carry away from us. Alternate translation: "so that God would forgive the sins"

the sins

Here "sins" mean the guilt that people have before God because of the sins they committed.

Chapter 10

Hebrews 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, the writer finishes describing how Jesus's sacrifice was better than the sacrifices offered in the Temple. (See: lawofmoses)

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 10:5-7, 15-17, 37-38, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

God's judgment and reward

Holy living is important for Christians. God will hold people accountable for how they lived their Christian lives. Even though there will not be eternal condemnation for Christians, ungodly actions do and will have consequences. In addition, faithful living will be rewarded. (See: holy, godly and faithful and reward)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"

The sacrifices themselves had no redeeming power. They were effective because they were a display of faith, which was credited to the person offering the sacrifice. It is ultimately the sacrifice of Jesus that "takes away sins." (See: redeem and faith)

"The covenant that I will make"

It is unclear whether this prophecy was being fulfilled as the author was writing or whether it was to occur later. The translator should try to avoid making a claim about the time this covenant begins. (See: prophet and covenant)

Links:

[Hebrews 10:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 10

10:1-10

How was the Law only a "shadow"?

[10:1]

When the author wrote that the law was only a "shadow" (σκιά/g4639), he used a metaphor. He wanted people to think

that the Law of Moses was only partly like something that was to come. That is, the things in the Law of Moses were like something that was perfect and eternal.

See: Law of Moses

What are "the good things to come"?

[10:1]

See: Hebrews 9:11

Why did the author write about people being "made perfect"?

[10:1]

The author wrote about people being "made perfect" to say that in some way God will remove all that is evil from people who believe in Jesus. This is different than in the Old Testament. The Law of Moses spoke about people atoning for their sins by offering sacrifices. However, nobody was ever "made perfect" because they offered a sacrifice. But the author said that now, God will in some way "make perfect" people who believe in Jesus.

Scholars disagree about how God "makes perfect" people who believe in Jesus. Some scholars think the author wanted to say that God perfectly and completely forgives a person for sins the person commits. Other scholars think the author wanted to speak about God helping people to resist temptation. That is, God helps them not to sin.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Law of Moses; Atone (Atonement); Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sacrifice

Why did the author write "consciousness of sins"?

[10:2]

The author wrote "consciousness of sins" to speak about a person knowing they sinned. This is even after God forgives them. Some scholars think the words, "consciousness of sins" spoke about a person's conscience not being satisfied after an offering was made. That is, the person could obey the Law of Moses, but they still felt guilty.

See: Sin; Conscience; Law of Moses; Guilty; Sacrifice

What was the "reminder" about which the author spoke?

[10:3]

The author wrote about a reminder. This was something that made people think about their sins over and over. In the Law of Moses, there was a yearly event called the Day of Atonement. This reminded people of their sins every year. Each year everyone in Israel had to repent. They had to make offerings for sin. This was so that God would cover over their sins for another year.

See: Sin; Law of Moses: Atone (Atonement); Repent (Repentance); Sacrifice

Why was it "impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"?

[10:4]

It was "impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" because God wants people to obey him instead of sinning. The priests could remove sins. The "blood of bulls and goats", that is to say sacrificing animals, only covered over sins that people committed.

See: Sin; Priest (Priesthood); Atone (Atonement); Sacrifice

Why did the author say that God "did not desire" sacrifices and offerings?

[10:5]

The author wrote that God "did not desire" sacrifices and offerings. This is because the sacrifices and offerings did not give God any honor unless they were done in the right way. These sacrifices needed to be made by faith in God. The author wanted to say that people needed to believe in Jesus, who is the messiah.

See: Sin; Messiah (Christ); Sacrifice; Faith (Believe in)

Why did the author write "a body you have prepared for me"?

[10:5]

The author wrote "a body you have prepared for me" to speak about Jesus, who is the messiah. The author wrote the same thing written in the Psalms where the messiah said to God (see: Psalm 40:6). That is, God allowed himself to be made into a human. He did this in the person of Jesus. It was necessary for Jesus to have a body so that he could offer himself as the perfect sacrifice to God.

See: Messiah (Christ); Incarnation; Sacrifice

What was the scroll?

[10:7]

A "scroll" was a way ancient people kept written things. They did this because they did not have printed books. Scholars think the "scroll" (κεφάλις/g2777) the author wrote about was the first five books of the Bible.

See: Law of Moses; Scroll

Why did the author write "to do your will"?

[10:7]

The author wrote "to do your will" so people would think about how Jesus completely did the will of God. God wanted Jesus to never sin and Jesus never sinned. Jesus did everything God wanted him to do. It was also God's will that Jesus would die for the sins of the world (see: Matthew 26:39,42).

See: Will of God; Law of Moses

What was the "first practice" the author spoke about?

[10:9]

The "first practice" was when people sacrificed animals according to the Law of Moses. People had to do many things to follow the Law of Moses.

See: Law of Moses

What is the "second practice" the author spoke about?

[10:9]

The "second practice" the author spoke about is when people believe in Jesus. That is, people who believe in Jesus do not need to follow the sacrifices in the Law of Moses for God to forgive their sins.

See: Law of Moses; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sin; Sacrifice

How did Jesus take away the first practice to establish the second practice?

[10:9]

Jesus took away the first practice in two ways. First, he lived perfectly according to God's will. Second, he offered himself to God as the perfect sacrifice for sins. This sacrifice never needs to be done again. He did this when he was crucified.

After this, people do not need to make sacrifices and obey the Law of Moses.

See: Will of God; Crucify (Crucifixion); Law of Moses; Sacrifice

What is "sanctified"?

[10:10]

See: Sanctify (Sanctification)

Why did the author write "once for all"?

[10:10]

The author wrote "once for all" so people would know that Jesus completely atoned for the sins of everyone who will ever live on earth. That is, he died "once" as a sacrifice. No other sacrifice for peoples' sins will ever be needed. Also, he died "for all" people who will ever believe in him.

Under the rules of the Old Covenant, the Jewish people sacrificed animals to obey the Law of Moses. However, with the New Covenant, Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for the sins of everyone. His sacrifice was done once, and does not need to be repeated.

See: Atone (Atonement); Sin; Covenant; Law of Moses; Sacrifice; Covenant with Moses (Old Covenant)

10:11-18

Who are the enemies of Jesus?

[10:13]

Scholars think the author spoke about different enemies of Jesus, Satan and the people who rejected Jesus.

Why did the author write about a "stool for his feet"?

[10:13]

The author spoke about a time when the enemies of Jesus would be made "a stool for his feet." This was a metaphor. God will make the enemies of Jesus powerless. They will be completely subject to Jesus. Jesus will rule everything. Jesus will not give anyone else permission to rule.

See: I Corinthians 15:24-28

Who are "those who are being sanctified"?

[10:14]

See: Sanctify (Sanctification)

Why did the author write that Jesus "perfected forever" those who are being sanctified?

[10:14]

The author wrote that Jesus "perfected forever" those who are being sanctified. He wrote this so people would think that Jesus satisfied the wrath of God against sin. His sacrifice was "perfect" (τελειόω/g5048). That is, he fulfilled all of what God required for the payment of sin. This is, Christians do not do this themselves. Jesus did it for them. He did it "forever."

That is, Jesus did this for all people who will ever be Christians.

See: Redeem (Redemption); Sanctify (Sanctification); Wrath; Sacrifice; Fulfill (Fulfillment)

Why did the author write "there is no longer any sacrifice for sin"?

[10:18]

The author wrote "there is no longer any sacrifice for sin" (10:18) because Jesus ended the need for any other sacrifices.

Jesus' death is the only sacrifice that is needed for people to be at peace with God.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Sacrifice; Sin; Atone (Atonement); Cross

10:19-25

What is the "most holy place" that Christians have confidence to enter?

[10:19]

The "most holy place" that Christians have confidence to enter is God's presence. That is, Christians can speak directly to God. This is not the same as the "most holy place" in the Tabernacle or Temple.

See: Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Presence of God; Tabernacle; Temple

What is the "new and living way"?

[10:20]

The author wrote about a "new and living way" for people to be with God. It is "new" because it did not exist before the sacrifice of Jesus. The author called it a "living way" because Jesus' sacrifice provided eternal life for people who believe in him. Jesus is the "way" to God the Father (see: John 14:6). That is, when people believe in Jesus, they can serve God and talk to God themselves.

See: Eternal Life; Sacrifice; Atonement

What was the "curtain" the author spoke of?

[10:20]

When the author spoke about a "curtain," he used a metaphor. He wanted people to think about the curtain that separated the holy place from the most holy place. This was in the Tabernacle and the Temple. It was also called the second curtain (see: Hebrews 9:6). This was the curtain which was torn from top to bottom at the moment of Jesus' died (see: Matthew 27:45-51; Mark 15:33-39). However, the author used this as a metaphor to say that after Jesus, the "curtain" that kept people separate from God no longer exists. People who believe in Jesus can worship God and talk to God themselves.

See: Metaphor; Temple; Holy Place; Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies); Tabernacle; Worship

Why did the author write "by means of his flesh"?

[10:20]

The author wrote "by means of his flesh" to speak about the human life of Jesus. That is to say, he wrote about "flesh" as a symbol. It was the human life of Jesus that was presented to God as the sacrifice for sins (see: 1 Peter 3:18).

See: Symbol; Sacrifice; Sin; Atonement

What was the "house of God"?

[10:21]

The "house of God" is the church, all Christians (see: Hebrews 3:6).

See: Church

Why did the author write "approach with true hearts"?

[10:22]

The author wrote "approach" to speak about how Christians must behave toward God. He wrote "true hearts" as a metaphor. He wanted people to know that they need to genuinely believe in God before they pray to him.

See: Heart (Metaphor)

What is the "full assurance of faith"?

[10:22]

To have "full assurance of faith" is to trust God completely. It is to completely believe in Jesus.

See: Faith (Believe in)

What is an "evil conscience"?

[10:22]

When the author wrote about an "evil conscience," he wanted people to think about sin. That is, he said that when a person sins, it damages their "conscience." They will not be able to know when they sin as easily after they sin.

See: Conscience; Spirit (Spiritual); Sin

Why did the author write about people having their "hearts sprinkled clean" from an evil conscience?

[10:22]

When the author wrote about people having their "hearts sprinkled clean", he used two metaphors. He used the metaphor of "heart" to speak about how people think and feel. He used the metaphor of "sprinkled clean" to speak about when God forgives people of their sins.

Scholars think the author wanted Christians to think about the Jewish priests. A priest was sprinkled with blood and bathed in water before they went to serve God (see: Exodus 29:21; Leviticus 8:30). They then could offer sacrifices for God's people. Jesus, the greatest High Priest, sacrificed himself. So his blood has cleansed the hearts of Christians. This lets Christians approach God and serve him.

See: Heart (Metaphor); Priest (Priesthood); High Priest; Conscience; Clean and Unclean; Sin; Sacrifice; People of God

What was the "confession" of hope?

[10:23]

The author wrote about Christians holding tightly to the "confession" (ὁμολογία/g3671) of their hope. He wanted Christians to completely trust what God says he will do. That is, they should believe God's promise to give them eternal life because they believe in Jesus.

Advice to translators: The author did not write about "confession" here to speak about when a person confesses sins they have committed. He wrote "confession" to speak about when a person says something that they deeply believe.

See: Confess (Confession); Hope; Eternal Life

10:26-39

Why did the author write “deliberately go on sinning”?

[10:26]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote "deliberately go on sinning." Some scholars think the author spoke about people who keep rejecting Jesus and the gospel. They choose to do this even though they have heard the gospel. Other scholars think the author spoke about people who believe in certain things Christians teach, but do not trust in Jesus. They think these people have rejected God. Other scholars think the author spoke about a person who says they are a Christian but who keeps on sinning and do not try to stop sinning.

See: Gospel; Sin

What was the “knowledge of the truth”?

[10:26]

Some scholars think the “knowledge” (ἐπίγνωσις/g1922) of the truth meant that a person understood true things about God. They knew they sinned and they also knew what they need to do for God to forgive their sins. Some scholars think that the author spoke about people who heard the truth about Jesus, but they never did anything. Other scholars think the author spoke about a person who knows the things Christians teach. This person has the “knowledge of the truth”.

See: Sin; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

Why did the author write “a sacrifice for sins no longer exists”?

[10:26]

The author wrote "a sacrifice for sins no longer exists." If a person goes on sinning after they say they believe in Jesus, the author wanted them to know that they cannot expect God to forgive them. Some scholars think that Christians will sin less and less. Other scholars think Christians can choose to stop being at peace with God and will not live forever with God in heaven. Other scholars think the author wanted people to remember that Jesus had to die for their sins.

See: Sin; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

Why did the author write “a certain fearful expectation of judgment”?

[10:27]

When the author wrote "a certain fearful expectation of judgment," he wanted people to know that God will judge a person who continually rejects Jesus. That is, the person can only expect that God will judge them with wrath. This judgment will be “fearful” (φοβερός/g5398). This person will live forever in hell. .

See: Judge (Judgment); Messiah (Christ); Wrath; Hell

What is the “fury of fire” about which the author spoke?

[10:27]

When the author wrote about the "fury of fire," he used a metaphor. He spoke about God he judges sinners. God is a consuming fire. That is, God completely destroys things. Some scholars think the author was writing about God punishing everyone who rejects Jesus. That is, God's wrath is like a fire when it punishes people

See: Metaphor; Judge (Judgment); Sin; Messiah (Christ); Wrath; Punish (Punishment)

Why did the author write about the “testimony of two or three witnesses”?

[10:28]

See: Deuteronomy 17:2-7

Why did the author write “trample underfoot the Son of God”?

[10:29]

The author wrote “trample underfoot the Son of God” to speak about thinking about Jesus shamefully. Jesus is the "Son of God." When someone was trampled underfoot, people kept stepping on them until they were badly injured or killed. The author used this as a metaphor to speak about dishonoring someone. He wanted people to think about someone saying that Jesus is unworthy to be the messiah.

See: Son of God; Metaphor; Messiah (Christ)

How did someone treat “the blood of the covenant as unholy”?

[10:29]

When someone said the death of Jesus was not different than any other death, then someone treated “the blood of the covenant as unholy” (see: Hebrews 9:14-15). They rejected the new covenant God made with people.

See: Atonement (Atonement); Covenant; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

Why did the author write about being “sanctified” by blood?

[10:29]

See: Sanctify (Sanctification)

What is "the Spirit of grace”?

[10:29]

The "Spirit of grace" is the Holy Spirit. Some scholars think the author wanted people to think about when Jesus spoke about the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (see: Mark 3:29). Other scholars think the author spoke about a person who refused to acknowledge the Holy Spirit. That is, the person disrespected or dishonored the Holy Spirit.

See: Holy Spirit; Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

Where was it written that "vengeance" belongs to the Lord, and that he "will judge his people"?

[10:30]

See: Deuteronomy 32:25-26; Romans 12:19

See: Avenge (Vengeance, Revenge)

Why did the author write "the living God"?

[10:31]

The author wrote "the living God" to tell people strongly that God is not some dead idol. He is not just an imaginary god. He is real. The "living God" keeps his promises and also judges people.

See: Idolatry (Idol); Judge (Judgment)

What were the "former days"?

[10:32]

Scholars think when the author wrote about the "former days," he was writing about a time before in a Christian's life.

Why did the author write "enlightened"?

[10:32]

The author wrote "enlightened" to speak about a person gaining important knowledge about God. Some scholars think that Christians were "enlightened" when they received instruction about how to live in a way that honors God. Other scholars think a Christian was "enlightened" at the moment he became a Christian. That is, he then saw and understood the gospel and true things about God.

See: Faith (Believe in); Gospel

What was to be "exposed to public ridicule"?

[10:33]

Some scholars think Christians were "exposed to public ridicule" because the Jewish religious leaders brought the Christians into the middle of a city. They then got people to insult the Christians. Sometimes these people attacked Christians. Other scholars think the author spoke about the times when the Christians were thrown into an arena and had to fight against wild animals.

About whom was the author writing when he wrote about "those who were prisoners"?

[10:34]

Some scholars think that when the author wrote about "those who were prisoners" he spoke about Christians who were thrown into prison because they believed in Jesus. Other scholars think the author spoke about himself. He had been put in prison because he was a Christian.

Why did the author write that the Christians "accepted with joy" being robbed of their possessions?

[10:34]

When the author wrote that the Christians "accepted with joy" being robbed of their possessions, he did not mean the Christians were happy about being robbed. He wanted people to think that Christians have something greater than anything you can own. Everything a person owns will be destroyed. However, the promises of God for them last forever. No one can take these promises away from them. This gave the Christians joy. So even if a thief broke in and stole their possessions, the promises of God were secure.

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

What is the "great reward" about which the author spoke?

[10:35]

The "great reward" the author spoke about is that God will in some way do good things for people who believe in Jesus. Some scholars think the "great reward" is God's promise of eternal life. This reward is based on the goodness and faithfulness of God.

See: Luke 6:23

See: Eternal Life; Reward

Why did the author write that God's "righteous one will live by faith"?

[10:38]

A person who is God's "righteous one" is a person God declares to be righteous. This is because the person believes in Jesus. It had nothing to do with following the Law of Moses (see: Romans 3:21; 4:3-5; 5:18-19).

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Justify (Justification); Law of Moses

Why did the author write "turn back to destruction"?

[10:39]

Some scholars think author wrote "turn back to destruction" to speak about people who stop believing in Jesus. He warned people that God will send someone who stops believing in Jesus to hell, that is to "destruction." Other scholars think the author wrote this to speak about Christians who disobey Jesus. They will be punished and may even die because of this. However, they will still live with God in heaven forever. Christians are punished for sinning, but they are promised to go to heaven because Jesus was punished for their sins.

See: Hell; Punish (Punishment); Heaven; Sin; Atone (Atonement)

Why did the author write "keeping their souls"?

[10:39]

The author wrote "keeping their souls" to speak about Christians who keep believing in Jesus. These Christians "keep their souls." That is, they will not be punished. Some scholars think the author spoke about Christians who believe in Jesus until they die. They think the author spoke about words that Jesus spoke earlier (see: Mark 8:35). Other scholars think the words "keeping their souls" simply meant they will not go to hell.

See: Soul; Hell; Faith (Believe in); Punish (Punishment)

Hebrews 10:1

Connecting Statement:

The writer shows the weakness of the law and its sacrifices, why God gave the law, and the perfection of the new priesthood and Christ's sacrifice.

the law is only a shadow of the good things to come

This speaks about the law as if it were a shadow. The author means the law is not the good things that God had promised. It only hints at the good things that God is going to do.

not the real forms of those things themselves

"not the real things themselves"

year after year

"every year"

Hebrews 10:2

would the sacrifices not have ceased to be offered?

The author uses a question to state that the sacrifices were limited in their power. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "they would have ceased offering those sacrifices."

ceased to be

"stopped being"

the worshipers would have been cleansed one time and would

Here being cleansed represents no longer being guilty of sin. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the sacrifices would have taken away the worshipers' sin once, and they would" or "God would have made the worshipers no longer guilty of sin once, and they would"

would no longer have any consciousness of sin

"would no longer think that they are guilty of sin" or

"would know that they are no longer guilty of sin"

Hebrews 10:3

General Information:

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Hebrews 10:4

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. Sins are spoken of as if they were objects that animal blood could sweep away as it flowed. Alternate translation: "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to cause God to forgive sins"

the blood of bulls and goats

Here "blood" refers to these animals dying as sacrifices to God.

Hebrews 10:5

General Information:

Christ's words when he was on earth were foretold in this quotation from a psalm of David.

you did not desire

Here "you" is singular and refers to God.

a body you have prepared

"you have made a body ready"

Hebrews 10:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 10:7

Then I said

Here "I" refers to Christ.

Hebrews 10:8

General Information:

Though changing the wording slightly, the author repeats these quotations from a psalm of David for emphasis.

sacrifices ... offerings

See how you translated these words in [Hebrews 10:5](#).

whole burnt offerings ... sin offerings

See how you translated similar words in [Hebrews 10:6](#).

that are offered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that priests offer"

Hebrews 10:9

See

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

He takes away the first practice in order to establish the second practice

The abstract noun "practice" here refers to a way of atoning for sins. Stopping doing it is spoken of as if it were an object that could be taken away. Starting the second way of atoning for sins is spoken of as establishing that practice.

Alternate translation: "He stops people atoning for sins the first way in order to atone for sins the second way"

first practice ... the second practice

The words "first" and "second" are ordinal numbers.

Alternate translation: "old practice ... the new practice"

Hebrews 10:10

we have been sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has sanctified us" or "God has dedicated us to himself"

through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ

The abstract noun "offering" can be expressed with the verb "offer" or "sacrifice." Alternate translation: "because Jesus Christ offered his body as a sacrifice" or "because Jesus Christ sacrificed his body"

Hebrews 10:11

Day after day

"Day by day" or "Every day"

can never take away sins

This speaks of "sins" as if they are an object that a person can take away. Alternate translation: "can never cause God to forgive sins"

Hebrews 10:12

he sat down at the right hand of God

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you

translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3]

Hebrews 10:13

until his enemies are made a footstool for his feet

Christ's enemies being humiliated is spoken of as if they were made a place for him to rest his feet. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until God humiliates Christ's enemies and they become like a footstool for his feet"

Hebrews 10:14

those who are being sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom God is sanctifying" or "those whom God has dedicated to himself"

Hebrews 10:15

General Information:

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Hebrews 10:16

General Information:

This is a quotation from the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament.

with them

"with my people"

after those days

"when the time of the first covenant with my people has finished"

I will put my laws in their hearts

Here "hearts" is a metonym for a person's inner being. The phrase "put my laws in their hearts" is a metaphor for enabling people to know his laws. Alternate translation: "I will enable them to know my laws"

I will write them on their minds

The phrase "write them on their minds" is a metaphor for causing people to remember his laws. Alternate translation: "I will cause them to remember my laws"

Hebrews 10:17

General Information:

This continues the quotation from the prophet Jeremiah in the Old Testament.

Their sins and lawlessness I will remember no longer."

"I will no longer remember their sins and lawlessness." or

"I will no longer think about their sins and lawlessness."

This is the second part of the Holy Spirit's testimony

Their sins and lawlessness

The words "sins" and "lawlessness" mean basically the same thing. Together they emphasize how bad the sin is. Alternate translation: "The things they did that were forbidden and how they broke the law"

Hebrews 10:18

Now

This is used to draw attention to the important point that follows. It does not mean "at this moment."

where there is forgiveness for these

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "forgiveness" is expressed as the verb "forgive." Alternate translation: "when God has forgiven these things"

there is no longer any sacrifice for sin

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "sacrifice" is expressed as the verb "make offerings." Alternate translation: "people no longer need to make offerings for

sin"

Hebrews 10:19

Connecting Statement:

Having made it clear that there is only one sacrifice for sin, the writer continues with the picture of the most holy place in the temple, where only the high priest could enter each year with the blood of the sacrifice for sins. He reminds the believers that they now worship God in his presence as if they were standing in the most holy place.

brothers

Here this means all believers in Christ, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "brothers and sisters" or "fellow believers"

the most holy place

This means the presence of God, not the most holy place in the old tabernacle.

by the blood of Jesus

Here "blood of Jesus" refers to the death of Jesus.

Hebrews 10:20

living way

Possible meanings are 1) this new way to God that Jesus has provided results in believers living forever or 2) Jesus is alive, and he is the way believers enter into the presence of God.

through the curtain

The curtain in the earthly temple represents the separation between people and God's true presence.

by means of his flesh

Here "flesh" stands for the body of Jesus, and his body stands for his sacrificial death. Alternate translation: "by means of his death"

Hebrews 10:21

we have a great priest over the house of God

This must be translated in such a way as to make it clear that Jesus is this "great priest."

over the house

"in charge of the house"

the house of God

This speaks about God's people as if they were a literal house. Alternate translation: "all the people of God"

Hebrews 10:22

let us approach

Here "approach" stands for worshiping God, as a priest would go up to God's altar to sacrifice animals to him.

with true hearts

"with faithful hearts" or "with honest hearts." Here "hearts" stands for the genuine will and motivation of the believers. Alternate translation: "with sincerity" or "sincerely"

in the full assurance of faith

"and with a confident faith" or "and trusting completely in Jesus"

having our hearts sprinkled clean

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if had he made our hearts clean with his blood"

hearts sprinkled clean

Here "hearts" is a metonym for the conscience, the awareness of right and wrong. Being made clean is a metaphor for being forgiven and being given the status of righteousness.

sprinkled

Sprinkling blood of a sacrifice was a symbolic action done by the priests by which they applied the benefits of the covenant to people and to objects. See how you translated this in [Hebrews 9:19]

having our bodies washed with pure water

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if he had washed our bodies in pure water"

our bodies washed with pure water

Possible meanings are 1) "bodies" is a metonym that represents peoples' entire beings, and "washed with pure water" is a metaphor representing Christ making a person spiritually pure or 2) this is literal and it refers to Christian baptism.

Hebrews 10:23

Let us also hold firmly to the hope we confess

Here "hold firmly" is a metaphor that refers to a person determining to do something and refusing to stop. Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." The abstract noun "hope" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Let us be determined to continue confessing the things that we confidently expect from God"

Hebrews 10:24

General Information:

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Hebrews 10:25

Let us not abandon meeting together

You can make explicit that the people met to worship.

Alternate translation: "Let us not stop coming together to worship"

as you see the day coming closer

A future time is spoken of as if it were an object coming closer to the speaker. Here "the day" refers to when Jesus will return. Alternate translation: "as you know that Christ will return soon"

Hebrews 10:26

Connecting Statement:

The writer now gives his fourth warning.

we deliberately go on sinning

"we know we are sinning but we do it again and again"

after we have received the knowledge of the truth

Knowledge of the truth is spoken of as if it were an object that could be given by one person to another. Alternate translation: "after we have learned the truth"

the truth

The truth about God.

a sacrifice for sins no longer remains

No one is able to give a new sacrifice because Christ's sacrifice is the only one that works. Alternate translation: "no one can offer a sacrifice for which God will forgive our sins"

a sacrifice for sins

Here "sacrifice for sins" stands for "an effective way to sacrifice animals to take away sins"

Hebrews 10:27

of judgment

Of God's judgment, that is, that God will judge.

a fury of fire that will consume God's enemies

God's fury is spoken of as if it were fire that would burn up

his enemies.

Hebrews 10:28

of two or three witnesses

It is implied that this means "of at least two or three witness."

Hebrews 10:29

How much worse punishment do you think one deserves ... grace?

The author is emphasizing the greatness of the punishment for those who reject Christ. Alternate translation: "This was severe punishment. But the punishment will be even greater for anyone ... grace!"

who has trampled underfoot the Son of God

Someone who has disregarded Christ and scorned him is spoken of as if that person had walked on him. Alternate translation: "who has rejected the Son of God"

the Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus.

who has regarded the blood of the covenant as unholy

This shows how the person has trampled the Son of God.

Alternate translation: "by regarding the blood of the covenant as unholy"

has regarded

or "has treated"

the blood of the covenant

Here "blood" stands for Christ's death, by which God established the new covenant.

the blood by which he was sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the blood by which God sanctified him"

the Spirit of grace

"the Spirit of God, who provides grace"

Hebrews 10:30

General Information:

The word "we" here refers to the writer and all believers.

These two quotations come from the law that Moses gave in the Old Testament.

Vengeance belongs to me

Vengeance is spoken of as if it were an object that belongs to God, who has the right to do as he wishes with what he owns. God has the right to take vengeance on his enemies.

I will pay back

God taking vengeance is spoken of as if he were paying back the harmful things that someone has done to others.

Hebrews 10:31

to fall into the hands

Receiving God's full punishment is spoken of as if the person falls into God's hands. Here "hands" refers to God's power to judge. Alternate translation: "to receive the full punishment"

Hebrews 10:32

the former days

"the time in the past"

after you were enlightened

Learning the truth is spoken of as if God shined a light on the person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "after you learned the truth about Christ"

how you endured a great struggle in suffering

"how much suffering you had to endure"

Hebrews 10:33

Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"People ridiculed you by insulting you and persecuting you in public"

you shared with those
"you joined those"

Hebrews 10:34
a better and everlasting possession

God's eternal blessings are spoken of as a "possession."
Hebrews 10:35

do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward
A person no longer having confidence is spoken of as if the person were to throw confidence away, like a person would discard something worthless. The abstract noun "confidence" can be translated with the adjective "confident" or the adverb "confidently." Alternate translation: "do not stop being confident, because you will receive a great reward for being confident" or "do not stop confidently trusting in God, who will reward you greatly"

Hebrews 10:36
General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 10:37
General Information:

This is a quotation from the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament.

For in a very little while
You can make this explicit. Alternate translation: "As God said in the scriptures, 'For in a very little while' in a very little while"

"very soon"
Hebrews 10:38

General Information:

Here the author quotes from the prophet Habakkuk. This directly follows the quotation from the prophet Isaiah in the previous verse.

My righteous one ... If he shrinks ... with him
These refer to any of God's people in general. Alternate translation: "My faithful people ... If any one of them shrinks ... with that person" or "My faithful people ... If they shrink ... with them"

My righteous ... my soul will
Here "My" and "my soul" refer to God.
my soul

The soul is a metonym for the whole being.

shrinks back
stops doing the good thing he is doing

Hebrews 10:39

who turn back to destruction

A person who loses courage and faith are spoken of as if he were stepping back in fear from something. And

"destruction" is spoken of as if it were a destination.
Alternate translation: "who stop trusting God, whom God will destroy"

who have faith and preserve their souls
Living eternally with God is spoken of as if it were preserving one's soul. Here "soul" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "who have faith, which will result in our living with God forever"

Chapter 11

Hebrews 11 General Notes

Structure

The writer begins this chapter by telling what faith is. Then he gives many examples of people who had faith and how they lived.

Important concepts in this chapter

Faith

In both the old and new covenants, God required faith. Some people with faith performed miracles and were very powerful. Other people with faith suffered greatly.

Links:

[Hebrews 11:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 11

11:1-3

What are "the things hoped for"?

[11:1]

When the author wrote about the "things hoped for," he wanted people to think about things God promises to Christians. Eternal life is one of these promises.

See: Hope; Eternal Life

Why did the author write "faith is being sure of" something?

[11:1]

The author wrote that "faith is being sure of" something. He wrote this because he wanted people to know that if they believe in Jesus, then they should be confident about what God says. That is, if a person has real faith, they will completely trust God. Christians can be sure that God's promises are true. They will happen. This is true even though Christians may not see the promise come true while they are alive

See: Faith (Believe in)

Who were the “ancestors” about whom the author wrote?

[11:2]

The “ancestors” about whom the author wrote are the people he wrote about in 11:4-38. The author did not write this because he thought everyone reading it was actually descended from all these people. He used the word “ancestor” as a metaphor. He wrote this because he wanted people to live in the same way these people lived. That is, he wanted people to trust God in the same way these people trusted God.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Metaphor

How were the ancestors “approved for their faith”?

[11:2]

Scholars think God “approved” (μαρτυρέω/g3140) these ancestors. That is, God told the author about the people in chapter 11.

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Faith (Believe in)

Why did the author write “by faith we understand”?

[11:3]

The author wrote “by faith we understand” to tell Christians that God will help them to understand certain things if they trust him. He wanted them to remember that God gives people faith as a gift (see: Ephesians 2:8-9). Then, after the person believes in Jesus, God can also give him a gift of knowing things about God.

See: Faith (Believe in)

Why did the author write that the universe was created “by God’s command”?

[11:3]

The author wrote that the universe was created “by God’s command”. The author used the Greek word “command” (ρήμα/g4487) to say that the universe was created because God spoke. That is, God said, “Let there be light” and there was light. God also said “let there be” when he created all the rest of the world. God commanded all things to be created by the word of his mouth.

See: Genesis 1

See: Create (Creation, Creature)

11:4-12

Why did the author write that Abel’s sacrifice was a “better sacrifice”?

[11:4]

When the author wrote that Abel’s sacrifice was a “better sacrifice,” he wanted people to think that God approved it more than Cain’s sacrifice. Scholars think that Abel’s sacrifice was “better” because he offered it to God in faith. That is, Abel brought his offering to God out because he wanted to worship God. Abel brought the best of his flock to God as his offering.

See: Genesis 4:3-5

See: Sacrifice; Faith (Believe in)

Why did the author say that Abel was “attested to be righteous”?

[11:4]

The author said that Abel was “attested to be righteous” so people would know that God knew that Abel was a righteous man. That is, God said Abel was righteous.

Advice to translators: The English word “attest” means to say something formally. Sometimes attesting something may require the person to take an oath that it is true. So, “attest” is much more important than “say”.

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

Why did the author write “Abel still speaks”?

[11:4]

The author wrote “Abel still speaks” because people can still learn about what he did. Most scholars think that because the story of Abel was recorded in the scriptures, his example still “speaks” to people who believe in God (see: Genesis 4:3-10).

Why did the author write that “Enoch was taken up” so that he did not see death?

[11:5]

The author wrote that Enoch was “taken up” (μετατίθημι/g3346), that is to say, he was moved from one place to another. Scholars think Enoch was taken from earth and moved to heaven (see: Genesis 5:21-24). Therefore, he did not die.

See: Heaven

What was the “divine message” given to Noah?

[11:7]

The “divine message” given to Noah was in two parts. First, God gave Noah a warning that the earth would be destroyed by a flood. Second, God told Noah to build a very large boat to save his family from the coming flood.

See: Genesis 6:13-22

What was “godly reverence”?

[11:7]

"Godly reverence" is when a person deeply honors something God says or does. Some scholars think Noah experienced a sense of deep caution because of what God said to him. Noah obeyed God because of that caution. That is to say, he obeyed because he feared what God might do if he did not obey. Other scholars think Noah simply believed what God said. So, out of respect and honor for God, he built the ark the way God told him.

Why did the author write that Noah "condemned the world"?

[11:7]

The author wrote that Noah "condemned the world" to speak about the effect of what Noah did. The author did not want to say that Noah spoke something to condemn the world. That is, by building the ark, Noah showed that he trusted God instead of trusting what other people said. Some scholars think that Noah's faith in building the ark "condemned the world" because other people in the world did not believe that God was going to destroy the world with a flood. Other scholars think that when Noah and his family entered the ark and it began to rain, it proved that the people in the world were wrong. So, those people were condemned to die in the flood because they rejected God.

See: World; Condemn (Condemnation); Faith (Believe in)

How did Noah become an "heir of righteousness"?

[11:7]

Noah became an "heir of righteousness" in some way because he did what God said. That is, because Noah did what God said, God gave righteousness to him. This was in some way like an inheritance for Noah. Scholars think that Noah became an "heir of righteousness" because God declared him to be righteous. This was because Noah trusted and obeyed what God told him to do.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Righteous (Righteousness); Justify (Justification)

What was "to receive as an inheritance"?

[1:8]

Scholars think the author wanted to say that Abraham would take possession of the land of Canaan because God said so (see: Genesis 12:1). Then, after Abraham died, his descendants would in some way inherit that land.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

What is the "city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God"?

[11:10]

The "city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" was a city that did not exist when Abraham lived. Some scholars think the author spoke about a city in heaven. This is a city with permanent and firm foundations. This is because it is built by God, not by people. They think this is the same city called the "City of God" or the heavenly city of Jerusalem (see: Psalm 46:4; Revelation 21). Fewer scholars think the author spoke about the city of Jerusalem.

See: Heaven

Why did the author write that "Abraham received ability to father a child"?

[11:11]

Some scholars think that Abraham received "ability" (δύναμις/g1411) to father a child because God gave him special power to father a child. This had to happen because Abraham was too old to have a child. More scholars think that God gave Sarah the ability to conceive a child (see: Genesis 18:9-14). Sarah was too old to have children.

Why did the author write that Abraham was "almost dead"?

[11:12]

When the author wrote that Abraham was "almost dead," he wanted people to know that Abraham was so old there was no hope of him starting a family.

How were Abraham's descendants "as many as the stars in the sky"?

[11:12]

When the author said that Abraham's descendants were "as many as the stars in the sky" he used a metaphor. He wanted people to know that nobody could count Abraham's descendants.

See: Metaphor; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

11:13-16

Who were "all these" about which the author spoke?

[11:13]

When the author wrote about "all these" he wrote about the people in 11:4-12.

Why did the author write that they were "foreigners and exiles on earth"?

[11:13]

The author wrote that the people he spoke about were "foreigners and exiles on earth" as a metaphor. He wanted people to think that these people trusted God completely. That is, they did not depend on anyone or anything on earth. So, it was as if they did not belong to any place on earth.

The people in 11:4-12 all admitted they were "foreigners and exiles on earth" because they believed God had given them an inheritance. They believed their inheritance was something they would find in heaven and not on earth.

See: Metaphor; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Heaven
What was the "city" God prepared for the people of faith?

[11:16]

Scholars think the author spoke about a "city" prepared in heaven. They think this city will be the new Jerusalem.

See: Revelation 21

See: Heaven

11:17-28

Why did God say to Abraham, "through Isaac your descendants will be named"?

[11:18]

God said to Abraham "through Isaac your descendants will be named." Before this, God promised Abraham that he would be "father of many nations." God spoke about his chosen people, that is Israel. Now, God told Abraham that he would keep this promise "through Isaac." That is, Abraham's first son, Ishmael, and any other sons of Abraham were not part of God's promise. Scholars think God was very specific that Abraham's descendants were to inherit these promises through Isaac. So God promised Abraham that he would have a second son, Isaac, and that God was going to make a covenant with Isaac (see: Genesis 17:15-21).

See: Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Covenant with Abraham; People of God; Covenant

Why did the author write "figuratively speaking"?

[11:19]

When the author used the words "figuratively speaking," he told people he used a metaphor. That is, it was as if Abraham already thought of Isaac as dead. The author wanted people to remember that Abraham had completely given Isaac to be sacrificed. Abraham bound Isaac and placed him on the altar. Abraham took out his knife to slay Isaac. But God stopped Abraham from actually killing Isaac. Instead of Isaac, God provided Abraham with a ram to sacrifice. Scholars think this was a symbol of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

See: Genesis 22:1-18

See: Metaphor; Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Sacrifice; Altar; Atonement (Atonement); Symbol

Why did the author write "Jacob worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff"?

[11:21]

The author wrote that "Jacob worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff." Scholars think that because of Jacob's old age, he bowed before God but used his staff to support himself. Bowing before God was a sign of worshipping God and showing him honor.

See: Worship; Sign

Why did the author write that Joseph "instructed them about his bones"?

[11:22]

The author wrote that Joseph "instructed them about his bones" to say that Joseph told his family what he wanted them to do with his body after he died.

See: Genesis 50:24-26

What were the "pleasures of sin" about which the author wrote?

[11:25]

Scholars disagree about what the "pleasures of sin" were. Some scholars think the author wrote about when Moses was a leader in Egypt. While he was there, he was tempted by many things. Other scholars think Moses knew what God had called him to do. So if he did not obey God, that would be sin.

See: Sin; Tempt (Temptation); Call (Calling)

See Map: Egypt

What was the "disgrace of following Christ"?

[11:26]

When the author wrote the "disgrace of following Christ," he wanted people to think that Moses suffered in some way like Jesus did. Moses was persecuted because he believed God. Jesus was also persecuted. So the author used this as a metaphor to speak about Moses.

The author did not intend to say that Jesus lived at the same time as Moses.

See: Messiah (Christ); Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did the author say that Moses "endured"?

[11:27]

The author wrote that Moses "endured" (καρτερέω/g2594) in faith when he left Egypt. That is, he kept trusting God. He kept obeying God. He saw what God did when he was in Egypt, though he did not see God. Because of God's mighty power, Moses wanted to obey God.

See: Faith (Believe in)

See Map: Egypt

Why did the author write that Moses "kept the Passover"?

[11:28]

To say that Moses “kept the Passover” was to say that Moses established a special celebration for Israel. This was called “Passover.” It was so the people would remember how God led Israel out of slavery in Egypt. When it was time for Israel to leave Egypt, God commanded the people to put the blood of a slaughtered lamb on the frames of their doors. This was to show the angel of God which houses to pass over (see: Exodus 12:1-13). That is, it was to tell the angel not to kill the firstborn in those houses.

See: Passover; Angel; Firstborn (Birthright)

11:29-40

Where was the “Sea of Reeds”?

[11:29]

See Map: Sea of Reeds

What happened in Jericho?

[11:30]

See: Joshua 6:1-21

See Map: Jericho

Who was Rahab?

[11:31]

See: Joshua 6:22-27

Who was Gideon?

[11:32]

See: Judges 6-8

Who was Barak?

[11:32]

See: Judges 4:1-16

Who was Samson?

[11:32]

See: Judges 13-16

Who was Jephthah?

[11:32]

See: Judges 11-12

Who was David?

[11:32]

See: 1 Samuel 16

Who was Samuel?

[11:32]

See: 1 Samuel 1:19-28; 3:1-21

Why did the author write that all those men “worked justice”?

[11:33]

When the author wrote that those men “worked justice” he wanted people to think that they established righteousness. That is, they made things just. They did this in the places where they ruled.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Justice (Just, Unjust)

Why did the author write “stopped the mouths of lions”?

[11:33]

The author wrote “stopped the mouths of lions” so people would think about Daniel. Daniel was thrown into a lion’s den. This was because he worshipped God. This angered the king of the country where Daniel was a slave. However, the angels of God prevented the lions from attacking Daniel (see: Daniel 6:16-22).

See: Worship; Angel

Why did the author write “extinguished the power of fire”?

[11:34]

When the author wrote “extinguished the power of fire”, he wanted people to think about the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These were three men from Israel who refused to fall down and worship the king, Nebuchadnezzar. The king had them thrown into a fiery furnace because of this. However, the angel of the Lord did not allow the fire to harm the three men (see: Daniel 3:14-28).

Who “received back their dead”?

[11:35]

Two women in the Old Testament “received back their dead.” That is, their sons died, but God brought the sons back to life. A widow from Zarephath had a son who became sick. After some time, he died. Elijah the prophet prayed to God, and God raised the boy back to life (see: 1 Kings 17:8-23). Another woman, who was from Shunem, had a son who became

sick. After some time, he also died. Elisha the prophet prayed to God and God raised the boy back to life (see: 2 Kings 4:8-34).

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Resurrect (Resurrection) ; Prophet; Pray (Prayer)

What was to be "stoned"?

[11:37]

In ancient times, a person could be "stoned" because people thought they did a great wrong. That is, people would throw large stones on the person to kill him. Scholars think the author wrote this about Zechariah, a priest and prophet in the Old Testament (see: 2 Chronicles 24:20-21). Some scholars think that the prophet Jeremiah, too, was stoned to death. They think he was stoned by the religious leaders in Jerusalem.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Priest (Priesthood); Prophet

Who was "sawn in two"?

[11:37]

Scholars think that Isaiah, the prophet, was killed by being sawn in two. Ancient writings other than the Bible wrote about the death of Isaiah.

See: Prophet; Ancient Writings

Who was "killed with the sword"?

[11:37]

Elijah spoke about prophets who "killed with the sword" by the leaders of Israel (see: 1 Kings 19:10).

See: Prophet

How was the world "not worthy" of all those who were put to death?

[11:38]

The author wrote that the world was "not worthy" of all those who were put to death. That is, he wanted people to think that the people who were put to death were more noble or righteous than the people who killed them. Scholars think the author meant that people thought those who were put to death for believing God did not deserve to continue living. This was because many people thought God's prophets were evil.

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

Why did the author write "they did not receive the promise"?

[11:39]

The author wrote "they did not receive the promise." He wrote "they" to speak about all the people he wrote about in chapter 11. He wrote "did not receive the promise" to speak about the long time God uses to do what he says. So the people in chapter 11 lived and died before God did all that he said he will do. That is, God intended to reveal part of his promise in the coming of Jesus, who is the messiah. God also holds a part of his promise to be revealed at the second coming of Jesus.

See: Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth; Reveal (Revelation)

What is "something better"?

[11:40]

When the author wrote "something better," he spoke about Jesus. That is, now people can believe in Jesus. Then God forgives their sins. Eventually, everyone who believes in Jesus will live with God forever in heaven. This is better than when people had to follow the Law of Moses and make sacrifices.

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Eternal Life; Law of Moses; Sin; Heaven

Why did the author write "without us"?

[11:40]

When the author wrote "without us", he wanted people to know that without Christians, God's plan for the world is not complete. Most scholars think that when the author said "without us" he was speaking about all the people who ever believe in Jesus. That includes all people who believe up until the time Jesus returns to earth.

See: Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth

Hebrews 11:1

Connecting Statement:

The author tells three things about faith in this brief introduction.

Now

This word is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Here the author starts to explain the meaning of "faith."

faith is being sure of the things hoped for

Here "hope" refers to having the confident expectation that God will do what he promised to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "faith is being sure of the

things we hope for" or "when we have faith, we are sure that we will receive from God the things we confidently wait for"

that are not seen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that we still have not seen" or "that still have not happened"

Hebrews 11:2

For because of this

"Because they were certain about events that had not happened"

the ancestors were approved for their faith

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"God approved of our ancestors because they had faith"
the ancestors

The author is speaking to the Hebrews about Hebrew
ancestors. Alternate translation: "our ancestors"
Hebrews 11:3

the universe was created by God's command
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"God created the universe by commanding it to exist"
what is visible was not made out of things that were visible

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"God did not create what we see out of things that were
visible"
Hebrews 11:4

Connecting Statement:

The writer then gives many examples (mostly from Old
Testament writings) of people who lived by faith even
though they did not receive what God had promised while
they lived on the earth.

he was attested to be righteous
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"God declared him to be righteous" or "God declared that
Abel was righteous"

Abel still speaks
Reading the scriptures and learning about Abel's faith is
spoken of as if Abel himself were still speaking. Alternate
translation: "we still learn from what Abel did"
Hebrews 11:5

It was by faith that Enoch was taken up so that he did not see death
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It
was by faith that Enoch did not die because God took him"
see death

This speaks of death as if it were an object that people can
see. It means to experience death. Alternate translation:
"die"

before he was taken up
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"before God took him"

it was testified that he had pleased God
This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1)
"God said that Enoch had pleased him" or 2) "people said
that Enoch pleased God."
Hebrews 11:6

Now without faith
Here "Now" does not mean "at this moment," but is used to
draw attention to the important point that follows.
without faith it is impossible to please him

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "a
person can please him only if he has faith"
that anyone coming to God

Wanting to worship God and belong to his people is spoken
of as if the person is literally coming to God. Alternate
translation: "that anyone who wants to belong to God"

he is a rewarder of those
"he rewards those"

those who seek him
Those who learn about God and make an effort to obey him
are spoken of as if they were seeking to find him.

Hebrews 11:7

having been given a divine message
This can be stated in active form and in other terms.
Alternate translation: "because God told him"
about things not yet seen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"about things no one had ever seen before" or "about
events that had not happened yet"
the world

Here "world" refers to the world's human population.
Alternate translation: "the people living in the world at that
time"

became an heir of the righteousness
Noah is spoken of as if he were to inherit property and
wealth from a family member. Alternate translation:
"received from God the righteousness"

that is according to faith
"that God gives to those who have faith in him"
Hebrews 11:8

when he was called
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"when God called him"

went out to the place
"left his home to go to the place"
that he was to receive as an inheritance

The land that God promised to give Abraham's descendants
is spoken of as if it were an inheritance that Abraham was
to receive. Alternate translation: "that God would give him"

He went out
"He left his home"
Hebrews 11:9

he lived in the land of promise as a foreigner
This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "promise" is
expressed as the verb "promised." Alternate translation: "he
lived as a foreigner in the land God had promised to him"
fellow heirs

"heirs together." This speaks about Abraham, Isaac, and
Jacob as if they were heirs that would receive an
inheritance from their father.

Hebrews 11:10
the city with foundations
"the city that has foundations." Having foundations
indicates that the city is permanent. Alternate translation:
"the eternal city"

whose architect and builder is God
"which is designed and built by God" or "which God would
design and build"
architect

a person who designs buildings and cities
Hebrews 11:11

General Information:
Many versions interpret this verse as referring to Sarah,
and others interpret it as referring to Abraham.

It was by faith
The abstract noun "faith" can be expressed with the verb
"believe." Possible meanings are 1) it was by Sarah's faith.
Alternate translation: "It was because Sarah believed God ...
she" or 2) it was by Abraham's faith. Alternate translation:
"It was because Abraham believed God ... he"

Sarah herself was barren

Sarah was not able to have children.

she received ability to conceive

Possible meanings are 1) Sarah received the ability to conceive a child. Alternate translation "she became able to bear a child" or 2) Abraham received the ability to father a child. Alternate translation: "he became able to have a child"

even though she was too old

Possible meanings are that 1) Sarah was too old or 2) Abraham was too old.

since she considered as faithful the one who had given the promise "because she believed God, who had given the promise, to be faithful." Possible meanings are 1) Sarah considered God to be faithful or 2) Abraham considered God to be faithful. Hebrews 11:12

descendants as many as the stars in the sky and as countless as sand by the seashore

This simile means that Abraham had very many descendants.

as countless as sand by the seashore

This means that just as there are so many grains of sand on the seashore that no one can count them all, Abraham had so many descendants that no one can count them all.

Hebrews 11:13

without receiving the promises

This speaks of promises as if they are objects that a person receives. Alternate translation: "without receiving what God had promised them"

they saw and greeted them from far off

Future promised events are spoken of as if they were travelers arriving from far away. Seeing and greeting the promised events is a metaphor for believing and being glad that the events will happen. Alternate translation: "they believed and were glad about what God would do in the future"

they were foreigners and exiles on earth

Here "foreigners" and "exiles" mean basically the same thing. This emphasizes that this earth was not their true home. They were waiting for their true home that God would make for them.

Hebrews 11:14

a homeland

"a country for them to belong to"

Hebrews 11:15

General Information:

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Hebrews 11:16

heavenly one

"heavenly country" or "country in heaven"

God is not ashamed to be called their God

This can be expressed in active and positive form. Alternate translation: "God is happy to have them call him their God" or "God is proud to have them say that he is their God"

Hebrews 11:17

when he was tested

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when God tested him"

Hebrews 11:18

to whom it had been said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to whom God said"

that your descendants will be named

Here "named" means assigned or designated. This sentence can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that I will designate your descendants"

Hebrews 11:19

God was able to raise up Isaac from the dead

"God was able to cause Isaac to live again"

to raise up ... the dead

In this verse, "to raise up" is to make alive again. The words "the dead" speak of all dead people together in the underworld.

figuratively speaking

"in a manner of speaking." This means that what the author says next is not to be understood literally. God did not bring Isaac back from death literally. But because Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac when God stopped him, it was as if God brought him back from the dead.

it was from them

"it was from the dead"

he received him back

"Abraham received Isaac back"

Hebrews 11:20

General Information:

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Hebrews 11:21

Jacob worshiped

"Jacob worshiped God"

Hebrews 11:22

when his end was near

Here "his end" is a polite way of referring to death.

Alternate translation: "when he was about to die"

spoke of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt

"spoke of when the children of Israel would leave Egypt"

the children of Israel

"the Israelites" or "the descendants of Israel"

instructed them about his bones

Joseph died while in Egypt. He wanted his people to take his bones with them when they left Egypt so they could bury his bones in the land that God promised them.

Hebrews 11:23

Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Moses's parents hid him for three months after he was born"

Hebrews 11:24

had grown up

"had become an adult"

refused to be called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"refused to allow people to call him"

Hebrews 11:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Hebrews 11:26

disgrace for the sake of Christ

This can be reworded so that the abstract noun "disgrace" is expressed as the verb "disrespect." Alternate translation:

"being disrespected for the sake of Christ" or "the experience of people disrespecting him because he did what Christ would want"

he was looking ahead to his reward

Thinking about something that will happen in the future is spoken of as looking ahead to it. Alternate translation: "he was thinking about the reward he would receive"

Hebrews 11:27

he endured as if he were seeing the one who is invisible

Moses is spoken of as if he saw God, who is invisible.

the one who is invisible

"the one no one can see"

Hebrews 11:28

he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood

This was the first Passover. Moses kept it by obeying God's commands concerning the Passover and by commanding the people to obey them every year. Alternate translation: "he commanded the people to obey God's commands concerning the Passover and to sprinkle blood on their doors" or "he established the Passover and the sprinkling of blood"

the sprinkling of the blood

This refers to God's command to the Israelites to kill a lamb and spread its blood on the doorposts of every house where Israelites lived. This would prevent the destroyer from harming their firstborn sons. This was one of the Passover commands.

should not touch

Here "touch" refers to harming or to killing someone.

Alternate translation: "would not harm" or "would not kill"

Hebrews 11:29

they passed through the Sea of Reeds

"the Israelites passed through the Sea of Reeds"

they were swallowed up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the water swallowed up the Egyptians"

they were swallowed up

The water is spoken of as if it were an animal. Alternate translation: "the Egyptians drowned in the water"

Hebrews 11:30

they had been circled around for seven days

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Israelites had marched around the walls for seven days"

seven days

"7 days"

Hebrews 11:31

had received the spies in peace

"had peacefully received the spies"

Hebrews 11:32

Connecting Statement:

The writer continues to speak of what God did for the ancestors of the people of Israel.

What more can I say?

The author uses a question to emphasize that there are many examples that he could have quoted. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "And there are many more examples."

the time will fail me

"I will not have enough time"

Barak

This is the name of a man.

Hebrews 11:33

It was through faith that they

Here "they" does not mean that each person listed in 11:32 did all the things the author is about to mention. The author means in general these are the kinds of things that those with faith were able to do. Alternate translation: "It was through faith that men like these"

they conquered kingdoms

Here "kingdoms" refers to the people who lived there.

Alternate translation: "they defeated the people of foreign kingdoms"

committed righteousness

Possible meanings are 1) "did righteous deeds" or "did what was right" or 2) "judged others fairly" or "administered justice."

They stopped the mouths of lions

These words begin a list of some of the ways God saved believers from death. Alternate translation: "They kept lions from eating them"

Hebrews 11:34

quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword

These are some of the ways God saved believers from death. Alternate translation: "they kept fire from burning them, they kept their enemies from killing them"

were made strong when they were weak

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"they received strength from God when they were weak"

became mighty in battle, and defeated

"and they became mighty in battle and defeated"

Hebrews 11:35

Women received back their dead by resurrection

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun

"resurrection." The word "dead" is a nominal adjective. It can be stated as a verb. Alternate translation: "Women received back alive those who had died"

Others were tortured, not accepting release

It is implied that their enemies would have released them from prison under certain conditions. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Others accepted torture rather than release from prison" or "Others allowed their enemies to torture them rather than doing what their enemies required of them in order to release them"

Others were tortured

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Others allowed those who imprisoned them to torture them" or "Others endured terrible pain"

a better resurrection

Possible meanings are 1) these people will experience a better life in heaven than what they experienced in this world or 2) these people will have a better resurrection than those who did not have faith. Those with faith will live forever with God. Those without faith will live forever separated from God.

Hebrews 11:36

Others experienced mocking and whippings, and even chains and imprisonment

This can be reworded so that the abstract nouns are

expressed as verbs. Alternate translation: "People afflicted others by mocking and whipping them and even putting them in chains and imprisoning them"

Hebrews 11:37

They were stoned. They were sawn in two. They were killed with the sword

These can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People threw stones at others. People sawed others in two. People killed others with the sword"

went about

"went from place to place" or "lived all the time"

in sheepskins and goatskins

"wearing only the skins of sheep and goats"

They were destitute

"They had nothing" or "They were very poor"

Hebrews 11:38

The world was not worthy

Here "world" refers to the people. Alternate translation:

"The people of this world were not worthy"

They were always wandering about

This was because they had no place to live.

in caves and holes in the ground

"some lived in caves or in holes in the ground"

Hebrews 11:39

Although all these people were approved by God because of their faith, they did not receive the promise

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God honored all these because of their faith, but they did not themselves receive what God had promised"

the promise

This expression stands for "what God had promised them."

Hebrews 11:40

so that without us, they would not be made perfect

This can be stated in positive and active form. Alternate translation: "in order that God would perfect us and them together"

Chapter 12

Hebrews 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

After telling of the value of discipline, the author begins a series of exhortations. (See; exhort)

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 12:5-6, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Discipline

God wants his people to do what is right. When they do what is wrong, he needs to correct or punish them. He does this just as earthly fathers correct and punish children whom they love. (See: discipline)

Links:

[Hebrews 12:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 12

12:1-3

What is the "large crowd of witnesses" that surround Christians?

[12:1]

Scholars think the "large crowd of witnesses" are all the people about which the author wrote in chapter 11. The author did not want to say that they are watching the things Christians do. Instead, they are "witnesses" because what happened to them shows how God is faithful to his people.

Why did the author write "lay aside every weight and easily entangling sin"?

[12:1]

When the author wrote that Christians must "lay aside every weight and easily entangling sin," he used a metaphor. Athletes raced. Before a race, they would remove extra clothes they did not need to wear. This would help them to run more easily. For the Christian, sin is like a "weight" that can keep the Christian from doing things that please God. Scholars think the author spoke about sins by which individual Christians are easily caught doing.

See: Metaphor; Sin

What is the "race that is placed before us"?

[12:1]

Scholars think that when the author wrote about the "race that is placed before us," he spoke about the life that God designs for each Christian. He wanted Christians to obey God. He wanted them to do this even when it is hard.

How was Jesus the "founder and perfecter of the faith"?

[12:2]

Jesus was the "founder" (ἀρχηγός/g0747) of the faith because he started something new. Christians must first believe in Jesus. Jesus was the "perfecter" (τελειωτής/g5051) of the faith because he makes it complete. All of a Christian's faith is about Jesus.

See: Philippians 1:6

See: Faith (Believe in)

What was the “joy that was placed before” Jesus?

[12:2]

Scholars think various things about the “joy that was placed before” Jesus.

Some scholars think Jesus had joy because he knew his suffering on the cross would redeem people from their sins. Some scholars think Jesus had joy because he knew that he would return to heaven. So he would once again be in the presence of God the Father. Some scholars think Jesus had joy because he knew that his disciples would also have joy themselves (see: John 15:11; 16:20).

See: Redeem (Redemption); Heaven; God the Father; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful); Cross; Sin; Presence of God; Disciple

Why did the author say Jesus “endured the cross, despised its shame”?

[12:2]

When the author wrote that Jesus “endured the cross, despised its shame,” he wanted people to know that Jesus thought differently about being crucified. Scholars think that people who were crucified experienced the worst kind of shame.

When the author said that Jesus “despised its shame,” he meant that Jesus was not ashamed to be crucified. This is because he was committed to obeying the will of God.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Cross; Shame (Ashamed); Will of God

Why did the author write that Jesus “sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”?

[12:2]

See: Hebrews 8:1

How did Jesus experience “opposition from sinners against himself”?

[12:3]

Scholars disagree about the meaning of the “opposition from sinners against himself.” Some scholars think the author spoke about some Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. They tried to stop Jesus from doing the things he wanted to do. They also insulted him for what he said. Other scholars think the “opposition” was from the crowd of people who brought Jesus to the cross. They mocked him. They spit on him. They insulted him because he claimed to be the messiah.

See: Sin; Messiah (Christ)

12:4-11

Why did the author write that “Christians have not yet resisted or struggled against sin to the point of blood”?

[12:4]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote that “Christians have not yet resisted or struggled against sin to the point of blood.” This was a metaphor. Some scholars think the author wanted to speak about Christians suffering because of sins. That is, they had not yet had to struggle against Satan to the point of shedding blood. Other scholars think the author said that Jesus had to suffer far worse than anything a Christian ever had to suffer.

See: Metaphor; Blood; Sin; Satan (The Devil)

Why did the author write that the “Lord disciplines everyone whom he loves”?

[12:6]

When the author wrote that the “Lord disciplines everyone whom he loves,” he used a metaphor about a father and his children. He wanted people to know that God has a strong love for all his people. This is like a father loves his children. But even more, he wants his children to live in the right way. That is, he wants people to obey him. God disciplines Christians so they will not sin. God does this because he loves Christians. He wants what is best for them.

See: Metaphor; Righteous (Righteousness); Sin; Family of God

Why did the author write “illegitimate”?

[12:8]

Scholars disagree about why the author wrote “illegitimate.” Some scholars think the author used the word “illegitimate” (νόθος/g3541) to say that the father had no interest in the child. Other scholars think the author wanted to say that people who reject God’s discipline show that they are not true sons of God.

See: Family of God

What is God’s “holiness”?

[12:10]

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

How is it possible for Christians to share God’s holiness?

[12:10]

Some scholars think that God enables Christians to “share in his holiness.” He does this by disciplining them. That is, Christians are made more and more to be like Jesus. They do more of the types of things that Jesus did. Other scholars think that Christians “share in” God’s holiness when they become more and more separated from the things of the world. They begin to want to do things that honor God.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); World

What is the “peaceful fruit of righteousness”?

[12:11]

The author wrote about the “peaceful fruit of righteousness” as a metaphor. He wrote about “fruit” to get people to think about the result of the discipline that he wrote about earlier. He wanted to say that discipline helped Christians to live in the right way. Scholars think that this gives Christians peace.

See: Fruit (Metaphor); Metaphor; Righteous (Righteousness)

12:12-17

What are “hands that hang down”?

[12:12]

When the author wrote “hands that hang down,” he used a metaphor. Some scholars think the author spoke about Christians who were exhausted. They were exhausted from trying to live as Jesus lived. They think the author wanted Christians to encourage each other. That is, he wanted them to continue together to do the work to which God called them. Other scholars think the author wanted Christians to not accept defeat. That is, he wanted them to fight sin, that is, work hard to try to not sin.

See: Metaphor; Call (Calling)

What are your weak knees?

[12:12]

When the author wrote “your weak knees,” he used a metaphor. Scholars think the author spoke about Christians who felt unable to face the trials in their lives. That is to say, they feared things going on around them. To “strengthen...your weak knees” meant to regain your courage. It meant to live in a way that honors God when it is very difficult to live in this way.

See: Metaphor; Trial

Why did the author write “make straight paths for your feet”?

[12:13]

When the author wrote “make straight paths for your feet,” he used a metaphor. He spoke about how Christians should honor God and obey him. Some scholars think the author encouraged Christians to keep doing the right things. This also helped other Christians to do the right things. Other scholars think there were many opportunities for Christians to do things that led to evil. Because there were opportunities like this, the author encouraged Christians to focus on following the ways of God.

See: Psalm 5:8; Proverbs 3:6; Micah 3:9

See: Metaphor

How do people “lack God’s grace”?

[12:15]

Scholars disagree about how people “lack God’s grace.” Some scholars think the author spoke about a person who was about to believe in Jesus, but for some reason the person did not. They do not believe in Jesus. Other scholars think the author wanted Christians to encourage one another so that no one misses the blessings from God. That is, the author spoke about a person who misses it when God favors them.

See: Grace; Bless (Blessing)

What is a “root of bitterness”?

[12:15]

A “root of bitterness” is about a person who is very angry. This makes them do the wrong things. Their anger lasts for a long time. How does a person become “polluted” with bitterness?

When the author said a person becomes “polluted” with bitterness, he used a metaphor to say that this is like the person becoming unclean. A person who allows bitterness to “pollute” (μυαίνω/g3392) them. That is, it makes them think the wrong things and do the wrong things.

See: Metaphor; Clean and Unclean

What is “sexually immoral”?

[12:16]

See: Sexual Immorality

What is an “ungodly person”?

[12:16]

An “ungodly person” is a person who does not honor and obey God. He says and does wrong things. He may even deny that God exists.

How did Esau sell his own birthright?

[12:16]

See: Genesis 25:29-34

Why did the author write that Esau “found no opportunity for repentance”?

[12:17]

When the author wrote that Esau “found no opportunity for repentance” he wanted people to think that Esau could not

change what he had done. When he sold his birthright, the agreement was final and could never be changed.

See: Repent (Repentance)

12:18-24

What was “a mountain that can be touched”?

[12:18]

See: Exodus 19:16-19; 20:18-21; Deuteronomy 4:11-12

What was the “trumpet blast” about which the author spoke?

[12:19]

See: Exodus 19:18-20

Why did the author say “you have not come...to a voice that speaks words”?

[12:19]

The author said, “you have not come ...to a voice that speaks words.” He wanted people to think about the time when Israel wandered in the wilderness. When God spoke to the people of Israel, they heard thunder and saw lightning and were afraid of the voice of the Lord. They wanted Moses to speak to the Lord. Then Moses told them what God said.

See: Exodus 20:18-21

What was “Mount Zion”?

[12:22]

See: Zion

What was the “city of the living God”?

[12:22]

The “city of the living God” was a way people spoke about where God himself lives. There was not a place on earth where people can go. Some people also called this the “heavenly Jerusalem”.

See: Heaven

What was the “congregation of the firstborn”?

[12:23]

The “congregation of the firstborn” is a way to speak about God's people. Some scholars think this is all people who believe in God. That is, it includes people who believed in God before Jesus lived. The author wrote about some of these people in chapter 11. It also includes everyone who has ever believed in Jesus. Other scholars think the “congregation of the firstborn” are angels. This is because God created angels before he created people. The word “firstborn” (πρωτότοκος/g4416) spoke about a shared inheritance. That is, Christians all will share in one inheritance. This is an inheritance given by God to both men and angels.

See: Angel; Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); People of God; Firstborn (Birthright)

Why did the author write “registered in heaven”?

[12:23]

When the author wrote “registered in heaven,” he wanted people to think about God having a written record of everyone who believes in him. Some people call this the “book of life” (see: Philippians 4:3; Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 21:27).

To be “registered in heaven” means a person is one of the people who are at peace with God and will live with God in heaven forever. Their names are written down, and they are considered citizens of heaven (see: Ephesians 2:18-22).

See: Grace; Heaven; Citizen

Who are the “spirits of the righteous ones”?

[12:23]

The “spirits of the righteous ones” are all people who are Christians when they die.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Righteous (Righteousness)

What is the “new covenant”?

[12:24]

See: New Covenant

How was Jesus the “mediator” of the new covenant?

[12:24]

Jesus became the “mediator” (μεσίτης/g3316) of the new covenant between God and man. In some way, Jesus stands between God and sinners. He speaks to God for them. He does this so they can be at peace with God.

See: Mediator; New Covenant; Sin

What was the “sprinkled blood”?

[12:24]

When the author wrote about “sprinkled blood,” he used a metaphor. All covenants in the Bible were made using blood. That is, animals were killed so their blood could be sprinkled to make the covenant. In the same way, Jesus made the new covenant between God and man effective by shedding his own blood. The blood of Jesus atoned for man's sin once.

See: Metaphor; Blood; Covenant; Atone (Atonement); Sin; New Covenant

What was “Abel's blood”?

[12:24]

When the author wrote "Abel's blood," he wanted people to think about how Cain murdered his brother Abel (see: Genesis 4:3-10). Abel's blood cried out from the ground for vengeance (see: Genesis 4:10). That is, "Abel's blood" is a way to speak about when God punishes someone who does wrong. On the other hand, Jesus's blood proclaims forgiveness and salvation.

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Avenge (Vengeance, Revenge); Punish (Punishment)

12:25-29

Who was the "one who is warning from heaven"?

[12:25]

Scholars disagree about who is the "one who is warning from heaven." Some scholars think the gospel was God's message to all people. The gospel says there is a blessing for people who believe in Jesus. However, it also warns that God will judge people who do not believe in Jesus. Other scholars think the author spoke specifically about Jesus. Jesus came to earth to teach people about God. Some of what Jesus taught was a warning about God's judgment.

See: Heaven; Gospel; Judge (Judgment); Bless (Blessing)

When did God's voice shake the earth?

[12:26]

See: Exodus 19:18

Why did the author write that God will also shake the heavens?

[12:26]

When the author wrote that God will also shake the heavens, he used the metaphor of an earthquake to speak about God's final judgment. The Old Testament spoke about this (see: Exodus 19:18; Psalm 68:8, 77:18, 114:7; Isaiah 13:1-22; Joel 2:1-11; Haggai 2:6, 2:21, 12:26). He wanted people to think that when that happens, God will remove everything that is evil.

See: Isaiah 2:19-21; 13:13

See: Metaphor; Judge (Judgment); Spirit (Spiritual); Jesus' Return to Earth; Heaven; Day of Judgment; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What are the things "that can be shaken"?

[12:27]

Scholars think that when the author wrote about things "that can be shaken" he was speaking about created things. This meant the world and everything in it will be shaken.

What are the things that "cannot be shaken"?

[12:27]

The author wrote about things that "cannot be shaken." This is a metaphor. God's blessings and promises that are part of God's new covenant and the kingdom of God cannot be stopped. They will happen as God promised.

See: New Covenant; Kingdom of God; Righteous (Righteousness)

Why did the author write that God is "a consuming fire"?

[12:29]

The author wrote that God is "a consuming fire" so people would think about God's final judgment. Scholars think the author spoke about God burning away all impurities in the life of a Christian (see: Luke 3:17, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15). This makes someone perfectly clean. This will purify them for entrance into heaven.

See: Judge (Judgment); Heaven; Day of Judgment; Clean and Unclean

Hebrews 12:1

General Information:

The words "we" and "us" refer to the author and his readers.

Connecting Statement:

Because of this great number of Old Testament believers, the author talks of the life of faith that believers should live.

we are surrounded by such a large cloud of witnesses

The writer speaks about the Old Testament believers as if they were a cloud that surrounds the present-day believers. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "such a large cloud of witnesses surrounds us" or "there are so many examples of faithful people about whom we learn in the scriptures"

witnesses

Here "witnesses" refers to the Old Testament believers in

chapter 11 who lived before the race of faith that believers now run.

let us lay aside every weight and easily entangling sin

Here "weight" and "easily entangling sin" are spoken of as if a person could take them off himself and put them down.

every weight

Attitudes or habits that keep believers from trusting and obeying God are spoken of as if they were loads that would make it difficult for a person to run while carrying.

easily entangling sin

Sin is spoken of as if it were a net or something else that can trip people up and make them fall. Alternate translation: "sin that makes obeying God difficult"

Let us run with perseverance the race that is placed before us

Following Jesus is spoken of as if it were running a race.

Alternate translation: "Let us continue obeying what God has commanded us, just like a runner keeps going until the

race is over"

Hebrews 12:2

the founder and perfecter of the faith

Jesus gives us faith and makes our faith perfect by causing us to reach our goal. Alternate translation: "creator and finisher of our faith" or "the one who enables us to have faith from beginning to end"

For the joy that was placed before him

The joy that Jesus would experience is spoken of as if God the Father had placed it before him as a goal to reach.

despised its shame

This means he was not concerned about the shame of dying on a cross.

sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

To sit at the "right hand of God" is a symbolic action of receiving great honor and authority from God. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Hebrews 1:3]

Hebrews 12:3

General Information:

The word "your" is plural and here refers to the readers. become weary and lose heart

Here "heart" represents a person's thoughts and emotions. Alternate translation: "become tired and discouraged"

Hebrews 12:4

Connecting Statement:

The author of Hebrews has been comparing the Christian life to a race.

You have not yet resisted or struggled against sin

Here "sin" is spoken of as if it were a person whom someone fights in a battle. Alternate translation: "You have not yet had to endure attacks of sinners"

to the point of blood

Resisting opposition so much that one dies for it is spoken of as if one reached a certain place where he would die.

of blood

Here "blood" refers to death. Alternate translation: "of death"

Hebrews 12:5

the encouragement that instructs you

Old Testament scripture is spoken of as if it were a person who could encourage others. Alternate translation: "what God has instructed you in the scriptures to encourage you"

as sons ... My son

The word translated "sons" and "son" is specifically the word for a male child. In that culture the family line continued through the sons, not normally through the daughters. However, as stated by the UDB and some English versions, the author is directing his words to both males and females.

My son ... corrected by him

Here the author is quoting from the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament, which was the words of Solomon to his male children.

do not think lightly of the Lord's discipline, nor grow weary

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "take it very seriously when the Lord disciplines you, and do not grow weary"

nor grow weary

"and do not become discouraged"

you are corrected by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he corrects you"

Hebrews 12:6

every son he receives

The word translated "son" is specifically the word for a male child. In that culture the family line continued through the sons, not normally through the daughters.

Hebrews 12:7

Endure suffering as discipline

"Understand that during suffering God teaches us discipline"

God deals with you as with sons

The readers are God's sons, and so God deals with them the way a father properly deals with sons.

sons ... son

All occurrences of these words may be stated to include males and females. Alternate translation: "children ... child" what son is there whom his father does not discipline?

The author makes the point through this question that every good father disciplines his children. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "every father disciplines his children!"

Hebrews 12:8

But if you are without discipline, which all people share in

You can restate the abstract noun "discipline" as the verb "disciplining." Alternate translation: "So if you have not experienced God disciplining you like he disciplines all his children"

then you are illegitimate and not his sons

Those whom God does not discipline are spoken of as if they are sons born to a man and a woman who are not married each other.

Hebrews 12:9

How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!

The author uses an exclamation to emphasize that we should obey God the Father. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "Therefore even more so, we should obey the Father of spirits and live."

the Father of spirits

This idiom contrasts with "fathers in the flesh." Alternate translation: "our spiritual Father" or "our Father in heaven" and live

"so that we will live"

Hebrews 12:10

so that we can share in his holiness

This metaphor speaks of "holiness" as if it were an object that can be shared among people. Alternate translation: "so that we may become holy, as God is holy"

Hebrews 12:11

No discipline at the time seems to give joy, but to give sorrow

"At the time, it seems that no discipline brings joy; rather, discipline always brings sorrow"

it produces the peaceful fruit of righteousness

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome."

Alternate translation: "it produces the peaceful result of righteousness" or "it produces righteousness, which results in peace"

who have been trained by it

"who have been trained by discipline." The discipline or correction done by the Lord is spoken of as if it were the Lord himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has trained by disciplining them" Hebrews 12:12

strengthen your hands that hang down and your weak knees.

Possibly this continues the metaphor about the race in [Hebrews 12:1]

Hebrews 12:13

Make straight paths for your feet

Possibly this continues the metaphor about the race in [Hebrews 12:1]

straight paths

Living so as to honor and please God is spoken of as if it were a straight path to follow.

what is lame will not be sprained

In this metaphor of running a race, "lame" represents another person in the race who is hurt and wants to quit. This, in turn, represent the Christians themselves. Alternate translation: "whoever is weak and wants to quit will not sprain his ankle"

will not be sprained

Someone who stops obeying God is spoken of as if he injured his foot or ankle on a path. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will not sprain his ankle"

rather be healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "instead become strong" or "instead God will heal him"

Hebrews 12:14

Pursue peace with everyone

Here the abstract noun "peace" is spoken of as if it were something that a person must chase after and can be translated with an adverb. Alternate translation: "Try to live peacefully with everyone"

and holiness, for without it no one will see the Lord

This can be expressed as a positive encouragement.

Alternate translation: "and work hard to be holy, because only holy people will see the Lord"

and holiness

You can state clearly the understood information. Alternate translation: "and pursue holiness"

Hebrews 12:15

no one lacks God's grace

"no one receives God's grace and then lets go of it" or "no one rejects God's grace after first trusting in him"

that no root of bitterness grows up to cause trouble, so that many do not become defiled by it

Hateful or resentful attitudes are spoken of as if they were a plant bitter to the taste. Alternate translation: "that no one becomes like a bitter root, which when it grows causes trouble and harms many people"

Hebrews 12:16

General Information:

The man Esau, who was told about in the writings of Moses, refers to Isaac's first son and Jacob's brother.

Hebrews 12:17

he was rejected

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "his

father, Isaac, refused to bless him"

because he found no opportunity for repentance

The abstract noun "repentance" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "because it was not possible for him to repent" or "because it was not possible for him to change his decision"

even though he sought it with tears

Here "he" refers to Esau.

Hebrews 12:18

General Information:

Here "you" and refers to the Hebrew believers to whom the author wrote.

Connecting Statement:

The author gives a contrast between what believers in Moses's time had while living under the law and what present day believers have after coming to Jesus under the new covenant. He illustrates the experience of the Israelites by describing how God appeared to them at Mount Sinai.

For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched

The implicit information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "For you have not come, as the people of Israel came, to a mountain that can be touched"

that can be touched

This means that believers in Christ have not come to a physical mountain like Mount Sinai that a person can touch or see. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that a person can touch" or "that people can perceive with their senses"

Hebrews 12:19

You have not come to a trumpet blast

"You have not come to a place where there is the loud sound of a trumpet"

nor to a voice that speaks words whose hearers begged that not another word be spoken to them

Here "voice" refers to someone speaking. The phrase "be spoken" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "or where God was speaking in such a way that those who heard him begged him not to speak another word to them"

Hebrews 12:20

General Information:

The quotation comes from the writings of Moses.

For they could not endure

"For the Israelites could not endure"

what was commanded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "what God commanded"

it must be stoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you must stone it"

Hebrews 12:21

General Information:

God reveals in this passage in Hebrews that Moses said he shook at seeing the mountain.

Hebrews 12:22

Mount Zion

The writer speaks of Mount Zion, the temple mount in Jerusalem, as if it were heaven itself, the residence of God. tens of thousands of angels

"an uncountable number of angels"

Hebrews 12:23

the firstborn

This speaks of believers in Christ as if they were firstborn sons. This emphasizes their special place and privilege as God's people.

who have been registered in heaven

"whose names are written in heaven." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whose names God has written in heaven"

who have been made perfect

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has made perfect"

Hebrews 12:24

General Information:

The man Abel was the son of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. Cain, also their son, murdered Abel.

the mediator of a new covenant

A mediator is a person who helps two parties come to an agreement. Christ, as mediator, made it possible for a better covenant between God and humans to exist. See how you translated this phrase in Hebrews 9:15.

the sprinkled blood that speaks better than Abel's blood

The blood of Jesus and the blood of Abel are spoken of as if they were people calling out. Alternate translation: "the sprinkled blood of Jesus that says better things than the blood of Abel"

the sprinkled blood

Here "blood" stands for Jesus's death, as Abel's blood stands for his death.

Hebrews 12:25

General Information:

The word "you" continues to refer to believers. The word "we" continues to refer to the writer and the readers who are believers.

Connecting Statement:

Having contrasted the Israelites' experience at Mount Sinai with the believers' experience after Christ died, the writer reminds believers that they have the same God who warns them today. This is the fifth main warning given to believers.

you do not refuse the one who is speaking

"you pay attention to the one who is speaking"

if they did not escape

The implicit information can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "if the people of Israel did not escape judgment"

the one who warned them on earth

Possible meanings are 1) "Moses, who warned them here on earth" or 2) "God, who warned them at Mount Sinai"

if we turn away from the one who is warning

Disobeying God is spoken of as if it were changing direction and walking away from him. Alternate translation: "if we disobey the one who is warning"

Hebrews 12:26

General Information:

This quotation is from the prophet Haggai in the Old Testament.

his voice shook the earth

"when God spoke, the sound of his voice caused the earth to shake"

shook ... shake

Use the word for what an earthquake does in moving the ground. This refers back to [Hebrews 12:18-21](#) and what happened when the people saw the mountain where Moses received the law from God.

Hebrews 12:27

General Information:

Here the quotation from the prophet Haggai is repeated from the previous verse.

mean the removal of those things that can be shaken, that is, of the things

The abstract noun "removal" can be translated with the verb "remove." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "mean that God will remove the things that he can shake, that is, the things"

shaken

Use the word for what an earthquake does in moving the ground. This refers back to Hebrews 12:18-21](./18.md) and what happened when the people saw the mountain where Moses received the law from God. See how you translated "shook" and "shake" in [Hebrews 12:26.

that have been created

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God has created"

the things that cannot be shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things that do not shake" or "the things that cannot shake"

that cannot be shaken

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that do not shake"

Hebrews 12:28

receiving a kingdom

You can add the words "because we are" to make clear the logical connection between this statement and the next statement. Alternate translation: "because we are receiving a kingdom" or "because God is making us members of his kingdom"

let us be thankful

"let us give thanks"

with reverence and awe

The words "reverence" and "awe" share similar meanings and emphasize the greatness of reverence due to God.

Alternate translation: "with great respect and dread"

Hebrews 12:29

our God is a consuming fire

God is spoken of here as if he were a fire that can burn up anything.

Chapter 13

Hebrews 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author finishes the list of exhortations he began in chapter 12. Then he asks the readers to pray for him and ends the letter.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in 13:6, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Hospitality

God wants his people to invite other people to come to their homes to eat food and even to sleep. His people should do this even if they do not know well the people they are inviting. In the Old Testament, Abraham and his nephew Lot both showed hospitality to people they did not know. Abraham served a costly meal to them, and then Lot invited them to sleep in his house. They learned later that those people were actually angels.

Links:

[Hebrews 13:1 Notes](#)

Hebrews 13

13:1-6

How can a person show “hospitality to angels without knowing it”?

[13:2]

When the author wrote that a person can show “hospitality to angels without knowing it,” he wanted people to think about how angels sometimes appeared and looked like people.

See: Genesis 18:1-14

See: Hospitable (Hospitality); Angel

Why did the author write “bound with them” to speak about Christians remembering prisoners?

[13:3]

To remember prisoners as if a person was “bound with them” was to fully sympathize with the suffering of people in prison. Paul spoke about Christians experiencing the suffering of other Christians (see: 1 Corinthians 12:26).

What is “the marriage bed”?

[13:4]

The “marriage bed” is the bed a husband and wife used when they sleep. The author used these words to speak about a husband and wife have sex in a way that did not dishonor God.

See: Marriage; Sexual Immorality

Why did the author write that Christians should “let the marriage bed be pure”?

[13:4]

The author wrote the command to “let the marriage bed be pure” as a warning. He wanted Christians to avoid adultery and sexual immorality.

See: Marriage; Adultery; Sexual Immorality

Who were the “sexually immoral”?

[13:4]

See: Sexual Immorality

What is “the love of money”?

[13:5]

The author wrote “the love of money” as a way to speak about greed. Scholars think the author meant that Christians must keep their lives from being characterized by the love for things you can buy. They think the Christian must keep even his thoughts from being greedy and wanting to buy many things.

See: Greed (Covet)

13:7-17

What is to “consider the result” of leaders' conduct?

[13:7]

To “consider the result” of Christian leaders' conduct is for Christians to observe what their leaders do. It is then to observe what happens in the church. Christians are to learn from Christian leaders how to live in a way that honors God.

See: Church

Why did the author command Christians to “imitate their faith”?

[13:7]

When the author commanded Christian to “imitate” (μιμεομαι/g3401) the faith of their leaders, he meant for Christians to live in the same way that their leaders did. He did not mean for Christians to copy everything done by their leaders, but to watch how they live in a way that honors God.

See: Faith (Believe in); Spirit (Spiritual)

How is Jesus “the same yesterday, today, and forever”?

[13:8]

When the author wrote that Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, he wanted people to know that Jesus does not change. Jesus has always lived and will always live and nothing changes him. Christian leaders die, but Jesus lives forever.

What were the “various strange teachings”?

[13:9]

When the author wrote about “various strange teachings,” he spoke about things some people taught in churches. These things were “strange” because they did not teach the same things that Jesus and the apostles taught. That is, some of the things they taught were wrong. During the time in which the book of Hebrews was written, there were still people who taught that people needed to follow the Law of Moses to be at peace with God. They wanted Christians to obey the Law of Moses. This is not what Jesus and the apostle taught.

See: Apostle; Church

Why did the author write “we have an altar”?

[13:10]

When the author wrote “we have an altar,” he used a metaphor to speak about Jesus. In the Old Testament, the altar was used to sacrifice animals so God would forgive people's sins. Now, Christians “have an altar” which is the cross. It was on the cross that Jesus was sacrificed for the sins of the world.

See: Metaphor; Sin; Symbol; Altar; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Sacrifice; Cross; Atonement (Atonement); Priest (Priesthood)

Why did the author write “Jesus also suffered outside the city gate”?

[13:12]

The author wrote “Jesus also suffered outside the city gate” so people would think about the crucifixion. He also wanted people to think about sacrifices for sin. That is, the atonement sacrifice of the Old Testament was burned outside the camp. But, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus was also made outside of the city of Jerusalem. Some scholars think that Jesus suffering outside the city gate showed Israel's complete rejection of Jesus as their messiah. Other scholars think that Jesus suffering outside the city gate was to show that Jesus' blood was the only acceptable sacrifice to God for sin. That is, nothing offered in the temple in Jerusalem could help people to be forgiven by God.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Atonement (Atonement); Messiah (Christ); Blood; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

Why did the author write that Christians must “go to him outside the camp”?

[13:13]

Some scholars think that when the author wrote that Christians must “go to him outside the camp,” he wanted people to think about something that happened during Moses' life. Moses went up Mount Sinai to meet with God. While he was on the mountain, the people of Israel grew impatient. They demanded an idol to be made for them. So Aaron made an idol out of gold. Seeing this, Moses pitched his tent outside the camp. Then, people who wanted to seek God went where Moses was, outside the camp (see: Exodus 33:7-11). Because Jesus was rejected and was taken outside of the walls of Jerusalem to be executed, so now Christians must “go to him outside the camp.” That is, someone who followed Jesus did not need to do the things the Jews did in the temple in Jerusalem.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

See Map: Mount Sinai

How do Christians “bear his shame”?

[13:13]

The author wrote that Christians “bear his shame” to say that when a person believes in Jesus, he may be treated the same way Jesus was treated. That is, Christians may be rejected, insulted, persecuted, or even killed because they believe in Jesus. So Christians bear shame that is in some way like that of Jesus.

Some scholars think the author spoke about Jewish Christians “bearing his shame” in that they were often driven away from the religious practices of the temple. They were driven outside of Jerusalem. Many of them were persecuted and treated as outsiders.

See: Shame (Ashamed); Persecute (Persecution)

Why did the author write that Christians do not have “any permanent city here”?

[13:14]

When the author wrote that “we do not have any permanent city here,” he wanted people to think that a home on earth will not be someone's home forever. That is, Christians look forward to a city God builds. This heavenly city will last forever (see: Hebrews 10:34-36, 11:10; 12:27).

See: Heaven

What are “sacrifices of praise”?

[13:15]

When the author wrote “sacrifices of praise,” he wanted Christians to always be thankful to God. This is because Jesus offered himself to God as a sacrifice that never needed to be repeated. Because he did this, God forgives the sins of people who believe in Jesus. So, nothing remains but to give God thanks and praise for what he has done. God accepts our

continual thanks and praise as our “sacrifice” to him.

See: Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Sacrifice; Praise; Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

13:18-25

How is Jesus the “great shepherd”?

[13:20]

When the author said that Jesus was “the great shepherd,” he used a metaphor. A shepherd cared for his sheep, even to the point of dying for the sheep. Jesus loved and cared for people and died for them.

See: Metaphor; Shepherd

What was the “blood of the eternal covenant”?

[13:20]

See: Hebrews 12:24

See: Blood; Covenant

Hebrews 13:1

Connecting Statement:

In this closing section, the author gives specific instructions to believers on how they are supposed to live.

Let brotherly love continue

"Continue to show your love for other believers as you would for a member of your family"

Hebrews 13:2

Do not forget

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:

"Be sure to remember"

hospitality for strangers

"to welcome and show kindness to strangers"

Hebrews 13:3

as if you were bound with them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if you were tied up along with them" or "as if you were in prison with them"

who are mistreated

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom others are mistreating" or "who are suffering"

since you yourselves also are in the body

Possible meanings are 1) because you are human and can suffer likewise, or 2) as if you too were being mistreated.

Hebrews 13:4

Let marriage be held in honor by all

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Everyone should hold marriage in honor"

let the marriage bed be kept pure

This refers to the act of sexual union as if it were the bed on which that act takes place. Alternate translation: "Let husbands and wives honor their marriage relationship to one another and engage in sexual activity with other people"

Hebrews 13:5

Let your conduct be free from the love of money

Here "conduct" refers to a person's character or the way he lives, and "free from the love of money" refers to not greatly desiring to have more money. A person who loves money is not content with the amount of money he has. Alternate translation: "Let your conduct not be affected by the love of money" or "Do not greatly wish to have more money"

Be content

"Be satisfied"

Hebrews 13:6

The Lord is my helper ... do to me

This is a quotation from the book of Psalms in the Old Testament.

I will not be afraid. What can a man do to me?

The author uses a question to emphasize that he does not fear people because God is helping him. Here "man" means any person in general. Alternate translation: "I will not fear what any person can do to me!"

Hebrews 13:7

spoke God's word to you

"told you what God has said"

the result of their conduct

"the outcome of the way they behave"

Imitate their faith

Here the trust in God and the way of life led by these leaders are spoken of as "their faith." Alternate translation: "Trust and obey God in the same way they do"

Hebrews 13:8

is the same yesterday, today, and forever

Here "yesterday" means all times in the past. Alternate translation: "is the same in the past, the present, and in the future forever"

Hebrews 13:9

Do not be carried away by various strange teachings

Being persuaded by various teachings is spoken of as if a person were being carried away by a force. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Do not let others persuade you to believe their various strange teachings"

various strange teachings

"many, different teachings that are not the good news we told you"

it is good that the heart should be strengthened by grace, not by foods that do not help those who walk by them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we become stronger when we think of how God has been kind to us, but we do not become stronger by obeying rules about food"

the heart should be strengthened

Here "heart" is a metonym for the "inner being." Alternate translation: "we should be strengthened inwardly"

foods

Here "foods" stands for rules about food.

those who walk by them

Living is spoken of as if it were walking. Alternate

translation: "those who live by them" or "those who

regulate their lives by them"

Hebrews 13:10

We have an altar from which

Here, "altar" is a metaphor. The Christians did not literally have an altar, nor did they offer animal sacrifices. The author means that Christians have a relationship with God that the Jews who work in the tabernacle do not know about. Alternate translation: "We have an altar, so to speak, from which" or "What we have is like an altar from which"

Hebrews 13:11

General Information:

This verse refers to animal sacrifices made by believers in God in Old Testament times, which covered their sins temporarily until the death of Christ came about.

the blood of the animals killed for sins is brought by the high priest into the holy place

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the high priest brings into the holy place the blood of the animals that the priests killed for sins"

while their bodies are burned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"while the priests burn the animals' bodies"

outside the camp

"away from where the people live"

Hebrews 13:12

Connecting Statement:

There is a comparison here between Jesus's sacrifice and the tabernacle sacrifices of the Old Testament.

So

"In the same way" or "Because the bodies of the sacrifices were burned outside the camp" (Hebrews 13:11)

outside the city gate

This stands for "outside the city."

Hebrews 13:13

Let us therefore go to him outside the camp

Obedying Jesus is spoken of as if a person were leaving the camp to go out where Jesus is.

bearing the disgrace he endured

Reproach is spoken of as if it were an object that has to be carried in one's hands or on one's back. Alternate translation: "while allowing others to treat us with disgust just like people insulted him"

Hebrews 13:14

looking for

"waiting for"

the one that is to come

"for the city that will come" or "the permanent city that will come"

Hebrews 13:15

sacrifices of praise

Praise is spoken of as if it were incense or sacrifices of animals.

praise that is the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name

Praise is spoken of as if it were fruit produced by the lips of people. Alternate translation: "praise that is produced by the lips of those who acknowledge his name"

lips that acknowledge his name

Here "lips" represents people who speak. Alternate

translation: "the lips of those who acknowledge his name"

or "those who acknowledge his name"

his name

A person's name represents that person. Alternate translation: "him"

Hebrews 13:16

Let us not forget doing good and sharing

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:

"Let us always remember to do good and share our goods with one another"

with such sacrifices

Doing good and helping others is spoken of as if they were sacrifices on an altar.

Hebrews 13:17

keep watch over your souls

The believers' souls, that is, the believers' spiritual well-being, are spoken of as if they were objects or animals that guards could keep watch over.

not with groaning

Here "groaning" stands for sadness or grief.

Hebrews 13:18

Pray for us

Here "us" refers to the author and his companions, but not to the readers.

we are convinced that we have a good conscience

Here "good" stands for being free from guilt. Alternate

translation: "we are certain that we have no guilt"

Hebrews 13:19

that I will be returned to you sooner

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"that God will return me to you sooner" or "that God will quickly remove the things that stop my coming to you"

Hebrews 13:20

Connecting Statement:

The author closes with a blessing and greetings.

Now

This marks a new section of the letter. Here the author praises God and gives a final prayer for his readers.

brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus

"raised the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, to life"

from the dead

"from among all those who have died." The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To raise someone from among them speaks of causing that person to become alive again.

the great shepherd of the sheep

Christ in his role of leader and protector of those who believe in him is spoken of as if he were a shepherd of sheep.

by the blood of the eternal covenant

Here "blood" stands for the death of Jesus, which is the basis for the covenant that will last forever between God and all believers in Christ.

Hebrews 13:21

equip you with everything good to do his will

"give you every good thing you need in order to do his will" or "make you capable of doing every good thing according to his will"

working in us
The word "us" refers to the author and the readers.
to whom be the glory forever
"whom all people will praise forever"
Hebrews 13:22
Now
This marks a new section of the letter. Here the author gives his final comments to his audience.
brothers
This refers to all the believers to whom he is writing, whether male or female. Alternate translation: "fellow believers"
to bear with the word of encouragement that I have briefly written to you
"to patiently consider what I have just briefly written to encourage you"
the word of encouragement

Here "word" stands for a message. Alternate translation: "the encouraging message"
Hebrews 13:23
has been set free
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "is no longer in prison"
Hebrews 13:24
Those from Italy greet you
Possible meanings are 1) the author is not in Italy, but there is a group of believers with him who have come from Italy or 2) the author is in Italy while writing this letter.
Italy
This is the name of a region at that time. Rome is the capital city of Italy.
Hebrews 13:25
General Information:
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Introduction to James

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of James

Greetings (1:1) Testing and maturity (1:2-18) Hearing and doing the Word of God (1:19-27) True faith seen in works Word of God (1:19-27) Royal law of love (2:1-13) Works (2:14-26)
Difficulties in community Dangers of the tongue (3:1-12) Wisdom from above (3:13-18) Worldly desires (4:1-12)
God's perspective on your decisions Boasting about tomorrow (4:13-17) Warning about riches (5:1-6) Suffering with patience (5:7-11)
Closing exhortations Oaths (5:12) Prayer and healing (5:13-18) Care for one another (5:19-20)

Who wrote the Book of James?

The author identified himself as James. This was probably James, the half-brother of Jesus. James was a leader in the early church and was part of the Jerusalem council. The Apostle Paul also called him a "pillar" of the church. This is not the same man as the Apostle James. The Apostle James was killed before this letter was written.

What is the Book of James about?

In this letter, James encouraged believers who were suffering. He told them know that God uses their suffering to help them become mature Christians. James also told them of the need for believers to do good deeds. He wrote much in this letter about how believers should live and treat one another. For example, he commanded them to treat one another fairly, to not fight with one another, and to use riches wisely.

James taught his readers by using many examples from nature such as in 1:6, 11 and 3:1-12. Also, many parts of this letter are similar to what Jesus wrote in the Sermon on the Mount (Mat 5-7).

Who were the "twelve tribes in the dispersion"?

James said he was writing to the "twelve tribes in the dispersion" (1:1). Some scholars think that James was writing to Jewish Christians. Other scholars think that James was writing to all Christians in general. This letter is known as one of the "General Epistles" since it was not written to a specific church or individual.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "James." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "A Letter from James" or "The Letter James Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Did James disagree with Paul about how a person is justified before God?

Paul taught in Romans that Christians are justified by faith and not by works. James seems to teach that Christians are justified by works. This can be confusing. But a better understanding of what Paul and James taught shows that they agree with one another. Both of them taught that a person needs faith in order to be justified. And they both taught that true faith will cause a person to do good works. Paul and James taught about these things in different ways because they had different audiences who needed to know different things about being justified. (See: justice and faith and works)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How should the translator signal transitions between topics in the Book of James?

The letter quickly changes topics. Sometimes James does not tell the readers that he is about to change topics. It is acceptable to allow the verses to appear disconnected from each other. It may make sense to set the passages apart by starting a new line or putting a space between topics.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of James?

"Do you want to know, foolish man, that faith without works is useless?" (2:20). The ULB and modern translations read this way. Some older translations read, "Do you want to know, foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" If a translation of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the reading found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

Chapter 1

James 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

James formally introduces this letter in verse 1. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Testing and temptation

These two words occur together in ([James 1:12-13](#)). Both words speak of a person who is able to choose between doing something good and doing something evil. The difference between them is important. God is testing the person and wants him to do what is good. Satan is tempting the person and wants him to do what is evil.

Crowns

The crown that a man who passes the test receives is a reward, something that people who do something especially good receive. (See: reward)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

James uses many metaphors in this chapter, and you will need to understand the material on the metaphor page before you can translate them well.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"To the twelve tribes in the dispersion"

It is not clear to whom James wrote this letter. He calls himself a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, so he was probably writing to Christians. But he calls his readers "the twelve tribes in the dispersion," words which usually refer to Jews. It is possible that he is using the words as a metaphor for "all people whom God has chosen" or that he wrote the letter at a time when most Christians had grown up as Jews.

Links:

[James 1:1 Notes](#) [James intro](#)

James 1 Commentary

1:1

How did people write letters in the first century?

[1:1]

In ancient times, it was common to begin a letter with the author's name, what other people called him, the names of those who were given the letter, and words of greeting. James used a common greeting in his letter and he wanted the people who he wrote to to have courage and be happy.

Why did James say he was a servant "of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"?

[1:1]

James said that he was a servant "of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." Perhaps he wanted people to know that Jesus is God. James was a Jew. Because of this, it would have been very wrong to call someone God or to say that there is more than one God. However, Jesus was God and there is only one God.

See: Trinity

Who were the twelve tribes?

[1:1]

The twelve tribes formed the nation of Israel (see: Genesis 49:1-28). Some scholars think that James was speaking to Christians who were also Jews. When James wrote, almost all Christians were from Jewish families. Other scholars think James used the metaphor "twelve tribes" to talk to all Christians, both Jewish and Gentile (see: Isaiah 49:6). They think that Christians are now the Israel, that is, the people of God.

Advice to translators: "Twelve tribes" could mean the actual nation of Israel, or it could be a metaphor that represents all Christians. In the same way the twelve tribes of Israel were God's chosen people, all Christians are God's chosen people.

See: Metaphor; Tribes of Israel; People of God

1:2-8

What did James tell Christians to do during struggles?

[1:2, 1:3, 1:4]

Some scholars think James wanted Christians to know that God used “struggle”(πειρασμός/g3986) to make Christians stronger. James said that this struggle caused “endurance”(ὑπομονή/g5281). That is, it helped them to trust in God more. James wrote to Christians while they were suffering from persecution. This persecution caused Christians to leave Israel. James wanted to encourage these Christians. He told them that God used these struggles to help Christians do the same types of things that Jesus did. That is, they do the types of things that Jesus did.

See: Persecute (Persecution)

Why do Christians need wisdom?

[1:5]

Christians need wisdom to know how God uses difficult times in their lives. He uses these difficult times to be Christians more like Jesus. That is, they do the types of things that Jesus did. James told Christians to ask God for this wisdom. He told them to ask “in faith(πίστις/g4102).” That is, when Christians ask God by praying, they need to completely trust God.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

What is a “double-minded” person?

[1:8]

James spoke about a “double-minded” person. Some scholars think James spoke about a person who said they trusted in God but did not trust him to answer their prayers. This person trusts in God sometimes but trust in the world at other times (see: Psalm 86:11; Romans 7:14-25).

See: Proverbs 11:3; Matthew 7:7-8; Romans 5:3-5

1:9-11

What does it mean to be a “poor” brother?

[1:9]

Some scholars think “poor”(ταπεινός/g5011) meant a poor person. Other scholars think it also meant a person without power or without honor in their community. James told the poor person to be happy in the “high position”(ὑψος/g5311) Jesus gave them (see: Luke 6:20; Ephesians 2:4-6).

How are rich Christians to be humble?

[1:10]

Paul wanted rich Christians to know that their riches cannot save them. That is, their money and possessions cannot keep them from dying and it cannot help them to have peace with God. Only by God giving the favor or showing them grace can a person live together with God forever in heaven. Because of this grace, James wanted these Christians to be happy and humbled because of what Jesus did for them.

Paul told the rich Christian that they will “fade away”(παρέρχομαι/g3928) in the same way that all other people do. All people die in the same way the flowers die (see: Isaiah 40:6-8).

See: Grace; Humble (Humility)

1:12

What is the “crown of life”?

[1:12]

God gives the “crown of life” to Christians who have difficult times, but still live in a way that honors Jesus (see: Romans 8:28-30). That is, they are honored in heaven. Perhaps James spoke about the time when all Christians are with God in heaven. At this time, God will give them the crown of life if they honor Jesus in the time of their struggles.

1:13-15

What causes people to sin?

[1:14]

James said that people’s own “desire”(ἐπιθυμία/g1939) tries to cause them to sin (see: Galatians 5:16-21; Ephesians 2:3). That is, people want to sin. If people do not fight against their desire to sin, they will sin. Sin causes death. In scripture, there are two types of death. Death is a type of separation. When someone’s body dies, they are separated from their body. The second type of death separates a person from God forever. They go to a place called hell.

Some scholars think James spoke about those who are not Christians. Their sin causes them to be separated from God forever. This will happen when their body dies. Other scholars think James wanted to say that Christians sin because they do not fight their desires. If this happens, then God might punish them and their body may die.

See: Hell

1:16-18

Why did James tell Christians not to be deceived?

[1:16]

Some scholars think James wrote to Christians who thought that God tried to cause people to sin (see: 1:13). However, James told Christians that God was never caused them to sin or to desire to sin. They want to sin.

What did “Father of lights” mean?

[1:17]

James used the words “Father of lights” to say that God is the creator of all things. Also, he created the sun, moon, stars, and everything else in the sky (see: Genesis 1:14-19). John also said that God is light (see: 1 John 1:5). The shadows affect the lights of the sun, moon, and stars in the sky. However, the light of God never changes and no shadow can cover it.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

How are Christians born for a second time?

[1:18]

James told Christians that God gave them new “birth”(ἀποκυέω/g0616) (see: Titus 3:5). Christians have new birth because of the “word of truth.” That is, Christians are newly born when they hear and accept the gospel.

See: Gospel;Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

Why did James call Christians “firstfruits”?

[1:18]

James used the metaphor of “firstfruits”(ἀπαρχή/g0536) to say that Christians belong to God (see: Exodus 22:29-30; 23:19; Leviticus 19:24).

They were also the first of something new God was doing through Jesus. Some scholars think James wanted Christians to know that they give themselves to God in the same way as they gave their best offerings to him in the Old Testament (see: Romans 12:1-2).

See: Metaphor;Offer (Offering); Fruit (Metaphor)

What commands did James give Christians?

[1:19]

James gave Christians three commands.

He told Christians to be “quick”(ταχύς/g5036) to hear. Some scholars think James spoke about being quick to hear the word of truth (see: 1:18). That is, they were quick to trust in Jesus. James also spoke about being quick to hear the word “implanted” in them (see 1:21). Other scholars think James was thinking about one of the Proverbs (see: Proverbs 17:27-28).

James told Christians to be “slow”(βραδύς/g1021) to speak. This does not mean Christians speak in a way that is slow.

James wanted Christians to think about every word they spoke so that their words honor Jesus (see: Proverbs 29:20).

Also, James told Christians to be “slow”(βραδύς/g1021) to anger. Many scholars think James told all Christians not to become angry quickly. Other scholars think James spoke to teachers and preachers. He wanted them to not be angry when other Christians did not know the scriptures in the same way church leaders knew it. However, James said that human anger does not honor God.

What does it mean to receive “with humility the implanted word”?

[1:21]

A person “humbly”(πρᾶϋτης/g4240) receives the “implanted”(ἐμφυτός/g1721) word of God when they hear the Scriptures and honor God by obeying the scriptures instead of honoring themselves. This does not mean Christians only need to know many things about the scriptures. Instead,

James spoke about taking this word inside of themselves. That is, they take the scriptures and obey them so that they change how they live and think.

1:22-25

What is the “perfect law of freedom”?

[1:25]

When James wrote about the “perfect”(τέλειος/g5046) law, he wrote about the Law of Moses. Also, he wrote about the things Jesus taught. However, the things Jesus taught that had not yet been written down. What Jesus taught gave people much more knowledge about the things God wanted people to do. Also, James wrote his book with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps Christians to understand God’s word completely. James also wrote that when Christians look carefully into the perfect law, it changes them. They obey God and God honors them.

James also said that this was the law of “liberty”(ἐλευθερία/g1657). Perhaps James said the perfect law was the law of liberty because this law makes Jesus known to all. Jesus saves people from the punishment of sin. After Jesus saves a person from sin, they can follow the law that honors God.

See: John 8:36; Romans 8:2; Galatians 3:21-25

See: Law of Moses

1:26-27

What is pure and unspoiled religion?

[1:27]

In scripture, sin is often spoken about as if something were getting or becoming dirty. When James spoke about something that was "pure and unspoiled," he wanted to say that it was not dirty. That is, it was not sinful or evil. In 1:27, James spoke about pure and unspoiled "religion"(θρησκεία/g2356) in three ways.

James said that a person who controlled their words was pure in their religion. That is, he did not speak about other people in an evil way.

He also said that a person who took care of the widows and orphans was pure and unspoiled in their religion. That is, they cared for widows and orphans in the same way God cares for all people (see: Deuteronomy 10:18; Psalm 68:5).

Also, James said a person who stayed away from the evil of the world was pure and unspoiled (see: Romans 12:2; 1 John 2:15-17). That is, they lived in a way that honors God.

See: World

James 1:1

General Information:

The apostle James writes this letter to all the Christians.

Many of them were Jews, and they lived in many different places.

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ

The phrase "this letter is from" is implied. Alternate

translation: "This letter is from James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ"

to the twelve tribes

Possible meanings are 1) this is a synecdoche for Jewish Christians, or 2) this is a metaphor for all Christians.

Alternate translation: "to God's faithful people"

in the dispersion

The term "dispersion" normally referred to the Jews who were scattered in other countries, away from their homeland, Israel. This abstract noun can be expressed with a phrase with the verb "scattered." Alternate translation: "who are scattered around the world" or "who live in other countries"

Greetings!

This is a basic greeting, such as "Hello!" or "Good day!"

James 1:2

Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you experience various troubles

"My fellow believers, think of all your different kinds of troubles as things to celebrate"

James 1:3

the testing of your faith produces endurance

The expressions "the testing," "your faith," and "endurance" are nouns that stand for actions. God does the testing, that is, he finds out how much the believers trust and obey him. Believers

James 1:4

Let endurance complete its work

Here endurance is spoken of as if it were a person at work.

Alternate translation: "Learn to endure any hardship"

fully developed

able to trust in Christ and obey him in all circumstances

not lacking anything

This can be stated in the positive. Alternate translation:

"having all that you need" or "being all that you need to be"

James 1:5

ask for it from God, the one who gives

"ask God for it. He is the one who gives"

gives generously and without rebuke to all

"gives generously and does not rebuke any"

he will give it to him

"God will give it to him" or "God will answer his prayer"

James 1:6

in faith, doubting nothing

"with complete certainty that God will answer"

For anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea that is driven by the wind and tossed around

Anyone who doubts that God will help him is said to be like the water in the ocean or in a large lake, which keeps moving in different directions.

James 1:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

James 1:8

is a double-minded man, unstable

The word "double-minded" refers to a person's thoughts when he is unable to make a decision. Alternate

translation: "cannot decide if he will follow Jesus or not and is unstable"

unstable in all his ways

Here this person is spoken of as if he cannot stay on one path but instead goes from one to another.

James 1:9

the lowly brother

"the believer who does not have much money" or "the believer whom other people consider unimportant"

boast of his high position

Someone whom God has honored is spoken of as if he were standing in a high place.

James 1:10

but the rich man of his low position

The words "let" and "boast" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "but let the rich man boast of his low position"

but the rich man

"but the man who has a lot of money"

of his low position

A rich believer should be happy if God causes him to suffer. Alternate translation: "should be happy that God has given him difficulties"

he will pass away as a wild flower in the grass

Rich people are spoken of as being similar to wild flowers, which are alive for only a short time.

James 1:11

its beauty perishes

A flower that is becoming less beautiful because it is decaying is spoken of as if its beauty were dying. Alternate translation: "it is no longer beautiful"

the rich man will fade away in the middle of his journey

Here the flower simile is probably continued. As flowers do

not die suddenly but instead fade away over a short time, so also the rich people may not die suddenly but instead take a little time to disappear.

in the middle of his journey

A rich man's activities in daily life are spoken of as if they are a journey that he is making. This metaphor implies that he is giving no thought to his coming death, and that it will take him by surprise.

James 1:12

Connecting Statement:

James reminds the believers who have fled that God does not cause temptation; he tells them how to avoid temptation.

Blessed is the man who endures testing

"The man who endures testing is fortunate" or "The man who endures testing is well off"

endures testing

remains faithful to God during hardships

passed the test

he has been approved by God

receive the crown of life

Eternal life is spoken of as if it were a wreath of leaves placed on the head of a victorious athlete. Alternate translation: "receive eternal life as his reward"

has been promised to those who love God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has promised to those who love him"

James 1:13

when he is tempted

"when he desires to do something evil"

I am tempted by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God is trying to make me do something evil"

God is not tempted by evil

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one can make God desire to do evil"

nor does he himself tempt anyone

"and God himself does not try to persuade anyone do evil"

James 1:14

each person is tempted by his own desire

A person's desire is spoken of as if it were someone else who was tempting him to sin.

which drags him away and entices him

Evil desire continues to be spoken of as if it were a person who could drag away someone else.

entices

attracts, persuades someone to do evil

James 1:15

Then after the desire conceives, it gives birth to sin, and after the sin is full grown, it gives birth to death

Desire continues to be spoken of as a person, this time clearly as a woman who becomes pregnant with a child.

The child is identified as sin. Sin is a female baby that grows up, becomes pregnant, and gives birth to death. This chain of metaphors is a picture of someone who ends up dying both spiritually and physically because of his evil desires and his sin.

James 1:16

Do not be deceived

"Do not let anyone deceive you" or "Stop deceiving yourselves"

James 1:17

Every good gift and every perfect gift

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. James uses them to emphasize that anything good that a person has comes from God.

the Father of lights

God, the creator of all the lights in the sky

With him there is no changing or shadow because of turning

This expression pictures God as an unchanging light. This is in contrast to the sun, moon, and stars that appear to move in the sky and sometimes are darkened. Alternate translation: "God always stays the same. He does not change like shifting shadows"

James 1:18

to give us

The word "us" refers to James and his audience.

give us birth

God, who brought us eternal life, is spoken of as if he had given us birth.

the word of truth

Possible meanings are 1) "the message about the truth" or 2) "the true message."

so that we would be a kind of firstfruits

James is using the traditional Hebrew idea of firstfruits as a way to describe the value of the Christian believers to God.

He implies that there will be many more believers in the future. Alternate translation: "so that we would be like an offering of firstfruits"

James 1:19

You know this

Possible meanings are 1) "Know this" is a command to pay attention to what I am about to write or 2) "You know this" is a statement saying that I am about to remind you of something that you already know.

Let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak

These sayings are idioms that mean people should first listen intently, and then consider carefully what they say.

Here "slow to speak" does not mean speaking slowly.

slow to anger

"not get angry quickly"

James 1:20

the anger of man does not accomplish the righteousness of God

When a person is always angry, he cannot do God's work, which is righteous.

James 1:21

take off all sinful filth and abundant amounts of evil

Sin and evil are spoken of here as if they were clothing that could be taken off. Alternate translation: "stop doing all filthy sins and stop doing abundant amounts of evil"

take off all sinful filth and abundant amounts of evil

Here the expressions "sinful filth" and "evil" share similar meanings. James uses them to emphasize how bad sin is.

Alternate translation: "stop doing every kind of sinful behavior"

sinful filth

Here "filth," that is, dirt, stands for sin and evil.

In humility

"Without pride" or "Without arrogance"

receive the implanted word

The expression "implant" means to place one thing inside of another. Here God's word is spoken of as if it were a plant made to grow inside believers. Alternate translation: "obey the message God has spoken to you"

save your souls

What a person is saved from can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "save you from God's judgment"

your souls

Here the word "souls" refers to persons. Alternate translation: "yourselves"

James 1:22

Be doers of the word

"Be people who follow God's instructions"

deceiving yourselves

"fooling yourselves"

James 1:23

For if anyone is a hearer of the word but not a doer

In the phrase "but not a doer" the words "is" and "of the word" are understood from the previous phrase. The noun "doer" can also be expressed with the verbs "do" or "obey." Alternate translation: "For if anyone listens to God's word in the scriptures but does not obey the word"

the word

"the message"

he is like a man who examines his natural face in a mirror

A person who hears God's word is like someone who looks in the mirror.

his natural face

The word "natural" clarifies that James is using the ordinary meaning of the word "face." Alternate translation: "his face"

James 1:24

then goes away and immediately forgets what he was like

It is implied that though he may see that he needs to do something, such as wash his face or fix his hair, he walks away and forgets to do it. This what a person who does not obey God's word is like. Alternate translation: "then goes away and immediately forgets to do what he saw he needed to do"

James 1:25

the person who looks carefully into the perfect law

This expression continues the image of the law as a mirror. the perfect law of freedom

The relationship between the law and freedom can be expressed clearly. Here "freedom" probably refers to freedom from sin. Alternate translation: "the perfect law that gives freedom" or "the perfect law that makes those who follow it free"

this man will be blessed in his actions

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will bless this man as he obeys the law"

James 1:26

thinks he is religious

"thinks he worships God correctly"

his tongue

Controlling one's tongue stands for controlling one's speech. Alternate translation: "what he says"

deceives

gets someone to believe something that is not true

his heart

Here "heart" refers to his belief or thoughts. Alternate translation: "himself"

his religion is worthless

"he worships God uselessly"

James 1:27

pure and unspoiled before our God and Father

James speaks of religion, the way one worships God, as if it could be physically pure and unspoiled. These are traditional ways for Jews to say that something is acceptable to God. Alternate translation: "completely acceptable to our God and Father"

the fatherless

"the orphans"

in their affliction

The fatherless and widows are suffering because their fathers or husbands have died.

to keep oneself unstained by the world

Sin in the world is spoken of as something dirty that can stain a person. Alternate translation: "to not allow the evil in the world to cause oneself to sin"

Chapter 2

James 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Favoritism

Some of James's readers treated rich and powerful people well and treated poor people badly. This is called favoritism, and James tells them that this is wrong. God wants his people to treat both rich people and poor people well.

Justification

Justification is what happens when God makes a person righteous. James says here that God makes righteous or justifies people who do good works along with having faith. (See: justice and righteous and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Quotation marks

The words "Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works" are hard to understand. Some people think that they are what "someone may say," like the words in the quotation marks. Most versions translate them as words that James is saying back to that "someone."

"You have ... I have"

Some people think that the words "you" and "I" are metonyms for "some people" and "other people." If they are correct,

verse 18 could be translated, "Someone may say, 'Some people have faith and other people have works. Not everyone has both.'" If the next sentence is also what "someone may say," it could be translated "Some people show their faith without works, and other people show their faith by their works. Both have faith." In both cases, the reader will understand only if you add the extra sentence. It is probably best to translate as the ULB does.

Links:

[James 2:1 Notes](#)

James 2

2:1

Who were the brothers?

[2:1]

James used the Greek word “brothers” to talk to all the Christians who read his letter. In the New Testament, Christians called one another brother and sister because they were God’s children.

See: Family of God

Why are Christians not to have favoritism?

[2:1]

James told Christians not to have “favoritism”(προσωποληψία/g4382) for certain people. Jesus did not have favoritism for different people (see: Acts 15:7-9; Romans 10:12-13). If Jesus did not have favoritism, Christians are not to have favoritism.

See: Family of God

2:2-4

What does it mean to judge with evil thoughts?

[2:4]

James did not want people to “judge with evil thoughts.” Many scholars think James wanted to say that judging others because they looked evil. That is, judging others because of what they wear and how they speak. The Bible says that only God can judge a person, and he judges by what is inside their hearts (see: Isaiah 16:7). That is, God judges them on their thoughts and why they do the things they want to do.

2:5-7

Who were the “poor”?

[2:5]

James spoke about the poor. Perhaps James spoke about people who did not have a lot of money or those who did not have a lot of education. Therefore, James said that God made poor people Christians and to teach the rich people how to have faith.

Why did James tell Christians to be “rich in faith?”

[2:5]

When James told Christians to be “rich in faith,” he wanted them to know that only faith in Jesus gave them life. That is, the riches the world gave them did not continue after they died. Jesus said that the riches Heaven gave only come by faith (see: Matthew 6:19-21).

Advice to translators: Someone who has “riches” has a lot of money.

Why did James say Christians were “heirs of the kingdom”?

[2:5]

A Christian is an “heir”(κληρονόμος/g2818) of the kingdom. Some scholars think they have God’s promise of being saved from their sins. James wanted Christians to know that when they die, they will be made perfect in heaven. Christians can know they are heirs because they have the Holy Spirit inside them. That is, he helps them to remember that God has saved them and helps them to live in a way that honors God. Other scholars think that certain Christians will have a place of honor when Jesus rules on the earth.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

2:8

What was the “royal law?”

[2:8]

The “royal”(βασιλικός/g0937) law was greater than all other laws. The royal law had two parts:

Love God

Love your neighbor (see: Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:17-18; Romans 3:8-10).

Jesus said this was the greatest law (see: Matthew 22:36-40). He said that all other laws of God were made up of this one.

2:9-13

Why is it sin to give someone favor?

[2:9]

Christians are not to favor some people over others because God does not favor anyone. Anything Christians do that God does not want them to do is sin (see: Deuteronomy 1:17; 10:17; 16:19).

What is the "law of liberty"?

[2:12]

James spoke about a "law of liberty." Some scholars think the law of "liberty" (ἐλευθερία/g1657) was the gospel. Other scholars think the law of liberty was the word of God, that is, Scripture. At the time James wrote this letter, Christians only had the Old Testament. These books told that the Messiah was coming with a new law that would free people from God's anger on sin.

See: Gospel

2:14-17

What did James say about faith and works?

[2:14, 2:17]

James wanted Christians to know that God did not want them to say they believed in Jesus but live in a way that dishonors God. Many scholars think James was talking about those who believed in God and knew a lot about God, but did not obey him. James wanted Christians to know that knowing about Jesus did not save them from sin. They needed to believe or trust in Jesus.

2:18-19

How do Christians show their faith?

[2:18]

James said that other see the faith of Christians when they do what honors God. For James, faith and works were not to be separated. James said that demons believe in God and Jesus (see: Deuteronomy 6:4-5). But this did not save them from sin because they hated God and his promises.

2:20-25

How did others show their faith by their works?

[2:21, 2:22, 2:23, 2:24, 2:25]

Abraham and Rahab trusted God. They showed people they trusted God by obeying him. Abraham left his home and family to obey God (see: Genesis 12:4). When God told him to sacrifice his son Isaac, Abraham obeyed (see: Genesis 22:9,12; Hebrews 11:17-19). Rahab showed people that she trusted God when she hid the Israelites to save their lives (see: Joshua 2:11-12).

2:26

Why did James compare the body and spirit with faith and works?

[2:26]

In 2:26, James spoke about the things that people do as if they were dead. Some scholars think that John wanted to say that in the same way the body does not exist without the spirit, faith does not exist without works. That is, the body does not have life without the "spirit" (πνεῦμα/g4151), and faith does not have life without works. Other scholars think that James wanted people to know that believe

James 2:1

Connecting Statement:

James continues to tell the scattered Jewish believers how to live by loving one another and reminds them not to favor rich people over poor people.

My brothers

James considers his audience to be Jewish believers.

Alternate translation: "My fellow believers" or "My brothers and sisters in Christ"

do not hold to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ... with partiality toward certain people

James wanted them to hold to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but he did not want them to show partiality to people.

Alternate translation: "as you hold to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ... do not show partiality toward certain people"

hold to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ

Believing in Jesus Christ is spoken of as if it were an object that one could hold onto.

our Lord Jesus Christ

The word "our" includes James and his fellow believers.

partiality

the act of treating some people better than others

James 2:2

Suppose that someone enters your meeting

James starts to describe a situation where the believers might give more honor to a rich person than to a poor person.

wearing gold rings and splendid clothes

"dressed like a wealthy person"

James 2:3

sit here in a good place

sit in this place of honor

stand over there

move to a place with less honor

Sit by my footstool

move to a humble place

James 2:4

are you not judging among yourselves? Have you not become judges with evil thoughts?

James is using rhetorical questions to teach and possibly scold his readers. Alternate translation: "you are making judgments among yourselves and becoming judges with evil thoughts."

James 2:5

Listen, my beloved brothers

James is exhorting his readers as if they were his family.

Alternate translation: "Pay attention, my dear fellow believers"

did not God choose ... love him?

Here James uses a rhetorical question to teach his readers not to show favoritism. It can be made a statement.

Alternate translation: "God has chosen ... love him"

the poor

This refers to poor people in general. Alternate translation: "poor people"

be rich in faith

Having much faith is spoken of as being wealthy or rich.

The object of faith may have to be specified. Alternate translation: "have strong faith in Christ"

heirs

The people to whom God has made promises are spoken of as if they were to inherit property and wealth from a family member.

James 2:6

But you have

James is speaking to his whole audience.

have dishonored the poor

"you have shamed poor people"

Is it not the rich who oppress you?

Here James uses a rhetorical question to correct his readers. Alternate translation: "It is rich people who oppress you."

the rich

This refers to rich people in general. Alternate translation: "rich people"

who oppress you

"who treat you badly"

Are they not the ones ... to court?

Here James uses a rhetorical question to correct his readers. It can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "The rich people are the ones ... to court."

drag you to court

"forcibly take you to court to accuse you in front of judges"

James 2:7

Do they not insult ... have been called?

Here James uses a rhetorical question to correct and teach his readers. It can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "The rich people insult ... have been called."

the good name by which you have been called

Here "name" represents "Christ." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ, who called you" or "Christ, to whom you belong"

James 2:8

you fulfill

The word "you" refers to the Jewish believers.

fulfill the royal law

"obey God's law." The law is "royal" because God, the true king, is the one who gave it to people.

Love your neighbor as yourself

James is quoting from the book of Leviticus.

your neighbor

"all people" or "everyone"

you do well

"you are doing well" or "you are doing what is right"

James 2:9

if you favor

"give special treatment to" or "give honor to"

committing sin

"sinning." That is, breaking the law.

you are convicted by the law as transgressors

Here the law is spoken of as if it were a human judge. This can be translated using an active verb. Alternate translation: "the law itself convicts you of transgressing it" or "you are guilty of breaking God's law"

James 2:10

For whoever obeys

"For anyone who obeys"

except that he stumbles ... the whole law

Stumbling is falling down while one is trying to walk.

Disobeying one point of the law is spoken of as if it were stumbling while walking.

in just a single way

because of disobedience to just one requirement of the law

James 2:11

For the one who said

This refers to God, who gave the law to Moses.

Do not commit

To "commit" is to do an action.

If you ... but if you ... you have

Here "you" means "each one of you." Although James was writing to many Jewish believers, in this case, he used the singular form as if he was writing to each person individually.

James 2:12

So speak and act

"So you must speak and obey." James commands the people to do this.

who will be judged by means of the law of freedom

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"who know that God will judge them by means of the law of freedom"

by means of the law

This passage implies that it is God who will judge according to his law.

the law of freedom

"the law that gives true freedom"

James 2:13

Mercy triumphs over

"Mercy is better than" or "Mercy defeats." Here mercy and justice are spoken of as if they were persons.

James 2:14

Connecting Statement:

James encourages the scattered believers to show their

faith before others, just as Abraham showed others his faith

by his works.

What profit is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith, but he has no works?

James is using a rhetorical question to teach his audience.

Alternate translation: "Fellow believers, if someone says he has faith but he has no works, that does him no good at all." or "Fellow believers, someone who has no works is no better if he says he has faith than someone who does not say he has faith."

he has faith, but he has no works ... that faith

Here, it is implied that "works" refers to things people do because they believe in God, such as obeying God and doing good to others. The abstract nouns "faith" and "works" can be expressed with the verbs "believe" and "do." Alternate translation: "he believes in God but does not do anything ... what he believes" or "he believes in God but does not do anything as a result of his belief ... that belief"

Can that faith save him?

James is using a rhetorical question to teach his audience.

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "faith."

Alternate translation: "That faith cannot save him." or "Just saying he believes in God will not save him."

save him

"spare him from God's judgment"

James 2:15

brother or sister

a fellow believer in Christ, whether male or female

James 2:16

stay warm

This means either "have enough clothes to wear" or "have a place to sleep."

be filled

The thing that fills them is food. This can be stated explicitly. Alternate translation: "be filled with food" or "have enough to eat"

for the body

to eat, to wear, and to live comfortably

what profit is that?

James uses a rhetorical question to teach his audience.

Alternate translation: "how does that help them?" or "that does nothing good for them." or "your speech by itself does not help them."

James 2:17

faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead

Here, it is implied that "works" refers to things people do because they believe in God, such as obeying God and doing good to others. James speaks of faith as if it were alive if one does good works, and of faith as if it were dead if one does not do good deeds. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "faith" and "works." Alternate translation: "a person who says he believes in God but does not do anything, does not really believe in God" or "a person who says he believes in God but does not do anything as a result of his belief, does not really believe in God"

James 2:18

Yet someone may say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

Possible meanings are 1) James describes how someone might argue against his teaching and how he would

respond to that person or 2) James describes how someone might support his teaching. If the speaker is supporting James, then the quotation would end at the end of the verse.

"You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works

The meanings in the abstract nouns "faith" and "works" can be expressed with "believe in God" and "do good things."

Alternate translation: "'You believe in God and I do good things.' Prove to me that you can believe in God without doing anything, and I will prove to you that I believe in God by what I do"

James 2:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

James 2:20

Do you want to know, foolish man, that faith without works is useless?

James uses this question to introduce the next part of his teaching. Alternate translation: "Listen to me, foolish man, and I will show that faith without works is useless."

that faith without works is useless

The meanings in the abstract nouns "faith" and "works" can be expressed with "believe in God" and "do good things."

Alternate translation: "that saying that you believe in God without doing good things is useless" or "that if you do not do good things, it is useless to say that you believe"

James 2:21

General Information:

Since these are Jewish believers, they know the story of Abraham, about whom God had told them long ago in his word.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works ... on the altar?

This rhetorical question is used to rebut the foolish man's arguments from [James 2:18]

Was not Abraham our father justified by works ... on the altar?

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "works."

This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Did not God justify Abraham our father because of what he did ... on the altar?" or "God certainly justified Abraham our father because of what he did ... on the altar."

father

Here "father" is used in the sense of "ancestor."

James 2:22

You see

The word "see" is a metonym. Alternate translation: "You understand"

that faith worked with his works, and that by works his faith was completed

James speaks as if "faith" and "works" were things that can work together and help each other. The meanings in the abstract nouns "faith" and "works" can be expressed with "believe God" and "do what God commanded." Alternate translation: "that because Abraham believed God, he did what God commanded him to do. And Abraham doing what God commanded showed that he truly believed"

You see

James again addresses his audience directly by using the plural form of "you."

James 2:23

The scripture was fulfilled
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"This fulfilled the scripture"
it was counted to him as righteousness
"God regarded his faith as righteousness." Abraham's faith and righteousness were treated as if they were able to be counted as having value.
James 2:24
it is by works that a man is justified, and not only by faith
Here, it is implied that "works" refers to things people do because they believe in God, such as obeying God and doing good to others. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "faith" and "works." This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God justifies a man because of what he does, and not just because he believes in God" or "God justifies a man because of what he does as a result of his belief, and not just because he believes in God"
James 2:25
In the same way also ... justified by works
James says that what was true of Abraham was also true of Rahab. Both were justified by works.
was not Rahab the prostitute justified by works ... another road?
James is using this rhetorical question to instruct his audience. Alternate translation: "it was what Rahab the prostitute did that justified her ... another road."
was not Rahab the prostitute justified by works ... another road?

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "works."
This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"did God not justify Rahab the prostitute because of what she did ... another road?" or "God justified Rahab the prostitute because of what she did ... another road."
Rahab the prostitute
James expects his audience to know the Old Testament story about the woman Rahab.
messengers
people who bring news from another place
sent them away by another road
"then helped them escape and leave the city"
James 2:26
For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead
James is speaking of faith without works as if it were a dead body without the spirit. Here, it is implied that "works" refers to things people do because they believe in God, such as obeying God and doing good to others. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "faith" and "works." Alternate translation: "For just as the body is useless without the spirit, even so it is useless for a person to believe in God if he does not do anything" or "For just as the body is useless without the spirit, even so it is useless for a person to believe in God if he does not do anything as a result of his belief"

Chapter 3

James 3 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

James teaches his readers that they should live to please God by reminding them of things that they know from everyday life.

Links:

[James 3:1 Notes](#)

James 3

3:1-12

How does God judge Christians who teach other Christians?

[3:1]

James said that leaders are judged more harshly or stricter than other Christians. This is because teachers lead and teach people what to know about God and how to follow Jesus' commands. Therefore, teachers must only say what is true about God (see: Ephesians 4:11-16). James warned teachers that if they said things that were not true about God, God punish them after they died. Scholars disagree about why they think James warned teachers.

There were people who did not believe in Jesus who were trying to teach other Christians about God. So James told these teachers that God will judge them for not believing in Jesus and for teaching untruths about God (see: Judges 14-15). James wanted teachers who did believe in Jesus to remember how great was their responsibility as a teacher of God's truth (see: Hebrews 13:7). Perhaps they were responsible for the things that their students said about God. That is, they will be punished when their students say false things about God that the teacher taught to them.

Why did James say that all Christians stumble?

[3:2]

James wanted Christians to know that they never stopped sinning and that all Christians will "stumble" (πταίω/g4417) (see: Job 4:17-19; Proverbs 20:9; 1 John 1:8). James wrote that if a person does not stumble in what he said, he was "perfect" (τέλειος/g5046). Some scholars think James wanted to say that a person is perfect if they do not sin with the words they say. Because no person can stop saying wrong things, James said that no person was perfect. Other scholars

think James spoke about a person who was a mature Christian. That is, they learned to control the words they say because they follow Jesus. This makes them “perfect” or more complete in their faith in Jesus.

Why did James compare the human tongue to bits and rudders?

[3:3, 3:4]

James wanted Christians to know that the words people speak control them in some way. He used two metaphors.

The first was about a horse with a bit in its mouth, which was a piece of metal attached to something a person used to lead them in a certain direction. In the same way a bit in the mouth of a horse leads the horse wherever the person wants it to go, so does the “tongue”(γλῶσσα/g1100) lead a person with the words that come from it.

The second metaphor is about the rudder of a boat; this is the part on the back of the boat that steers the boat. Also, in the same way a large boat is controlled by a small rudder, the human tongue is a small part of the body that can control the entire person’s life. James wanted Christians to know that the tongue was small, but the words it speaks can cause great destruction.

See: Metaphor

Why is the tongue a “restless evil”?

[3:8]

James spoke about the tongue as if it were a person, even though it is not a person. He said that no person can “tame”(δαμάζω/g1150) the tongue. That is, because the tongue is “restless”(ἀκατάστατος/g0182), a person cannot fully control it.

Also, James said the tongue was “evil”(κακός/g2556). That is, the words that it says can destroy people in the same way a poison destroys and kills people.

James wanted Christians to know that people cannot control their tongues, but God can control their tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit inside them.

3:13-16

How does a Christian show “meekness of wisdom”?

[3:13]

When James spoke about the “meekness”(πραΰτης/g4240) of wisdom, he spoke about a person’s heart and mind. That is, those who were meek never got tired of doing what was good to others without thinking they were going to get anything in return. Some scholars said that a meek person has great power, but power they were able to control. They said that those who are meek are humble and gentle with other people. That is, a meek person does not give themselves a higher position over other people. That is, he does not try to control other people and he is not selfish.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

3:17-18

What is the fruit of righteousness?

[3:18]

The “fruit of righteousness” James spoke about is a metaphor of how God works in all Christians. He helps Christians to do good things and do things that God wants them to do. However, it is more than just doing good things. They change and want to do things that honor God.

Those who have the “fruit of righteousness” are at peace with other people. These Christians are able to live at peace with others and create peace with other people in the world. By living in this way, Christians show other people what God is like. That is, who he is and what he does for the people he created.

See: Metaphor; Fruit (Metaphor)

James 3:1

Not many of you

James is making a generalized statement.

my brothers

"my fellow believers"

we who teach will be judged more strictly

"God will judge us who teach more severely." This probably because those whom they teach trust them to know the truth and teach it correctly.

we who teach

James includes himself and other teachers, but not the readers, so the word "we" is exclusive.

James 3:2

we all stumble

James speaks of himself, other teachers, and the readers, so the word "we" is inclusive.

stumble

Sinning is spoken of as if it were stumbling while walking.

Alternate translation: "fail" or "sin"

does not stumble in words

"does not sin by saying wrong things"

he is a perfect man

"he is spiritually mature"

control even his whole body

James is referring to one's heart, emotions, and actions.

Alternate translation: "control all his behavior" or "control all his actions"

James 3:3

General Information:

James is developing an argument that small things can control big things.

Now if we put bits into horses' mouths

James speaks about horses' bits. A bit is a small piece of metal that is placed into a horse's mouth to control where it goes.

Now if

"If" or "When"

horses

A horse is a large animal used to carry things or people.

James 3:4

Notice also that ships ... are steered by a very small rudder

A ship is like a truck that floats on water. A rudder is a flat piece of wood or metal at the back of the ship, used to control where it goes. The word "rudder" could also be translated as "tool."

are driven by strong winds,

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"strong winds push them, they"

are steered by a very small rudder to wherever the pilot desires

"have a small tool that a person can use to control where the ship goes"

James 3:5

the tongue is a small member

It can be stated explicitly what the tongue is a member of.

Alternate translation: "the tongue is a small member of the body" or "the tongue is a small part of the body"

boasts great things

Here "things" is a general word for everything about which these people are proud.

Notice also

"Think about"

how small a fire sets on fire a large forest

In order to help people understand the harm that the tongue can cause, James speaks of the harm that a small flame can cause. Alternate translation: "how a small flame can start a fire that burns many trees"

James 3:6

The tongue is also a fire

The tongue is a metonym for what people say. James calls it a fire because of the great damage it can do. Alternate translation: "The tongue is like a fire"

a world of evil set among our members

The enormous effects of sinful speaking are spoken of as if they were a world by themselves.

our members

"the members of our bodies" or "the parts of our bodies"

The tongue defiles the whole body

The tongue here is a metonym for the words of the person whose tongue it is, and the body is a synecdoche for the whole person. The words defiling the person is a metaphor for God rejecting a person who speaks evil words.

sets on fire the course of life

The phrase "course of life" refers to a person's entire life.

Alternate translation: "it ruins a person's entire life"

life, and is itself set on fire by hell

The word "itself" refers to the tongue. Also, here "hell" refers to the powers of evil or to the devil. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "life because the devil uses it for evil"

James 3:7

For every kind of ... mankind

The phrase "every kind" is a general statement referring to all or many kinds of wild animals. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People have learned to control many kinds of wild animals, birds, reptiles, and sea creatures"

reptile

This is an animal that crawls on the ground.

sea creature

an animal that lives in the sea

James 3:8

But no human being can tame the tongue

James speaks of the tongue as if it were a wild animal. Here "tongue" represents a person's desire to speak evil thoughts.

It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison

James speaks of the harm that people can cause by what they say as if the tongue were an evil and poisonous creature that can kill people. Alternate translation: "It is like a restless and evil creature, full of deadly poison" or "It is like a restless and evil creature that can kill people with its venom"

James 3:9

With it we

"We use the tongue to say words that"

we curse men

"we ask God to harm men"

who have been made in God's likeness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom God made in his likeness"

James 3:10

Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing

The nouns "blessing" and "cursing" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "With the same mouth, a person blesses people and curses people"

My brothers

"Fellow Christians"

these things should not happen

"these things are wrong"

James 3:11

Connecting Statement:

After James stresses that the words of believers should not both bless and curse, he gives examples from nature to teach his readers that people who honor God by worshiping him should also live in right ways.

Does a spring pour out from its opening both sweet and bitter water?

James uses a rhetorical question to remind believers about what happens in nature. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know that a spring does not pour out both sweet water and bitter water."

James 3:12

Does a fig tree, my brothers, make olives?

James uses another rhetorical question to remind the

believers about what happens in nature. Alternate translation: "Brothers, you know that a fig tree cannot grow olives."

my brothers

"my fellow believers"

Or a grapevine, figs?

The word "make" is understood from the previous phrase.

James uses another rhetorical question to remind the

believers about what happens in nature. Alternate translation: "Or does a grapevine make figs?" or "And a grapevine cannot grow figs."

James 3:13

Who is wise and understanding among you?

James uses this question to teach his audience about proper behavior. The words "wise" and "understanding" are similar. Alternate translation: "I will tell you how a wise and understanding person is to act."

Let that person show a good life by his works in the humility of wisdom

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns

"humility" and "wisdom." Alternate translation: "That person should live a good life by doing the kind of deeds that come from being humble and wise"

James 3:14

if you have bitter jealousy and ambition in your heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions or thoughts. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "jealousy" and "ambition." Alternate translation: "if you are jealous and selfish" or "if you desire what other people have and you want to succeed even if it harms others"

do not boast and lie against the truth

The abstract noun "truth" can be stated as "true." Alternate translation: "do not boast that you are wise, because that is not true"

James 3:15

This is not the wisdom that comes down from above

Here "This" refers to the "bitter jealousy and strife" described in the previous verses. The phrase "from above" is a metonym that represents "heaven" which represents God himself. Alternate translation: "This is not the kind of wisdom that God teaches us from heaven"

This is not the wisdom that comes down from above. Rather, it is earthly, unspiritual, demonic

The abstract noun "wisdom" can be stated as "wise."

Alternate translation: "Whoever acts like this is not wise according to what God in heaven teaches us. Rather, this person is earthly, unspiritual, and demonic"

earthly

The word "earthly" refers to the values and behaviors of the people who do not honor God. Alternate translation: "not honoring to God"

unspiritual

"not from the Holy Spirit" or "not spiritual"

demonic

"from demons"

James 3:16

For where there are jealousy and ambition, there is confusion and every evil practice

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns

"jealousy," "ambition," and "confusion." Alternate translation: "For when people are jealous and selfish, this causes them to act in disorderly and evil ways"

there is confusion

"there is disorder" or "there is chaos"

every evil practice

"every kind of sinful behavior" or "every kind of wicked deed"

James 3:17

But the wisdom from above is first pure

Here "from above" is metonym that represents "heaven," which represents God himself. The abstract noun "wisdom" can be stated as "wise." Alternate translation: "But when a person is wise according to what God in heaven teaches, he acts in ways that are first pure"

is first pure

"is first holy"

full of mercy and good fruits

Here "good fruits" refer to kind things that people do for others as a result of having wisdom from God. Alternate translation: "full of mercy and good deeds"

and sincere

"and honest" or "and truthful"

James 3:18

The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace among those who make peace

Making peace is spoken of as if they were sowing seeds, and righteousness is spoken of as if it were the fruit that grows up as a result of making peace. Alternate translation: "The result of making peace is righteousness" or "Those who work peacefully to help people live in peace produce righteousness"

make peace

The abstract noun "peace" can be expressed by using the word "peacefully." Alternate translation: "cause people to live peacefully" or "help people not to be angry with each other"

Chapter 4

James 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Adultery

Writers in the Bible often speak of adultery as a metaphor for people who say they love God but do things that God hates. (See: and godly)

Law

James probably uses this word in [James 4:11](#) to refer to "the royal law" ([James 2:8](#)).

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical Questions

James asks many questions because he wants his readers to think about how they are living. He wants to correct and teach them.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Humble

This word probably usually refers to people who are not proud. James uses the word here to refer to people who are not proud and who also trust in Jesus and obey him.

Links:

[James 4:1 Notes](#)

James 4

4:1-3

Why do Christians quarrel and fight?

[4:1]

James wrote that Christians “quarrel”(πόλεμος/g4171) and “fight”(μάχη/g3163) with one another because they want their own “desires”(ἡδονή/g2237). That is, they want to do what they want to do instead of being at peace with one another.

Also, James said this made Christians “jealous”(ζήλος/g2205) and have “selfish ambition”(ἐριθεία/g2052) (see: 3:16). When Christians are selfish and jealous, this causes them to harm one another.

James wrote about two kinds of fighting.

Fights that happen in the mind. A Christian’s selfish ambition fights against the Holy Spirit who lives inside of them. That is, the Holy Spirit reminds the Christian of what God wants them to do so that they will fight their own desire to sin (see: Romans 7:21-23).

Christians fight against Christians. Jealousy causes Christians to want what other Christians have. This causes them to fight with one another to get what they want.

How do Christians ask God for things in the wrong way?

[4:3]

When a Christian asks “wrong”(κακῶς/g2560), they ask for selfish reasons. That is, they ask for things they want, not things that God wants. Some scholars think James spoke about those who were not Christians. Non-Christians ask only for things they want God to give them to make them happy. Other scholars think James spoke to Christians who asked only for what made them happy instead of asking what God wanted from them. James spoke earlier about people who did not ask with faith (see: 1:6-8).

4:4

Why did James call people “adulteresses”?

[4:4]

James called the people “adulteresses.” This is because they called themselves Christians but only did what they wanted to do. They did not do what God wanted. God called the Jews adulterers because they left God for what they wanted to do things that the rest of the world did. In the same way, James called certain Christians adulterers because they did not do the things Jesus commanded them to do (see: Jeremiah 6:3-9; Ezekiel 23:37).

See: Adultery

4:5-6

Who is the “jealous” one?

[4:5]

Some scholars think James spoke about God being “jealous”(φθόνος/g5355) for his people. That is, God cares for people and wants them for himself (see: Exodus 20:5; 34:14). Other scholars think the Holy Spirit caused this jealousy in God.

That is, because the Holy Spirit lives inside Christians, God owns the Christian and has control over their lives. He is jealous when Christians do not do what he wants because they are not listening to his Holy Spirit. Other scholars think James spoke about Christian who were full of jealousy because they were selfish (see: 4:4).

How does God give “more grace?”

[4:6]

James spoke about God giving “more grace.” Some scholars think that because James spoke about God being jealous in verse five, he gives enough grace to keep his anger from destroying the Christian who disobeys God. Other scholars think James spoke about how all Christians’ fight against their own jealousy. God gives grace to help Christians to overcome this jealousy.

See: Grace

4:7-10

How do Christians “draw near” to God?

[4:8]

James told Christians to “draw near” to God. That is, they come close to him because they love him and want to know him better. This came with the promise that God will draw near to anyone who wants to be close to God. James told Christians to “cleanse your hands” and to “purify your hearts.” Some scholars think that James wanted Christians to know that they

needed to do these things to draw near to God. During the time of the Old Testament, priests were required to wash their bodies before going into the temple and serve God there (see: Exodus 30:20). In the New Testament, John also told Christians how they can draw near to God by confessing their sins to God. This cleansed them from the sin that holds back their relationship with God (see: 1 John 1:9). Also, John wrote that in the same way Jesus is pure, Christians can be pure because of the Holy Spirit inside of them (see: 1 John 3:2-3). This gives them confidence to draw near to God without fear.

Also, James told Christians to “grieve”(ταλαιπωρέω/g5003), to “mourn”(πενθέω/g3996), and to “cry”(κλαίω/g2799). Most scholars think James wanted Christians to have a deep sadness because of their sin. The apostle Paul experienced deep sadness for sin (see: Romans 7:21-25). Also these scholars think this sadness is to cause Christians to repent.

Finally, James told Christians to “humble”(ταπεινώω/g5013) themselves before the Lord. That is, Christians need to know their need for God. This is because they cannot be close to God without the power of God.

See: Priest (Priesthood) ; Temple; Purify (Pure); Confess (Confession)

How can Christians be humble?

[4:10]

James wrote that Christians need to be humble. Also, he said God gives “grace to the humble.” To be humble, Christians must “submit”(υποτάσσω/g5293) themselves to God. This is, Christians do all that God wants them to do. Also, James told Christians to “resist”(ἀνθίστημι/g0436) the devil. Some scholars think James wanted to say that when Christians submit to God they can resist the devil. Other scholars think that to resisting the devil is to stand firmly against him (see: Ephesians 6:13; 1 Peter 5:8-9).

See: Humble (Humility); Grace; Submit (Submission)

4:11-12

Why are Christians not to speak against one another?

[4:11]

James said that a person who speaks against another person has become a “judge”(κρίνω/g2919). However, there is only one judge. That is, God is judge because he made the law (see: Romans 2:1). Only the one who makes the law can judge it correctly. One way Christians can speak against another Christian is to say that they did wrong when they did not actually do so (see: 1 Peter 2:1). Also, A second way is speaking against another Christian because they do not like something about them.

See: Law of Moses

4:13-17

Why are Christians to be careful with their plans for the future?

[4:14]

James told Christians not to “boast”(καυχάομαι/g2744) about the things they will do. Some people talk about what they will be doing in the future without thinking of what God wants from them. James said that this makes them “arrogant”(ἀλαζονεία/g0212) plans. James wrote to those who talked much about what they wanted to do days, weeks, and years in the future. However, James wanted them to remember that only God knew what was going to happen days, weeks, and years into the future. James said that this boasting was evil. Some scholars think that when James said to “do good,” he was talking about making plans. That is, to do good is to trust God with the plans for the future. James told Christians to say instead that “if the Lord wills” their plans will happen.

See: Will of God

James 4:1

General Information:

In this chapter, the words “yourselves,” “your,” and “you” are plural and refer to the believers to whom James writes.

Connecting Statement:

James rebukes these believers for their worldliness and their lack of humility. He again urges them to watch how they speak to and about each other.

Where do quarrels and disputes among you come from?

The abstract nouns “quarrels” and “disputes” mean basically the same thing and can be translated with verbs. Alternate translation: “Why do you quarrel and dispute among yourselves?” or “Why do you fight among yourselves?”

Do they not come from your desires that fight among your members? James uses this question to rebuke his audience. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: “They

come from your evil desires for things, desires that fight among your members.” or “You quarrel and have disputes because of your desires that fight among your members.”

Do they not come from your desires that fight among your members James writes of the tension or conflict that people feel because of their different desires as if those desires were fighting. Alternate translation: “Do they not come because of the conflict you feel because of your different desires?” or “You quarrel and argue because of the tension caused by your different desires.”

your desires that fight among your members

Possible meanings are 1) “members” refers to the parts of a person: his body, feelings, and thoughts. Each person wants more than one thing, but he cannot have them all.

Alternate translation: “your conflicting desires within you” 2) “members” refers to the individual people in the church. Different members want different things. Alternate

translation: "the conflicting desires among you all"

James 4:2

You murder and covet, and you are not able to obtain

The phrase "You murder" is probably a hyperbole. The words "murder" and "covet" are used to express how badly the people behave in order to get what they want. Alternate translation: "You do all kinds of evil things to get what you cannot have"

You fight and quarrel

The words "fight" and "quarrel" mean basically the same thing. James uses them to emphasize how much the people argue among themselves. Alternate translation: "You constantly fight"

James 4:3

you ask wrongly

Possible meanings are 1) "you ask with wrong motives" or "you ask with bad attitudes" or 2) "you are asking for wrong things" or "you are asking for bad things"

James 4:4

You adulteresses!

James speaks of believers as being like wives who sleep with men other than their husbands. Alternate translation: "You are not being faithful to God!"

Do you not know ... God?

James uses this question to teach his audience. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "You know ... God!"

friendship with the world

This phrase refers to identifying with or participating in the world's value system and behavior.

friendship with the world

Here the world's value system is spoken of as if it were a person that others could be friends with.

friendship with the world is hostility against God

One who is friends with the world is an enemy of God. Here "friendship with the world" stands for being friends with the world, and "hostility against God" stands for being hostile against God. Alternate translation: "friends of the world are enemies of God"

James 4:5

Or do you think the scripture says in vain ... envious?"

This is a rhetorical question James uses to exhort his audience. To speak in vain is to speak uselessly. Alternate translation: "There is a reason that scripture says ... envious."

The Spirit he caused to live in us

Some versions, including the ULB and UDB, understand this as a reference to the Holy Spirit. Other versions translate this as "the spirit" and mean by it the human spirit that each person has been created to have. We suggest that you use the meaning that is presented in other translations used by your readers.

James 4:6

But God gives more grace

How this phrase relates to the previous verse can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "But, even though our spirits may desire what we cannot have, God gives us even more grace if we will humble ourselves"

so the scripture

"that is why the scripture"

the proud

This refers to proud people in general. Alternate translation: "proud people"

the humble

This refers to humble people in general. Alternate translation: "humble people"

James 4:7

So submit

"Because God gives grace to the humble, submit"

submit to God

"obey God"

Resist the devil

"Oppose the devil" or "Do not do what the devil wants"

he will flee

"he will run away"

you

Here this pronoun is plural and refers to James's audience. James 4:8

General Information:

The word "you" here is plural and refers to the scattered believers to whom James writes.

Come close to God

Here the idea of coming close stands for becoming honest and open with God.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded

These are two phrases in parallel with each other.

Cleanse your hands

This expression is a command for people to do righteous acts instead of unrighteous acts. Alternate translation:

"Behave in a way that honors God"

purify your hearts

Here "hearts" refers to a person's thoughts and emotions.

Alternate translation: "make your thoughts and intentions right"

you double-minded people

The word "double-minded" refers to a person who cannot make a firm decision about something. Alternate translation: "you people who cannot decide if you want to obey God or not"

James 4:9

Grieve, mourn, and cry

These three words have similar meanings. James uses them together to emphasize that the people should be truly sorry for not obeying God.

Let your laughter turn into mourning and your joy into gloom

This is saying the same thing in different ways for emphasis. The abstract nouns "laughter," "mourning," "joy," and "gloom" can be translated as verbs or adjectives.

Alternate translation: "Stop laughing and mourn. Stop being joyful and be gloomy"

James 4:10

Humble yourselves before the Lord

"Be humble toward God." Actions done with God in mind are often spoken of as being done in his physical presence.

he will exalt you

James indicates that God will honor the humble person by saying God will pick that person up off the ground

physically from where that person had prostrated himself in humility. Alternate translation: "he will honor you"

James 4:11

brothers

James speaks of the believers as if they are biological brothers. The term here includes women as well as men.

Alternate translation: "fellow believers"

but a judge

"but you are acting like the person who gives the law"

James 4:12

Only one is the lawgiver and judge

This refers to God. "God is the only one who gives laws and judges people"

Who are you, you who judge your neighbor?

This is a rhetorical question James uses to scold his audience. This can be expressed as a statement. Alternate translation: "You are just a human and cannot judge another human."

James 4:13

spend a year there

James speaks of spending time as if it were money. "stay there for a year"

James 4:14

Who knows what will happen tomorrow, and what is your life?

James uses these questions to correct his audience and to teach these believers that physical life is not that important. They can be expressed as statements. Alternate translation: "No one knows what will happen tomorrow, and your life does not last very long!"

For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then disappears James speaks of people as if they were a mist that appears and then quickly goes away. Alternate translation: "You live for only a short amount of time, and then you die"

James 4:15

Instead, you should say

"Instead, your attitude should be"

we will live and do this or that

"we will live long enough to do what we have planned to do." The word "we" does not directly refer to James or his audience but is part of the example of how James's audience should consider the future.

James 4:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

James 4:17

for anyone who knows to do good but does not do it, for him it is sin Anyone who fails to do the good he knows he should do is guilty of sin.

Chapter 5

James 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Eternity

This chapter contrasts living for things of this world, which will not last, with living for things that will last for eternity. It is also important to live with the expectation that Jesus will return soon. (See: eternity)

Oaths

Scholars are divided over whether this passage teaches all oaths are wrong. Most scholars believe some oaths are permissible and James instead is teaching Christians to have integrity.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Elijah

This story will be difficult to understand if the books of 1 and 2 Kings and 1 and 2 Chronicles have not yet been translated. "Save his soul from death"

This probably teaches that the person who stops their sinful lifestyle will not be punished with physical death as a consequence of their sin. On the other hand, some scholars believe this passage teaches about eternal salvation. (See: sin and death and save)

Links:

[James 5:1 Notes](#)

James 5

5:1-6

Why does James tell Christians not to "store up treasure"?

[5:3]

James told Christians not to worry about getting money and possessions here on earth. James spoke to those who had much more money and than they needed to survive. James told rich people to use their money and possessions to honor God (see: 1 Timothy 6:17-19). He told Christians that the riches the world gave them cannot be taken to heaven when they died. James did not want Christians to think that being rich was wrong, but he wanted them to know that they needed to use their money and possessions to honor God. That is, they needed to use their riches to help the poor and sick in the church. By doing this, they followed Jesus' command to store their treasures in heaven (see: Matthew 6:19-20). God gave them these riches to honor him. Anything not used to honor him rots away in the same way fruit or meat rots, very quickly.

Advice to Translators: A possession is something that a person owns. When someone owns many things of great value

they are called “riches.”

See: Heaven

Why did James say the “pay of the laborers cries out”?

[5:4]

James said that the “pay of the laborers is crying out.” He wanted Christians to know that landowners broke the law of God when they did not pay their workers on the day that they worked (see: Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:14). If these people were not paid, they did not eat. James wanted Christians to know this was unjust. He said that God hears these cries, and he gave justice to the unjust (see: Malachi 3:5; Jeremiah 22:13-17).

See: Justice (Just, Unjust)

How were the righteous being condemned and killed?

[5:6]

James said that the people condemned and killed the righteous people. That is, people were killing people who did the right things. Perhaps James spoke to landowners who said their hired workers were guilty of things that they did not do. That is, they said that the innocent workers were guilty of wrong against them. Because the landowners were taking their workers to court, they took away their workers ability to make money. Because they did not make money, they did not eat. Because they did not eat, they died. Also, those who were judged guilty in the courts were killed. James said that those who did this were guilty of their workers deaths.

See: Condemn (Condemnation); Righteous (Righteousness); Guilty; Innocent

5:7-12

Why are Christians to be patient?

[5:7]

James told Christians to “be patient” (μακροθυμέω/g3114) when they suffer. He wanted them to be patient until Jesus came back to earth because he will make suffering stop.

Why did Christians need to stand firm?

[5:7]

James told Christians to be patient because Jesus was coming for them. Christians were suffering trials and persecution. James wanted them to know that they needed to hope in Jesus and have courage in his coming for them. Also, he told Christians not to complain about each other because this caused them to forget about Jesus. Also, James told them to have “endurance” (ὑπομονή/g5281) in the same way Job did. Because Job endured, God honored him (see: Job 42:1-17).

See: Trial; Persecute (Persecution)

Why did James say not to take an oath?

[5:12]

James told Christians not to take “oaths”(ὀμνύω/g3660). He said that they were only to say “yes” and “no.” James wanted Christians to know that they needed to speak the truth always. If they took an oath, God judged them. He judged if they told the truth or not (see: Matthew 5:33-37).

5:13-18

Who are the sick?

[5:14]

James spoke about sick people.

Some scholars think James spoke about people who had physical suffering. That is, their bodies had something wrong with it and they were in pain. Some physical suffering only stay for a short time while other physical suffering continues for a long time in people's body.

Also, scholars think James spoke to Christians who had spiritual suffering. That is, the enemy, Satan and his demons, tried to get them to sin or to reject Jesus. Other scholars think James wrote about Christians having severe physical suffering. James said that those suffering in this way needed other Christians to comfort them and perhaps help them defeat their suffering.

See: Satan (The Devil); Demon

What did James tell the sick to do?

[5:14]

James told sick Christians to go to the elders of their local church and have them pray for them. The elders spoke a “prayer” (εὐχή/g2171) of faith. That is, they prayed the will of God and trusted God's answer (see: 4:13-15). James said this prayer saved sick people. Some scholars think the word “save” meant saved from sin and spiritual death. That is, it helped them to be able to live together with God forever in heaven. Other scholars think the word “save” means their physical health will be saved. That is, the sick person will become well.

See: Elder

Who are righteous people?

[5:16]

James spoke about people who did the right things. Some scholars think James spoke about people made righteous by

Jesus (see: Roman 5:18-19). Other scholars think James spoke about people Jesus made at peace with God and those who Jesus helped to do the right things (see: 1 John 3:7). That is, Jesus saved them, and they lived their lives in a way that honored Jesus because he saved them.

Why does the prayer of the person who greatly honors God has power?

[5:16]

Some scholars think the prayer of a person who greatly honors God has great power because it is spoken with complete trust that God will answer. Other scholars think James spoke that this prayer had power because these people knew God alone had the power to make their request happen.

5:19-20

Who are those who stray from the truth?

[5:19]

James said that those who “stray”(πλανάω/g4105) from the truth chose to leave the truth of Jesus.

Some scholars think these people stopped listening to the truth about the gospel that had been taught to them. That is, they rejected the gospel. Paul also spoke about these people (see: Timothy 4:2-4).

Other scholars think James spoke to those Christians who were being led back into following the Jewish Law of Moses to save them from their sins.

Other scholars think James spoke to Christians who chose to return to doing sinful thing and thinking sinful things. That is, they knew what was right, but chose to do what was wrong.

See: Gospel; Law of Moses

What happens when those who are sinning “turn back”?

[5:19]

James says good things about people who encourage a “straying”(πλανάω/g4105) brother or sister to stop sinning and begin to do the right things.

Some scholars think that he wanted to say that this will to “rescue”(σώζω/g4982) the sinner from eternal death. That is, they will not be separated from God forever in hell.

Other scholars think that this will help the sinner from being punished by dying on the earth because of their sin. James told Christians that it was good for them to help a brother or sister straying from the truth. Also, James told these Christians to encourage straying people.

See: Hell

James 5:1

Connecting Statement:

James warns rich people about their focus on pleasure and riches.

you who are rich

Possible meanings are 1) James is giving a strong warning to wealthy believers or 2) James is talking about wealthy unbelievers. Alternate translation: "you who are rich and say you honor God"

because of the miseries coming on you

James states that these people will suffer terribly in the future and writes as if their sufferings were objects that were coming toward them. The abstract noun "miseries" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "because you will suffer terribly in the future"

James 5:2

Your riches have rotted, and your clothes have become moth-eaten.

Earthly riches do not last nor do they have any eternal value. James speaks of these events as if they had already happened. Alternate translation: "Your riches will rot, and your clothes will be eaten by moths."

riches ... clothes

These things are mentioned as examples of things that are valuable to wealthy people.

James 5:3

Your gold and your silver have become tarnished

Earthly riches do not last nor do they have any eternal value. James speaks of these events as if they had already happened. Alternate translation: "Your gold and silver will

become tarnished"

gold ... silver

These things are mentioned as examples of things that are valuable to wealthy people.

have become tarnished ... their rust

Gold does not actually tarnish, and gold and silver do not actually rust. James wants to emphasize that these precious metals will be ruined. Alternate translation: "are ruined ... their ruined condition"

their rust will be a witness against you. It

James wrote of their valuable things being ruined as if they were a person in a courtroom accusing the wicked of their crimes. Alternate translation: "and when God judges you, your ruined treasures will be like someone who accuses you in court. Their corrosion" (See: and)

will consume ... like fire

Here the corrosion is spoken of as if it were a fire that will burn up their owners.

your flesh

Here "flesh" stands for the physical body.

fire

The idea of fire here is meant to lead people to remember that fire often stands for God's punishment that will come on all the wicked.

for the last days

This refers to the time right before God comes to judge all people. The wicked think they are storing up riches for the future, but what they are doing is storing up judgment.

Alternate translation: "for when God is about to judge you"

James 5:4

Connecting Statement:

James continues to warn rich people about their focus on pleasure and riches.

the wages you kept back from the laborers who mowed your fields are crying out against you

The money that should have been paid is spoken of as a person who is shouting because of the injustice done to him. Alternate translation: "God can see that you kept back the wages you should have given to those who mowed your fields"

The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts

The shouts of the harvesters are spoken of as if they could be heard in heaven. Alternate translation: "The Lord of hosts has heard the cries of the harvesters"

the ears of the Lord of hosts

God is spoken of as if he had ears as humans have.

James 5:5

You have fattened your hearts for a day of slaughter

Here people are viewed as if they were cattle, luxuriously fed on grain so they would become fattened to be slaughtered for a feast. However, no one will feast at the time of judgment. Alternate translation: "Your greed has only prepared you for harsh eternal judgment"

your hearts

The "heart" was considered to be the center of human desire, and here stands for the entire person.

James 5:6

You have condemned ... the righteous person

This is probably not "condemned" in the legal sense of a judge passing a sentence of death on a criminal. Instead, it probably refers to the wicked and powerful people who decide to mistreat the poor until they die.

the righteous person. He does not

"the people who do what is right. They do not." Here "the righteous person" refers to righteous people in general and not to a specific person. Alternate translation: "righteous people. They do not"

James 5:7

General Information:

In closing, James reminds the believers about the Lord's coming and gives several short lessons on how to live for the Lord.

Connecting Statement:

James changes topics from a rebuke of the rich people to an exhortation to the believers.

Be patient, then

"Because of this, wait and be calm"

until the Lord's coming

This phrase refers to the return of Jesus, when he will begin his kingdom on the earth and judge all people. Alternate translation: "until Christ's return"

the farmer

James makes an analogy using farmers and believers to teach what it means to be patient.

James 5:8

Strengthen your hearts

James is equating the believers' hearts to their will to remain committed. Alternate translation: "Stay committed"

or "Keep your faith strong"

the Lord's coming is near

"the Lord will return soon"

James 5:9

Do not complain, brothers ... you

James is writing to all the scattered Jewish believers.

against one another

"about each other"

you will not be condemned

This can be stated in the active. Alternate translation:

"Christ will not condemn you"

See, the judge

"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: the judge"

the judge is standing at the door

James compares Jesus, the judge, to a person about to walk through a door to emphasize how soon Jesus will return to judge the world. Alternate translation: "the judge is coming soon"

James 5:10

the suffering and patience of the prophets, those who spoke in the name of the Lord

"how the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord suffered persecution with patience"

spoke in the name of the Lord

"Name" here is a metonym for the person of the Lord.

Alternate translation: "spoke by the authority of the Lord" or "spoke for the Lord to the people"

James 5:11

See, we regard

"Pay attention, because what I am about to say is both true and important: we regard"

those who endured

"those who continued obeying God even through hardship"

James 5:12

Above all, my brothers,

"This is important, my brothers:" or "Especially, my brothers,"

my brothers

This refers to all believers including women. Alternate translation: "my fellow believers"

do not swear

To "swear" is to say that you will do something, or that something is true, and to be held accountable by a higher authority. Alternate translation: "do not make an oath" or "do not make a vow"

either by heaven or by the earth

The words "heaven" and "earth" refer to the spiritual or human authorities that are in heaven and earth.

let your "Yes" mean "Yes" and your "No" mean "No,"

James is telling people to speak the truth without making an oath. Alternate translation: "If you say 'Yes' or 'No,' say it truthfully"

so you do not fall under judgment

Being condemned is spoken of as if one had fallen, crushed by the weight of something heavy. Alternate translation: "so God will not punish you"

James 5:13

Is anyone among you suffering hardship? Let him pray

James uses this question to cause the readers to reflect on their need. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If anyone is enduring troubles, he should pray"

Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise

James uses this question to cause the readers to reflect on their blessings. This can be translated as a statement.

Alternate translation: "If anyone is happy, he should sing songs of praise"

James 5:14

Is anyone among you sick? Let him call

James uses this question to cause the readers to reflect on their need. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If anyone is sick, he should call"

in the name of the Lord

"Name" is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ.

Alternate translation: "by the authority of the Lord" or

"with the authority that the Lord has given them"

James 5:15

The prayer of faith will heal the sick person

The writer speaks of God hearing believers pray for sick people and healing those people as if the prayers themselves healed the people. Alternate translation: "The Lord will hear the prayer of faith and will heal the sick person"

The prayer of faith

"The prayer made by believers" or "The prayer that people pray believing God will do as they ask"

the Lord will raise him up

"the Lord will make him well" or "the Lord will enable him to resume his normal life"

James 5:16

General Information:

As these are Jewish believers, James reminds them to pray by recalling one of the prophets of old and that prophet's practical prayers.

So confess your sins

Admit to other believers things you did wrong so that you can be forgiven.

to one another

"to each other"

so that you may be healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God may heal you"

The prayer of a righteous person is very strong in its working

Prayer is presented as if it were an object that was strong or powerful. Alternate translation: "When the person who obeys God prays, God will do great things"

James 5:17

prayed earnestly

"prayed eagerly" or "prayed passionately"

in the land

There may have been rain in lands other than Israel, but it did not rain in Israel.

three ... six

"3 ... 6"

James 5:18

The heavens gave rain

"The heavens" probably refers to the sky, which is presented as the source of the rain. Alternate translation:

"Rain fell from the sky"

the earth produced its fruit

Here the earth is presented as the source of the crops.

fruit

Here "fruit" stands for all the crops of the farmers.

James 5:19

brothers

Here this word probably refers to both men and women.

Alternate translation: "fellow believers"

if anyone among you strays from the truth, and someone brings him back

A believer who stops trusting in God and obeying him is spoken of as if he were a sheep that wandered away from the flock. The person who persuades him to trust in God again is spoken of as if he were a shepherd who goes to search for the lost sheep. Alternate translation: "whenever anyone stops obeying God, and another person helps him start obeying again"

James 5:20

whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way ... will cover over a great number of sins

James means that God will use the actions of this person to persuade the sinner to repent and be saved. But James speaks as if it were this other person who actually saved the sinner's soul from death.

will save him from death and will cover over a great number of sins

Here "death" refers to spiritual death, eternal separation from God. Alternate translation: "will save him from spiritual death, and God will forgive the sinner for all of his sins"

will cover over a great number of sins

Possible meanings are 1) the person who brings back the disobedient brother will have his sins forgiven or 2) the disobedient brother, when he returns to the Lord, will have his sins forgiven. Sins are spoken of as if they were objects that God could cover so that he would not see them, so that he would forgive them.

Introduction to 1 Peter

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of 1 Peter

Introduction (1:1-2) Praise for God's salvation of the believers (1:3-2:10) Christian living (2:11-4:11) Encouragement to persevere when suffering (4:12-5:11) Closing (5:12-14)

Who wrote the Book of 1 Peter?

The Book of 1 Peter was written by the apostle Peter. He wrote the letter to Gentile Christians scattered throughout Asia

Minor.

What is the Book of 1 Peter about?

Peter stated that he wrote this letter for the purpose of "encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God" (5:12). He encouraged Christians to continue obeying God even when they were suffering. He told them to do this because Jesus would return soon. Peter also gave instructions about Christians submitting to persons in authority.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title "1 Peter" or "First Peter." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The First Letter from Peter" or "The First Letter Peter Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

How were Christians treated in Rome?

Peter probably was in Rome when he wrote this letter. He gave Rome the symbolic name of "Babylon" (5:13). It appears that when Peter wrote this letter, Romans were badly persecuting Christians.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Peter, except in two places: [1 Peter 1:16]

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 1 Peter?

"You made your souls pure by obedience to the truth. This was for the purpose of sincere brotherly love; so love one another earnestly from the heart" (1:22). The ULB and most other modern translations read this way. Some older translations read, "You made your souls pure by obedience to the truth through the Spirit for the purpose of sincere brotherly love, so love one another earnestly from the heart."

If translations of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the readings found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

Chapter 1

1 Peter 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Peter formally introduces this letter in verses 1-2. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East. Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 1:24-25.

Special concepts in this chapter

What God reveals

When Jesus comes again, everyone will see how good God's people were to have faith in Jesus. Then God's people will see how gracious God has been to them, and all people will praise both God and his people.

Holiness

God wants his people to be holy because God is holy. (See: holy)

Eternity

Peter tells Christians to live for things that will last forever and not to live for the things of this world, which will end. (See: eternity)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. Peter writes that his readers are glad and sad at the same time ([1 Peter 1:6](#)). He can say this because they are sad because they are suffering, but they are glad because they know that God will save them "in the last time" ([1 Peter 1:5](#))

Links:

[1 Peter 1:1 Notes](#) [1 Peter intro](#)

1 Peter 1 Commentary

1:1-2

Why did Peter call the people "foreigners"?

[1:1]

Peter wrote to certain people. He called them "foreigners of the dispersion." When Peter lived, the Jews were dispersed or spread out. That is, they lived all over the world and only a few of them lived in Israel. However, Peter was talking about Christians and not Jews. Some scholars think Peter wanted to say that being a Christian made someone different than other people. They were foreign or different from other people in the evil world around them. Fewer scholars think Peter

wanted them to know that believing in Jesus was more important than remaining in the country in which they lived or their birth country. At this time, many Christians were forced to move away from their homes or separated from other people like them.

Advice to translators: In some places, people are outcast from their communities. This means that they have been separated from other people who live with or near them. In many places, when someone becomes a Christian, they are treated badly by people who live with or near them.

See: World

Why did Peter call the people to whom he wrote "chosen ones"?

[1:1]

Peter called Christians "chosen"(ἐκλεκτός/g1588) by God because God planned for something to happen. He planned it before he made the world (see: Ephesians 1:4). The Holy Spirit made God's plan work. God chose people to obey Jesus. Peter wanted them to know that a Christian needs to obey Jesus every day.

See: Elect (Election)

What does "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" mean?

[1:2]

Peter wrote that God said Christians are to be "sprinkled with the blood of Jesus." That is, God continues to forgive Christians. He does this because of Jesus died so that people could be at peace with God. (see: 1 John 1:7).

Advice to translators: The intended meaning of "God keeps forgiving Christians" is that God is always wants to forgive. If there is a way to say "God continually forgives" in your language, use that.

See: Atonement (Atonement); Blood; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon)

1:3-5

What is a "living hope"?

[1:3]

Peter wrote about a "living hope." Some scholars think Peter wrote "living hope" because he wanted readers to know God made it so that people could live with him in heaven forever. This is because Jesus resurrected and Christians will too. God said that people who believe in Jesus will physically be with Jesus in heaven. Some scholars also think Peter wrote "living hope" because he wanted Christians to think about a person without hope. Paul also wrote about this (see: Ephesians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 4:13). Peter wrote about what Jesus gives Christians now. He also wrote about what he gives them in the future with him (see:1:13; 1:21; 3:15).

Advice to translators: In Scripture, hope is a type of confidence. It is about knowing who God is and trusting in the things he will do because he is God.

See: Hope; Heaven; Resurrect (Resurrection)

What is the "inheritance" God gives to Christians?

[1:4]

The "inheritance"(κληρονομία/g2817) God gives to Christians is getting to live together with God in heaven after they die. Peter wrote that Christians will inherit someone and this cannot change. Because God promised this, he will give it to those who believe in Jesus. Christians can know that they will live forever. Also, Christian will not sin or be near sin after they die.

Peter said God "protects"(τηρέω/g5083) this inheritance in heaven for Christians. God fully gives this gift, but Christians are not given it until they go to heaven (see: Ephesians 1:14).

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir); Heaven

1:6-9

Why did Peter say in "this" you rejoice?

[1:6]

Scholars disagree about why Peter wrote "in this" Christians rejoice. Some scholars think Peter wrote about how God will "completely save"(σωτηρία/g4991) Christians when Jesus returns to earth. Other scholars think Peter wanted to say how great it is for Christians to know that they have this, even before they die (see: 1:3-5).

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

How can Christians be joyful even when bad things happen to them?

[1:6, 1:7]

Peter said that Christians can be joyful when bad things happen to them because they know God's power (see:1:5). Peter said that when bad things happen to Christians, it is a time for them to show how they trust God to care for them. That is, they show they truly and completely believe in God. This allows the Christian to be able to give praise and honor to God now and when Jesus Christ "returns"(ἀποκαλύψει/g602).

Also, Peter wanted Christians to know they can have "joy"(χαρά/g5479) because they know God saved them from their sins. Because of this, he knows that he will be with Jesus. Peter says that this is a kind of joy that is "incredibly wonderful"(δοξάζω/g1392). It is so wonderful that the Christian cannot even talk about it clearly or fully.

See: Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4

See: Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

1:10-12

Why did Peter write about the Old Testament prophets searching the scriptures?

[1:10]

The prophets wanted to know about how God saved people from their sins. The prophets read Old Testament to know more about this. Peter wrote that the prophets read the scriptures carefully to know how God saved people from their sins (see: Matthew 13:16-17). The prophets spoke that the “favor”(χάρις/g5485) of God is greater than what the prophets knew in their lives.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Prophet

Who is the “Spirit of Christ”?

[1:11]

Peter spoke about the Holy Spirit when he said the “Spirit of Christ.” The Holy Spirit told the prophets to know the Messiah was going to come into the world. He was going to suffer to save people from their sins (see: Isaiah 53:3-5). The prophets read the scriptures God gave them to find out who was this Messiah and when this suffering was going to happen.

God told the prophets that what the Messiah was going to do was not going to happen in their lifetimes. He told them that it was going to happen in the future (see: Ephesians 3:4-6). This message was so great that even the angels wanted to know and understand it. That is, not even angels knew what God was going to do to save people.

See: Holy Spirit; Messiah (Christ); Suffer; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Angel

1:13

Where did Peter tell Christians to place their hope?

[1:13]

Peter told Christians to “place all of their hope”(ἐλπίζω/g1679) in the goodness and favor of God. This he will give them when Jesus Christ “comes back to earth”(ἀποκαλύψει/g602) again. Nobody knows when this is going to happen. But, some scholars think Peter wanted Christians to think it was coming in their future.

Peter also told his readers that they needed to think about how God wanted them to live now. This means everything they needed to honor God and do what he tells them.

See: Hope; Jesus' Return to Earth

1:14-16

How are Christians to be different after they believe in Jesus?

[1:14, 1:15]

Peter wrote that after someone believes in Jesus, they are to do things differently than when they did not believe in Jesus. They need to completely obey God the Father. That is, they should stop sinning and allow rule their lives and to follow him (see: Romans 6:12-17; 2 Corinthians 10:5).

Peter said that before people believe in Jesus, they want to do things that are evil. They do this because they are

“ignorant”(ἄγνοια/g0052). That is, they did not know the things they did dishonored God (see: Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:18).

Only God is “holy”(ἅγιος/g40). That is, only God is perfectly pure and good. But in the same way God is completely pure and holy, Christians are to try to be pure and holy in everything they do. Christians cannot be completely pure and good before they die, but the Holy Spirit helps them. Christians are to change what they do and think to honor God in all they do and think.

See: Faith (Believe in); God the Father; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Purify (Pure); Holy Spirit

1:17

What does Peter say Christians must remember about God?

[1:17]

Peter wrote that Christians need to remember two things about God. Christians can pray to God and call him “Father.”

This is because Christians are God’s children. Christians also need to remember that God judges everyone. That is, he judges Christians and non-Christians. God treats all people with his good and right standard (see: Matthew 16:27; 1 Corinthians 3:13). Because God is the judge, Peter told his readers to live their whole lives here on earth in

“reverence”(ψόβος/g5401). That is, Christians need to give honor to God by doing what he says.

See: Pray (Prayer); God the Father; Children of God; Judge (Judgment)

1:18-19

Why did Peter tell Christians to give great respect to God?

[1:18, 1:19]

Peter said Christians need to give great respect to God because they know God “set them free”(λυτρόω/g3084) from sin. Before believing in Jesus, people want to sin and this controls them. God set them free from this and they can know that they have peace with God (see: Mark 10:45; Titus 2:14; Colossians 1:13).

Another reason Christians need to give great respect to God is because of what God did to set people free from their sin. That is, Jesus had to die so that people could be at peace with God. Peter wanted readers to think about how Jesus died on the cross (see: Hebrews 9:13-14; Revelation 5:9). When Peter wrote about "silver or gold," he wanted to say that what Jesus did cost far more than anything on earth.

See: Atonement (Atonement)

1:20-23

When did God plan to save people from their sins?

[1:20]

Peter wrote that, before the "foundation" (καταβολή/g2602) of the world, God planned to save people from their sins. That is, God planned to save people before he created the world. This plan needed Jesus to suffer and die on the cross (see: 1:11,18-19; Acts 2:23). God caused his plan to be done by Jesus in the last days. All Christians today live in these last days. That is, the last days began when Jesus came to the earth, and they are still continuing.

Because Jesus was the Messiah and did God's plan, Christians believe in God and trust him completely. God raised Jesus from the dead and gave Jesus "glory" (δόξα/g1391). Because God did this, Christians trust in God. They know that God will do all that he promised.

See: Atonement (Atonement); Cross; Last Days; Messiah (Christ); Resurrect (Resurrection); Glory (Glorify)

Why did Peter command Christians to love one another with true love?

[1:22]

Peter gave two reasons why Christians need to love each other with true love. First, God wants Christians to be pure so they can "love" (φιλαδέλφια/g5360) other Christians. The Christian "obeys" (ὑπακοή/g5218) all that God commands. This obedience "purifies" (ἀγνίζω/g0048) the Christian's soul. This makes it possible for the Christian to love other Christians. God planned all this (see: 1:2). Second, the Christian is "reborn" (ἀναγεννάω/g0313). That is, born a second time. Peter used a metaphor about a "seed" that cannot die. He wanted to say that the Christian's second birth is from Jesus, and will last forever. The best thing about that seed is "love" (ἀγάπη/g0025). This also makes it possible for the Christian to love other Christians.

Because of these two reasons, Peter told Christians to love each other in the same way God loves them.

See: Love; Purify (Pure); Soul; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Metaphor

1:24-25

How did Peter say the "flesh" is different than "the word of the Lord"?

[1:24, 1:25]

Peter quoted from Isaiah that spoke about "flesh" and "the word of the Lord" (see: Isaiah 40:6-8). When he wrote about "flesh," he wanted to talk about how people are before they believe in Jesus. He used the metaphor of grass in a field that dries up and dies. He wanted to say that before people believe in Jesus, nothing they do will remain long. Even the greatest things people do will be destroyed or forgotten. This is because people are born from a "seed" that dies (1:23). But when people believe in Jesus, they are given a new and a better life. They now want to do things that honor God. This new life is better because it comes from the "word" (ῥῆμα/g4487) of God, which never dies. That is, the word of God is eternal. So the Christian's new life is also eternal. It is this eternal word that is known as the "good news" (εὐαγγελίζω/g2097) that Peter and others told the first Christians. This is the same good news that Christians today hear and believe.

See: Flesh; Faith (Believe in); Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Eternal Life

1 Peter 1:1

General Information:

Peter identifies himself as the writer and identifies and greets the believers to whom he is writing.

the foreigners of the dispersion

Peter speaks of his readers as people who live away from their homes in many different countries.

Cappadocia ... Bithynia

Along with the other places that Peter mentions, "Cappadocia" and "Bithynia" were Roman provinces located in what is now the country of Turkey.

the chosen ones

"the ones whom God the Father has chosen." God has chosen them according to his own foreknowledge.

1 Peter 1:2

the foreknowledge of God the Father

The abstract noun "foreknowledge" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Possible meanings are 1) God had

determined what would happen ahead of time. Alternate translation: "what God the Father decided previously" or 2) God knew what would happen ahead of time. Alternate translation: "what God the Father knew beforehand"

for the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ

Here "the blood" refers to the death of Jesus. Just as Moses sprinkled blood on the people of Israel to symbolize their covenant with God, believers are in covenant with God because of Jesus's death.

May grace be to you, and may your peace increase

This passage speaks of grace as if it were an object that believers could possess, and of peace as if it were something that could increase in amount. Of course, grace is in reality the kind way God acts toward believers, and peace is how believers live in safety and joy with God.

1 Peter 1:3

General Information:

Peter begins to talk about the believers' salvation and faith.

our Lord Jesus Christ ... has given us new birth
The words "our" and "us" refer to Peter and those to whom he is writing.

he has given us new birth to a living hope

Here "new birth" is a metaphor meaning that God has changed people so that they live their lives in a new way. Here "living hope" is a metaphor meaning an enduring, confident expectation." Alternate translation: "he has caused us to live in a new way, having an enduring, confident hope"

he has given us new birth

"he has caused us to be born again"

1 Peter 1:4

This is for an inheritance

You can translate this using a verb. Alternate translation: "We confidently expect to receive an inheritance"

inheritance

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

will not perish, will not become stained, and will not fade away

Peter uses three similar phrases to describe the inheritance as something that is perfect and eternal.

It is reserved in heaven for you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is reserving it in heaven for you"

1 Peter 1:5

You are protected by God's power

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is protecting you"

by God's power

Here "power" is a way of saying that God is strong and able to protect believers.

through faith

Here "faith" refers to the fact that the believers trust in Christ. Alternate translation: "because of your faith"

that is ready to be revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God is ready to reveal"

in the last time

This refers to a particular time, not to an extended period of time. This particular time is as the world as we know it is ending, before the age to come begins.

1 Peter 1:6

In this you greatly rejoice

The word "this" refers to all the blessings that Peter mentions in the previous verses.

1 Peter 1:7

This is for the proving of your faith

In the same way in which fire refines gold, hardships test how well believers trust in Christ.

the proving of your faith

God wishes to test how well believers trust in Christ.

faith, which is more precious than gold that perishes, even though it is tested by fire

Faith is more valuable than gold, because gold does not last forever, even if it is refined in fire.

your faith will be found to result in praise, glory, and honor

Possible meanings are 1) that "God will honor you very

highly" because of your faith or 2) that "your faith will bring praise, glory, and honor" to God.

at the revealing of Jesus Christ

"when Jesus Christ is revealed." This refers to the return of Christ. This can also be expressed with an active form. Alternate translation: "when Jesus Christ appears to all people"

1 Peter 1:8

joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory

"wonderful joy that words cannot describe"

1 Peter 1:9

the salvation of your souls

Here "soul" refers to the whole person. The abstract noun "salvation" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "your salvation" or "God saving you"

1 Peter 1:10

salvation ... grace

These words present two ideas as if they were things or objects. In reality, "salvation" refers to the action of God saving us, or to what happens as a result. Similarly, "grace" refers to the kind way in which God deals with believers.

searched diligently and examined carefully

The words "searched diligently" and "examined carefully" mean basically the same thing. Together these words emphasize how hard the prophets tried to understand this salvation. Alternate translation: "carefully searched to know all about this salvation" or "carefully examined everything about this salvation"

1 Peter 1:11

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues talking about the prophets' search for salvation.

inquiring into

Possible meanings are 1) "trying to learn" or 2) "trying to make known."

the Spirit of Christ

This is a reference to the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1:12

It was revealed to them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God revealed to the prophets"

into which angels long to look

"that angels want to understand"

1 Peter 1:13

So gird

"Because of this, gird." Peter uses the word "So" here to refer back to everything he has said about salvation, their faith, and the Spirit of Christ giving revelations to the prophets.

gird up the loins of your mind

Girding up the loins refers to preparing to work hard. It comes from the custom of tucking the bottom of one's robe into a belt around the waist in order to move with ease.

Alternate translation: "get your minds ready"

Be sober

Here the word "sober" refers to mental clarity and alertness. Alternate translation: "Control your thoughts" or "Be careful about what you think"

Put your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you

Peter tells Christians to confidently wait to receive God's grace. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Confidently wait for the grace that God will bring to you" or "Fully trust in the grace that God will bring to you"

the grace that will be brought to you

God's way of dealing kindly with believers is spoken of as if it were an object that he will bring to them. Alternate translation: "the good things that God will kindly give to you"

when Jesus Christ is revealed

This refers to when Christ returns. This can also be expressed with an active form. See how you translated this in 1 Peter 1:7. Alternate translation: "when Jesus Christ appears to all people"

1 Peter 1:14

do not conform yourselves to the desires

"do not desire the same things" Alternate translation: "do not live to gratify the desires"

1 Peter 1:15

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Peter 1:16

For it is written

This refers to God's message in the scripture. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For as God said"

Be holy, because I am holy

Here the word "I" refers to God.

1 Peter 1:17

conduct yourselves in fear during your time here as foreigners.

Christians living their lives on earth is spoken of as if they were living in a land far away from their home. Alternate translation: "be reverent while you are living your life on earth"

1 Peter 1:18

you have been redeemed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has redeemed you"

1 Peter 1:19

the precious blood of Christ

Here "blood" stands for Christ's death on the cross.

like that of a lamb without blemish or spot

Jesus died as a sacrifice so that God would forgive people's sins. This phrase shows that Jesus was perfect by comparing his blood to the blood of a spotless lamb. Alternate translation: "like the blood of the spotless lambs that the Jewish priests sacrificed"

without blemish or spot

Peter expresses the same idea in two different ways to emphasize Christ's purity. Alternate translation: "with no imperfections"

1 Peter 1:20

Christ was foreknown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God knew Christ" or "God chose Christ"

before the foundation of the world

You can translate this with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "before God created the world"

he has been revealed to you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has revealed him to you"

he has been revealed to you

Peter does not mean that his readers have actually seen Christ, but that they have learned the truth about him.

1 Peter 1:21

who raised him from the dead

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "who caused him to live again so that he was no longer among the dead"

and gave him glory

"and glorified him" or "and showed that he is glorious"

your faith and hope are in God

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "your faith and trust are in God" or "you believe in God and trust him"

1 Peter 1:22

You made your souls pure

Here the word "soul" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "You made yourselves pure"

pure

Here the idea of cleanliness refers to being acceptable to God.

by obedience to the truth

You can translate this using a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "by obeying the truth"

brotherly love

This refers to love between fellow believers.

love one another earnestly from a pure heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts or emotions. To love someone "from a pure heart" means to love someone completely with total commitment. Alternate translation: "love one another earnestly and completely"

1 Peter 1:23

born again, not from perishable seed, but from imperishable seed

Possible meanings are that Peter speaks of the word of God either 1) as the seed of a plant that grows and produces new life in believers or 2) as the tiny cells inside a man or woman that combine to cause a baby to grow inside the woman.

imperishable seed

seed that will not rot or dry up or die

through the living and remaining word of God

Peter speaks of God's word as if it were alive forever. In reality, it is God who lives forever, and whose instructions and promises last eternally.

1 Peter 1:24

General Information:

In these verses Peter quotes a passage from the prophet Isaiah relating to what he has just said about them being born of imperishable seed.

All flesh is like grass, and all its

The word "flesh" refers to humanity. The prophet Isaiah compares humanity to grass that grows and dies quickly. Alternate translation: "All people will die like grass dies, and all their"

glory is like the wild flower of the grass

Here the word "glory" refers to beauty or goodness. Isaiah compares the things that people consider to be good or beautiful about humanity to flowers that die quickly. Alternate translation: "goodness soon stops, just as flowers soon die"
1 Peter 1:25

the word of the Lord
"the message that comes from the Lord"
the gospel that was preached
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the gospel that we preached"

Chapter 2

1 Peter 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 2:6, 7, 8, and 22.

Special concepts in this chapter

Stones

Peter uses a building made of large stones as a metaphor for the church. Jesus is the cornerstone, the most important stone. The apostles and prophets are the foundation, the part of the building on which all the other stones rest. In this chapter, Christians are the stones that make up the walls of the building. (See: and cornerstone and foundation)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Milk and babies

When Peter tells his readers to "long for pure spiritual milk," he is using the metaphor of a baby craving his mother's milk. Peter wants Christians to crave God's word the same way a baby craves milk.

Links:

[1 Peter 2:1 Notes](#)

1 Peter 2

2:1-3

How did Peter say that Christians need to do to honor God?

[2:1, 2:2]

Peter wrote that Christians needed to stop doing the evil things they did before they believed in Jesus. They needed to do the things that honor God.

They needed to stop having "hateful feelings" (κακία/g2549) and "all kinds of deceit" (δόλος/g1388). Christians needed to not "pretend to be someone they are not" (ὑπόκρισις/g5272). That is, a Christian does not need to pretend they do good things when they do not do good things. Christians need to stop all "jealous desires" (φθόνος/g5355) and "speaking evil of other people" (καταλαλία/g2636).

Peter then wrote about what Christians needed to do to honor God. He used the metaphor of "milk." He wanted to say that Christians needed to want to learn about God. They needed to think and do the same things Jesus thought and did. In the same way babies want milk to live, Christians need to want to do the things Jesus did to live. In the same way milk gives food to babies, the Bible shows Christians how to know God and the things that honor him. Christians also get their "spiritual food" when they listen to a wise teacher who knows what God wants them to do (See: Ephesians 5:1-10).

Peter wrote that Christians want this because they see and know how good God is to them. Peter used the metaphor of "tasting" to talk about this. That is, when Peter wrote that Christians "tasted" that God is good and kind, he wanted to say that they know this because God was kind to them.

Peter also wanted readers to think about 1:22, where he commanded Christians to love each other. Now, in 2:1-3, he wrote how Christians can do this. That is, he wrote what Christians need to do these things if they want to love each other.

See: 1 Corinthians 3:2

See: Faith (Believe in); Hypocrisy (Hypocrite); Metaphor; Grow in Faith

2:4-5

What is the "living stone" about which Peter wrote?

[2:4]

Peter used the metaphor "living stone" to speak about Jesus. He wanted to say that in the same way a stone is solid and good to build a house upon, so Jesus is a solid foundation for people to believe in. In the same way a large stone makes a solid physical base for a building, so Jesus is a foundation for his church. Peter wrote about Jesus as the "living" (ζάω/g2198) stone because God brought him back from the dead after he died on the cross. The same metaphor applies to people who believe in Jesus. That is, when they believe in the living stone, they become living stones.

Peter added to this metaphor by saying that God builds all Christians into a spiritual house. In ancient Israel, people built

homes out of stones and clay. In the same way, God builds his kingdom out of people who believe in Jesus. Peter wanted to say that God does not live in a building. The Holy Spirit, who is God, lives in Christians. When Christians do what the Holy Spirit tells them to do, he places them together the way a builder places stones into a house.

These living stones also have something God wants them to do. Peter called them a “household of priests”(ἱεράτευμα/g2406). He wanted to say that they need to worship God. Christians worship God by how they talk and what they do (see: 2: 9). Peter also wanted to say that when Christians worship God, this is the same as “sacrifices”(θυσία/g2378) to God.

When Peter and other Christians talked about Jesus, many people did not believe in Jesus (see: Acts 4:11; Matthew 21:42). But Peter wrote that God “chose”(ἐκλεκτός/g1588) Jesus. So, Jesus has “high value”(ἐντιμος/g1784).

See: Metaphor; Church; Kingdom of God; Priest (Priesthood) ; Worship; Sacrifice; Elect (Election)

2:6-8

Why did Peter write about the "cornerstone"?

[2:6]

Peter used a metaphor from the Book of Isaiah to say that Jesus is the cornerstone of God's kingdom (see: Isaiah 28:16).

The cornerstone is the strongest and most important stone in a building. In the same way, Jesus is the most important part of God's kingdom.

Peter said that people who “believe” or “trust”(πιστεύων/g4100) in Jesus will not be ashamed. They will be given honor.

God gave Jesus the highest honor as the cornerstone. In the same way, Christians are given honor by being living stones. That is, God makes them into the spiritual home where God dwells.

However, the people who do not believe in Jesus, the cornerstone, will “stumble”(προσκοπῶ/g4350) and fall. That is, they did not do the right thing and God judges them because they did not do what honors God.

See: Metaphor; Kingdom of God; Faith (Believe in); Shame (Ashamed); Stumble (Stumbling Block)

2:9-10

How did God approve people who believe in Jesus?

[2:9, 2:10]

Peter wrote about how God accepts Christians in six ways: God “chose”(ἐκλεκτός/g1588) to accept Christians because they believe in Jesus (see: Isaiah 43:20-21). God made Christians a royal “priesthood”(ἱεράτευμα/g2406) (see: Exodus 19:5-6).

That is, Christians serve and worship God, the King. They show those who do not believe in Jesus who God is and what he does (see: Revelation 20:6). God “set apart”(ἅγιος/g0040) Christians (see: Exodus 19:6). When a person believes in Jesus,

God makes them different from those who do not believe in Jesus. That is, Christians show God's goodness by the things that they do to honor God (see: 1:15-16). Christians are people who “belong to God”(περιποίησις/g4047). Because

Christians belong to God, they tell other people about the good things God does. Peter wrote that people who are not Christians are in “darkness”(σκότος/g4655). This is a metaphor he used to talk about how they do not know God. Because

they do not believe in God, they do things that are sinful and evil. However, God brought Christians out of the darkness and into the “light”(φῶς/g5457). That is, they can know God and honor him by what they do. God brought Christians

together to be his people. That is, in the past, they did not worship God. But now, because they believe in Jesus, God brings Christians together to worship him and to do other things together that honor him. They care for each other in ways that

good families care for each other. God gave mercy to Christians. That is, God showed great kindness to his people when he forgave their sins. This was a gift God gave to people who did not deserve this gift.

See: Elect (Election); Faith (Believe in); Priest (Priesthood) ; Serve (Servant, Slave); Worship; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart);

Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Mercy

2:11-12

Why did Paul call his readers "foreigners and exiles"?

[2:11]

When Peter wrote that his readers were "foreigners and exiles," he wanted to say that Christians are different than other people. When a person believes in Jesus, God saves them from their sins. He also changes them. Now they do the things that honor God instead of the things that other people in the world want them to do, things that do not honor God. It is as if they become strangers to the world, and they no longer do the things that other people do. So, Peter used the metaphor of "foreigners" to write about this difference.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); World; Metaphor

How should Christians live in a world in which they are strangers?

[2:12]

Peter wrote that Christians need to live differently than other people in the world because they are strangers in the world. Peter “strongly encouraged”(παρακαλέω/g3870) Christians not to talk or to do things the way they did before they believed in Jesus (see: Colossians 1:13-14). If they keep doing the same things, this will cause conflict inside of them (see: James 4:1-3).

Instead, Christians are to do things in a “good way”(καλός/g2570) among other people. These people will say bad things about the Christian. But if they see the good things the Christian does, they will give God honor (see: Matthew 5:16).

Peter says this honor will be given to God on the "day of his coming." Some scholars think the day of God's coming talks about a time when God will judge the nations of the world. At this time, all people will honor Jesus as their master (see: Philippians 2:10-11). Other scholars think the day of God's coming is the time when God saves someone from his sins and causes him to become part of God's kingdom. This is because God has favored them.

See: World; Faith (Believe in); Day of Judgment; Kingdom of God

2:13-15

Why does Peter instruct Christians to obey earthly rulers?

[2:13]

Peter wrote that Christians need to obey their earthly rulers for two reasons:

Peter said that it was for Jesus. Christians need to obey earthly rulers so that they do not bring dishonor to the name of Jesus because they disobeyed their rulers. Christians understand that earthly rulers were put in their position by God (see: Romans 13:1-7). So, when Christians obey earthly rulers, they are obeying God. They are also following Jesus' example. This brings honor to God. Peter wrote that God deeply wants Christians to do what is good because it will stop people who spoke wrong things about Christians. This means that Christians need to obey their rulers, and continue to do good deeds. That is, unless their rulers try to get them to do something that dishonors God. In this way, people who oppose Christians will not be able to say bad things about them.

See: Name

2:16-17

What did Peter want to say when he wrote that Christians are "free"?

[2:16]

Peter told Christians to do the things that people who are "free" (ἐλεύθερος/g1658) do. That is, that they no longer need to sin (see: Galatians 13:13; Romans 6:6-7) because God forgave their sins. Christians must never use their freedom to "cover up" (ἐπικάλυμμα/g1942) for doing wrong. Instead, Christians serve God. They honor God by how what they do (see: Romans 6:17-19)

See: Free (Freedom); Sinful Nature; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Serve (Servant, Slave)

How do Christians show that they are free?

[2:16, 2:17]

Christians show that they are free by what they do. Because Christians are free, they need to respect all people. Christians are to "love" (ἀγαπάω/g0025) each other. They are to "revere" (φοβέω/g5399) and worship God only. Peter says Christians are to "honor the king." That is, they need to show respect to the one who rules their country.

See: Free (Freedom); Love; Fear of God

2:18-20

What does Peter tell Christians to do to serve God?

[2:18]

Peter wrote that a "household servant" (οικέτης/g3610) works for his master, giving them "all respect" (φόβος/g5401). That is, servants voluntarily give respect to their masters the way everyone is to respect their rulers (see: 2:17). This is because the Christian has the highest respect for God. Servants should serve masters who are fair or unfair in the same way. This gives honor to God.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave)

What does Peter say is "praiseworthy"?

[2:19]

Peter wrote that it is "praiseworthy" when a Christian is treated unjustly because he believes in Jesus. That is, God is pleased when Christians trust him when they are being treated badly or suffer. Christians do not need to stop doing things that honor God in order to avoid being punished or mistreated by other people. This is because Christians are to do the same types of things that Jesus did.

See: Praise; Justice (Just, Unjust)

2:21-25

To what were Christians "called"?

[2:21]

When Peter wrote that Jesus called Christians to "this," he wanted his readers to think about suffering. Some scholars think Jesus called Christians specifically to be falsely accused and mistreatment for simply being Christians. Other scholars think Jesus called Christians specifically to trust God when they suffered for doing what was right (see: John 15:18-20; 2 Timothy 3:12).

See: Suffer

How was Jesus "reviled"?

[2:23]

Jesus was "reviled" (λοιδορέω/g3058) when people spoke evil thing about him. The rulers insulted Jesus, falsely accused

him of things he did not do, and made threats with words in anger. Jesus' trusted God who judges all things in a correct and just way. Jesus did this as an example for Christians to follow (see: 3:9).

What did it mean for a Christian to have "no more part in sin" and to "live for righteousness"?

[2:24]

Paul wrote that Christians needed to have "no more part in sin" and needed to "live for righteousness." He wanted his readers to remember that they no longer have to sin. This is because they believe in Jesus, and God saved them from their sins. Now, they are to do things that honor God. This is what Jesus did. When Jesus died on the cross, he made it possible for people to be at peace with God and to do what God wants them to do. He also made it possible for them to live together with God in heaven forever (see: Isaiah 53:5). None of this is possible before God saves someone from their sins. See: Sin; Righteous (Righteousness); Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Cross; Heaven

Why did Peter write, "by his bruises you have been healed"?

[2:24]

When Peter wrote "by his bruises you have been healed," he used a metaphor to talk about how God saves people from their sins. The bruises of Jesus came when the soldiers beat him and then hung him on a cross to die. Peter wanted to say that because Jesus suffered physically, people who believe in Jesus no longer need to suffer in a different way. This was not a physical suffering. Instead, if they believe in Jesus, God will save them from their sins and they will be at peace with God. This is a type of healing.

See: Metaphor; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Cross; Faith (Believe in)

What did Peter want readers to think about when he wrote about the "shepherd and guardian of their souls"?

[2:25]

When Peter wrote about readers returning to the "shepherd and guardian of their souls," he wanted them to think about following Jesus. Some scholars think Peter wrote this to the Jewish people who continued to do things that did not honor God's commands. They think that when some Jewish people believed in Jesus, they began to honor God again. Other scholars think Peter wrote this to both Jews and Gentiles. When he wrote that the Jews and Gentiles "returned" (ἐπιστρέφω/g1994) to the shepherd of their souls, it meant they stopped sinning and started following Jesus, who is the Messiah.

See: Shepherd; Soul; Israel; Gentile; Messiah (Christ)

1 Peter 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues teaching his readers about holiness and obedience.

Therefore, put aside all evil, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander. These sinful actions are spoken of as if they were objects that people could throw away. The word "Therefore" here refers back to everything that Peter has said about being holy and obedient. Alternate translation: "So then, stop being evil, deceptive, hypocritical, envious, and slanderous"

1 Peter 2:2

As newborn infants, long for pure spiritual milk

Peter speaks of his readers as if they were babies. Babies require very pure food that they can digest easily. In the same way, believers need pure teaching from God's word. Alternate translation: "Just as babies long for their mother's breast milk, so you must yearn for pure spiritual milk"

long for

"desire intensely" or "yearn for"

pure spiritual milk

Peter speaks of the word of God as if it were spiritual milk that nourishes children.

you may grow in salvation

Here the word "salvation" refers to when God brings the salvation of his people to completion when Jesus returns grow

Peter speaks of believers advancing in knowledge of God and faithfulness to him as if they were children growing up.

1 Peter 2:3

if you have tasted that the Lord is kind

Here to taste means to experience something personally.

Alternate translation: "if you have experienced the Lord's kindness toward you"

1 Peter 2:4

General Information:

Peter begins to tell a metaphor about Jesus and the believers being living stones.

Come to him who is a living stone

Peter speaks of Jesus as if he were a stone in a building.

Alternate translation: "Come to him who is like a stone in a building, but alive, not a dead stone"

who is a living stone

Possible meanings are 1) "who is a stone that is alive" or 2) "who is a stone that gives life."

that has been rejected by people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that people have rejected"

but that has been chosen by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but that God has chosen"

1 Peter 2:5

You also are ... being built up to be a spiritual house

Just as people used stones to build the temple in the Old Testament, believers are the materials that God is using to build a house in which he will live.

You also are like living stones

Peter compares his readers to stones that are alive.

that are being built up to be a spiritual house

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God is building into a spiritual house"

a holy priesthood that offers the spiritual sacrifices

Here the position of priesthood stands for the priests who fulfill its duties.

1 Peter 2:6

Scripture contains this

The scriptures are spoken of as if they were a container. This passage refers to the words that a person reads in scripture. Alternate translation: "This is what a prophet wrote in the scriptures long ago"

See

The word "see" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

a cornerstone, chosen and valuable

God is the one who chose the stone. Alternate translation: "a most important cornerstone, which I have chosen"

a cornerstone

The prophet speaks of the Messiah as the most important stone in a building.

1 Peter 2:7

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues quoting from the scriptures.

The value, then, is to you who believe

You may need to make explicit that the value is of the "cornerstone"

The stone that was rejected ... has become the head of the corner

This is a metaphor that means people, like builders, rejected Jesus, but God has made him the most important stone in a building.

The stone that was rejected by the builders

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The stone that the builders rejected"

the head of the corner

This refers to the most important stone in a building and means basically the same thing as "cornerstone" in 1 Peter 2:6.

1 Peter 2:8

A stone of stumbling and a rock that makes them fall

These two phrases share similar meanings. Together they emphasize that people will take offense at this "stone," which refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "a stone or a rock over which people will stumble"

stumble because they disobey the word

Here "the word" refers to the gospel message. To disobey means to not believe. Alternate translation: "stumble because they do not believe the message about Jesus"

which is what they were appointed to do

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for which God also appointed them"

1 Peter 2:9

a chosen people

You can clarify that God is the one who has chosen them. Alternate translation: "a people whom God has chosen"

a royal priesthood

Possible meanings are 1) "a group of priests who are also kings" or 2) "a group of priests who serve the king."

a people for God's possession

"a people who belong to God"

who called you out

"who called you to come out"

from darkness into his marvelous light

Here "darkness" refers to their condition as sinful people who did not know God, and "light" refers to their condition as people who do know God and practice righteousness. Alternate translation: "from a life of sin and ignorance of God to a life of knowing and pleasing him"

1 Peter 2:10

General Information:

Here Peter quotes a verse from the prophet Hosea. Some modern versions do not format this as a quote, which is also acceptable.

1 Peter 2:11

General Information:

Peter begins to talk about how to live Christian lives. foreigners and exiles

These two words mean basically the same thing. Peter speaks of his readers as people who are living in foreign lands away from their home. See how you translated "foreigners" in [1 Peter 1:1]

to abstain from fleshly desires

Here the idea of flesh refers to the sinful nature of humanity in this fallen world. Alternate translation: "to not to give in to sinful desires"

fight against your soul

Here the word "soul" refers to a person's spiritual life. Peter speaks of sinful desires as soldiers that are trying to destroy the spiritual life of believers. Alternate translation: "seek to destroy your spiritual life"

1 Peter 2:12

Your conduct among the Gentiles should be honorable

The abstract noun "conduct" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "When you are with the Gentiles, you should always act in an honorable way"

honorable

morally good

they may be eyewitnesses of your good deeds

The abstract noun "deeds" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "they may be eyewitnesses of the good things that you do"

on the day when he appears

"on the day when he comes." This refers to the day when God will judge all people. Alternate translation: "when he comes to judge everyone"

1 Peter 2:13

every human authority

"every person who is in authority" or "everyone who has authority"

for the Lord's sake

Possible meanings are 1) that by obeying human authorities, they are obeying the Lord who established those authorities or 2) that by obeying human authorities, they will honor Jesus who also obeyed human authorities.

the king as supreme

"the king as the highest human authority"

1 Peter 2:14

who are sent for the punishment

The abstract noun "punishment" can be translated using the verb "punish," and the idea can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the king has sent to punish"

1 Peter 2:15

in doing good you silence the ignorant talk of foolish people
"by doing good you stop foolish people from speaking about things that they do not know"

1 Peter 2:16

as a covering for wickedness

Peter speaks of their condition as free people as something that they should not use to hide sinful behavior. Alternate translation: "as an excuse to do wicked things"

1 Peter 2:17

the brotherhood

This refers to all Christian believers.

1 Peter 2:18

General Information:

Peter begins to speak specifically to people who are servants of other people.

the good and gentle masters

Here the words "good" and "gentle" share similar meanings and emphasize that such masters treat their servants kindly. Alternate translation: "the very kind masters"

the malicious ones

"the cruel ones" or "the mean ones"

1 Peter 2:19

it is praiseworthy

"it is deserving of praise" or "it is pleasing to God"

because he is conscious of God, a person endures sorrows while suffering unjustly

This person accepts unjust suffering because he knows that he is obeying God.

1 Peter 2:20

For how much credit is there ... while being afflicted?

Peter asks this question to emphasize that there is nothing praiseworthy about suffering for doing something wrong. Alternate translation: "For there is no credit ... while being afflicted."

while being afflicted

Here the word "afflicted" is a metonym for "punished." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "while someone afflicts you" or "while someone punishes you"

1 Peter 2:21

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues speaking to people who are servants of other people.

it is to this that you were called

Here the word "this" refers to believers enduring while suffering for doing good, as Peter has just described. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has called you to this"

for you to follow in his steps

"so that you would follow his footprints." Peter speaks of following Jesus's example in the way that they suffer as if one were walking on the same path that Jesus had taken. Alternate translation: "so that you would imitate his behavior"

1 Peter 2:22

neither was any deceit found in his mouth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "neither did anyone find deceit in his mouth"

neither was any deceit found in his mouth

Here "deceit" refers to words that a person speaks that are intended to deceive other people. Alternate translation: "neither did he speak any lies"

1 Peter 2:23

When he was insulted, he gave no insult in return

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"When people insulted him, he did not insult them back"

he gave himself over to the one who judges justly

"he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly." This means that he trusted God to take away his shame, which had been put on him by those who treated him harshly.

1 Peter 2:24

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues talking about Jesus Christ. He is still speaking to people who are servants.

He himself

This refers to Jesus, with emphasis.

carried our sins in his body on the tree

Here "carried our sins" means he suffered the punishment for our sins. Alternate translation: "suffered the punishment for our sins in his body on the tree"

the tree

This is a reference to the cross on which Jesus died, which was made of wood.

By his bruises you have been healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has healed you because people bruised him"

1 Peter 2:25

you had been straying like lost sheep

Peter compares his readers' actions before they had believed in Christ to the way lost sheep wander away from their shepherd.

the shepherd ... of your souls

The word "shepherd" is a metaphor for a person who protects another, and the word "souls" is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "your shepherd..."

Chapter 3

1 Peter 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 3:10-12.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Outward ornaments"

Most people want to look good so other people will like them and think they are good people. Women are especially careful to look good by wearing nice clothes and jewels. Peter is saying that what a woman thinks and says and does are more important to God than how she looks.

Unity

Peter wanted his readers to agree with each other. More importantly, he wanted them to love each other and be patient with each other.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Peter quotes a psalm that describes God as if he were a person with eyes, ears, and a face. However, God is a spirit, so he does not have physical eyes or ears or a physical face. But he does know what people do, and he does act against wicked people.

Links:

[1 Peter 3:1 Notes](#)

1 Peter 3

3:1-7

Why did Peter write "in this way"?

[3:1]

When Peter wrote "in this way," he wanted people to think about how they could live in the same way Jesus lived. Peter had just written about how Jesus lived. He honored God when he was arrested and crucified (see: 2:21-25). Scholars think Peter wanted Christians to obey their leaders who ruled over them. He wanted Christians to think about how servants were obeyed and respected their masters (see: 2:13-25). Other scholars remind us that no one deserves more honor than Jesus. However, people beat and killed Jesus. Peter wanted Christians to obey their leaders as much as Jesus did.

See: Submit (Submission)

How was a wife to submit to her husband?

[3:1]

Peter did not make rules about how a wife was to submit to her husband. Some scholars think Peter wanted each husband and wife to decide this between themselves. Peter wrote to wives who were Christians. Peter expected the wife to submit to her husband for "the Lord's sake" (see: 2:13). That is, the wife did this to honor Jesus.

See: Submit (Submission)

Why did Peter write that a husband can be "won without a word"?

[3:1]

Peter wrote that a husband can be "won without a word." He wanted to say that the wife may help the husband to believe in Jesus. Scholars think Peter wrote about a non-Christian husband in this verse. The wife lived in a way that honored God. She did this when she honored and respected her husband. Because she lived in this way, she helped the non-Christian husband to believe in Jesus.

Peter did not want to say the wife had to be silent in the home. Rather, he wanted people to think that what the wife did was more important than what she said (see: 1 Timothy 2:11-12).

What is the "inner person of the heart"?

[3:4]

When Peter wrote the "inner person of the heart", he wanted readers to think about how they thought and felt.

See: Inner Person; Heart (Metaphor)

How did Peter speak about genuine beauty?

[3:4]

Peter spoke about genuine beauty as not being about how a woman looks. Instead, Peter contrasted the "outward ornaments" (ἐξωθεν/g1855) with the private "inner person" (κρυπτός/g2927). Some scholars think Peter spoke about the things a wife did to make herself beautiful to others. If the wife was concerned with her outward appearance only, then her husband might not see how Jesus changed her life. If the wife was primarily concerned with the ways a Christian thinks and acts, then her husband might see that Jesus made her a better person.

Other scholars think Peter spoke about what Solomon said. In Proverbs, Solomon wrote about how outward beauty did not last, but only the inward beauty (see: Proverbs 31:30).

Advice to translators: In some places, people talk about a woman having two types of beauty. The way a woman looks is a beauty that is on the outside of her. That is, people can see that she is beautiful when they look at her. However, people also talk about a woman being beautiful on the inside. This is a metaphor. She lives in a way that honors God. However, people cannot easily see this by looking at her.

See: Metaphor

Who were the "holy women long ago who hoped in God"?

[3:5]

Peter wrote about "holy women long ago who hoped in God." He was writing about women in the Old Testament. He spoke about women who trusted what God said. They completely trusted God's promises. Those women "adorned"

themselves with certain things. They wore certain things. This is a metaphor. They lived in a way that honored God and other people could see them do this.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Metaphor

How did Sarah think of Abraham as her lord?

[3:6]

When Sarah called Abraham "lord," she did this because she respected and honored him. She did this because he was her husband. In ancient times, people often used the word "lord" when they wanted to tell someone they respected and honored the person with whom they spoke. The word "lord" also means master. Why did Peter write "not afraid of trouble"?

Scholars disagree about what Peter wanted to say when he wrote "not afraid of trouble." Perhaps Peter wrote about when a non-Christian husband treated his Christian wife badly. Some scholars think that a Christian wife will not be afraid of any kind of trouble. These scholars think she was treated badly because she was a Christian. Other scholars think Peter wanted Christian wives to do what was right. He wanted them not to be afraid and hate her non-Christian husband.

How does a husband live with his wife "according to understanding"?

[3:7]

A husband lives with his wife "according to understanding" when he knows her very well. Then he lives in a way that honors her by knowing what she needs and wants.

Scholars think the words "according to understanding" (γνῶσις/g1108) also mean that a husband needs to know what the Bible says about a husband and wife (see: Ephesians 5:21-33). This included knowing what God wanted married people to do. He honors God by saying and doing good things that help her.

Why did Peter write "weaker vessel"?

[3:7]

Peter wrote "weaker vessel" to speak about certain things a woman physically could not do. When Peter lived, most people thought women were physically weaker than men. Peter did not want to say that women were not as smart as men. Women could honor God as much as men could honor God. Some scholars think that when Peter wrote this, he also wanted to say that men were weak, but in a different way than women.

What is "the grace of life"?

[3:7]

The "grace of life" is God's love and care for people. This is a special gift God gives to people who believe in him.

See: Grace

How are Christian husbands and wives "fellow heirs" of the grace of life?

[3:7]

Christian husbands and wives are "fellow heirs" of the grace of life because they both will live with God forever. This is because they both believe in Jesus.

God values men and women equally (see: Galatians 3:28-29). Peter wrote that men and women are not greater or lesser when speaking about spiritual things. However, in chapter 3, Peter did recognize that in a marriage, the man and woman do different things. That is, the husband has the role of authority within the marriage and the wife the role of helper (see: Genesis 2:18).

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

3:8-12

Why did Peter write "like-minded"?

[3:8]

Peter wrote "like-minded." He wanted people to think about people who believed what their ancestors. In the Roman Empire, many people were like-minded and worshipped many gods. These are the same gods their ancestors worshipped. However, Peter did not want Christians to do this (see: 1 Peter 1:18). Instead, Peter encouraged Christians to become "like-minded" in another way. He wanted Christians to think the same things about the gospel that the apostles taught.

See: False gods; Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs); Gospel; Apostle

Why did Peter write "for this you were called"?

[3:9]

When Peter wrote "for this you were called," he continued to tell Christians that God wants them to be like Jesus. Peter also wrote about this in 1 Peter 2:21. God wants Christians not to attack back people who attack them. The apostle Paul also called Christians to do good things, even if other people do evil things to them (see: Romans 12:17-21). Jesus said Christians should bless and pray for people do evil things to them (see: Luke 6:27-29, 35).

See: Call (Calling)

Why did Peter write that "the eyes of the Lord see the righteous"?

[3:12]

Peter wrote that "the eyes of the Lord see the righteous." He wanted to tell Christians that God knows what happens to them. God will help them in some way. Peter said the same things written in Psalms (see: Psalms 34:12-16). God delivered

the righteous out of all their troubles. Many times God delivered the people of Israel.

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

What is "the face of the Lord"?

[3:12]

The "face of the Lord" is a metaphor for God treating someone well. Peter wanted to say that God will not reward people who do wrong things. Instead, he will reward people who trust and obey him.

See: Metaphor; Reward

3:13-17

Why did Peter write "who is the one who will harm you"?

[3:13]

Peter wrote "who is the one who will harm you." He wanted people to think about how people treat other people who do the right things. Normally, no one will punish a person if they do good. Peter wanted people to think about when Christians are harmed even though they do what God wants.

Peter spoke about people saying Christians do bad things when they do not do these things (see: 1 Peter 2:12, 15). People will insult and want to harm Christian (see: 1 Peter 3:9,14).

Christians will be persecuted. However, God will reward him in the end.

See: Punish (Punishment); Persecute (Persecution) ; Reward

Why did Peter write "suffer because of righteousness"?

[3:14]

Peter wrote that Christians sometimes suffer even if they do good things. Christians suffer because they do what God wants, God blesses them. Jesus also said this (see: 1 Peter 4:3-4; Matthew 5:11-12). Because of this, Peter encouraged Christians trust God when they suffered (see: Isaiah 8:12-13).

See: Suffer; Bless (Blessing); Persecute (Persecution)

How do Christians "set apart the Lord Christ" as holy?

[3:15]

Christians are "set apart the Lord Christ as holy" when they believe in him and worship him. Scholars think that when Jesus was alive, many people knew that he was 'holy.' So they honored him. These Christians truly believed that Jesus controlled everything. So they trusted him completely. Because of this, Christians were not afraid of how other people treated them. Peter wanted all Christians to do this.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Messiah (Christ); Worship

What is "a good conscience"?

[3:16]

A "good conscience" is when a person does their best not to sin. When they do sin, they repent and ask God to forgive them. In verse 16, Peter wrote about Christians keeping a good conscience when they are insulted for living in a way that honors God.

See: Conscience; Conscience; Sin

3:18-22

Why did Peter write that Jesus "suffered once for sins"?

[3:18]

When Peter wrote that Jesus "suffered once for sins," he wanted Christians to know that Jesus died so that people could be at peace with God.

Some scholars think Peter wanted people to think about the Law of Moses. According to the Law of Moses, people needed to offer sacrifices every day. It also required a special sacrifice once a year (see: Hebrews 7:27; 10:1-4). However, when Jesus sacrificed himself, he was punished for people's sins.

See: Sin; Atonement; Offer (Offering); Law of Moses

Who were the "spirits...now in prison"?

[3:19]

Scholars are not sure who Peter wrote about when he wrote "spirits...now in prison." Some scholars think Peter was writing about people. Perhaps they were people who lived during the days of Noah, but who thought only about doing evil things. They were in hell when Jesus preached to them.

Other scholars think Peter was writing about demons who disobeyed God.

Other scholars think Peter wrote about people who lived and disobeyed in Noah's time, but

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Hell; Preach (Preacher); Demon

What did Jesus preach?

[3:19]

Scholars think Jesus "preached" through Noah. Peter wrote that Noah preached righteousness (see: 2 Peter 2:5). Because of this, these scholars think the message preached during Noah's day was a message of repentance and faith.

Other scholars think Jesus preached to condemn the people and angels who disobeyed God when Noah lived.

See: Preach (Preacher); Righteous (Righteousness); Repent (Repentance); Faith (Believe in); Condemn (Condemnation); Angel

When did Jesus preach?

[3:19]

Scholars disagree about when Jesus preached the things Peter wrote about in verse 19. Scholars who think the "spirits" were people, think that the Spirit of Christ, that is to say the Holy Spirit, preached when Noah lived. Other scholars think that the Spirit of Christ spoke to the "spirits" in hell sometime between when he was buried and when he was resurrected.

See: Preach (Preacher); Spirit (Spiritual); Holy Spirit; Hell; Resurrect (Resurrection)

How were "eight souls" saved "by means of the water"?

[3:20]

When Peter wrote "eight souls," he wanted people to think about Noah and his family. "Souls" is a metaphor for people. When Peter wrote "by means" of the water, he wanted people to think about how God used the flood's water to remove bad people from the world. However, he rescued Noah and his family. God saved those who obeyed him. He saved eight people in Noah's family.

See: Soul; Metaphor

How were the flood waters during Noah's day a symbol of baptism?

[3:21]

Peter wrote about the flood when Noah lived. This was a metaphor or symbol of baptism for Christians. Peter wanted his people to know that God judged people and punished them for their sins with the flood. The ark which Noah built was a symbol of how Jesus saves people from their sins. Eight people of Noah's day were rescued in the ark from God's judgment. In some way, people who believe in Jesus and appeal to God for a "good" conscience are rescued. That is, God does not punish them for their sins.

See: Metaphor; Symbol; Baptize (Baptism); Punish (Punishment); Judge (Judgment); Sin; Atonement (Atonement)

Why did Peter write "Christ is at the right hand of God"?

[3:22]

Peter wrote "Christ is at the right hand of God" to say that God gave Jesus power and permission to rule everything. In ancient times, when a person sat at the right hand of a king, the king gave the power and permission to rule others.

See: Romans 8:34; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 10:12, 12:2

See: Reward

1 Peter 3:1

General Information:

Peter begins to speak specifically to women who are wives.

In the same way, you who are wives should submit to your own husbands

Just as believers are to "Obey every human authority" (1 Peter 2:13) and servants are to "be subject" to their masters (1 Peter 2:18), wives are to submit to their husbands. The words "Obey," "be subject," and "submit" translate the same word.

some men are disobedient to the word

Here "the word" refers to the gospel message. To disobey means that they do not believe. See how you translated a similar phrase in [1 Peter 2:8]

they may be won

"they may be persuaded to believe in Christ." This means that the unbelieving husbands will become believers. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they may become believers"

without a word

"without the wife saying a word." Here "a word" refers to anything the wife might speak about Jesus.

1 Peter 3:2

having been eyewitnesses of your respectful, pure behavior

The abstract noun "behavior" can be translated with a verb. Alternate translation: "having seen for themselves that you behave sincerely and respectfully"

your respectful, pure behavior

Possible meanings are 1) "your sincere behavior toward them and the way that you honor them" or 2) "your pure behavior toward them and the way that you honor God."

1 Peter 3:3

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues speaking to women who are wives.

your adornment

"the things that make you beautiful" or "your beauty"

1 Peter 3:4

the inner person of the heart

Here the words "inner person" and "heart" refer to the inward character and personality of a person. Alternate translation: "what you really are on the inside"

a gentle and quiet spirit

"a gentle and peaceful attitude." Here the word "quiet" means "peaceful" or "calm." The word "spirit" refers to a person's attitude or temperament.

which is precious before God

Peter speaks of God's opinion of a person as if that person were standing directly in front of him. Alternate translation: "which God considers to be precious"

1 Peter 3:5

who hoped in God

The holy women confidently expected that God would do what he promised to do. Alternate translation: "who fully trusted God"

1 Peter 3:6

called him her lord

said that he was her lord, that is, her master

You are now her children

Peter says that believing women who act as Sarah acted can be thought of as if they were her actual children.

1 Peter 3:7

General Information:

Peter begins to speak specifically to men who are husbands. In the same way

This refers back to how Sarah and other godly women obeyed their husbands in 1 Peter 3:5 and 1 Peter 3:6.

wives according to understanding, as with a weaker container, a woman

Peter speaks of women as if they were containers, as men are sometimes also spoken of. The abstract noun "understanding" can also be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "wives, understanding that the woman is the weaker partner"

give them honor as fellow heirs of the grace of life

You can translate this using verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "honor them because they will also receive by grace the eternal life that God gives"

heirs of the grace of life

Eternal life is often spoken of as if it were something that people inherit.

Do this

Here "this" refers to the ways husbands should treat their wives. Alternate translation: "Live with your wives in this way"

so that your prayers will not be hindered

To "hinder" is to prevent something from happening. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that nothing will hinder your prayers" or "so that nothing will keep you from praying as you should"

1 Peter 3:8

General Information:

Peter begins to speak again to all of the believers.

be like-minded, compassionate

"have the same opinion and be compassionate" or "have the same attitude and be compassionate"

tenderhearted

being gentle and compassionate towards others

1 Peter 3:9

Do not pay back evil for evil or insult for insult

Peter speaks of responding to the actions of another person as remitting payment for those actions. Alternate translation: "Do not do evil to someone who does evil to you or insult someone who insults you"

continue to bless

You can clarify the object of blessing. Alternate translation: "continue to bless those who do evil to you or insult you" for this you were called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God called you for this"

that you might inherit a blessing

Peter speaks of receiving God's blessing as receiving an inheritance. Alternate translation: "that you might receive God's blessing as your permanent possession"

1 Peter 3:10

General Information:

In these verses Peter quotes from the Psalms.

to love life and see good days

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize the desire to have a good life.

see good days

Here experiencing good things is spoken of as seeing good days. The word "days" refers to one's lifetime. Alternate translation: "experience good things during life"

stop his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit

The words "tongue" and "lips" refer to the person who is speaking. The phrases "his tongue from evil" and "his lips from speaking deceit" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the command not to lie. Alternate translation: "stop himself from saying evil and deceitful things"

1 Peter 3:11

Let him turn away from what is bad

Here "turn away" is a metaphor that means to stop doing something. Alternate translation: "Let him stop doing what is bad"

1 Peter 3:12

The eyes of the Lord see the righteous

The word "eyes" refers to the Lord's ability to know things. The Lord's approval of the righteous is spoken of as his seeing them. Alternate translation: "The Lord sees the righteous" or "The Lord approves of the righteous"

his ears hear their prayers

The word "ears" refers to the Lord's awareness of what people say. That the Lord hears their prayers implies that he also responds to them. Alternate translation: "he hears their prayers" or "he grants their prayers"

the face of the Lord is against

The word "face" refers to the Lord's will to oppose his enemies. Opposing someone is spoken of as setting one's face against that person. Alternate translation: "the Lord opposes"

1 Peter 3:13

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues teaching the believers how to live Christian lives.

Who is the one who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? Peter asks this question to emphasize that it is unlikely that someone would harm them if they do good things.

Alternate translation: "No one will harm you if you do good things."

1 Peter 3:14

suffer because of righteousness

You can translate this with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "suffer because you do what is right"

you are blessed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will bless you"

Do not fear their threats. Do not be troubled

These two phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that believers should not be afraid of those who persecute them. Alternate translation: "Do not be afraid of what people might do to you"

their threats

Here the word "their" refers to anyone who might try to harm those to whom Peter is writing.

1 Peter 3:15

Instead, set apart

"Instead of being troubled, set apart"

set apart the Lord Christ in your hearts as holy

The phrase "set apart the Lord Christ ... as holy" is a metaphor for acknowledging Christ's holiness. Here "hearts" is a metonym for the "inner person." Alternate translation: "acknowledge within yourselves that the Lord Christ is holy" or "honor the Lord Christ as holy within yourselves"

about the hope you have

Here "hope" means "a confident expectation." Alternate translation: "about why you have confidence in God" or "about what you are confidently expecting God to do for you"

1 Peter 3:16

however, with meekness and respect

This describes how Christians should answer people who ask about their hope. Alternate translation: "but do this with gentleness and respect"

1 Peter 3:17

if it should be God's will

This statement is hypothetical. Peter is saying that it is sometimes God's will that his people suffer, but it is not always God's will.

1 Peter 3:18

Connecting Statement:

Peter explains how Christ suffered and what Christ accomplished by suffering.

suffered for us

The word "us" includes the people Peter was writing to, so that he would bring us to God

Peter probably means here that Christ died in order to create a close relationship between us and God.

He was put to death in the flesh

Here "flesh" refers to Christ's body; Christ was physically

put to death. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People put Christ to death physically"

he was made alive by the Spirit

Possible meanings are 1) the Holy Spirit made Jesus alive.

Alternate translation: "the Spirit made him alive" or 2)

Jesus now had a spiritual body that would never die.

Alternate translation: "he was made alive in the spirit" or

"he was made alive with a spiritual body"

1 Peter 3:19

By the Spirit, he went

Possible meanings are 1) "By the Holy Spirit's power, he went" or 2) "In his spiritual existence, he went."

the spirits who are now in prison

Possible meanings of the word "spirits" are 1) "evil spirits" or 2) "spirits of the dead people."

1 Peter 3:20

when the patience of God was waiting

God's patience is a metonym for God himself. Peter writes of God's patience as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "when God was waiting patiently"

in the days of Noah, in the days of the building of an ark

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "during the time of Noah, when he was building an ark"

1 Peter 3:21

through the resurrection of Jesus Christ

"because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ." This phrase completes the thought, "This is a symbol of the baptism that

saves you now."

1 Peter 3:22

Christ is at the right hand of God

To be at the "right hand of God" is a symbol that God has given Jesus the greatest honor and authority over all others.

Alternate translation: "Christ is beside God in the place of honor and authority"

submit to him

"submit to Jesus Christ"

Chapter 4

1 Peter 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry that is quoted from the Old Testament in 4:18.

Special concepts in this chapter

Ungodly Gentiles

This passage uses the term "Gentiles" to refer to all ungodly people who are not Jews. It does not include Gentiles who have become Christians. "Sensuality, passion, drunkenness, drunken celebrations, having wild parties, and committing disgusting acts of idolatry" were actions that characterized or typified the ungodly Gentiles. (See: godly)

Martyrdom

It is apparent that Peter is speaking to many Christians who are experiencing great persecution and are facing death for their beliefs.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"Let it" and "Let none" and "Let him" and "Let those"

Peter uses these phrases to tell his readers what he wants them to do. They are like commands because he wants his readers to obey. But it is as if he is telling one person what he wants other people to do.

Links:

[1 Peter 4:1 Notes](#)

1 Peter 4

4:1-6

Why did Peter write “arm yourselves” with the intent of suffering?

[4:1]

Peter told Christians to “arm themselves”(ὀπλιζέω/g3695) with the intent of suffering. That is, knowing they would be persecuted. This was a metaphor. A soldier armed himself with weapons and armor. He used this metaphor to tell Christians to think about suffering in the same way Jesus thought about suffering. That is, Christians should be ready to suffer because they believe in Jesus. As Peter wrote earlier, Christians can expect to suffer for doing what is right, just as Jesus did (see: 1 Peter 2:22-23; 3:17-18).

See: Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution)

How does a Christian who “has suffered in the flesh” cease from sin?

[4:1]

Peter wrote about someone who has suffered in the flesh. Some scholars think Peter was speaking about Christians who suffered for doing what is right (see: 1 Peter 3:17). They think that when a Christian suffers for doing what is right, he has chosen to stop sinning. Other scholars think that when a Christian chooses to obey God, he shows he does not want to sin any more.

Peter did not want to say that a Christian stops sinning completely. A Christian will only stop sinning when they die and are with God in heaven.

See: Sin; Heaven

Why did Peter write “the rest of his time in the flesh”?

[4:2]

Peter wrote “the rest of his time in the flesh” to speak about the rest of a person’s life on earth.

According to Peter, what were “men’s desires”?

Scholars think that when Peter wrote about “men’s desires,” he spoke about how people who were not Christians thought. They thought about things they wanted. When they did this, they were doing the wrong thing. Peter also spoke about people doing the wrong things because they did not know the right thing to do. He also spoke earlier about how the things they wanted made “war against the soul” (see: 1 Peter 1:14; 2:11).

See: Spiritual Warfare; Soul

How does a Christian live “for God’s will”?

[4:2]

A Christian lives “for God’s will” when he does what God wants. In this letter, Peter wrote about ways a Christian can do what God wants. Peter told Christians to “love one another” (see: 1:22). He also told Christians to “be hospitable” to one another and to “serve one another” (see: 4:9-10).

Advice to translators: Someone who is hospitable welcomes someone who they do not know. They help people they do not know.

See: Will of God

Who were the “Gentiles” about which Peter wrote?

[4:3]

See: Gentile

Why did Peter write about people living “in sensuality, passion, drunkenness, drunken celebrations, having wild parties”?

[4:3]

Peter wrote about people living “in sensuality, passion, drunkenness, drunken celebrations, having wild parties.” He wanted people to think about someone who did not live in the right way. They did not control themselves. They wanted to sin, so they did evil things.

See: Sexual Immorality; Sin

What were “disgusting acts of idolatry”?

[4:3]

Peter wrote about “disgusting acts of idolatry.” He wanted people to know that some people worshipped idols. A person committed idolatry when they worshipped things in the world or things that people created. They worshipped these things instead of God.

Some scholars think when Peter wrote “disgusting acts,” he did not speak about all idolatry. This is because all idolatry is a sin against God. They think Peter spoke about breaking the laws made by the government. That is, even people who were not Christian thought these acts were evil.

See: Idolatry (Idol); Worship; Sin

Why did Peter write “floods of reckless behavior”?

[4:4]

Peter wrote “floods of reckless behavior.” He was writing about people who did more evil things than good things. They lived in a way that was very evil. They loved to sin and constantly sinned. So they did not care that God would punish

them for what they did.

See: Sin

Who is "the one who is ready to judge"?

[4:5]

The "one who is ready to judge" is God.

See: Judge (Judgment)

Why did Peter write that people will "give an account" to God?

[4:5]

When Peter wrote about people "giving an account" to God, he wanted people to think about the time when God will judge people who lived their lives in "sensuality" (see: 1 Peter 4:3) and spoke against Christians. He used the metaphor of a trial in court, where people are accused of crimes and they have to respond. He wanted to say that God will judge people who continue to live in the wrong way (see: Matthew 12:36).

See: Judge (Judgment); Metaphor

Why did Peter write "the living and the dead"?

[4:5]

Peter wrote "the living and the dead" so people would know that God will judge everyone who is not a Christian (see: Revelation 20:11-15). This is called the Great White Throne Judgment. Peter wanted to say that nobody can escape this judgment just because they die before it happens.

See: Judge (Judgment)

How was the gospel "preached also to the dead"?

[4:6]

Scholars disagree about how the gospel was "preached also to the dead." Some scholars think Peter spoke about the gospel being preached to those who were alive when the preaching happened, but died by the time Peter wrote this letter. That is, Peter spoke about Christians who were dead when he wrote this. Fewer scholars think Peter spoke about Jesus preaching to people in hell (see: 1 Peter 3:18-19).

The reason the gospel was preached was because God was about to judge people (see: 1 Peter 4:5).

See: Gospel; Preach (Preacher); Hell; Judge (Judgment)

How are Christians "judged in the flesh as humans"?

[4:6]

When Peter wrote about Christians being "judged in the flesh as humans", he wanted to write about Christians dying. In the beginning, Adam sinned (see: Genesis 3). God punished him and all his descendants. Because of this, all people from then on die (see: Romans 5:12-21). All people are punished or judged in this way. Peter wanted to say that Christians also die.

See: Judge (Judgment); Ancestor and Descendant (Fathers, Forefathers, Patriarchs)

Why did Peter write "live in the spirit the way God does"?

[4:6]

Peter wrote "live in the spirit the way God does." He wanted people to think about eternal life. For the Christian, when their body dies, their spirit keeps living and it will always live (see: 1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). That is, in some way, Christians are able to live forever because of what God did for them through Jesus. Non-Christians also live forever. Their spirit lives in hell forever.

See: Eternal Life; Spirit (Spiritual); Hell

4:7-11

Why did Peter write "the end of all things is coming near"?

[4:7]

Peter wrote "the end of all things is coming near." He wanted people to know that Jesus could return to earth at any time.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

How does a person have a "sound mind"?

[4:7]

A Christian has a "sound mind" (σωφρονέω/g4993) when he thinks about things in a right way. That is, he knows how to live at peace with other Christians (see: Romans 12:3; Titus 1:8).

Why did Peter write that Christians need to be "sober in your thinking"?

[4:7]

Peter wrote that people need to be "sober in your thinking" because he wanted Christians to be aware of things going on around them. He wanted them to look for things that did not honor God. They will know that they should not do these things. They will also pray.

See: Pray (Prayer)

What is "fervent love"?

[4:8]

When Peter wrote about “fervent”(ἐκτενής/g1618) love he wrote about helping other Christians to live in a way that honors God. A Christian needs to do this, even if it means not doing what they want to do. They should serve other Christians. A Christian who has “fervent love” does so even when he is treated unkindly.

See: Love

How does love cover a “multitude of sins”?

[4:8]

Christian love covers a “multitude of sins” because the Christian always seeks to do good to others. That is, this often helps Christians to forgive other people. Peter wanted people to think about being ready to forgive others.

Peter did not want to say that someone who loves can also sin. Instead, he wanted people to forgive others when someone sins against them.

See: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7; Proverbs 10:12

See: Sin; Forgive (Forgiveness, Pardon); Love

Why did Peter write “be hospitable to one another”?

[4:9]

Peter wrote “be hospitable to one another” to encourage Christians to willingly open their homes to other Christians. This might be another Christian who is traveling or visiting. Sometimes this meant for a Christian to host a group to worship and to learn about the Bible. Christians should do this without complaining or disputing (see: Philippians 2:14).

See: Galatians 6:10

See: Hospitable (Hospitality); Worship

How do Christians receive a “gift” ?

[4:10]

Christians receive a “gift” because God gives them something. Peter wrote the word “gift” to show that God freely gives something to each Christian. He did not speak about a gift of money. Instead, he meant God gives them a certain ability that helps them to serve God or other people in some way.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit

How do Christians speak “with God’s words”?

[4:11]

Many of the gifts given by God to Christians were speaking gifts, that is gifts the person uses when they speak. A Christian who is given a speaking gift needs to be careful that he truly speaks things that agree with God’s word, the Bible.

See: Gifts of the Holy Spirit; Word of God

4:12-19

What is the “testing in the fire” about which Peter spoke?

[4:12]

The “testing in the fire” that Peter wrote about is when a Christian suffers or struggles in life (see: 1 Peter 2:21) because they believe in Jesus. This may happen because other people attack them or persecute them. Peter wanted his people to learn to trust God when they suffered. He wanted them to praise God for the strength he gives them in the middle of the suffering (see: 1 Peter 1:7). Peter wanted Christians to know that they will suffer and struggle.

See: Test; Persecute (Persecution)

How does a Christian “experience the sufferings of Christ”?

[4:13]

In ancient times, when a person became a Christian, they were often persecuted. They were put into prison or even killed. Other people insulted them, or mocked them, or in some way treated them wrong because they believed in Jesus (see: Acts 5:41; 16:25). This may still happen to Christians now. Peter wanted Christians to know that in some way they share in what Jesus suffered, when this happens to them.

Peter encouraged Christians, however, to “rejoice” when they suffered in this way so that they can rejoice even more when Jesus returns (see: Romans 5:3-5).

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Rejoice (Joy, Joyful)

When will the “revealing of” Jesus’s “glory” happen?

[4:13]

Scholars think Peter spoke about Jesus being “revealed” when he returns to earth. Nobody except God the Father knows when this will happen.

See: Glory (Glorify); Jesus’ Return to Earth; Reveal (Revelation); God the Father

Why did Peter write about the “Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God” resting on Christians?

[4:14]

Peter wrote about the “Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God” resting on Christians to encourage them. Peter wanted Christians not to be discouraged when people spoke badly about them because they believed in Jesus. Peter told them that the Spirit of God would give them strength to endure when other people ridicule them or unfairly treat them (see: Acts 5:40-42).

See: Holy Spirit; Glory (Glorify); Persecute (Persecution)

What is a "meddler"?

[4:15]

A "meddler" is someone who involves himself in other people's lives without their permission. This includes people who gossip or say things about certain people to other people and it hurts the people they are talking about.

See: Gossip

Why did Peter write "if anyone suffers as a Christian"?

[4:16]

Scholars disagree about why Peter wrote "if anyone suffers as a Christian." Some scholars think Peter wrote about people thinking that Christians are criminals because they believe in Jesus (see: Acts 8:3; 9:1-2). Other scholars think Peter wrote about people being punished because they were Christians.

How does "judgment begin with the household of God"?

[4:17]

When Peter wrote that it is time for "judgment to begin with the household of God," he wanted people to know about how God will treat Christians. The "household of God" is all Christians.

Some scholars think Peter wrote about judgment he wanted Christians to know that this judgment was a type of mercy for Christians. Christians may suffer while they are alive. But God will make them stronger so they can endure the suffering. Then he will judge Christians for the good things they do to serve Jesus.

Other scholars think Peter wanted to say that God's judgement will begin with Christians. It will be a judgment of mercy on Christians. Then God will judge all people who do not believe in Jesus. This will be a judgment of wrath on non-Christians.

See: Judge (Judgment); Wrath; Mercy; Reward

Why did Peter tell Christians to "entrust their souls to the faithful Creator"?

[4:19]

Peter told Christians to "entrust their souls to the faithful Creator." He wanted to encourage them to keep trusting in God, no matter what happened to them. Scholars think Peter wanted them to think that all of their suffering was because of God's will for them. He wanted them to trust that God would make their suffering help them to live more in a way that honored God. (see: Romans 5:3-5).

See: Will of God

1 Peter 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to teach the believers about Christian living. He begins by giving a conclusion to his thoughts from the previous chapter about Christ's sufferings.

in the flesh

Here "flesh" means "body." Alternate translation: "in his body" or "while here on earth"

arm yourselves with the same intention

The phrase "arm yourselves" makes readers think of soldiers who get their weapons ready for battle. It also pictures "the same intention" as a weapon or perhaps as a piece of armor. Here this metaphor means that believers should be determined in their mind to suffer as Jesus did. Alternate translation: "prepare yourselves with the same thoughts that Christ had"

has ceased from sin

"has stopped sinning"

1 Peter 4:2

for men's desires

for the things that sinful people normally desire

1 Peter 4:3

the time that has passed is enough for you to do the desire of the Gentiles

Peter wanted the believers to stop doing the sinful things the Gentiles did. He was not praising them for doing those things enough. Alternate translation: "you have been doing for too long the things that the Gentiles like to do"

drunken celebrations, having wild parties

These terms refer to activities in which people gather to drink too much alcohol and behave in a shameful manner.

1 Peter 4:4

floods of reckless behavior

These examples of wild, boundless sin are spoken of as if they were great floods of water that sweep over people.

reckless behavior

doing everything they can to satisfy the desires of their bodies

1 Peter 4:5

the one who is ready to judge

Possible meanings are 1) "God, who is ready to judge" or 2) "Christ, who is ready to judge"

the living and the dead

This means all people, whether they are still alive or have died. Alternate translation: "every person"

1 Peter 4:6

the gospel was preached also to the dead

Possible meanings are 1) "the gospel was preached also to people who had already died" or 2) "the gospel was preached also to those who were alive but are now dead"

the gospel was preached

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) Christ preached. Alternate translation: "Christ preached the gospel" or 2) men preached. Alternate translation: "men preached the gospel"

they have been judged in the flesh as humans

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) God judged them in this life on earth. Alternate translation:

"God judged them in their bodies as humans" or 2) men judged them according to human standards. Alternate translation: "men judged them in their bodies as humans" judged in the flesh as humans
This is a reference to death as the ultimate form of judgment.

live in the spirit the way God does

Possible meanings are 1) "live spiritually as God lives because the Holy Spirit will enable them to do so" or 2) "live according to God's standards by the power of the Holy Spirit"

1 Peter 4:7

The end of all things

This refers to the end of the world at Christ's second coming.

is coming

The end that will happen soon is spoken of as if it is physically coming closer in distance. Alternate translation: "will soon happen"

be of sound mind, and be sober in your thinking

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. Peter uses them to emphasize the need to think clearly about life since the end of the world is near.

be sober in your thinking

Here the word "sober" refers to mental clarity and alertness. See how you translated this in [1 Peter 1:13]

1 Peter 4:8

Above all things

"Most importantly of all"

for love covers a multitude of sins

Peter describes "love" as if it were a person who places a cover over the sins of others. Possible meanings are 1) "for a person who loves will not try to find out if another person has sinned" or 2) "for a person who loves will forgive the sins of other people, even if those sins are many"

1 Peter 4:9

Be hospitable

Show kindness to and welcome guests and travelers

1 Peter 4:10

As each one of you has received a gift

This refers to special spiritual abilities that God gives to believers. Alternate translation: "Because each one of you has received a special spiritual ability as a gift from God"

1 Peter 4:11

so that in all ways God would be glorified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that in all ways you will glorify God"

glorified

praised, honored

1 Peter 4:12

do not regard as strange the testing

"do not be surprised by the testing"

the testing in the fire that has come upon you

In the same way that fire refines gold, trials test and refine a person's faith. Alternate translation: "the difficult trial that you are experiencing" or "your troubles that are like a test by fire"

1 Peter 4:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Peter 4:14

If you are insulted for Christ's name,

Here the word "name" refers to Christ himself. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If people insulted you because you believe in Christ"

the Spirit of glory and of God

This refers to the Holy Spirit. Alternate translation: "the Spirit of glory, who is the Spirit of God," or "the glorious Spirit of God"

rests on you

"is with you" or "stays with you" or "lives with you"

1 Peter 4:15

a meddler

This refers to a person who gets involved with the affairs of others without having a right to do so.

1 Peter 4:16

with that name

"because he bears the name Christian" or "because people have recognized him as a Christian." The words "that name" refer to the word "Christian."

1 Peter 4:17

household of God

This phrase refers to believers, whom Peter speaks of as God's family.

If it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who disobey God's gospel?

Peter use this question to emphasize that God's judgment will be more severe for people who reject the gospel than for believers. Alternate translation: "If it begins with us, the outcome for those who do not obey God's gospel will be much worse."

what will be the outcome for those

"what will happen to those"

those who disobey God's gospel

"those who do not believe God's gospel." Here the word "disobey" means to not believe.

1 Peter 4:18

the righteous ... what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

Peter use this question to emphasize that sinners will suffer much more than believers do. Alternate translation: "the righteous man ... the outcome will be much worse for the ungodly and the sinner."

If it is difficult for the righteous to be saved

Here the word "saved" refers to final salvation when Christ returns. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If the righteous person experiences many difficulties before God saves him"

what will become of the ungodly and the sinner

"what will happen to the ungodly and the sinner"

the ungodly and the sinner

The "the ungodly" is a nominal adjective that means "the ungodly person." The words "ungodly" and "sinner" mean basically the same thing and emphasize the wickedness of these people. Alternate translation: "ungodly sinners"

1 Peter 4:19

commit their souls

Here the word "souls" refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "commit themselves" or "commit their lives"

in well-doing

The abstract noun "well-doing" can be translated with a

verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "while they do good" or "while they live rightly"

Chapter 5

1 Peter 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Most people in the ancient Near East would end a letter the way Peter ends this one.

Special concepts in this chapter

Crowns

The crown that the Chief Shepherd will give is a reward, something that people who do something especially good receive. (See: reward)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Lion

All animals are afraid of lions because they are fast and strong, and they eat almost every other kind of animal. They also eat people. Satan wants to make God's people afraid, so Peter uses the simile of a lion to teach his readers that Satan can harm their bodies, but if they trust in God and obey him, they will always be God's people, and God will care for them.

Babylon

Babylon was the evil nation that in Old Testament times had destroyed Jerusalem, taken the Jews away from their homes, and ruled over them. Peter uses Babylon as a metaphor for the nation that was persecuting the Christians he was writing to. Many scholars think that Peter was referring to Rome because the Romans were persecuting the Christians.

Links:

[1 Peter 5:1 Notes](#)

1 Peter 5

5:1-4

Who were the "elders"?

[5:1]

See: Elder

Why did Peter write the word "exhorting"?

[5:1]

Peter wrote "exhort" because he wanted the other elders to work hard to serve the church.

Advice to translators: The word "exhort" meant to encourage or to make a serious request.

See: Elder; Church

Why did Peter say he was a "witness of the sufferings of Christ"?

[5:1]

Scholars disagree about why Peter said he was a "witness of the sufferings of Christ." Some scholars think Peter saw Jesus when he was beaten and crucified (see: Luke 22:28, 54-62; John 18:15-27). Other scholars think that Peter was a "witness" (μάρτυς/g3144) because he spoke about how Jesus suffered, but he did not actually see Jesus suffer. Other scholars think Peter both saw Jesus suffer and told other people about the things he saw.

See: Crucify (Crucifixion)

How was Peter "one who will share in the glory that will be revealed"?

[5:1]

Scholars think Peter was "one who will share in the glory that will be revealed" in two different ways: He will share in the glory that God will reveal to all Christians when Jesus returns to earth. He will share in a certain type of glory with Jesus (see: Matthew 19:28). The other apostles will also share this glory.

See: Glory (Glorify); Reveal (Revelation); Jesus' Return to Earth; Apostle

What was a "shepherd of God's flock"?

[5:2]

A "shepherd of God's flock" was a metaphor. He was writing about the Christian leaders. They taught Christians the word of God. They also warned Christians not to listen to certain teachers who taught the wrong things. These teachers wanted Christians to stop trusting in Jesus.

See: Metaphor; Shepherd; Word of God

Why did Peter write that a church leader must not serve for "shameful profit"?

[5:2]

Peter wrote that a Christian leader must not serve for "shameful profit." He wanted them to know why people should become leaders in the church. Peter warned that there were some Christian leaders who wanted to make money because they were Christian leaders. Peter wrote that they shamed themselves if they did this. Instead, he wanted them to simply

serve God by teaching and caring for Christians.

Some scholars think Peter spoke about teachers who only wanted to be leaders so that people would honor them. They did not serve God with humility.

See: Humble (Humility); Church

Why did Peter warn church leaders not to “act as a master over the people in your care”?

[5:3]

Peter warned the church leaders not to “act as a master over the people” in their care to tell them to lead in the church in a way that honors God. That is, he did not want them to act like someone who ordered slaves around. He did not want them to be proud and arrogant. Instead, Peter wanted them to think about helping other Christians to live in a way that honors God.

See: Pride; Church

Who is the “Chief Shepherd”?

[5:4]

The “Chief Shepherd” is Jesus, who is the messiah. He alone will judge what the Christian leaders do when He returns to earth.

See: Messiah (Christ); Jesus' Return to Earth; Judge (Judgment)

What is the “crown of glory”?

[5:4]

The “crown of glory” is a metaphor. He was writing about how God will honor people who serve him well. When Peter lived, crowns were given to people as a reward or to show people special honor. Some scholars think Peter used the “crown of glory” as a metaphor to say that God will show special honor to leaders who served him well. Other scholars think Peter used “crown of glory” as a metaphor to say that God will honor all Christians in a special way when Jesus returns.

See: Crown; Glory (Glorify); Metaphor; Jesus' Return to Earth; Reward

5:5-11

Why did Peter write that “God resists the proud”?

[5:5]

Scholars disagree about why Peter wrote that “God resists the proud.” When a person “resists”(ἀντιτάσσω/g0498) someone, he opposes what they do. That is, he works against it. Some scholars think Peter wanted to say that God opposes a proud person. They think he used the metaphor about people who opposed each other in battle. Other scholars think Peter wanted to say that God turns his back on proud people. That is, he will not honor or reward them because of their pride. Other scholars think Peter wanted to say that God refuses to listen to proud people.

See: Pride; Metaphor; Reward

How do people humble themselves “under God’s mighty hand”?

[5:6]

People humble themselves “under God’s mighty hand” when they decide to follow and serve God. They do this because they understand that he is greater than they are. Some scholars think Peter spoke about people accepting and following the wisdom of God instead of following the ideas of the world. Other scholars think Peter spoke about people following God because God always accomplishes what he wants to do (see: Job 42:1-3; Micah 6:8).

See: World; Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

Why did Peter write that God “may” lift up Christians?

[5:6]

When Peter wrote that God “may” lift up Christians, he wanted people to know that God does not have to do this. Peter wanted people to know that God will do it if they continue to serve God and honor him. However, if they do not continue to serve God and honor him, then God may choose not to reward them.

See: Reward

Why did Peter write that God will “lift up” Christians?

[5:6]

Peter wrote that God will “lift up” Christians to say that God will bless or honor or reward them in some way. That is, he used the metaphor of a person being lifted up out of a hole, or being raised to some high position. God lifts Christians up when he gives a spiritual blessing to them, or allows them to have a closer fellowship with God. God sometimes gives greater responsibility to church leaders who are humble (see: Luke 16:10). This is a way of lifting them up.

See: Metaphor; Reward; Spirit (Spiritual); Bless (Blessing); Fellowship; Church

Why did Peter write that God will lift up Christians “in due time”?

[5:6]

Peter wrote that God will lift up Christians “in due time” to say that when God chooses, he will bless or honor or reward them in some way. Many scholars think Peter spoke about God relieving Christians from suffering or hardship when he thinks best.

See: Bless (Blessing); Reward

Why did Peter write "cast all your anxiety" on God?

[5:7]

Peter wrote "cast all your anxiety" on God to tell Christians to trust God instead of worrying about what is happening to them. Some scholars think that when Peter wrote this, he wanted people to pray and ask God to help people to stop worrying. That is, Christians need to remember that God knows everything and he is the only one who can calm Christians when they worry.

Why did Peter tell Christians to be "sober" and "watchful"?

[5:8]

Peter told Christians to be "sober" and "watchful." He wanted to warn them not to pay attention to any wrong ideas about God. There are many false teachers in the church who spread wrong ideas. Christians may be misled by people who talk about things in the world that do not honor God. Peter warned the Christian must not start believing wrong ideas about God and the Bible.

See: Church

How is the devil like a "roaring lion"?

[5:8]

The devil is like a "roaring lion" because he is very strong. Scholars think Peter used a metaphor to speak about how the devil wants to destroy any person who believes in Jesus. That is, the devil wants Christians to believe the wrong things and do the wrong things.

See: Satan (The Devil); Metaphor

How can Christians "stand against" the devil?

[5:9]

Christians can "stand against" the devil when they keep trusting in Jesus no matter what happens. Some scholars think that to "stand against" (ἀνθίστημι/g0436) the devil is to oppose him. That is, Christians need to keep believing the right things. They need to reject things that are not taught in the Bible. They need to always speak against the devil. Other scholars think Peter encouraged Christians to trust God. That is, Christians need to trust that God gives Christians a way to resist the devil when the devil attacks them.

See: Ephesians 6:10-18; James 4:7

See: Satan (The Devil)

What was "your community of believers"?

[5:9]

When Peter wrote "your community of believers," he spoke about the church. Some scholars think he wanted to speak about a group of Christians living in one place. Other scholars think he wanted to speak about all Christians everywhere.

See: Church

What were "the same sufferings"?

[5:9]

When Peter wrote "the same sufferings," he told Christians that they will experience the same kinds of sufferings as other Christians experienced in their lives. Peter wanted Christians to know that suffering is common for people who believe in Jesus.

See: Suffer

Why did Peter write "after you suffer for a little while"?

[5:10]

Peter wrote "after you suffer for a little while." He wanted Christians to know that when they suffer because they believe in Jesus, it will end. Some scholars think Peter wanted to say that only God knows how long every Christian can endure suffering. That is, God is the only one that knows how difficult the suffering will be for any Christian. So, he will make sure the person does not suffer more than that. Other scholars think Peter wanted to say that Christians can expect to suffer while they live on this earth. However, when Jesus returns to the earth, Christians will not suffer anymore.

See: Suffer; Jesus' Return to Earth

How will God "perfect" Christians?

[5:10]

Peter wrote that God will "perfect" (καταρτίζω/g2675) Christians. He wanted to say that in some way God will make Christians more like Jesus. Scholars think that God does something while Christians are alive to make them live in the same way Jesus lived. That is, they live in a way that honors God.

Some scholars think God will complete this before the person dies. Other scholars think that God will "perfect" Christians by doing something to them after Jesus returns to earth.

See: Romans 8:29; Philippians 1:6

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

How will God "establish" Christians?

[5:10]

God will "establish" Christians. That is, in some way, God will help Christians them to trust in him more. Some scholars think that when Christians suffer, God uses the suffering to show them how to trust in God more. Other scholars think that God does this by showing people that his promises are true. He does this, even when the Christian is suffering. How will God "strengthen" Christians?

[5:10]

God will "strengthen" Christians. That is, in some way, God will help Christians them to endure suffering. Some scholars think that when Christians suffer, God uses it to help them trust God's power more. That is, God uses his power to help them through their suffering. Other scholars think God uses suffering to prepare Christians to endure even more suffering.

See: Suffer; Grace

Who is the "woman who is in Babylon"?

[5:13]

Scholars disagree about the "woman who is in Babylon." Some scholars think the woman was Peter's wife. Other scholars think he used "woman" as a metaphor for the church. Other scholars think "Babylon" was the actual city of Babylon. Other scholars think "Babylon" was a metaphor for Rome.

See: Metaphor; Church

See Map: Babylon; Rome

1 Peter 5:1

General Information:

Peter speaks specifically to men who are elders.

the glory that will be revealed

This is a reference to Christ's second coming. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the glory of Christ that God will reveal"

1 Peter 5:2

Be shepherds of God's flock

Peter speaks of the believers as a flock of sheep and the elders as the shepherds who care for them.

1 Peter 5:3

Do not act as lords over those allotted to you. Instead, be examples

Elders are to lead by example and not act toward the people as a harsh master would toward his servants.

those allotted to you

You can translate this in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom God has placed in your care"

1 Peter 5:4

Then when the Chief Shepherd is revealed

Peter speaks of Jesus as if he were a shepherd who has authority over all other shepherds. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When Jesus, the Chief Shepherd, appears" or "When God reveals Jesus, the Chief Shepherd"

an unfading crown of glory

Here the word "crown" represents the reward that someone receives as a symbol of victory. The word "unfading" means that it is eternal. Alternate translation: "a glorious prize that will last forever"

1 Peter 5:5

General Information:

Peter gives an instruction specifically to younger men and then continues to instruct all of the believers.

In the same way

This refers back to the way the elders were to submit to the Chief Shepherd as Peter described in 1 Peter 5:1 through 1 Peter 5:4.

All of you

This refers to all believers, not just the younger men.

clothe yourselves with humility

Peter speaks of the moral quality of humility as if it were clothing that people could put on. Alternate translation: "act humbly toward each other" or "act with humility"

1 Peter 5:6

under God's mighty hand so

Here the word "hand" refers to God's power to save the humble and punish the proud. Alternate translation:

"under God's great power so" or "before God, realizing that he has great power, so"

1 Peter 5:7

Cast all your anxiety on him

Peter speaks of anxiety as if it were a heavy burden that a person places on God, rather than carrying it himself.

Alternate translation: "Trust him with everything that worries you" or "Let him take care of all the things that trouble you"

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober

Here the word "sober" refers to mental clarity and alertness. See how you translated this in [1 Peter 1:13]

the devil is walking around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour

Peter compares the devil to a roaring lion. Just as a hungry lion completely devours its prey, the devil is seeking to completely destroy the faith of believers.

walking around

The context indicates that this is part of the simile of the "roaring lion," so if your language has a word for the way an animal walks when it is hunting, you may use it here.

1 Peter 5:9

Stand against him

Standing is a metonym for fighting. Alternate translation: "Fight against him"

your brotherhood in the world is enduring

Peter speaks of fellow believers as members of the same family. Alternate translation: "your fellow believers who are in the world are enduring"

in the world

"in various places throughout the world"

1 Peter 5:10

for a little while

"for a short time"

the God of all grace

Here the word "grace" may refer either to the things that God gives or to God's character. Possible meanings are 1) "the God who always gives us what we need" or 2) "the God who is always gracious."

who called you to his eternal glory in Christ

"who chose you to share his eternal glory in heaven because you are joined to Christ"

perfect you

"make you perfect" or "restore you" or "make you well again"

confirm you, strengthen you

These two expressions have similar meanings, that is, that God will enable the believers to trust in him and to obey him regardless of any suffering they may experience.

1 Peter 5:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Peter 5:12

General Information:

This is the end of Peter's letter. Here he gives his final remarks about his letter and his closing greetings.

I have written to you briefly through him

Silvanus wrote the words that Peter told him to write in the letter.

what I have written is the true grace of God

"I have written about the true grace of God." Here the word "grace" refers to the gospel message, which tells of the kind things that God has done for believers.

Stand in it

The word "it" refers to "the true grace of God." Being strongly committed to this grace is spoken of as standing firmly in one place, refusing to move. Alternate translation: "Remain strongly committed to it"

1 Peter 5:13

The woman who is in Babylon

Here "The woman" probably refers to the group of believers who live in "Babylon." Possible meanings for "Babylon" are 1) it is a symbol for the city of Rome, 2) it is a symbol for anywhere that Christians are suffering, or 3) it refers literally to the city of Babylon. It most likely refers to the city of Rome.

who is chosen together with you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has chosen as he has chosen you"

my son

Peter speaks of Mark as if he were his spiritual son.

Alternate translation: "my spiritual son" or "who is like a son to me"

1 Peter 5:14

a kiss of love

"a loving kiss" or "a kiss to show your love for each other"

Introduction to 2 Peter

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 Peter

Introduction (1:1-2) Reminder to live good lives because God has enabled us to (1:3-21) Warning against false teachers (2:1-22) Encouragement to prepare for the second coming of Jesus (3:1-17)

Who wrote the Book of 2 Peter?

The author identified himself as Simon Peter. Simon Peter was an apostle. He also wrote 1 Peter. Peter probably wrote this letter while in a prison in Rome just before he died. Peter called this letter his second letter, so we can date it after 1 Peter. He addressed the letter to the same audience as his first letter. The audience probably was Christians scattered throughout Asia Minor.

What is the Book of 2 Peter about?

Peter wrote this letter to encourage believers to live good lives. He warned them about false teachers who were saying Jesus was taking too long to return. He told them that Jesus was not slow in returning. Instead, God was giving people time to repent so that they would be saved.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 Peter" or "Second Peter." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Second Letter from Peter" or "The Second Letter Peter Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Who were the people Peter spoke against?

It is possible that the people Peter spoke against were those who would become known as Gnostics. These teachers distorted the teachings of scripture for their own gain. They lived in immoral ways and taught others to do the same.

What does it mean that God inspired Scripture?

The doctrine of scripture is a very important one. 2 Peter helps readers to understand that while each writer of scripture had his own distinct way of writing, God is the true author of scripture (1:20-21).

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Peter. Also, the word "you" is always plural and refers to Peter's audience.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 2 Peter?

For the following verses, some modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If translations of the Bible exist in the general region, translators should consider using the readings found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"to be kept in chains of lower darkness until the judgment" (2:4). Some modern versions and older versions have, "to be kept in pits of lower darkness until the judgment." "They enjoy their deceitful actions while they are feasting with you" (2:13). Some versions have, "They enjoy their actions while they are feasting with you in love feasts." "Beor" (2:15). Some other translations read, "Bosor." "The elements will be burned with fire, and the earth and the deeds in it will be revealed" (3:10). Other versions have, "The elements will be burned with fire, and the earth and the deeds in it will be burned up."

Chapter 1

2 Peter 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Peter formally introduces this letter in verses 1-2. Writers often began letters in this way in the ancient Near East.

Special concepts in this chapter

Knowledge of God

To have knowledge of God means to belong to him or to have a relationship with him. Here, "knowledge" is more than just mentally knowing about God. It is a knowledge that causes God to save a person and to give him grace and peace. (See: know)

Living godly lives

Peter teaches that God has given believers all that they need for living godly lives. Therefore, believers should do everything they can to obey God more and more. If believers continue to do this, then they will be effective and productive through their relationship with Jesus. However, if believers do not continue living godly lives, then it is like they have forgotten what God did through Christ to save them. (See: godly and save)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The truth of Scripture

Peter teaches that the prophecies in Scripture were not made up by men. The Holy Spirit revealed God's message to the men who spoke them or wrote them down. Also, Peter and the other apostles did not make up the stories they told people about Jesus. They witnessed what Jesus did and heard God call Jesus his son.

Links:

[2 Peter 1:1 Notes](#) [2 Peter intro](#)

2 Peter 1 Commentary

1:1-11

Why did Peter call himself a "slave"?

[1:1]

Peter called himself a "slave." This is a metaphor. He served and obeyed God.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave); Metaphor

What was an "apostle"?

[1:1]

See: Apostle

Why did Peter write "the same precious faith"?

[1:1]

When Peter wrote "the same precious faith," he wanted people to know that all Christians shared the same kind of faith. That is, God did not give some Christians better faith than others. So, Peter did not think he had a different kind of faith because he was an apostle.

See: Apostle; Apostle

Why did Peter write "faith in the righteousness of our God"?

[1:1]

When Peter wrote "faith in the righteousness of our God," he wanted Christians to know that God forgives their sins because he is righteous. This is the only reason God forgives people. So, God does not declare people to be "righteous" because of anything they have done.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Apostle; Sin

What was the "knowledge of God" about which Peter spoke?

[1:2]

Peter spoke about "knowledge"(ἐπίγνωσις/g1922). This was more than simply learning things about God, Jesus, and the Bible. Peter wanted Christians to study the Bible. When Christians do things they learn from scripture, they trust God more.

See: Philippians 3:8, 10

What were the "things concerning divine power"?

[1:3]

When Peter wrote about "things concerning divine power," he wanted people to understand how he knew what he wrote. Peter wanted Christians to know that Jesus is the source of the power that helps them to live in a way that honors God.

What is "life and godliness"?

[1:3]

Some scholars think "life and godliness" were two separate things. They think Peter wrote "life" to speak about eternal life. They think he wrote "godliness" to speak about how a Christian lives.

Other scholars think "life and godliness" was just one idea. They think Peter wanted to speak about how Christians can live in a way that honors God.

See: Godly (Godliness); Eternal Life

Why did Peter write that God called people through his "glory and excellence"?

[1:3]

Peter wrote that God called people through his "glory and excellence" so people would know that God wants them to become Christians because God is good. God is glorious. The "excellence"(ἀρετή/g0703) of God is a way of speaking about God. God is good. This is why he calls people to believe in Jesus.

See: 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; Ephesians 2: 4-9

See: Call (Calling); Glory (Glorify); Love; Mercy; Grace

How are Christians "sharers in the divine nature" of God?

[1:4]

Peter wrote that Christians are "sharers in the divine nature" of God. That is, when people become Christians, God begins to make them like him in some way. However, people do not become gods.

See: 1 Peter 1:23; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16

How do Christians escape "the corruption in the world"?

[1:4]

Christians escape "the corruption in the world" by obeying what Jesus taught. Before believing in Jesus, people cannot live in a way that honors God. This is because of sin. After believing in Jesus, people can choose to live in a way that honors God (see: Romans 6:12-14), that is things that honor God.

See: World

Why did Peter write that Christians should "add goodness" to their faith?

[1:5]

Peter wrote that Christians should "add goodness" to their faith so people would know that when they believe in Jesus, it should change how they live.

Some scholars think Peter wanted to say that Christians must try hard to be good and live in the same way Jesus lived.

How does a Christian add "knowledge" to his faith?

[1:5, 1:6]

A Christian adds "knowledge"(γνῶσις/g1108) by studying the Bible. When he studies the Bible, he will learn how to make wise decisions in life. By studying the Bible he learns how God wants his people to live.

See: Wise (Wisdom, Fool)

What is "self-control"?

[1:6]

"Self-control" is a way to speak about a person choosing to do the right things instead of the wrong things. Some scholars think a Christian who has "self-control" is a person who keeps himself from doing evil things. He does this even if he wants to do something wrong. Other scholars think a Christian who has "self-control" works hard to live in a way that honors God.

What is "endurance"?

[1:6]

"Endurance"(ὑπομονή/g5281) is to be patient even when hard things happen to you. That is, a Christian must continue living in a right way. He must keep trusting in God's promises even when he is suffering.

What is "godliness"?

[1:6, 1:7]

See: Godly (Godliness)

Why did Peter write "brotherly affection"?

[1:7]

Peter wrote "brotherly affection" to say that Christians are commanded to love other Christians in the same way someone

should love their own family.

Why did Peter write “you will not be barren or unfruitful” in the knowledge of Jesus?

[1:8]

When Peter wrote that Christians will not be “barren”(ἀργός/g0692), he said they would not be useless to God.

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

How can a person be “so nearsighted that he is blind”?

[1:9]

Peter wrote that a person can be “so nearsighted that he is blind.” This is a metaphor. Peter was writing about people who could not understanding anything at all that God wants. Or perhaps they only understood some of what God wanted.

See: 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

Why did Peter write that Christians need to make “your calling and election sure”?

[1:10]

Peter wrote that Christians need to make their “calling and election sure”. That is, when Christians live in a way that honors God, it proves to themselves and other people that they are at peace with God. This is because God changes people after they believe in Jesus.

See: Call (Calling); Elect (Election)

Why did Peter write that Christians “will not stumble”?

[1:10]

See: Metaphor; Walk

What is the “eternal kingdom”?

[1:11]

The “eternal kingdom” is the Kingdom of God.

See: Kingdom of God

1:12-21

What is the “tent” about which Peter spoke?

[1:13]

Peter spoke about a “tent”(σκηνωμα/g4638). This was a metaphor. He was speaking about his body.

See: Metaphor; Soul

Why did Peter write that the “putting off” of his tent would be soon?

[1:14]

Peter wrote that the “putting off” of his tent would be soon. This is a metaphor. Peter wanted people to know that he was about to die.

See: 1 Corinthians 15:53-54

See: Metaphor

Why did Peter write “after my departure”?

[1:15]

When Peter wrote “after my departure”(ἐξοδος/g1841), he spoke about after he died.

See: Luke 9:28-31

What were “cleverly invented myths”?

[1:16]

When Peter wrote about “cleverly invented myths”, he spoke about stories other people told. These stories were untrue, but people made them sound as if they were true. Peter warned about false teachers who taught them the wrong things (see: 2 Peter 2:1-3).

See: False Teacher

What is the “power and the coming” of Jesus?

[1:16]

Scholars think that when Peter wrote about the “power and the coming” of Jesus, he spoke about when Jesus will return to earth. That is, people will know that Jesus is powerful when he returns (see: Matthew 24:30).

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

How were Peter and others “eyewitnesses of his majesty”?

[1:16]

When Peter said he and other disciplers were “eyewitnesses of his majesty,” he spoke about when Jesus was transfigured (see: Matthew 17:1-3). This happened in front of Peter, James, and John. This showed Peter, James, and John just how great Jesus is.

See: Transfigure (Transfiguration); Disciple

What was the “majestic glory”?

[1:17]

Some scholars think Peter used the words “majestic glory” to speak about God who has great glory. Other scholars think

Peter wrote about the bright cloud from which a voice spoke when Jesus was transfigured (see: Matthew 17:5).

See: Transfigure (Trainsfiguration); Glory (Glorify)

Who was the “beloved Son”?

[1:17]

The “beloved Son” was Jesus. The words “beloved”(ἀγαπητός/g0027) Son spoke about the highest kind of love that God the Father could express. Some scholars think the words also spoke about Jesus as the Messiah.

See: God the Father; Son of God; Messiah (Christ)

What was the “holy mountain” about which Peter spoke?

[1:18]

The “holy mountain” about which Peter spoke was the mountain on which Jesus was transfigured. This happened in front of Peter, James, and John. So Peter wrote “we ourselves heard this voice” in verse 18.

See: Transfigure (Trainsfiguration)

What was the “prophetic word”?

[1:19]

When Peter wrote about the “prophetic word,” he spoke about the prophecies in the Old Testament. Many of these prophecies spoke about when Jesus came to the earth. Because Peter and the other apostles saw Jesus, the Old Testament prophecies “were made more sure”. That is, the apostles could tell people that Jesus fulfilled these prophecies. So they knew they were completely true.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Old Testament (Law and Prophets); Jesus' Return to Earth; Apostle

What was the “lamp shining in a dark place”?

[1:19]

Peter wrote about a “lamp shining in a dark place.” This was a metaphor. He was speaking about the Old Testament. A lamp showed people where to go when they walked in the dark. In the same way, the Old Testament told people about Jesus, the Messiah.

See: Metaphor; Messiah (Christ); Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What was the “morning star”?

[1:19]

The “morning star” was a metaphor to speak about Jesus, who is the Messiah. The morning star was a bright star that rose just before dawn. It gave light at the end of each night. In some way, Jesus brought light to people. This was so that they might come to know God.

See: Revelation 22:16

See: Metaphor; Messiah (Christ); Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

What was “prophecy”?

[1:20]

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)

Why did Peter write “no prophecy comes from someone’s own interpretation”?

[1:20]

When Peter wrote “no prophecy comes from someone's own interpretation”, he wanted people to know that prophets spoke what God told them. Some scholars think Peter said that none of the Old Testament prophets spoke by their own power. They did not speak about their own ideas. Instead, they spoke about what God told them to say (see: 2 Peter 1:21). Other scholars think Peter wanted to say that no person had the right to interpret the Bible according to their own ideas (see: 2 Peter 2:1).

See: Prophecy (Prophecy); Prophet; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

Why did Peter write “the will of man”?

[1:21]

Peter wrote “the will of man” to talk about people who taught their own ideas instead of what God said. These people were sometimes called “false teachers” by the writers of the New Testament.

Peter wanted people to be certain that no prophecy in the Bible was what a prophet thought of, or what other people wanted him to say. God gave them the thoughts that they wrote.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy); Prophet

2 Peter 1:1

General Information:

Peter identifies himself as the writer and identifies and greets the believers he is writing to.

slave and apostle of Jesus Christ

Peter speaks of being Jesus Christ's servant. He also was given the position and authority of being Christ's apostle.

to those who have received the same precious faith

That these people have received faith implies that God has given that faith to them. Alternate translation: “to those to whom God has given the same precious faith”

to those who have received

“to you who have received.” Peter addresses all believers who may read this letter.

we have received

Here the word “we” refers to Peter and the other apostles,

but not to those to whom he is writing. Alternate translation: "we apostles have received"

2 Peter 1:2

May grace and peace increase in measure

God is the one who will give grace and peace to believers.

Alternate translation: "May God increase your grace and your peace"

May grace and peace increase

Peter speaks of peace as if it were an object that could increase in size or numbers.

in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord

You can translate "knowledge" using a verbal phrase.

Alternate translation: "through your knowing God and Jesus our Lord"

2 Peter 1:3

General Information:

Peter begins to teach the believers about living godly lives.

for life and godliness

Here "godliness" describes the word "life." Alternate

translation: "for a godly life"

through the knowledge of him who called us

You may need to make specific that it is Peter and his readers who know God. Alternate translation: "through our knowledge of God, who called us" or "because we know God, who has called us"

who called us

Here the word "us" refers to Peter and his audience.

through his own glory and excellence

Possible meanings are 1) "by showing us his own glory and greatness" or 2) "to share his own glory and excellence."

2 Peter 1:4

Through these

Here "these" refers to "his own glory and virtue."

you might be sharers

"you might share"

the divine nature

what God is like

having escaped the corruption in the world that is caused by evil desires

Peter speaks of people not suffering from the corruption that wicked desires cause as if they were escaping from that corruption. The word "corruption" is an abstract noun that can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "and so that the wicked desires in this world will no longer corrupt you"

2 Peter 1:5

For this reason

This refers to what Peter has just said in the previous verses. Alternate translation: "Because of what God has done"

2 Peter 1:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Peter 1:7

brotherly love

This refers to love for a friend or family member and likely means love for one's spiritual family.

2 Peter 1:8

these things

This refers to faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love, which Peter mentioned in the previous verses.

they will keep you from being barren or unfruitful

Peter speaks of these qualities as if they were people who could change his readers, and he speaks of his readers as if they were cattle or a food crop. This can be translated using the opposites of "barren" and "unfruitful." Alternate translation: "because you have them you will not be barren or unfruitful" or "they will enable you to do much valuable work"

barren or unfruitful

A "barren" animal is one that cannot bear offspring, and an "unfruitful" plant is one that cannot bear food. These are metaphors that describe people who do not do valuable work. If your language has only one word for these two ideas, you can treat them as a doublet and combine them.

Alternate translation: "unproductive"

in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ

You can translate "knowledge" using a verbal phrase.

Alternate translation: "through your knowing God and Jesus our Lord"

2 Peter 1:9

whoever lacks these things

any person who does not have these things

is so nearsighted that he is blind

Peter speaks of a person who does not possess these qualities as if he were a nearsighted or blind person because he does not understand their value. Alternate translation: "is like a shortsighted person who cannot see their importance"

he has been cleansed from his past sins

You can use a verb to translate this. Alternate translation: "that God has cleansed him from his old sins"

2 Peter 1:10

make your calling and election sure

The words "calling" and "election" share similar meanings and refer to God's choosing people to belong to him.

Alternate translation: "make sure that God has really chosen you to belong to him"

you will not stumble

Here the word "stumble" refers either to 1) committing sin.

Alternate translation: "you will not practice sinful behavior" or 2) becoming unfaithful to Christ. Alternate translation: "you will not become unfaithful to Christ"

2 Peter 1:11

there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will richly provide for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom"

an entrance

the opportunity to enter

2 Peter 1:12

Connecting Statement:

Peter tells the believers about his obligation to continue reminding them and teaching them.

you are strong in the truth

"you strongly believe the truth of these things"

2 Peter 1:13

to stir you up by way of reminder

Here the word "stir" means to awaken someone from sleep. Peter speaks of causing his readers to think about these things as if he were waking them from sleep. Alternate translation: "to remind you of these things so that you will think about them"

as long as I am in this tent

Peter speaks of his body as if it were a tent that he is wearing and will take off. Being in his body represents being alive, and taking it off represents dying. Alternate translation: "as long as I am in this body" or "as long as I am alive"

2 Peter 1:14

the putting off of my tent will be soon

Peter speaks of his body as if it were a tent that he is wearing and will take off. Being in his body represents being alive, and taking it off represents dying. Alternate translation: "I will soon take off this body" or "I will die soon"

2 Peter 1:15

you may always be able to remember these things

Here the words "these things" refers to everything that Peter has said in the previous verses.

after my departure

Peter speaks of his death as if he were leaving one place to go to another. Alternate translation: "after my death" or "after I die"

2 Peter 1:16

Connecting Statement:

Peter continues to explain his teachings to the believers and explains why they are trustworthy.

For we did not follow cleverly invented myths

Here the word "we" refers to Peter and the other apostles, but not to his readers. Alternate translation: "For we apostles did not follow cleverly made-up stories"

the power and the coming

These two phrases may refer to the same thing and be translated as a single phrase. Alternate translation: "the powerful coming"

the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ

Possible meanings are 1) the future second coming of the Lord Jesus or 2) the first coming of the Lord Jesus.

our Lord Jesus Christ

Here the word "our" refers to all believers.

2 Peter 1:17

when a voice was brought to him by the Majestic Glory

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when he heard a voice come from the Majestic Glory" or "when he heard the voice of the Majestic Glory speak to him" or "when the Majestic Glory spoke to him"

the Majestic Glory, saying

Peter refers to God in terms of his glory. This is a euphemism that avoids using God's name, out of reverence for him. Alternate translation: "God, the Supreme Glory, saying"

2 Peter 1:18

We ourselves heard this voice brought from heaven

With the word "We," Peter is referring to himself and to the disciples James and John, who heard the voice of God.

Alternate translation: "We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven"

heard this voice brought from heaven

"heard the voice of the one who spoke from heaven"

we were with him

"we were with Jesus"

2 Peter 1:19

General Information:

Peter begins to warn the believers about false teachers.

For we have the prophetic word made more certain

The things that Peter and the other apostles saw, which he described in the previous verses, confirm what the prophets spoke. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For the things that we saw make this prophetic message more sure"

For we have

Here the word "we" refers to all believers, including Peter and his readers.

the prophetic word made

This refers to the Old Testament. Alternate translation: "the scriptures, which the prophets spoke, made"

to which you would do well to pay attention

Peter instructs the believers to pay close attention to the prophetic message.

as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns

Peter compares the prophetic word to a lamp that gives

light in the dark until light comes in the morning. The

coming of morning is a reference to Christ's coming.

the morning star rises in your hearts

Peter speaks of Christ as the "morning star," which indicates that daybreak and the end of darkness is near.

Christ will bring light into the hearts of believers, ending all doubt and bringing full understanding of who he is. Here

"hearts" is a metonym for people's minds. Alternate translation: "Christ shines his light into your hearts like the morning star shines its light into the world"

the morning star

The "morning star" refers to the planet Venus, which sometimes rises just before the sun and indicates that daybreak is near.

2 Peter 1:20

Above all, you must understand

"Most importantly, you must understand"

no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation

Possible meanings are 1) the prophets did not make their prophecies on their own or 2) people must rely on the Holy Spirit to understand the prophecies or 3) people must interpret the prophecies with the help of the entire Christian community of believers.

2 Peter 1:21

men spoke from God when they were carried along by the Holy Spirit

Peter speaks of the Holy Spirit helping the prophets to write what God wanted them to write as if the Holy Spirit were carrying them from one place to another. Alternate translation: "men spoke from God as the Holy Spirit directed them"

2 Peter 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Flesh

"Flesh" is a metaphor for a person's sinful nature. Here it does not represent the physical part of man. "Flesh" represents the human nature that rejects all things godly and desires what is sinful. This is the condition of all humans before they receive the Holy Spirit by believing in Jesus. (See: flesh)

Implicit information

There are several analogies in 2:4-8 that are difficult to understand if the Old Testament has not yet been translated. Further explanation may be necessary.

Links:

[2 Peter 2:1 Notes](#)

2 Peter 2

2:1-3

What were "false prophets"?

[2:1]

False prophets were people who said they were prophets but they were not. They said that God gave them things to say, but these people were lying.

See: False Prophet; Prophet

What were "destructive heresies"?

[2:1]

A "heresy" (αἵρεσις/g0139) is a teaching about God which is not true. These things harmed people. Perhaps these people believed they were at peace with God when they were not. They needed to believe the right things to be at peace with God.

See: Heresy

How did the false prophets and teachers "deny the master"?

[2:1]

Scholars disagree about how the false prophets and teachers "denied the master," Jesus. Some scholars think Peter wrote about people who said they believed Jesus. However, they did not obey what Jesus taught. The things they taught were different from what Jesus taught. Other scholars think the false teachers denied Jesus by saying things about him that were not true. Some false teachers denied the gospel.

See: 2 Timothy 3:5

See: Prophet; Gospel

Why did Peter write about "quick destruction"?

[2:1]

Scholars disagree about why Peter wrote "quick destruction." Scholars disagree about why Peter wrote "quick". They also disagree about why he wrote "destruction".

Some scholars think Peter used the word "quick" (ταχινός/g5031) to say that some kind of punishment for the false prophets and teachers was going to happen soon. Other scholars think Peter wanted to say that God could judge all people who sin might happen at any moment.

Some scholars think the "destruction" about which Peter spoke was the final judgment of God. This will happen when Jesus returns to earth. Other scholars agree that Peter said the false prophets will be destroyed when God judges them. God will send them to hell when they die. However, these scholars think God will punish them before they die.

See: Punish (Punishment); Prophet; Sin; Day of Judgment; Jesus' Return to Earth; Hell

Who were the "many" about which Peter spoke?

[2:2]

Some scholars think that Peter wrote "many" to speak about the false prophets and teachers from verse 1. Other scholars think Peter spoke about "many" people who claimed to be Christians. However, some of those people did not really believe in Jesus.

See: False Prophet; False Teacher

Why did Peter write "follow their sensuality"?

[2:2]

Peter said people will follow their "sensuality" (ἀσέλγεια/g0766). He was writing about people who did the evil things they wanted to do (see: 1 Peter 4:3).

What is the "way of truth"?

[2:2]

The “way of truth” is the way Jesus and the apostles taught Christians to live.

See: Apostle

How is the way of truth “blasphemed”?

[2:2]

When Christians did what the false prophets and teachers taught, it caused other people to say bad things about the things Jesus and the apostles taught. When they did this, they spoke against God. They said the things God taught were not true.

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Prophet; Apostle

How did the false teachers “exploit” Christians with “deceptive words”?

[2:3]

False teachers used “deceptive words.” They created stories so people would reject the gospel. Jesus permitted Christian teachers to make money from teaching and preaching the gospel. They could make money to live, but they should not try to become very rich. Scholars think the false teachers began to “exploit”(ἐμπορεύομαι/g1710) people and tried to become rich by teaching people (see: 1 Timothy 6:3-5).

See: False Teacher; Gospel; Preach (Preacher)

Why did Peter write “their condemnation has not been idle”?

[2:3]

Peter wrote their “condemnation has not been idle.” He wanted people to know that God already decided to punish the false teachers. He wanted people to know that God will punish them soon.

See: Condemn (Condemnation); Punish (Punishment); False Teacher

Why did Peter write “their destruction is not asleep”?

[2:3]

Peter wrote that the destruction of the false teachers “is not asleep.” He wanted people to know that God already started to destroy the false teachers. Scholars think that just as God will certainly punish the false teachers, he will also destroy the false teachers.

2:4-9

Who were the “angels who sinned”?

[2:4]

When Peter wrote about “angels who sinned”, he wanted people to think of angels who rebelled against God. Scholars do not know when this happened. Jude wrote about angels who heaven (see: Jude 1:6). These angels are now called demons.

See: Genesis 6:1-4

See: Angel; Sin; Demon; Heaven

What were “chains of lower darkness”?

[2:4]

Scholars disagree about why Peter wrote “chains of lower darkness.” Some scholars think this was a metaphor. Peter was speaking about the angels who sinned and then were kept in darkness. Other scholars think the darkness itself was like a chain, because the angels could barely move because of the darkness. Those angels will be kept in this darkness until Jesus returns to judge the whole world.

See: Metaphor; Judge (Judgment); Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Angel; Demon; Sin; Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Peter write that God “did not spare the ancient world”?

[2:5]

When Peter wrote that God “did not spare the ancient world,” he spoke about the world before the flood when Noah lived (see: Genesis 7:17-24). That is, Peter wanted people to think about how God used the flood to punish the people when Noah lived. He did this to punish them for their sins.

See: Punish (Punishment); Sin

How was Noah a “herald of righteousness”?

[2:5]

Noah was a “herald”(κῆρυξ/g2783) of righteousness. That is, he preached about righteousness. Scholars think that Noah obeyed God and this made other people think about the righteousness of God. God said that Noah was a righteous man (see: Genesis 7:1).

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Preach (Preacher)

Where was Sodom and Gomorrah?

[2:6]

See: Genesis 14

See Map: Sodom and Gomorrah

Why did Peter call Lot a “righteous” man?

[2:7]

Peter called Lot a “righteous” man because Lot obeyed God even while Lot lived in Sodom. Sodom and Gomorrah were considered to be cities where people did evil things.

See: Genesis 14

See: Righteous (Righteousness)

See Map: Sodom and Gomorrah

Why did Peter write that God “knows how to rescue godly men out of trials”?

[2:9]

Peter wanted all Christians to know that God will help people who trust him when they are severely challenged. That is, just as God rescued both Noah and Lot, he can also rescue Christians from their trials.

See: 1 Corinthians 10:13

See: Trial

What was the “day of judgment”?

[2:9]

See: Day of Judgment; Jesus' Return to Earth

2:10-22

Why did Peter write “corrupt desires of the flesh”?

[2:10]

Scholars disagree about why Peter wrote “corrupt desires of the flesh.” Some scholars think Peter wanted people to know that there were evil people when Noah and Lot lived. There were also evil people and false teachers when Peter lived.

Other scholars think Peter was writing about certain sins the people of Sodom did.

See: Flesh; Sexual Immorality

How do people “despise authority”?

[2:10]

Peter wrote about people who “despise”(καταφρονέω/g2706) authority. He was speaking about people who hated leaders. Some scholars think Peter spoke about leaders who said they believed the things Jesus taught, but they did not obey Jesus. They also did not honor Jesus.

How were people “self-willed”?

[2:10]

When Peter wrote about people who were “self-willed” he spoke about people who always wanted to do whatever they wanted to do. They did not want to do what other people wanted to do. They did not obey leaders. Instead, they wanted other people to do the things they taught.

How did someone “blaspheme the glorious ones”?

[2:10]

Scholars disagree about how people “blasphemed the glorious ones.” Some scholars think that Peter spoke about people who say evil things about someone in heaven. Some of these people even deny that these people exist. Fewer scholars think that Peter wrote “blaspheme the glorious ones” to speak about people who spoke evil against leaders in his church whom God has chosen.

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy); Glory (Glorify)

What were “insulting judgments”?

[2:11]

When Peter wrote “insulting judgments,” he wanted people to know that these angels were strong and powerful, yet they did not judge people. Some scholars think the angels did not judge people in heaven. This is because the angels know that God is the only judge. Others scholars think Peter said the angels in heaven did not judge demons. Other scholars think that angels in heaven did not judge false teachers or religious leaders.

See: Judge (Judgment); Angel; Demon; Heaven

Who did Peter call “unreasoning animals”?

[2:12]

Scholars think Peter called the false teachers and prophets “unreasoning animals.” This is a metaphor. He was speaking about these false leaders. Animals live always do the things they want to do. Peter wanted to say that in some way these prophets and teachers only do the things they want to do. That is, they did not try to do the right things.

See: Metaphor; Prophet

Why did Peter write “reward of their wrongdoing”?

[2:13]

Scholars disagree about why Peter wrote “reward of their wrongdoing.” Peter spoke about the false teachers and prophets. Some scholars think Peter spoke about how God would punish them by sending them to hell. They would be punished for doing evil things and causing other people to sin. Other scholars think Peter spoke about how false teachers and prophets will be treated unjustly because they unjustly treated other people.

See: Hell; Reward; Prophet

Why did Peter write "luxury during the day"?

[2:13]

Peter wrote about "luxury during the day." This was a common metaphor to speak about people who boldly do wrong things that other people can see. Most people who lived in a wrong way and did the wrong things in the evening. Because it was dark, they believed that no one really saw them doing evil things. However, the false teachers and prophets did evil things during the day. They did not care if anyone saw living in an evil way. This is because they thought they were living in the right way.

See: Prophet; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

How were the false teachers and prophets "stains and blemishes"?

[2:13]

Peter called the false teachers and prophets "stains and blemishes." This was a metaphor. He was speaking about the shame they caused themselves and other people. He wanted people to think about how a stain on a garment makes people no longer see it as beautiful. Scholars think that because of the wrong things the false teachers and prophets did, they were like "stains" on the Christian community. That is, they made people think bad things about Christians.

See: False Teacher; False Prophet; Metaphor

What were "eyes full of adultery"?

[2:14]

Some scholars think the words, "eyes full of adultery" describes a man who cannot look at a woman without having wrong thoughts about her. That is, he wants nothing but to have sex with her. Other scholars think Peter wanted to say that the false teachers and prophets wanted to be with women so they could have sex with her. Other scholars think the words meant that these men thought every woman was an adulterer.

See: Adultery; False Prophet; False Teacher

How did the false prophets and teachers "entice unstable souls"?

[2:14]

Peter wrote that the false prophets and teachers "entice unstable souls" to say that they tempted Christians in some way. They taught things that were close to the truth, but were really lies. By lying, they were able to make Christians follow them and to do the wrong things.

See: False Prophet; False Teacher; Soul; Tempt (Temptation)

How did the false prophets and teachers have "hearts trained in covetousness"?

[2:14]

When Peter spoke about these false teachers and prophets having "hearts trained in covetousness", he wanted people to know that everything the false teachers and prophets did was for themselves.

See: False Prophet; False Teacher

What was the "way of Balaam"?

[2:15]

Peter wrote "the way of Balaam" so people would think about the things Balaam did. The story of Balaam in the Old Testament spoke about a man who was greedy. He did all he could to get the people of Israel to live in a wrong way (see: Numbers 31:16). He did this because one of Israel's enemies promised him a large amount of money. In the same way, the false teachers and prophets did the same types of things Balaam did. They tried to get Christians to live in a wrong way. They did this to try to gain a lot of money.

See: Old Testament (Law and Prophets); False Prophet; False Teacher

What was the "gloom of thick darkness"?

[2:17]

The "gloom of thick darkness" spoke about the blackest kind of darkness. Scholars think God set aside the darkest places in hell for the false teachers and prophets.

See: Hell; Light and Darkness (Metaphor); False Teacher; False Prophet

How did the false teachers and prophets speak with "vain arrogance"?

[2:18]

The false teachers and prophets spoke with "vain arrogance" in several ways. They spoke loudly. They used, big words. They spoke with great emotion in order to excite people. They spoke about promises that God never made. They could not make these promises happen. So, what they said was in "vain". That is, they had no real value. Also, they thought very highly of themselves. They were arrogant.

See: False Teacher; False Prophet

What were the "lusts of the flesh"?

[2:18]

When Peter wrote "lusts of the flesh", he wanted people to think about how they can be tempted to sin.

See: Flesh; Tempt (Temptation); Sin

Who were the people who tried to "escape from those who live in error"?

[2:18]

The people who tried to "escape from those who live in error" were Christians. Scholars think Peter spoke about people who had just become Christian. That is, God only recently forgave their sins. So, they no longer lived in the wrong way. However, they knew people who were not Christians. These people still lived in sin. They would try to get these people to stop being Christians and to live in the way they used to live. These Christians needed to stop listening to the people they used to know.

See: Sin

Why did Peter write "slaves of corruption"?

[2:19]

When Peter wrote "slaves of corruption", he used a metaphor to speak about how powerful sin can be. People who were slaves were completely owned and controlled by other people. A person who is a slave to "corruption" (φθορά/g5356) is a person who does things that are evil when they are tempted. Their sins control them in some way.

Some scholars think the "corruption" about which Peter spoke is when someone obeys Satan. They do this because they think Satan will reward them. Really, Satan makes them think and do worse and worse things.

See: Metaphor; Sin; Satan (The Devil); Spirit (Spiritual)

What was the "corruption of the world"?

[2:20]

Scholars think that when Peter wrote "corruption of the world", he spoke about how people who were not Christians often did evil things. The "corruption" was a result of wanting to sin (see: 2 Peter 1:4).

See: World

How can people "turn away from the holy commandment"?

[2:21]

When Peter wrote that people can "turn away from the holy commandment," he spoke about people who heard true things about God but not to believe them. That is, they believed the lies of the false teachers and prophets instead of the truth about God. Peter used the metaphor of someone turning away from a good thing. This would be like a person refusing a great gift. When he wrote about the "holy commandment," he was writing about living in the right way.

See: Metaphor; Prophet; Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Command (Commandment)

2 Peter 2:1

General Information:

Peter begins to warn the believers about false teachers.

False prophets came to the people, and false teachers will also come to you

Just as false prophets came deceiving Israel with their words, so will false teachers come teaching lies about Christ.

destructive heresies

The word "heresies" refers to opinions that are contrary to the teaching of Christ and the apostles. These heresies destroy the faith of those who believe them.

the master who bought them

The word "master" here refers to a person who owns slaves. Peter speaks of Jesus as the owner of people whom he has bought, the price being his death.

2 Peter 2:2

sensuality

immoral sexual behavior

the way of truth will be slandered

The phrase "way of truth" refers to the Christian faith as the true path to God. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "unbelievers will slander the way of truth"

2 Peter 2:3

exploit you with deceptive words

"convince you to give them money by telling you lies"

Their condemnation has been coming for a long time, and their destruction is not asleep

Peter speaks of "condemnation" and "destruction" as if they are persons who act. These abstract nouns can be expressed with the verbs "condemn" and "destroy".

Alternate translation: "It was decided long ago that they would be condemned; they will surely be destroyed" or "God said long ago that he would condemn them; he is ready to destroy them"

Their condemnation has been coming for a long time, and their destruction is not asleep

Possible meanings are 1) the false teachers will be condemned, and as a result they will be destroyed, or 2) the two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize how soon or how certainly the false teachers will be condemned.

2 Peter 2:4

Connecting Statement:

In verses 4-9, Peter gives three examples of times that God punished sinners. Two of these times there were also some righteous people whom God did not punish.

did not spare

"did not refrain from punishing" or "punished"

but delivered them into hell

This tells how God punished the angels who sinned.

Alternate translation: "but threw them down into hell" or "but sent them to hell"

to be kept in chains of darkness

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "where he keeps them in chains of darkness"

in chains of darkness

Possible meanings are 1) "in chains in a very dark place" or 2) "in darkness that imprisons them like chains."

until the judgment

This refers to the day of judgment when God will judge every person.

2 Peter 2:5

Connecting Statement:

Verse 5 is Peter's second example of a time that God punished sinners. This time there was a righteous man whom God did not punish.

and if he did not spare the ancient world

Here the word "world" refers to the people who lived in it.

Alternate translation: "and if God did not refrain from punishing the people who lived in the ancient world"

but preserved Noah ... along with seven others

"But protected Noah ... along with seven others." God did not destroy Noah and seven other people when he destroyed the rest of the people who lived in the ancient world.

Noah, a herald of righteousness

"Noah, a preacher of righteousness." Possible meanings are 1) Noah taught people that they should live righteous lives, or 2) Noah warned people that the righteous God would judge them.

when he brought a flood on the world of the ungodly

God punished ungodly people by sending a flood that killed them.

2 Peter 2:6

Connecting Statement:

Verses 6-8 are Peter's third example of a time that God punished sinners. Again, there was a righteous man whom God did not punish.

and if he reduced the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes

"and if God burned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire until only ashes remained"

condemned them to destruction

Here the word "them" refers to Sodom and Gomorrah and the people who lived in them.

as an example of what is to happen to the ungodly

Sodom and Gomorrah serve as an example and a warning of what will happen to others who disobey God.

2 Peter 2:7

Connecting Statement:

Verses 6-8 are Peter's third example of a time that God punished sinners. Verses 7-8 tell about a righteous man whom God did not punish with the sinners.

but delivered righteous Lot

Lot was righteous, and God rescued him from the punishment he sent on Sodom and Gomorrah.

the sensual behavior of lawless people

"the immoral behavior of people who broke God's law"

2 Peter 2:8

that righteous man

This refers to Lot.

was tormented in his righteous soul

Here the word "soul" refers to Lot's thoughts and emotions.

The immoral behavior of the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah disturbed him emotionally. Alternate translation: "was greatly disturbed"

2 Peter 2:9

Connecting Statement

In this verse Peter tells us what we can know about God because of what God did in verses 4-8.

if the Lord did these things

The words "these things" refer to what God did in verses

4-8.

rescue ... out of trials

Possible meanings of the word "trials" are 1) tests or temptations, "enable ... to resist temptation" or "enable ... to pass the test," or 2) suffering, "bring ... through suffering."

2 Peter 2:10

Connecting Statement:

Peter begins describing the characteristics of unrighteous men.

This is especially true

The word "this" refers to God keeping unrighteous men in prison until judgment day in 2 Peter 2:9.

those who walk after the corrupt desires of the flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for the body and for selfish desires, and to "walk after" or pursue its "corrupt desires" is a metaphor for those people doing whatever they want to do to satisfy those desires. Alternate translation: "those who continue to indulge their corrupt, sinful desires"

despise authority

"refuse to submit to God's authority." Here the word "authority" probably refers to God's authority.

authority

Here "authority" stands for God, who has the right to give commands and to punish disobedience.

self-willed

"doing whatever they want to do"

the glorious ones

This phrase refers to spiritual beings, such as angels or demons.

2 Peter 2:11

greater strength and power

"more strength and power than the false teachers"

they do not bring insulting judgments against them

The word "they" refers to angels. Possible meanings for the word "them" are 1) the glorious ones or 2) the false teachers.

bring insulting judgments against them

The idea that angels could accuse them is spoken of as if they could attack them using accusations as weapons.

2 Peter 2:12

these people are like unreasoning animals, born for capture and destruction

Just as people cannot reason with animals, no one can reason with these men. Alternate translation: "these false teachers are like unreasoning animals whose nature is to be born for capture and destruction"

for capture and destruction

These abstract nouns can be translated as verbs. The author has not stated the actor in these cases, so it is best if you can leave it unstated. Alternate translation: "so that people can capture and destroy them" or "so that other animals can capture and destroy them" or "so that people can capture them or other animals can destroy them" or "and they become prey or die"

They do not know what they insult

They speak evil of what they do not know or understand.

In destruction they also will be destroyed

This emphasizes that God will destroy them and can be

stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will completely destroy them"

2 Peter 2:13

suffering harm as a reward for doing harm

Peter speaks of the punishment that the false teachers will receive as if it were a reward. Alternate translation:

"receiving what they deserve for the harm they have done" luxury during the day

Here the word "luxury" refers to immoral activity that includes gluttony, drunkenness, and sexual activity. Doing these things during the day indicates that these people are not ashamed of this behavior.

They are stains and blemishes

The words "stains" and "blemishes" share similar meanings. Peter speaks of the false teachers as if they were stains on a garment that cause shame for those who wear it. Alternate translation: "They are like stains and blemishes on clothes, which cause disgrace"

2 Peter 2:14

They have eyes full of adultery

Here the "eyes" represent their desires and "eyes full" means they constant want something. Alternate translation: "They constantly want to commit adultery"

they are never satisfied with sin

Although they sin in order to satisfy their lusts, the sin that they commit never satisfies.

They entice unstable souls

Here the word "souls" refers to persons. Alternate translation: "They entice unstable people"

hearts trained in greed

Here the word "hearts" refers to the thoughts and emotions of the person. Because of their habitual actions, they have trained themselves to think and act out of greed.

2 Peter 2:15

the straight way

Behavior that honors God is spoken of as if it were a path to follow.

have gone astray

People who commit evil behavior that displeases God are spoken of as if they were animals like cows or sheep who go away from the people who take care of them.

to receive payment for unrighteousness

"to receive money for doing things that are not righteous"

2 Peter 2:16

he obtained a rebuke

You can specify it was God who rebuked Balaam. Alternate translation: "God rebuked him"

a mute donkey speaking in a human voice

A donkey, which is naturally unable to speak, spoke with a voice like a human.

stopped the prophet's insanity

God used a donkey to stop the prophet's foolish action.

2 Peter 2:17

These men are springs without water

Springs flowing with water promise refreshment for thirsty people, but "springs without water" will leave the thirsty disappointed. In the same way, false teachers, although they promise many things, are unable to do what they promise.

mists driven by a storm

When people see storm clouds, they expect rain to fall.

When the winds from the storm blow the clouds away before the rain can fall, the people are disappointed. In the same way, false teachers, although they promise many things, are unable to do what they promise.

The gloom of thick darkness is reserved for them

The word "them" refers to the false teachers. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has reserved the gloom of thick darkness for them"

2 Peter 2:18

They speak with vain arrogance

They use impressive but meaningless words.

Through the lusts of the flesh, through sensuality, they entice people

"They appeal to people's fleshly lusts and desire for sensuality. This is how they entice people"

people who are trying to escape from those who live in error

This phrase refers to people who recently became believers. The phrase "those who live in error" refers to unbelievers who still live in sin. Alternate translation:

"people who try to live rightly, instead of living sinfully as they used to and as other people do"

people who are trying to escape

Peter speaks of people who live sinfully as if they are slaves to sin who need to be released from their captivity.

2 Peter 2:19

They promise freedom to them, but they themselves are slaves of corruption

"Freedom" here is an idiom for the ability to live exactly as one wants. Alternate translation: "They promise to give them the ability to live exactly as they want to live, but they themselves cannot escape their own sinful desires"

promise freedom ... slaves of corruption

Peter speaks of people who live sinfully as if they were slaves to sin and need to be released from their captivity.

For a man is a slave to whatever overcomes him

Peter speaks of a person as a slave when anything has control over that person, and that thing as the master of that person. Alternate translation: "For if something has control over a person, that person becomes like a slave to that thing"

2 Peter 2:20

Connecting Statement:

The words "they" and "them" refer to the false teachers Peter speaks of in verses 12-19.

If they have escaped the corruptions ... and are again entangled in them and overcome

The events in this conditional statement have happened.

The false teachers had at one time escaped, but they became entangled and were overcome. Alternate

translation: "Since they have escaped ... and are again entangled in them and overcome"

the corruptions of the world

The word "corruptions" refers to sinful behavior that makes one morally impure. The "world" refers to human society. Alternate translation: "the corrupting practices of sinful human society"

through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

You can translate "knowledge" using a verbal phrase. See

how you translated similar phrases in [2 Peter 1:2]

the last state has become worse for them than the first

"their condition is worse than it was before"

2 Peter 2:21

the way of righteousness

Peter speaks of life as a "way" or path. This phrase refers to living a life that is according to God's will.

turn away from the holy commandment

Here "turn away from" is a metaphor that means to stop doing something. Alternate translation: "stop obeying the holy commandment"

the holy commandment delivered to them

This can be stated in active terms. Alternate translation:

"the holy commandment that God delivered to them" or

"the holy commandment that God made sure that they received"

2 Peter 2:22

This proverb is true for them

"This proverb applies to them" or "This proverb describes them"

A dog returns to its own vomit, and a washed pig returns to the mud
Peter uses two proverbs to illustrate how the false teachers, although they have known "the way of righteousness," have turned back to the things that make them morally and spiritually impure.

Chapter 3

2 Peter 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Fire

People often use fire to destroy things or to make something pure by burning off the dirt and worthless parts. Therefore when God punishes the wicked or purifies his people, it is often associated with fire. (See: fire)

Day of the Lord

The exact time of the coming day of the Lord will come as a surprise to people. This is what the simile "like a thief in the night" means. Because of this, Christians are to be prepared for the coming of the Lord.

Links:

[2 Peter 3:1 Notes](#)

2 Peter 3

3:1-7

Why did Peter write "stir up your sincere mind"?

[3:1]

Peter wrote "stir up your sincere mind" to remind Christians to think the right things. Some scholars think Peter wanted to encourage Christians by remembering the words Peter wrote to them. To "stir up" was a metaphor to say he wanted the Christians to think carefully about the truth they had been taught.

See: Metaphor

Who were the "holy prophets"?

[3:2]

The "holy prophets" were men who spoke to people for God. Peter wrote this about the prophets whose words are in the Old Testament.

See: Prophet; Old Testament (Law and Prophets)

What was the command of the Lord that was given through the apostles?

[3:2]

Scholars think many things about the "command of the Lord" given through the apostles: Some scholars think Peter wrote this about all of the things that Jesus taught to the apostles. Some scholars think Peter wrote about when Jesus warned that false teachers and prophets would come. Some scholars think Peter wrote about the "appearing" of Jesus when he returns to earth.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Apostle; Command (Commandment); False Teacher; False Prophet

Who were the "mockers" about which Peter spoke?

[3:3]

The "mockers" were people who laughed at Christians and ridiculed Christians. They did this because Christians believed Jesus was going to come back again. The mockers thought this was not going to happen. They thought they could laugh at Christians for believing it. Perhaps Peter was still speaking about the false teachers.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

What are the "last days"?

[3:3]

See: Last Days

How did the mockers live "according to their own desires"?

[3:3]

People who lived “according to their own desires” were people who rejected Jesus and did not live in a way that honored God. They sinned because they wanted to sin. They did not care about that God will judge people.

See: Judge (Judgment)

Why did the mockers ask “where is the promise of his return”?

[3:4]

The mockers asked “where is the promise of his return” to accuse Christians of believing things that did not happen. Some scholars think that because Jesus had not yet returned, the mockers asked about the signs of his return (see: Mark 13:24-26). Because they had not seen the signs, they claimed that Jesus did not tell them the truth.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Sign

Why did the mockers say “our fathers fell asleep”?

[3:4]

When Peter spoke about someone falling asleep, he wanted to say they died.

How does a person “willfully forget” something?

[3:5]

When Peter said that some people “willfully forget” things, he wanted people to know that they wanted to reject something. They choose to believe other things, but these other things are false.

What was the “world of that time”?

[3:6]

Peter spoke about the “world of that time.” He was speaking about the earth when Noah was alive. That is, he spoke about the world with all its people and animals that were destroyed in the great flood. The only ones who did not die then were those saved on Noah's ark. This event was one of the facts those who mocked Christians forgot. That is, they denied that it happened.

See: Genesis 7

Why did Peter write “reserved for fire by that same command”?

[3:7]

Peter wrote “reserved for fire by that same command” to say that God will end the world. When God created the heavens and the earth, he did it by a “command”, that is by speaking. In the same way, he will one day speak a command. At that time, the world will be destroyed by fire. It will be destroyed when God speaks the command for it to be destroyed.

See: Heaven; Fire

What is the day of judgment?

[3:7]

See: Day of Judgment

How is it that “one day with the Lord is like a thousand years”?

[3:8]

Peter wrote that “one day with the Lord is like a thousand years” to tell people that God thinks differently about time than people do. Some scholars think that God does not count time in the same way people do. To God, one thousand years is not a long time. In the same way, one day is not a short time to God. Other scholars think Peter wanted to say that God thinks about everything at the same time. That is, God sees everything from the creation to the end of the world at the same time (see: Psalm 90:4; 1 Peter 4:7).

Why did Peter write “the Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises”?

[3:9]

Peter wrote “the Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises” to tell people that God will fulfill all his promises when he decides it is right. Scholars think Peter wanted to say that the Lord did not break his promises. Instead, all of God's promises have a certain time when they will occur. That is, God fulfills each of his promises exactly at the time he wants them to be fulfilled.

See: Fulfill (Fulfillment)

What did it mean to “make room for repentance”?

[3:9]

When Peter wrote “make room for repentance,” he wanted people to know that God wants all people to repent of their sins. That is, God wants everyone to change their mind about who Jesus is, and to stop living in a wrong way. God “makes room” for this to happen. That is, he allowed time for this when he planned the world.

See: Repent (Repentance; Sin

What is the “day of the Lord”?

[3:10]

See: Day of the Lord

How will the Lord “come as a thief”?

[3:10]

Scholars think that when Peter wrote the Lord will “come as a thief,” he wanted people to know that Jesus will return to earth suddenly. He will come when no one expects him to come. Jesus is not a thief.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth

Why did Peter write "the heavens will pass away"?

[3:10]

Scholars think on the Day of the Lord, God will end or destroy the world. When this happens, there will be some kind of loud noise and the sky will disappear. Everything in the sky, that is to say the sun, moon, and the stars will be completely destroyed.

See: Day of the Lord

Why did Peter write that "the earth and the deeds in it will be revealed"?

[3:10]

Scholars disagree about why Peter wrote that "the earth and the deeds in it will be revealed." Some scholars think Peter wanted to say that God will expose the deeds that all people have done. God knows everything people do. He will judge the things people have done. Other scholars think Peter wanted to say that God will expose and destroy all things on earth. This will happen to things God created and to things that people built.

See: Reveal (Revelation)

How do people live "holy and godly lives"?

[3:11]

People live "holy and godly lives" when they live in a way that honors God.

See: Godly (Godliness); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

How can Christians "hasten the coming of the day of God"?

[3:12]

Scholars disagree about how Christians "hasten the coming of the day of God." Some scholars think Peter wanted to say that Christians should want Jesus to return to the earth soon. Other scholars think Christians must do certain things to make the Jesus return soon. If Christians pray and the gospel will be preached to all nations, then Jesus will return.

See: Day of the Lord; Jesus' Return to Earth; Gospel; Preach (Preacher)

What is the "day of God"?

[3:12]

See: Day of the Lord

How will the heavens be destroyed by fire?

[3:12]

See: 2 Peter 3:10

What are the "new heavens and the new earth"?

[3:13]

Peter wrote "new heavens and new earth" to tell people that after God destroys the world, he will in some way create another world. The new world will include "heavens" and "earth." This new world will be a world of glory. That is, there will be no sin or death.

Some scholars think Peter wanted to say that God will in some way change the existing heavens and earth. God will do this after they have been destroyed by fire. Other scholars think that God will once again create out of nothing, a new heaven and a new earth.

See: Isaiah 65:17; 66:22

See: Glory (Glorify); Sin; Heaven; Fire

What is a place "where righteousness will dwell"?

[3:13]

When Peter wrote about a place "where righteousness will dwell," he was writing about the new earth. In the new earth everything will be good. People will only do things that are right. The earth and everything that will dwell on the earth will be perfectly holy, just as God is holy.

See: Righteous (Righteousness); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

How can a Christian be "found spotless and blameless" before God?

[3:14]

A Christian who lives in a "spotless" (ἄσπιλος/g0784) lives in a way that God. A Christian who lives in a "blameless" (ἀμώμητος/g0298) way lives in a way so that no one can accuse him of doing wrong things. Why did Peter write "consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation"?

Peter wrote that God made it so that anyone can be saved from their sins. That is, God waits so people can repent and believe in Jesus. God is patient. Because God is patient, more people will be saved from their sins and go to heaven.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins); Repent (Repentance); Heaven

Why does Peter say that Paul's writings were "difficult to understand"?

[3:16]

Peter said that Paul wrote things that were difficult to understand. He also said that there were other scriptures that were also difficult to understand. They contain things that people may not understand right away. Perhaps Peter wanted Christians to think carefully about the things the false teachers and prophets said.

See: False Teacher; False Prophet

How does a Christian lose his own "faithfulness"?

[3:17]

When Peter wrote about a Christian losing his own "faithfulness," he spoke about how Christians need to keep trusting in Jesus. He warned Christians that if they listen to the mockers, false teachers, and prophets, they will begin to doubt what it says in the Bible. He warned them to always trust what Jesus, the apostles, and the Bible taught. He wanted them not to listen to the mockers and false prophets.

Advice to translators: A mocker is someone who insults other people.

See: Apostle; False Teacher; False Prophet

How do Christians "grow in grace and knowledge"?

[3:18]

When Peter wrote that Christians should "grow in grace and knowledge," he wanted people to become live in a way that honors God more every day. Some scholars think Peter told Christians to always trust in Jesus, and to obey him. Then Jesus will in some way give favor to them. Other scholars think Peter encouraged Christians to work to be more and more like Jesus. That is, to do more of the types of things Jesus did.

See: Grace

How is "glory" given to God then, and forever?

[3:18]

Peter wrote that all "glory" was to be given to God. He wanted all Christians to praise God and honor God. When Christians do this, it glorifies God. Peter wanted Christians to always praise and honor God.

See: Glory (Glorify); Praise

2 Peter 3:1

General Information:

Peter begins to talk about the last days.

to stir up your sincere mind

Peter speaks of causing his readers to think about these things as if he were waking them from sleep. Alternate translation: "to cause you to think pure thoughts"

2 Peter 3:2

the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the words that the holy prophets spoke in the past"

the command of our Lord and Savior given through your apostles

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the command of our Lord and Savior, which your apostles gave to you"

2 Peter 3:3

Know this first

"Know this as the most important thing." See how you translated this in 2 Peter 1:20.

proceed according to their own desires

Here the word "desires" refers to sinful desires that are opposed to God's will. Alternate translation: "live according to their own sinful desires"

proceed

act, behave

2 Peter 3:4

Where is the promise of his return?

The mockers ask this rhetorical question to emphasize that they do not believe that Jesus will return. The word "promise" refers to the fulfillment of the promise that Jesus will return. Alternate translation: "The promise that Jesus would return is not true! He will not return!"

our fathers fell asleep

Here "fathers" refers to ancestors who lived long ago.

Falling asleep is a euphemism for dying. Alternate translation: "our ancestors died"

all things have stayed the same, since the beginning of creation

The mockers exaggerate with the word "all," and they argue that since nothing in the world has ever changed, it cannot be true that Jesus will return.

since the beginning of creation

This can be translated as a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "since God created the world"

2 Peter 3:5

by the word of God the heavens and the earth came to exist

"God spoke and the heavens and the earth came to exist"

came to exist out of water and through water

This means that God caused the land to come up out of the water, gathering the bodies of water together to make the land appear.

2 Peter 3:6

through which

Here "which" refers to God's word and water.

the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God flooded the world that existed at that time with water and destroyed it"

2 Peter 3:7

By the same word the heavens and the earth are reserved for fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God, by that same word, has reserved the heavens and the earth for fire"

the same word

"that same command"

fire, being kept for the day of judgment

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"fire. God is reserving them for the day of judgment"

for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly people

This can be stated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "for the day when he judges and destroys ungodly people"

2 Peter 3:8

It should not escape your notice

"You should not fail to understand this" or "Do not ignore

this"

that one day with the Lord is like a thousand years

"that from the Lord's point of view, one day is like a thousand years"

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow concerning his promise

"The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise." The noun

"promise" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation:

"The Lord will not delay in doing what he promised to do"

his promise

This is the Lord's promise to return.

as some consider slowness to be

Some people think that the Lord is slow to fulfill his promise because their perspective of time is different from God's.

2 Peter 3:10

However ... laid bare

Although the Lord is being patient and wants people to repent, he will indeed return and bring judgment.

the day of the Lord will come as a thief

Peter speaks of the day when God will judge everyone as if it were a thief who will come unexpectedly, and the people will be surprised when it happens.

The heavens will pass away

"The heavens will disappear"

The elements will be burned with fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will burn the elements with fire"

The elements

Possible meanings are 1) the heavenly bodies, such as the sun, moon, and stars or 2) the things that make up heaven and earth, such as soil, air, fire, and water.

the earth and the deeds in it will be laid bare

God will see all the earth and all the deeds of everyone, and he will then judge everything. This can be stated in active terms. Alternate translation: "God will expose the earth and everything that people have done on it"

2 Peter 3:11

Connecting Statement:

Peter begins to tell the believers how they should live as they wait for the day of the Lord.

Since all these things will be destroyed in this way

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Since God will destroy all these things in this way"

what kind of people should you be?

Peter uses this rhetorical question to emphasize what he will say next, that they "should live holy and godly lives."

Alternate translation: "you know what kind of people you should be."

2 Peter 3:12

the heavens will be destroyed by fire, and the elements will be melted in great heat

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will destroy the heavens by fire, and he will melt the elements in great heat"

the elements

Possible meanings are 1) the heavenly bodies, such as the sun, moon, and stars or 2) the things that make up heaven and earth, such as soil, air, fire, and water. See how you

translated this in 2 Peter 3:10.

2 Peter 3:13

where righteousness will dwell

Peter speaks of "righteousness" as if it were a person. This is a metonym for people who are righteous. Alternate translation: "where righteous people will dwell" or "where people will live righteously"

2 Peter 3:14

do your best to be found spotless and blameless before him, in peace

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "do your best to live in such a way that God will find you spotless and blameless, and be at peace with him and each other"

spotless and blameless

The words "spotless" and "blameless" mean basically the same thing and emphasize moral purity. Alternate translation: "completely pure"

spotless

Here this stands for "faultless."

2 Peter 3:15

Also, consider the patience of our Lord to be salvation

Because the Lord is patient, the day of judgment has not yet happened. This gives people an opportunity to repent and be saved, as he explained in [2 Peter 3:9]

according to the wisdom that was given to him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"according to the wisdom that God gave to him"

2 Peter 3:16

Paul speaks of these things in all his letters

"Paul speaks of the patience of God leading to salvation in all his letters"

in which there are things that are difficult to understand

There are things in Paul's letters that are difficult to understand.

Ignorant and unstable men distort these things

Ignorant and unstable men misinterpret the things that are difficult to understand in Paul's letters.

Ignorant and unstable

"Unlearned and unsteady." These men have not been taught how to properly interpret scripture and are not well established in the truth of the gospel.

to their own destruction

"resulting in their own destruction"

2 Peter 3:17

Connecting Statement:

Peter finishes instructing the believers and ends his letter.

since you know about these things

"These things" refers to the truths about the patience of God and the teachings of these false teachers.

guard yourselves

"protect yourselves"

so that you are not led astray by the deceit of lawless people

Here "led astray" is a metaphor for being persuaded to do something wrong. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "so that lawless people do not deceive you and cause you do something wrong"

and lose your own faithfulness

Faithfulness is spoken of as if it were a possession that believers could lose. Alternate translation: "and stop being

faithful"

2 Peter 3:18

grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
Here growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord
represents experiencing his grace more and knowing him

more. The abstract noun "grace" can be expressed with the phrase "act kindly." Alternate translation: "receive more of the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and know him more" or "be more aware of how our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ acts kindly toward you, and know him better"

Introduction to 1 John

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 1 John

Introduction (1:1-4) Christian living (1:5-3:10) The command to love one another (3:11-5:12) Conclusion (5:13-21)

Who wrote the Book of 1 John?

This book does not name the author. However, since early Christian times, most Christians have thought that the Apostle John was the author. He also wrote of the Gospel of John.

What is the Book of 1 John about?

John wrote this letter to Christians at a time when false teachers were troubling them. John wrote this letter because he wanted to prevent believers from sinning. He wanted to protect believers from false teachings. And he wanted to assure believers that they were saved.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "1 John" or "First John." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The First Letter From John" or "The First Letter John Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Who were the people that John spoke against?

The people John spoke against were possibly those who would become known as Gnostics. These people believed that the physical world was evil. Since they believed Jesus was divine, they denied that he was truly human. This is because they thought God would not become human since the physical body is evil. (See: evil)

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

What do the words "remain," "reside," and "abide" mean in 1 John?

John often used the words "remain," "reside," and "abide" as metaphors. John spoke of a believer becoming more faithful to Jesus and knowing Jesus better as if Jesus's word "remained" in the believer. Also, John spoke of someone being spiritually joined to someone else as if the person "remained" in the other person. Christians are said to "remain" in Christ and in God. The Father is said to "remain" in the Son, and the Son is said to "remain" in the Father. The Son is said to "remain" in believers. The Holy Spirit is also said to "remain" in the believers.

Many translators will find it impossible to represent these ideas in their languages in exactly the same way. For example, John intended to express the idea of the Christian being spiritually together with God when he said, "He who says he remains in God" (1 John 2:6). The UDB says, "If we say that we are in union with God," but translators will often have to find other expressions that communicate these ideas well.

In the passage "the word of God remains in you" (1 John 2:14), the UDB expresses this idea as "you are living by the commands of the word of God." Many translators will find it possible to use this translation as a model.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 1 John?

For the following verses, some modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If translations of the Bible exists in the general region, translators should consider using the readings found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"And we are writing these things to you so that our joy may be complete" (1:4). Some older versions have, "And we are writing these things to you so that your joy may be complete." "And you all know the truth" (2:20). Other modern versions have, "And you all have knowledge." Some older versions have, "and you know all things." "and this is what we are!" (3:1). The ULB and most modern translations read this way. Some older versions omit this phrase. "and every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God" (4:3). The ULB and most modern versions have this reading. Some older translations read, "and every spirit that does not acknowledge that Jesus has come in the flesh is not of God."

For the following passage, translators are advised to translate this as the ULB does. However, if in the translators' region there are older versions of the Bible that include this passage, the translators can include it. If it is included, it should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that it was probably not in the original version of 1 John.

"For there are three who bear witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood. These three are in agreement." (5:7-8) Some older versions have, "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three are as one."

1 John 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is a letter that John wrote to Christians.

Special concepts in this chapter

Christians and sin

In this chapter John teaches that all Christians are still sinners. But God continues to forgive a Christian's sins. (See: sin and faith and forgive)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

In this chapter John writes that God is light. Light is a metaphor for understanding and righteousness. (See: and righteous)

John also writes about people walking in the light or in the darkness. Walking is a metaphor for behaving or living.

People who walk in the light understand what is righteous and do it. People who walk in the darkness may not understand what is righteous, and they do what is sinful.

Links:

[1 John 1:1 Notes](#) [1 John intro](#)

1 John 1 Commentary

1:1-4

John wrote about “the beginning.” When was this?

[1:1]

John wrote about “the beginning” in verse one. Some scholars think that this was the time when God created the world. They think this because the gospel of John and the book of Genesis began in a similar way (see: John 1:1, and Genesis 1:1). Other scholars think that John was talking about the time when Jesus began to preach and teach. John wrote “the beginning” many times in this letter. These scholars think that John was always thinking of the time when Jesus began to teach (see: 1 John 2:7).

See: Gospel;Preach (Preacher)

Why did John say that he and the other apostles saw Jesus, heard Jesus speak, and touched Jesus?

[1:1]

John said that he and the other apostles saw Jesus, heard Jesus speak, and touched Jesus. John did this for several reasons. First, he did this to show that Jesus was a true human being. John did not want people to think that Jesus was only God pretending to be human. Second, John showed people that he saw Jesus. John knew Jesus because he had been with Jesus when Jesus was preaching and teaching.

Many scholars think that John wrote verse one in order to correct some false teachers. Those false teachers believed that Jesus was not truly a human being. Perhaps this is also why John said that he had seen, heard, and touched him.

In 1:1, who or what is the “word”?

[1:1]

Some scholars think that John was speaking about Jesus when he said “word or message (λόγος/g3056).” This was because John said that he and the other apostles saw, heard, and touched Jesus. In Scripture, only Jesus is called the “word.” If Jesus is the “word,” then he is also the “word of life” (see: 1 John 5:20). That is, Jesus is the one who brings eternal life to anyone who believes in him.

Fewer scholars think that the “word” is the gospel. If this is true, then it referred to the message Jesus shared (see: Philippians 2:16). They think that in some way, Jesus is the gospel. He is the good news.

See: Eternal Life; Gospel

Advice to translators: Follow the wording used in your translation for “word” and “word of life.” Also, “word” and “message” are used in the same way here.

In 1:1, what type of life does John talk about?

[1:1]

In verse 1, John wrote about “life (ζωή/g2222).” Some scholars think that when John wrote that someone has life, he wanted to say that that person will live with God forever. Jesus gives this type of life to those who believe in him. Other scholars think John wanted to say that Jesus helps Christians to live in a new way in this world. This is because Christians have become God’s friends. Or perhaps “life” means both things at the same time.

See: Gospel;Eternal Life; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins);Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

How is “fellowship” used in this passage?

[1:3]

When two people have “fellowship,” they are at peace with each other, and they are friends. When John wrote about fellowship, he wanted to say that Christians are at peace with God and with each other.

In this passage, John wanted to say two different things. First, he wanted to say that Christians are friends with each other. The second thing John wanted to say is that Christians are friends with God, because they are at peace with him. When a Christian is at peace with God, they want to be at peace with other people.

See: Fellowship

Christian are friends with whom?

[1:3]

In this passage, Christians have “fellowship” with other Christians, that is, they are friends with other Christians. They are also friends with God. A Christian is a friend of God when he trusts in God, prays to God, and honors him. Also, Christians are to be friends with other Christians. They are at peace with each other, help each other, and worship God together.

See: Fellowship

1:5-10

Why did John speak of God as if he were light?

[1:5]

In this passage, John spoke about God as if he were light. This is because light represents someone who always does right and who never sins.

However, scholars think different things about the darkness. Some think that when John wrote about darkness, he was thinking about evil. If this is true, then the people in the darkness are the Christians who live in this evil world. However, other scholars think that John wanted to say that God has not yet shown certain people that they are sinners. In other words, these certain people are in darkness because they do not understand the truth about themselves and about God.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Why does John make so many statements beginning with “if”?

[1:6, 1:7, 1:8, 1:9, 1:10]

John made five statements in this passage that began with “if (ἐάν/g1437).” Each statement said something that might be true. Each statement then said what would happen if that thing were true.

The first statement (1:6) explained that a Christian’s sin kept him from being a friend to God. But in this case, it was not permanent.

The second statement (1:7) was about a person who honored God. Such people were at peace with one another. They knew that God was no longer angry because they had sinned (see: Heb. 9:14 and 10:22).

The third statement (1:8) has caused scholars to disagree with each other. Some scholars think that verse 8 is about people who believe they do not sin very often. These people are not Christians. However, other scholars believe that verse 8 is about those who say they never sin. These people are lying to themselves and to other people.

The fourth statement (1:8) was about how Christians are friends with God. They become friends with him by admitting that they sin and then by repenting of their sins. If they do this, then their sins cannot separate them from God. They know that God is no longer angry with them for having sinned.

Advice to translators: People translate 1:7 in very different ways. Feel free to adapt the content to follow your local translation and clarify it.

Does God only forgive Christians when they lead a life that honors him?

[1:7]

God does not forgive someone because the person does things that please him. However, some translations may appear to say the opposite in 1:7.

The first part of this verse speaks of how Christians must honor God and do what pleases him. In the second part of the verse, John said that Jesus makes people clean or forgives sin. This, of course, is how people become Christians.

Scholars disagree about how these two ideas are connected to each other. Some think that a person must live in the “light,” that is, that he must honor God with his words and actions for God to save him. For these scholars, if someone fails to do this, God will not save him. However, other scholars think John is teaching Christians to live in a way that honors him.

See: Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

Why did John write 1:8?

[1:8]

Many scholars think John wrote this verse because false teachers claimed that they were able to not sin for a long time.

However, because John uses “we” when he says, “If we say we have no sin,” John includes himself among sinners.

Because of this, other scholars do not think John was arguing against false teachers. Instead, they think that some Christians did not understand what it meant that God saved them.

Can Christians avoid sinning?

[1:8]

John clearly says in 1:8 that Christians sin. It is a sin for someone to say that they do not sin.

However, scholars disagree about how someone “has sin.” Some think John meant that Christians sin from time to time, but they cannot constantly sin. If this is true, then Christians can stop sinning for a period of time. However, other scholars think John meant that all Christians sin, even if they do not know what sins they are committing. Must a person confess his sins for God to save him?

[1:9]

It is not necessary for a person to “confess” or admit his sins to God in order for God to save him. Instead, God saves someone when he believes in Jesus, not when he admits his sin to God.

Why should a Christian confess his sins to God?

[1:9]

John said that it is important for a Christian to “confess (ὁμολογέω/#g3670),” that is, admit their sins to God. For a Christian to continue to be friends with God, he must be a friend of God in the right way. When a Christian sins, he is in danger of ceasing to be friends with God. He becomes a true friend of God again by admitting his sin to God.

When John said that God will “cleanse Christians” or “make Christians clean” from sin, he is using a metaphor. He is speaking of sin as if it were dirtiness. Christians continue to commit sin, which is like getting dirty again and again. However, each time they sin, they must admit their sin to God. Then, God continues to forgive or “cleanse” them.

See: Fellowship; Justify (Justification)

1 John 1:1

General Information:

The apostle John wrote this letter to believers. All instances of “you,” “your,” and “yours” include all believers and are plural. Here the words “we” and “us” refer to John and those who had been with Jesus. In verses 1-2 many pronouns like “that,” “which,” and “it” are used. They refer to “the Word of life” and “the eternal life.” But, since these are names for Jesus, you can use pronouns that refer to a person like “who,” “whom” or “he.”

which we have heard

“which we have heard him teach”

which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at

This is repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: “which we ourselves have seen”

the Word of life

This refers to Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: “the one who gives life” or “the one who causes people to live forever”

life

The word “life” throughout this letter refers to more than physical life. Here “life” refers to being alive spiritually.

1 John 1:2

the life was made known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “God made the eternal life known to us” or “God made us able to know him, who is eternal life”

we have seen and testify

“we have seen it and testify about it” or “we have seen him and testify about him”

the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to us

Here, “the eternal life” refers to the one who gives that life, Jesus. Alternate translation: “the one who enables us to live forever, who was with God the Father, and who has been made known to us”

and which has been made known to us

This was when he lived on earth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: “and which the Father has made known to us” or “and who came to live among us”

1 John 1:3

General Information:

Here the words “we,” “us,” and “our” refer to John and those who had been with Jesus.

That which we have seen and heard we declare also to you

“We say to you also what we have seen and heard”

have fellowship with us. Our fellowship is with the Father

“be our close friends. We are friends with God the Father”

Our fellowship

It is not clear if John is including or excluding his readers. You may translate this either way.

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

1 John 1:4

so that our joy will be complete

“to make our joy complete” or “to make ourselves completely happy”

1 John 1:5

General Information:

Here the words “we” and “us” refer to all believers, including the people to whom John was writing. Unless otherwise stated, that is the meaning for the remainder of this book.

Connecting Statement:

From here into the next chapter, John writes about fellowship—close relationships with God and other believers.

God is light

This is a metaphor that means that God is perfectly pure and holy. Cultures that associate goodness with light may be able to keep the idea of light without explaining the metaphor. Alternate translation: “God is purely righteous like pure light”

in him there is no darkness at all

This is a metaphor that means that God never sins and is not evil in any way. Cultures that associate evil with darkness may be able to keep the idea of darkness without explaining the metaphor. Alternate translation: “in him there is nothing that is evil”

1 John 1:6

walk in darkness

Here “walk” is a metaphor for how a person lives or behaves. Here “darkness” is a metaphor for “evil.” Alternate

translation: "do what is evil"

1 John 1:7

walk in the light as he is in the light

Here "walk" is a metaphor for how a person lives or behaves. Here "light" is a metaphor for "good" or "right." Alternate translation: "do what is good as God is perfectly good" or "do what is right as God is perfectly right"

the blood of Jesus

This refers to the death of Jesus.

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 John 1:8

have no sin

"never sin"

are deceiving

"are tricking" or "lying to"

the truth is not in us

The truth is spoken of as if it were an object that could be inside believers. Alternate translation: "we do not believe what God says is true"

1 John 1:9

he is faithful

"God is faithful"

to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. John uses them to emphasize that God will surely forgive our sins.

Alternate translation: "and will completely forgive us for what we have done wrong"

1 John 1:10

we make him out to be a liar

It is implied that a person who claims to be without sin would be calling God a liar since he said that everyone is a sinner. Alternate translation: "it is the same as calling God a liar, because he said we have all sinned"

his word is not in us

"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Obeying and honoring God's word is spoken of as if his word were inside the believers. Alternate translation: "we do not understand God's word and do not obey what he says"

Chapter 2

1 John 2 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Antichrist

In this chapter John writes about both a specific antichrist and many antichrists. The word "antichrist" means "opposed to Christ." The antichrist is a person who will come in the last days and imitate Jesus's work, but he will do it for evil. Before this person comes, there will be many people who work against Christ; they too are called "antichrists." (See: antichrist and lastday and evil)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

There are several groups of similar metaphors that are used throughout this chapter.

Being in God is a metaphor for having fellowship with God, and God's word and truth being in people is a metaphor for people knowing and obeying God's word.

Walking is a metaphor for behaving, not knowing where one is going is a metaphor for not knowing how to behave, and stumbling is a metaphor for sinning.

The light is a metaphor for knowing and doing what is right, and darkness and blindness are metaphors for not knowing what is right and doing what is wrong.

Leading people astray is a metaphor for teaching people things that are not true.

Links:

[1 John 2:1 Notes](#)

1 John 2

2:1-2

Verse 1 has the word "if" in it. Is it like the statements in 1 John 1 that also have "if"?

[2:1]

John said five things using the word "if" (ἐάν/#g1437) in 1 John 1. In 1:1, he said something using the word "if" as well. He said the same thing that he said in 1 John 1 in a very short way. Here, he said that when a Christian sin, God forgives them. However, bad things still often happen when Christians sin. Because of this, John wanted Christians to try hard to stop sinning. But when they sin, John wanted them to ask God to forgive them.

How does Jesus "help" Christians?

[2:1]

Jesus "advocates for" or helps Christians. Only John used this Greek word translated "help" to say what Jesus and the Holy Spirit do. John wanted to say that someone who helps is someone who does things for someone else. For example, if someone is accused of a crime, he helps by speaking to the judge for that person. Jesus goes to God, the judge, and speaks for Christians. Jesus also helps Christians live in a way that honors God.

See: John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, and 16:7

See: [Intercede (Intercession)] (../articles/intercede.md)

When Jesus died, he suffered the punishment for the sins that Christians do. How could Jesus suffer for Christians?
[2:2]

Scripture says that if anyone sins, God must punish him. But Scripture also says that God punished Jesus in the place of sinners. He did this when Jesus agreed to die on the cross.

John wrote about what happened when one person, Jesus, died for everyone else. He was a “propitiation for our sins (ἱλασμός/#g2434).” This Greek word was only used twice in Scripture. Both times are in this letter. John wrote this word to talk about something that Jesus gave to God so that God would forgive the sins of mankind. However, God would only accept one thing, his Son should die. God must punish sin, so he punished Jesus instead of mankind. In other words, when Jesus died on the cross, God stopped being angry with people who trust in Jesus. However, he remains angry with the rest of mankind.

When people worshiped other gods in the ancient Near East, they often thought that their gods became angry for very small reasons. For example, they thought that these gods quarreled or fought among themselves and with mankind, the same way that people often quarrel with one another. However, John showed that God is angry for only one reason, that is, when mankind sins.

So some scholars think that when John wrote “propitiation for our sins,” he wanted to say that God was at peace with Christians, even after they have sinned. This is why God does not punish Christians.

See: Propitiation; Atonement (Atonement)

See: Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 4:10

Advice to translators: When God is angry with people, he is angry because he is just, not because he commits sin.

Did Christ die for the sins of all people?

[2:2]

Some scholars think that Jesus died for the sins of all people in the world. It was in this way that Jesus made it possible for people to live together with God forever. However, it is only those who believe in him who will live with him.

Other scholars think that Jesus only died for the sins of some people, that is, for those who would believe in him. They think Jesus only died for the people whom God has chosen. They think that John said that Jesus died for certain people everywhere in the world.

See: John 3:16

See: Atonement (Atonement); Elect (Election)

2:3-6

How does someone “know” God?

[2:3]

For John, when a person “knows” God, he does not only know who he is. He also knows that God is good, and he knows why God acts as he does.

John wrote that anyone who obeys the word of God knows God. When someone knows God, he wants to please him. That is why he obeys him. John wrote that a Christian must obey God. He also wanted to say that it is better to obey him than it is to know many things about him.

Some people in ancient times said that God secretly told them things. Therefore, they said that they knew secret things about God. Perhaps John was thinking about these people when he wrote that Christians must obey God.

What does John mean by remain or abide (μένω/#g3306)?

See: Abide

2:7-11

What are the old and new commandments?

[2:7]

John wrote that Christians should obey God. Perhaps John was thinking about the things that the apostles taught, when he wrote this. This is what some scholars think.

The old commandment that John was writing about was Jesus’ command to love other people. However, he says it is also new, perhaps he is telling it again to them.

See: Matthew 22:36-40

See: Command (Commandment); Gospel; Law of Moses;

What are the darkness and the light?

[2:8]

Perhaps John continued to speak about light in order to talk about God. He wanted to say that God always does what is right, and that he always says what is true. He is like light, which makes everyone able to see. This is what some scholars think.

John wrote about darkness in order to talk about sin. The writers of the Scriptures often say that the world is evil, and John himself said this world is “dark.”

John wrote in verse 8 that the darkness is passing away, going away, or disappearing. Perhaps he wanted to say that the gospel is causing people to believe in Jesus. This makes the world less evil, or “dark.” This is what some scholars think. When John wrote about people walking in darkness, perhaps he was thinking about Christians who deliberately sin. Some scholars think so. Or, perhaps John was thinking about non-Christians. These people often live very wrongly. This shows that they are not Christians, and that they are living in darkness. They are very far from Christ.

See: World

Why should Christians love other Christians?

[2:9, 2:10]

John wrote that Christians should love other Christians. He was thinking about this when he wrote the metaphor about light and darkness. People who honor God are walking in the light because they love other Christians. People who do not love other Christians are not living in the right way. They are living as they did before they became Christians. John says that these people are in the darkness. The darkness stops these Christians from knowing that they themselves sin. Some scholars think that John was speaking about Christians who have difficulty loving certain other Christians. John also wrote that Christians are brothers, because they are part of God's family. Families must love other people in their family. Also, Christians must love non-Christians.

See: Matthew 22:39-40

See: Metaphor

Advice to translators: Scripture often speaks about the way a Christian lives as walking. Express this idea in the same way that your local version of 1 John does.

2:12-17

What is the world?

[2:15]

Usually, when the writers of Scripture wrote about “the world,” they were thinking about all of the people of the world. However, sometimes they were thinking about all the evil things of the world. That is, they were thinking about everything and everyone on earth that acts against God.

This is why John wrote that Christians must not love the world. Most of the people in the world do not honor God. They continually sin.

See: James 4:4

See: World

What things do people in this world like?

[2:16]

John wrote about three things that people like in this world. Each of these things is wrong. However, people still want these things.

(1) Lust of the flesh (2) Lust of the eyes (3) Arrogance of life

Perhaps these three things are really the same thing. If this is true, then John wrote these three things because he wanted people to think about the time when Satan persuaded Adam and Eve to sin in the Garden of Eden (see: Genesis 3:6). Adam and Eve proudly disobeyed God when they decided to eat the fruit that they wanted. Perhaps John was thinking about this when he was writing.

However, perhaps John was thinking about how Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness. This is what some other scholars think.

Or, perhaps John was thinking about when Satan rebelled against God (see: Isaiah 14). This is what some other scholars think.

See: World

2:18-25

How many antichrists are there?

[2:18]

Some scholars think that John used the word “antichrists” in two different ways. The first antichrist is a certain person, that is, the devil. He will come to earth and will look like a man. He will try to do the same things that Jesus did. This antichrist will oppose Jesus and his church. The second antichrist is anyone, in general, who opposes Jesus.

See: Antichrist

Who was John speaking about?

[2:19]

Some scholars think that John was writing about Christians in verse 19. These scholars think that some Christians left the larger group of Christians because they did not think in the same way at the larger group of Christians.

However, more scholars think that John was writing about non-Christians in verse 19. When these people left the Christians, they showed everyone that they were not truly Christians. These scholars think that there is a difference between those who say that they are Christians and those who are truly Christians, that is, people who will live together with God forever. Perhaps those who left the church decided to follow the false teachers.

See: Eternal Security; Save (Salvation, Saved from Sins)

What is the anointing of the Holy Spirit?

[2:20]

See: Anoint (Anointing)

Who was John writing about when he wrote "all" in 2:20?

[2:20]

Some scholars think that "all" meant knowing all things or all the things about Jesus that you need to know. Other scholars believe that it is a reference to knowing all of the truth. This can be all of the truth about Jesus or the truth about the false teachers. Still others believe that it is "all" of the people know the truth.

Some scholars think that when John wrote "all," he wanted to say that Christians know all the things they need to know about Jesus. However, other scholars think that John was talking about knowing all of the truth about Jesus or about the false teachers. Still others think that John wanted to say that all Christians know the truth.

2:26-29

How do Christians do what is right?

[2:29]

Scholars think different things about verse 29. Perhaps John wanted to say that Jesus saves Christians only if they live in the right way. Perhaps he wanted to say that if Jesus saved someone, that person would certainly live in the right way. Or perhaps he wanted to say that a person could not live in the right way if Jesus has not saved him. If this is true, then people who do not believe in Jesus sin even when they do good things.

1 John 2:1

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to John and all believers.

Connecting Statement:

John continues to write about fellowship and shows that it is possible because Jesus goes between believers and the Father.

Children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. Alternate translation: "You who are as dear to me as my own children"

I am writing these things

"I am writing this letter"

But if anyone sins

"But when anyone sins." This is something that is likely to happen.

we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the one who is righteous

The word "advocate" here refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "we have Jesus Christ, the one who is righteous, who speaks to the Father and asks him to forgive us"

1 John 2:2

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins

"God is no longer angry with us because Jesus sacrificed his own life for our sins"

1 John 2:3

We know that we have come to know him

"We know that we know him" or "We know that we have a good relationship with him"

if we keep his commandments

"if we obey what he commands"

1 John 2:4

The one who says

"Anyone who says" or "The person who says"

I know God

"I have a good relationship with God"

does not keep

"does not obey" or "disobeys"

his commandments

"what God tells him to do"

the truth is not in him

The truth is spoken of as if it were an object that could be inside the believers. Alternate translation: "he does not believe what God says is true"

1 John 2:5

keeps his word

To keep someone's word here is an idiom for to obey. Alternate translation: "does what God tells him to do"

in him truly the love of God has been perfected

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1)

"the love of God" refers to a person loving God, and

"perfected" represents completely or fully. Alternate

translation: "it is that person who loves God completely" or

2) "the love of God" refers to God loving people, and

"perfected" represents completing its purpose. Alternate

translation: "God's love has achieved its purpose in that person's life"

By this we know that we are in him

The phrase "we are in him" means that the believer has fellowship with God. Alternate translation: "When we obey what God says, we can be certain that we have fellowship with him" or "By this we know that are joined to God"

1 John 2:6

remains in God

To remain in God means to continue to have fellowship with God. Alternate translation: "continues to have fellowship with God" or "stays joined to God"

should himself also walk just as he walked

Conducting one's life is spoken of as if it were walking on a path. Alternate translation: "must live as he lived" or

"should also obey God just as Jesus Christ did"

1 John 2:7

Connecting Statement:

John gives believers basic principles of fellowship—obedience and love.

Beloved, I am

"You people whom I love, I am" or "Dear friends, I am"

I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old

commandment that you have had

"I write to you to love one other, which is not a new thing to do but an old commandment that you have heard." John refers to Jesus's command to love one another.

from the beginning

Here, "beginning" refers to when they decided to follow Christ. Alternate translation: "from when you first believed in Christ"

The old commandment is the word that you heard

"The old commandment is the message that you heard"

1 John 2:8

Yet I am writing a new commandment to you

"But in one way the commandment I write to you is a new commandment"

which is true in Christ and in you

"which is true, as shown in Christ's deeds and your deeds"

the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining

Here "darkness" is a metaphor for "evil," and "light" is a metaphor for "good." Alternate translation: "you are ceasing to do evil and you are doing more and more good"

1 John 2:9

General Information:

Here the word "brother" refers to a fellow Christian.

The one who says

"Anyone who says" or "Someone who claims." This does not refer to a specific person.

he is in the light

Here to be "in the light" is a metaphor for doing what is right. Alternate translation: "he does what is right"

is in the darkness

Here to be "in the darkness" is a metaphor for doing what is evil. Alternate translation: "does what is evil"

1 John 2:10

there is no occasion for stumbling in him

"nothing will cause him to stumble." The word "stumbling" is a metaphor that means to fail spiritually or morally.

Alternate translation: "nothing will cause him to sin" or "he will not fail to do what is pleasing to God"

1 John 2:11

is in the darkness and walks in the darkness

Here "walk" is a metaphor for how a person lives or behaves. Here to be "in the darkness" and "walks in the darkness" mean the same thing. This brings attention to how evil it is to hate a fellow believer. Alternate translation: "does what is evil"

he does not know where he is going

This is a metaphor for the believer who is not living as a Christian should be living. Alternate translation: "he does not know what he should do"

the darkness has blinded his eyes

"the darkness has made him unable to see." Darkness is a metaphor for sin or evil. Alternate translation: "sin has made it impossible for him to understand the truth"

1 John 2:12

General Information:

John explains why he is writing his letter either to different age groups or to believers with differences in maturity. Try to use similar wording for these sentences, as they are written poetically.

you, children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

your sins are forgiven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God forgives your sins"

because of his name

"his name" refers to Christ and who he is. Alternate

translation: "because of what Christ has done for you"

1 John 2:13

I am writing to you, fathers

The word "fathers" here is possibly a metaphor referring to mature believers. Alternate translation: "I am writing to you, mature believers"

you know

"you have a relationship with"

the one who is from the beginning

"the one who has always lived" or "the one who has always existed." It refers either to "Jesus" or to "God the Father."

young men

This possibly refers to those who are no longer new believers but are growing in spiritual maturity. Alternate translation: "young believers"

overcome

The writer is speaking of the believers' refusal to follow Satan and of their frustrating his plans as if it were a matter of conquering him.

1 John 2:14

you are strong

Here "strong" refers not to believers' physical strength, but to their faithfulness to Christ.

the word of God remains in you

"Word of God" here is a metonym for the message from God. The writer refers to the believers' increased faithfulness to Christ and knowledge of him as if he were speaking of God's word existing in them. Alternate translation: "God's message continues to teach you" or "you know the word of God"

1 John 2:15

Do not love the world or

In 2:15-17 the word "world" refers to all the things people want to do that do not honor God. Alternate translation:

"Do not behave like the people in the world who do not honor God, and do not love"

the things that are in the world

"the things that those who dishonor God want"

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him

A person cannot love this world and all that dishonors God and love the Father at the same time.

the love of the Father is not in him

"he does not love the Father"

1 John 2:16

the lust of the flesh

"the strong desire to have sinful physical pleasure"

the lust of the eyes

"the strong desire to have things that we see"

is not from the Father

"does not come from the Father" or "is not how the Father

teaches us to live"

1 John 2:17

are passing away

"pass away" or "will one day not be here"

1 John 2:18

Connecting Statement:

John warns about those who are against Christ.

Children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

it is the last hour

The phrase "the last hour" refers to the time just before Jesus returns. Alternate translation: "Jesus will return soon" many antichrists have come

"there are many people who are against Christ"

have come. By this we know

"have come, and because of this we know" or "have come, and because many antichrists have come, we know"

1 John 2:19

They went out from us

"They left us"

but they were not from us

"but they did not really belong to us anyway" or "but they were not really part of our group in the first place." The reason they were not really part of the group is that they were not believers in Jesus.

For if they had been from us, they would have remained with us

"We know this because they would not have left us if they really had been believers"

1 John 2:20

General Information:

In the Old Testament the word "anointing" referred to pouring oil on a person to set him apart to serve God.

But you have an anointing from the Holy One

John speaks of the Holy Spirit as if he were "an anointing" that the people have received from Jesus. The abstract noun "anointing" can be translated with a verbal phrase.

Alternate translation: "But the Holy One has anointed you" or "But Jesus Christ, the Holy One, has given you his Spirit" the Holy One

This refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "Jesus, the Holy One"

you all know

Your language might allow you to use the abstract noun "knowledge" here. If your language requires you to state what it is that the readers know, be as general as possible. Alternate translation: "you all have knowledge" or "you all know what is true"

1 John 2:21

the truth ... no lie is from the truth

The abstract noun "truth" can be translated as an adjective. Alternate translation: "what is true ... no lie comes from what is true"

1 John 2:22

Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?

"Who is the liar? Anyone who denies that Jesus is the Christ." John used a question to emphasize who liars are.

Alternate translation: "The one who denies that Jesus is the

Christ is the liar"

denies that Jesus is the Christ

"refuses to say that Jesus is the Christ" or "says that Jesus is not the Messiah"

denies the Father and the Son

"refuses to say the truth about the Father and the Son" or "rejects the Father and the Son."

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

1 John 2:23

has the Father

"belongs to the Father"

confesses the Son

"speaks the truth about the Son"

has the Father

"belongs to the Father"

1 John 2:24

General Information:

Here the word "you" is plural and refers to the people to whom John wrote, as well as all believers. The word "he" is emphatic and refers to Christ.

Connecting Statement:

John reminds believers to continue in what they have first heard.

As for you

This marks John's telling them how they should live as followers of Jesus instead of how those against Christ live.

let what you have heard from the beginning remain in you

"remember and believe what you have heard from the beginning." How they heard it, what they heard, and what "the beginning" means can be made explicit: Alternate translation: "continue to trust what we have taught you about Jesus just as you have trusted since you first became believers"

what you have heard from the beginning

"what we taught you about Jesus when you first became believers"

If what you heard from the beginning remains in you

The word "remains" is talking about relationship, not salvation. Alternate translation: "If you continue to trust what we first taught you"

also remain in the Son and in the Father

To "remain in" means to continue to have fellowship with. See how you translated a similar phrase to "remain in" in [1

John 2:6]

1 John 2:25

This is the promise he gave to us—eternal life.

"This is what he promised to give us—eternal life" or "He has promised to cause us to live forever"

life

The word "life" throughout this letter refers to more than physical life. Here "life" refers to being alive spiritually. See how you translated this in [1 John 1:1]

1 John 2:26

those who would lead you astray

Here "lead you astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate

translation: "those who want to deceive you" or "those who

want to make you believe lies about Jesus Christ"

1 John 2:27

Connecting Statement:

Starting in verse 29, John introduces the idea of being born into God's family. The previous verses show that believers continue to sin; this part shows that believers also have the new nature, which cannot sin. It continues to show how believers can recognize each other.

As for you

This marks John's telling them something else about how they should live as followers of Jesus instead of following those who are against Christ.

the anointing that you received from him remains in you

John speaks of the Holy Spirit as if he were "the anointing" that the people have received from Jesus and remains in them. The abstract noun "anointing" can be translated with a verbal phrase. See how you translated "anointing" in [1 John 2:20]

as his anointing teaches you everything

Here the word "everything" is a generalization. Alternate translation: "because his anointing teaches you everything"

that you need to know" or "because his Spirit teaches you everything that you need to know"

1 John 2:28

Now

This word is used here to mark a new part of the letter.

Now, children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

he appears

"we see him"

boldness

having no fear

not be ashamed before him

"not be ashamed in his presence"

at his coming

"when he comes again"

1 John 2:29

has been born from him

"has been born of God" or "is God's child"

Chapter 3

1 John 3 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Children of God

God created all people, but people can only become children of God by believing in Jesus. (See: believe)

Cain

Cain was a son of the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve. He was jealous of his brother and murdered him.

Readers may not know who Cain was if they have not read Genesis. It may help them if you explain this to them.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"To know"

The verb "to know" is used in two different ways in this chapter. Sometimes it is used about knowing a fact, as in 3:2, 3:5, and 3:19. Sometimes it means to experience and understand someone or something, as in 3:1, 3:6, 3:16, and 3:20. Some languages have different words for these different meanings.

"He who keeps God's commandments remains in him, and God remains in him"

Many scholars believe this is about remaining in God's will and is not about being saved. (See: eternity and save)

Links:

[1 John 3:1 Notes](#)

1 John 3

3: 1-3

Who are the children of God?

[3:1]

John wrote that Christians are children of God. However, Christians are not the physical children of God. That is, God did not give birth to their bodies. He did not give birth to them as a mother gives birth to her children. Instead, Christians have been born a second time. John wrote that they are born "from" God (see: 1 John 2:29).

When John wrote about God, he showed that a person must be born a second time (see: John 3). If a person is not born a second time, John wrote that he is a child of the devil (see: 3:10). But if God gives birth to a person a second time, that person is at peace with God. He is a friend of God.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

How will Christians be like Jesus when he returns to the earth?

[3:2]

In 3:2, John showed that after a person starts to believe in Jesus, he begins to act more like Jesus. He begins to live more rightly, because he wants to honor God. God changes him little by little to be more like Jesus. God will continue to change him as long as he is alive in this world. When Jesus returns to this world, God will change the Christians to be like Jesus.

God will unite them completely with Jesus. They will not sin anymore. They will no longer suffer or have pain. Nothing bad can hurt them anymore.

3:4-10

What is lawlessness?

[3:4]

In Scripture, God told his people to obey the laws or rules that he made for them. The devil and sinners work against God, so they are against the law, lawless, without the law, or outside of the law. When someone works against God, that is, they take a side against God and side with Satan. John said that they are “lawless.” The false teachers took sides for Satan and against God.

See: Law of Moses

Advice to translators: Translate “lawless” however your local version translates this idea.

When John wrote about sinning again and again, whom was he thinking about?

[3:6]

When John wrote about sinning again and again, he was thinking about the false teachers and anyone else who does the work of the devil instead of the work of Jesus.

See: 1 John 1:8, 10; Romans 7:20

Advice to translators: Many translations of 3:4 and 1 John 2:29 can appear to contradict each other. This note is an attempt to clarify this apparent contradiction. Not all translation will need this clarification.

3:11-17

Why did Cain kill Abel?

[3:12]

The book of Genesis showed that Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam and Eve. It also showed that Cain murdered Abel. It did not say why Cain killed him. It only said that God refused to accept what Cain sacrificed to him. Then Cain became angry at his brother (see: Gen 4). John showed how Cain was different from Christians, those who follow Jesus and honor him. They are different from those who follow the devil, that is, those who do not honor God.

Those who belong to the devil, they like to sin. This is why they hate those who live rightly, that is, those who want to honor God.

Children of the devil do evil things because they want to insult God, and because they hate God's children. John wrote that anyone who hates another person is the same as one who murders him. He wrote this because often people murder others because they hate them.

Why does the world hate Christians?

[3:13]

Frequently, people who do not believe in Jesus go so far as to hate Christians. When someone sins because he wishes to do, he then wants to sin more. If he hates another person, there is nothing more to do than kill him. This is what happened to Cain.

See: Sin; World

Advice to translators: In Scripture, the writers often write the word “world” when they want to speak about all of the sinful people in the world. Also, Scripture shows that a person can sin more and more unless he repents.

When John wrote “anyone,” who was he thinking of?

[3:15]

John wrote that “anyone” who hates another person would not get to live together with God in heaven forever. Some scholars believe that Christians cannot murder another person. This is because God makes them new when they believe in Jesus. Others believe that Christians can still commit very evil sins. Murder is an example of this. However, when Christians do this, they are not doing the things that God wants them to do.

See: Abide

3:18-24

Why did John write that Christians belong to the “truth”?

[3:19]

Perhaps when John wrote that Christians belong to the “truth (αληθεια/#g225) or are from the truth, he wanted to say that they believe true things about God. This is another way of saying that Christians belong to God. They are different from those who belong to the devil. This is what some scholars think. However, perhaps John wanted to say that Christians obey God. It is those who obey God, they believe the right things about God and doing the right things.

Advice to translators: Translate “heart” the way your local version of 1 John translates it.

What is the heart?

[3:19]

When John wrote about the “heart” he was thinking that Christians know when they have sinned. They know this in their heart. The Jews thought that the heart was where they knew this. John wrote that Christians' hearts can sometimes

condemn them. He wanted to say that Christians know that they deserve for God to punish them for having sinned. Perhaps John wanted to say that God wants Christians to completely obey him, even more than they think in their hearts that they should obey him. Some scholars think this.

However, more scholars think that John wanted to say that God knows Christians better than they know themselves. God knows the things that Christians really want to do. He knows how much they want to obey him. Therefore, only God can comfort Christians.

When John wrote that God gives Christians what they pray for, what did he want to say?

Here John wrote that Christians must obey what God commands. Christians should do the things that God desires.

Therefore, Christians should ask for things that God wants. When they ask him for these things, God gives them these things. What does the Holy Spirit do for Christians?

Perhaps John wants to say that the Holy Spirit allows Christians to know that they will live with God forever. This is what some scholars think. Or, perhaps John wants to say that the Holy Spirit allows believers to know that God is with them now. This is because Christians cannot know this on their own, without the Holy Spirit making it known to them.

See: Eternal Security; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

1 John 3:1

Connecting Statement:

In this part John tells the believers about their new nature, which cannot sin.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us

"Think about how our Father loves us so much"

we should be called children of God

"the Father called us his children"

children of God

Here this means people who belong to God through faith in Jesus.

For this reason, the world does not know us, because it did not know him

Possible meanings are 1) "Because we are the children of God and because the world did not know God, it does not know us" or 2) "Because the world did not know God, it does not know us."

the world does not know us, because it did not know him

Here "the world" refers to people who do not honor God.

What the world did not know can be made explicit:

Alternate translation: "those who do not honor God do not know that we belong to God, because they did not know God"

1 John 3:2

Beloved, we are

"You people whom I love, we are" or "Dear friends, we are."

See how you translated this in 1 John 2:7.

it has not yet been revealed

This can be stated in active form: Alternate translation:

"God has not yet revealed"

revealed

This can mean here either "told," "demonstrated," or "shown."

1 John 3:3

Everyone who has this hope in him

The word "him" refers to Christ. Having hope in Christ means expecting that because of Christ, what is hoped for will happen. Alternate translation: "Everyone who has this hope because of Christ" or "Everyone who trusts Christ to fulfill this hope"

who has this hope in him

The phrase "this hope" refers to the hope of being like Christ, as mentioned in the previous verse. Here to have hope is to confidently expect something good. Alternate

translation: "who confidently expects in Christ to become like Christ" or "who confidently waits for Christ to cause him to become like Christ"

purifies himself just as he is pure

"keeps himself pure because Christ is pure"

1 John 3:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 John 3:5

Christ was revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Christ appeared" or "the Father revealed Christ"

1 John 3:6

remains in him

To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]

No one ... has seen him or known him

John uses the words "seen" and "known" to say that the person who sins has never met Christ in a spiritual sense. A person behaving according to his sinful nature cannot know Christ. Alternate translation: "No one ... has ever truly believed in him"

1 John 3:7

Children, do not let

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

do not let anyone lead you astray

Here "lead you astray" is a metaphor for persuading someone to believe something that is not true. Alternate translation: "do not let anyone fool you" or "do not let anyone deceive you"

The one who does righteousness is righteous, just as Christ is righteous

"He who does what is right is pleasing to God just as Christ is pleasing to God."

1 John 3:8

is from the devil

"belongs to the devil" or "is like the devil"

from the beginning

This refers to the very earliest time of creation before humans first sinned. Alternate translation: "since the earliest time of creation"

the Son of God was revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"God revealed his Son"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

1 John 3:9

Connecting Statement:

For now John ends this section on the new birth and the new nature which cannot sin.

Whoever has been born from God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"Whoever God has made his child"

God's seed

This speaks of the Holy Spirit, whom God gives to believers and who makes them able to resist sin and do what pleases God as if he were a physical seed that is planted in the earth and grows. Alternate translation: "the Holy Spirit"

he has been born of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"God has given him new spiritual life" or "he is a child of God"

1 John 3:10

In this the children of God and children of the devil are revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are"

Whoever does not do what is righteous is not from God, neither is the one who does not love his brother

"whoever does not do what is righteous is not from God; whoever does not love his brother is also not from God" or "those who are from God do what is right, and those who are from God love their brothers"

his brother

Here "brother" means fellow Christians.

1 John 3:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 John 3:12

General Information:

Cain and Abel were the first sons of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman.

We should not be like Cain

"We should not do as Cain did"

brother

This refers to Cain's younger brother Abel.

Why did he kill him? Because

John uses a question to teach his audience. This can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "He killed him because"

his works were evil and his brother's righteous

The words "works were" are also understood in the second phrase. Alternate translation: "Cain's works were evil and his brother's works were righteous" or "Cain did evil things and his brother did what was right"

1 John 3:13

my brothers

"my fellow believers." John's readers were both male and female.

if the world hates you

Here the word "world" refers to the people who do not honor God. Alternate translation: "if those who do not honor God hate you who do honor God"

1 John 3:14

we have passed out of death into life

The conditions of living and of being dead are spoken of as if they were physical locations that a person could leave from and go to. The abstract nouns "life" and "death" can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "we are no longer spiritually dead but are spiritually alive" life

The word "life" throughout this letter refers to more than physical life. Here "life" refers to being alive spiritually. See how you translated this in [1 John 1:1]

remains in death

"is still spiritually dead"

1 John 3:15

Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer

John speaks of a person who hates another believer as if he were a murderer. Since people commit murder because they hate other people, God considers anyone who hates to be as guilty as someone who kills a person. Alternate translation: "Whoever hates another believer is as guilty as someone who kills a person"

no murderer has eternal life residing in him

"Eternal life" does refer to believers living forever after they have died, but it is also the power that God gives believers in this life to help them to stop sinning and to do what please him. Here eternal life is spoken of as if it were a person that could live in someone. Alternate translation: "a murderer does not have the power of spiritual life"

1 John 3:16

Christ laid down his life for us

This expression means "Christ willingly gave his life for us" or "Christ willingly died for us"

1 John 3:17

the world's goods

material possessions like money, food, or clothing

sees his brother in need

"realizes a fellow believer needs help"

shuts up his heart of compassion from him

Here "heart" is a metonym for "thoughts" or "emotions."

Here "shuts up his heart of compassion" is a metaphor for no longer showing someone compassion. Alternate translation: "does not show him compassion" or "does not willingly help him"

how does the love of God remain in him?

John uses a question to teach his audience. Alternate translation: "God's love is not in him"

1 John 3:18

My children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

let us not love in word or in tongue, but in actions and truth

The phrases "in word" and "in tongue" both refer to what a person says. Alternate translation: "do not just say that you love people, but show that you truly love people by helping them"

in actions and truth

The words "let us love" are understood here. Alternate translation: "let us love in actions and truth"

1 John 3:19

Connecting Statement:

Here John probably means that believers' ability to love God and each other sincerely (1 John 3:18) is a sign that their new life has indeed originated from the truth about Christ.

we are from the truth

People living according to the truth is spoken of as they were "from the truth." Alternate translation: "we are living according the way Jesus taught us" or "we belong to him who is true"

we assure our hearts

The word "heart" here refers to feelings. Alternate translation: "we do not feel guilty"

1 John 3:20

if our hearts condemn us

Here "hearts" is a metonym for people's thoughts or consciences. Here "hearts condemn us" is a metaphor for feeling guilty. Alternate translation: "if we know that we have sinned and as a result feel guilty"

God is greater than our hearts

Here "hearts" is metonym for people's thoughts or consciences. For God to be "greater than our hearts" means that God knows more than a person. Therefore he can judge things better than a person can. The effect of this truth is probably that God is more merciful than our

consciences would suppose. Alternate translation: "God knows more than we do"

1 John 3:21

Beloved, if

"You people whom I love, if" or "Dear friends, if." See how you translated this in 1 John 2:7.

1 John 3:22

do the things that are pleasing before him

Here "before him" represents God's opinion or what he thinks about something. Alternate translation: "do the things that are pleasing to him" or "do what pleases him"

1 John 3:23

This is his commandment: that we should believe ... just as he gave us this commandment

The abstract noun "commandment" can be stated as "command." Alternate translation: "This is what God commands us to do: Believe ... just as he commanded us to do"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 John 3:24

remains in him, and God remains in him

To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]

he remains in us

To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. Alternate translation: "God continues to have fellowship with us"

Chapter 4

1 John 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Spirit

This word "spirit" is used in different ways in this chapter. Sometimes the word "spirit" refers to spiritual beings. Sometimes it refers to the character of something. For example "the spirit of the antichrist," "the spirit of truth," and "the spirit of error" refer to what is typical of the antichrist, truth, and error. "The Spirit" (written with a capital "S") and "the Spirit of God" refer to God. (See: antichrist)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Loving God

If people love God, they should show it in the way they live and the way they treat other people. Doing this may assure us that God has saved us and that we belong to him, but loving others does not save us. (See: save)

Links:

[1 John 4:1 Notes](#)

1 John 4

4:1-6

How do Christians test people who teach about God?

[4:1]

Some people teach others the truth about God, but other people teach false things about him. John did not want the Christians to accept what everyone teaches about God. Instead, Christians must find out who is teaching the truth, and who is teaching wrong things.

John wanted to say that whenever a person teaches others about God, either the Holy Spirit is showing him what to say, or Satan is showing him. Therefore, believers must try to find out who is showing that teacher what to say.

Satan does not want to say that Jesus came from God. Also, Satan does not want to say that Jesus was a human being, that Jesus is the Son of God, or that Jesus himself is God.

John wrote that Jesus Christ has come “in the flesh.” Perhaps this means that Jesus came from God and was a human being in this world.

Satan did not want to say this. Therefore, if a teacher refused to say this, then the believers knew that Satan has shown these false teachers what to say. Only the Holy Spirit could have truly taught people about God. It is the Holy Spirit and angels from God who speak the truth about God, because they want to honor him.

This is not the only test Scripture gives to determine whether something is from God. The Old Testament talked about how to test the messages that false prophets said that they got from God (see: Deuteronomy 13:2-3). In addition to this, John also said that spirits from God would teach the same things the apostles taught, that is the gospel. Those who reject God will be unable to teach the true, biblical gospel.

See: 1 Corinthians 12:3

See: Gospel

When John wrote about the antichrist, who was he thinking about?

[4:3]

When John wrote 4:3, he was not thinking about one person. However, in 4:4, John was perhaps thinking about a person whom he called the antichrist. All of these persons came from the devil. They follow the way of the devil. They all try to stop Jesus from working on the earth.

However, some scholars think that in 4:4 John was not thinking about any one person. They do not think that the antichrist is a person who will come later. Instead, they think that John was writing about the devil. It is the devil who can do evil in this world. It is the devil who tells people to fight against those who believe in Jesus.

The Spirit of God is different from the spirit of the antichrist. At the beginning of 4:2, the Greek word “spirit” means the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person. However, the “spirit” of the antichrist is not a person, but rather the power of the devil. It means everything that fights against Jesus.

See: John 12:31; 1 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2

What is the Greek text of 4:3?

[4:3]

The oldest copies of 4:3 do not have the words “in the flesh (σάρξ/#g4561)”, so scholars think that someone added them much later. That person added them in order to explain what John wanted to say. In this way, he made this verse like 2 John 1:7 and 4:2. In those verses, John wanted to say that Jesus was truly a human being.

Most translators now do not translate these words in this verse.

4:7-12

When John wrote, “Everyone who loves is born of God,” what did he want to say?

[4:7]

John wanted to say that if anyone does not love other people, he does not know that God loves mankind. Also, he cannot be a friend of God. So he shows everyone that he is not a Christian.

However, John did not want to say that anyone who loves other people is a Christian. But he did think that Christians should love each other. John commanded them to do this. Some scholars think that 4:7 is the main idea of John’s whole letter.

When John wrote that Jesus is God’s one and only son, what did he want to say?

[4:9]

John wrote that Jesus is God’s “only” or “unique” Son. He wanted to say that Jesus is different from all Christians, who are also God’s children (see: 1 John 3:2). God made believers his children when he gave birth to them a second time. However, the Greek word “one and only” showed that Jesus is different. This is because he has always been God. He has always been the Son of God, because God the Father never gave him birth, that is, the Son of God has always existed, even before he became a human being.

How did God the Father send God the Son?

[4:10]

God the Son has the same power as God the Father, and he is just as great as the Father. Even so, God the Father sent the Son into this world (see: 4:9). Jesus is as great as his Father, but he came into the world when his Father told him to.

See: John 3:16

See: Incarnation; Trinity

Has no one seen God?

[4:12]

John wrote that no one has seen God. John wanted to say that no one can look at God and continue to live. No one who sins can live beside God. He will die if he sees God. God will destroy anyone who tries to go near him (see: Exodus 33:20). It is true that Jesus is God, but he is also a human being. When people saw Jesus, Jesus was hiding most of his power. He was hiding most of what God is, so that people could be with him.

In the Old Testament, many people wrote about this. When John was writing this letter, perhaps he was thinking about people who said they had seen God directly. John wanted to say that no one can see God now. A time will come when

believers will be able to see him.

4:13-16

Can a Christian know that God has saved him?

[4:13]

Perhaps John wanted to say here that Christians can know that they will one day live forever in heaven with God. They can know this because they have the Holy Spirit in them.

However, some scholars think that a Christian, one who trusts in Jesus now, can one day reject him. If he does that, they say that Jesus will refuse to save him any longer.

See: Ephesians 1:14

See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Is the Holy Spirit God?

[4:13]

In 4:13, Paul said that God “remains” or “abides” within Christians. It is God who comes to live in a Christian when he believes in Jesus. In Scripture, it is the Holy Spirit who lives within all Christians (see: 1Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19). The Holy Spirit is God.

See: Abide; Trinity; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

What must a believer accept about Jesus?

[4:15]

In 4:2, John wrote that spirits must accept that Jesus was truly a human being. If they do not say this, this shows that they do not come from God. In 4:15, John wrote that Christians must accept that Jesus is the Son of God. If a person does not accept this, he does not understand who Jesus is.

In this chapter, John wanted people to believe what is true about Christ, that is He is both fully God and fully human. Christians must believe both.

See: Son of God

Who should Christians “remain in this love” towards?

[4:16]

Christians should certainly “remain” or “abide” in love (see: 4:16). That is, Christians should continue to love, but John did not say whom they should love. Perhaps he wanted to say that they should continue to love other Christians. However, fewer scholars think that John was saying that Christians must remain or continue to love Jesus.

See : Abide

4:17-21

How can a Christian have confidence at the time when God will judge everyone?

[4:17]

When John wrote about confidence, boldness, or having a lack of fear, he was thinking about the time when God will judge everyone. Christians who honor God do not need to worry about this happening. They should look forward to Jesus returning to the earth. However, anyone who does not honor God should fear Jesus returning to the earth.

The Jews and the first Christians both believed that God would judge everyone at a future time. Some scholars think that John wanted to say that every Christian will see Jesus. At that time, every Christian will have to explain to him why he lived the way he did in this world. The place where this will happen is the Judgment Seat of God (see: 2 Corinthians 5:10). It is at this time that Jesus will give a reward to every Christian for how he lived in this world.

If Christians obey what John says they should do, they should not fear Jesus when he judges them.

However, other scholars think that John is not talking about a time when Jesus will judge the Christians. Christians do not need to fear that time, because God has punished Jesus for their sins. Instead, Jesus will judge only those who do not believe in him. He will separate them from the Christians. Then he will receive the Christians to himself.

God punished Jesus for Christians because he loved them and promised that he would save them. This is why Christians should trust that Jesus will receive them. God always keeps his promises. Truly, if a person is afraid of Jesus, perhaps this shows that this person is not a Christian at all.

See: 1 John 2:28

See: Day of Judgment

Advice to translators: Scripture talks about how a Christians should not fear God, but also that they should fear God.

However, there are two different meanings of the English word “fear.” Christians should not be scared of God, but they should want to respect God and not want to be punished by God.

1 John 4:1

General Information:

John gives a warning against false teachers who teach against Christ's having had a human body and teachers who talk the way those who love the world talk.

Beloved, do not believe

"You people whom I love, do not believe" or "Dear friends, do not believe." See how you translated this in 1 John 2:7. do not believe every spirit

Here, the word "spirit" refers to a spiritual power or being

that gives a person a message or prophecy. Alternate translation: "do not trust every prophet who claims to have a message from a spirit"

test the spirits

Here, the word "spirits" refers to a spiritual power or being that gives a person a message or prophecy. Alternate translation: "think carefully about what the prophet says"

1 John 4:2

has come in the flesh

Here "flesh" represents the human body. Alternate translation: "has come as a human being" or "has come in a physical body"

1 John 4:3

This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming, and now is already in the world

"These are prophets opposed to Christ, whom you have heard are coming, and now are already in the world"

1 John 4:4

God, children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

have overcome them

"have not believed the false teachers"

the one who is in you is

"God, who is in you, is"

the one who is in the world

Here "the one" refers to the devil. Here "the world" represents the people of the world. Alternate translation: "the devil who is in the people of the world"

1 John 4:5

They are from the world

"They" refers to the false teachers. "From the world" is in contrast to being from God. "The world" represents all things that oppose God. Alternate translation: "They are of the world"

therefore what they say is from the world

Here "from the world" is in contrast to being from God.

Here "the world" represents all things that oppose God.

Alternate translation: "therefore what the false teachers say is of the world"

and the world listens to them

The words "the world" are a metonym for people who do not obey God. Alternate translation: "so the people who do not obey God listen to them"

1 John 4:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 John 4:7

General Information:

John continues to teach about the new nature. He teaches his readers about God's love and loving one another.

Beloved, let us love

"You people whom I love, let us love" or "Dear friends, let us love." See how you translated "Beloved" in 1 John 2:7.

let us love one another

"believers are to love other believers"

and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God

"and because those who love their fellow believers have

become God's children and know him"

for love is from God

"because God causes us to love each other"

born from God

This is a metaphor which means someone has a relationship to God like a child to his father.

1 John 4:8

The person who does not love does not know God, for God is love

The phrase "God is love" a metaphor which means "the character of God is love." Alternate translation: "Those who do not love their fellow believers do not know God, because the character of God is to love people"

1 John 4:9

Because of this ... among us, that God has sent his only Son

"Because of this ... among us: God has sent his only Son."

The phrase "Because of this" refers to the phrase "that God has sent his only Son."

the love of God was revealed among us

The noun "love" can be translated as a verb. This phrase can be made active. Alternate translation: "God showed that he loves us"

so that we would live because of him

"to enable us to live eternally because of what Jesus did"

1 John 4:10

In this is love: not that

"The true demonstration of love was not that" or "This is true love: not that

he sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins

By dying on the cross as a sacrifice, Christ satisfied God's wrath against our sin. The phrase "atoning sacrifice" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "he sent his Son to be the sacrifice that satisfied his wrath against our sins"

1 John 4:11

Beloved, if

"You people whom I love, if" or "Dear friends, if." See how you translated this in 1 John 2:7.

if God so loved us

"since God loved us in this way"

we also should love one another

"believers are to love other believers"

1 John 4:12

God remains in us

To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]

his love is perfected in us

"God's love is complete in us"

1 John 4:13

we remain in him and he in us

To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]

and he in us

The word "remains" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and he remains in us"

By this we know ... us, because he has given

Your translation may be clearer if you omit either "by this" or "because." Alternate translation: "We know ... us because

he gave" or "By this we know ... us: he gave"

because he has given us some of his Spirit

"because he gave us his Spirit" or "because he has put his Holy Spirit in us." This phrase, however, does not imply that God has less of his Spirit after he has given us some.

1 John 4:14

Also, we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world

"And we apostles have seen the Son of God and tell everyone that God the Father has sent his Son to save people on this earth"

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

1 John 4:15

Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God

"Anyone who says the truth about Jesus, that he is the Son of God"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

God remains in him and he in God

To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]

and he in God

The word "remains" is understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "and he remains in God" (See: Ellipsis)

1 John 4:16

God is love

This is a metaphor which means "the character of God is love." See how you translated this in [1 John 4:8]

the one who remains in this love

"those who continue to love others"

remains in God, and God remains in him

To remain in someone means to continue to have fellowship with him. See how you translated "remains in God" in [1 John 2:6]

1 John 4:17

Because of this, this love has been made perfect among us, so that we will have confidence

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1)

"Because of this" refers back to [1 John 4:16]

this love has been made perfect among us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God has made his love for us complete"

because as he is, just so are we in this world

"because the relationship that Jesus has with God is the same relationship we have with God in this world"

1 John 4:18

Instead, perfect love throws out fear

Here "love" is described as a person with the power to remove fear. God's love is perfect. Alternate translation:

"Instead, when our love is complete, we are no longer afraid"

because fear has to do with punishment

"because we would be afraid only if we thought that he would punish us"

But the one who fears has not been made perfect in love

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"But when a person is afraid that God will punish him, his love is not complete"

1 John 4:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 John 4:20

hates his brother

"hates a fellow believer"

the one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen

If two negative statements in a row are confusing, this can be translated differently. Alternate translation: "the one who hates his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen"

1 John 4:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 5

1 John 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Children born from God

When people believe in Jesus, God makes them his children and gives them eternal life. (See: believe)

Christian living

People who believe in Jesus should obey God's commands and love his children.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

A sin that results in death

This seems to refer to behaviors that will result in a person experiencing spiritual death, that is, to be separated from God forever. (See: death)

"the whole world lies in the power of the evil one"

The phrase "the evil one" refers to Satan. God has allowed him to rule the world, but ultimately God is in control over everything. God keeps his children safe from the evil one. (See: satan)

Links:

[1 John 5:1 Notes](#)

1 John 5

5:1-5

What must Christians believe about Jesus?

[5:1]

John wrote many things about Jesus. In 1 John 4:2, John wrote that Jesus was a true human being. If anyone does not believe this, he is not truly a Christian. He has rejected Jesus. In this passage, John continued to write about Jesus. John said that Christians must also believe Jesus is the messiah. Jesus is the one whom God had promised to send to Israel. Jesus is the one who will deliver Christians.

See: Messiah (Christ)

Why did John write the metaphor about children?

[5:1]

John used a metaphor to describe Christians. He said that Christians were children. However, he was not writing about children born to their mother and father. Instead, John wanted to say that when anyone believes in Jesus, the Holy Spirit gives that person new life. When this happens, a person is “born” a second time and God becomes that person’s new “father.” God had already created that person, but now for the first time he is that person’s father.

Because all Christians are children of God, they are brothers and sisters to each other. God is father to all Christians, and he loves all of them the same. Because of this, all Christians should love each other.

See: Born Again (New Life, Regeneration)

How does John use “overcomes”?

[5:4]

In Scripture, Christians are described as having won something. This occurs when they believe in Jesus. They have “overcome,” “conquered,” or “defeated” (νικάω/#g3528) the world. This is a metaphor about how Christians have defeated Satan. Satan does not want people to believe in Jesus. These forces are at work on the earth. Why did John write that Christians “have overcome” the world?

John wrote that Christians have “overcome or defeated” (νικάω/#g3528) the world. When John wrote “the world,” he was thinking about all the people who love to do evil and who reject Jesus. Perhaps he was also thinking about Satan, because Satan is the one who tries to get people to sin. Christians defeat Satan when they trust in Jesus and obey him. This is also what John was thinking about when he wrote that Christians overcome the world.

See: 1 John 2:13-14, 4:4

See: World

5:6-12

Why did John write water and blood?

[5:6]

John wrote water and blood. John spoke about these things to make people think about what Jesus did while he was on the earth. Water and blood represented what Jesus did while he was on the earth. John the Baptist baptized Jesus in water. This is when Jesus began to do the work God sent him to do. When Jesus died on the cross, he bled, so the blood represented his death.

Other scholars think that John wrote “water and blood” because false teachers did not believe that Jesus was an actual human being. John said this because people have both water and blood in their bodies.

See: Messiah (Christ); Baptize (Baptism)

Advice to translators: This may or may not be an issue for people in your local context. Feel free to omit this information if it would not be helpful to the local church.

What did John actually write in 5:7 and 5:8?

[5:7, 5:8]

In some old Greek copies of this letter, 5:7 and 5:8 have more words than in other copies of this letter. In other words, these two verses are longer in these copies. The longer verses have the words “God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

However, in most old copies of 1 John, 5:7 and 5:8 are shorter because they do not have these words. Today, when people translate this letter, they usually do not translate these words. But some people translate them and put them inside square brackets ([...]) to show that these words are not in the oldest copies of the letter.

Advice to translators: This may or may not be an issue for people in your local context. Feel free to omit this information if it would not be helpful to the local church.

Who is the Spirit of truth?

[5:7]

See: 1 John 4:6

5:13-17

When does God give Christians the things they ask him for?

[5:14]

When Christians pray to God, he gives them what they ask him for if:

(1) They pray for things that he wants to give them (2) They pray for things that God wants to help them with.

However, God does not give Christians everything they ask for.

See: Will of God

When John wrote about sins leading to death, what was he writing about?

[5:16]

Perhaps when John wrote about sins not "resulting in" or "leading to" death, he was writing about sins that can cause a person to die if he commits them. This is because God punishes that person immediately. Some scholars think this.

Other scholars think that John was writing about sins that God will punish by putting the sinner far away from himself forever. This is what the Scripture writers often call death. However, these scholars do not think that a Christian can sin in this way. People who sin in this way commit the sin that God will not forgive (see: Matthew 12:21-32; Mark 3:28-29; Luke 12:10).

See: John 17:9; Romans 6:23; James 5:19-20

5:18-21

How did John end this letter?

[5:18, 5:19, 5:20, 5:21]

Many scholars think that in these final verses John wanted people to think about everything he just wrote. Therefore, he said the same things in the strongest.

Did John write about people who sin many times, or was he writing about people who sin only one time?

[5:18]

John may have written about people who sin many times or people who sin only one time. Some people may have asked if Christians are able to live without sinning. All Christians can live without sinning, but no Christian does.

Some scholars think that Christians cannot keep doing the same sin many times. Perhaps this is what John wanted to say. Many translators think this, so this is how they translate this verse. Other scholars think that John wrote about even one sin.

Advice to translators: Many translators think that John wants to say that anyone born from God does not continue to sin or make a habit of sinning. Other translations think that John "sin" without saying anything else. This content may need to be adapted to follow your local translation.

What are idols?

[5:21]

Idols are false gods. Often people made statues or drawings that represented those false gods. In ancient times, most people worshiped false gods instead of Yahweh, the God of Israel.

John taught that if a person worshipped anything other than the true God, he worshipped an idol. This is because when a person sins, he is not obeying God; he is obeying something else.

When John wrote that the Christians should keep themselves from idols, perhaps he wanted to tell them not to sin, or perhaps he wanted to tell them not to worship actual idols.

See: Idolatry (Idol)

1 John 5:1

General Information:

John continues to teach his readers about God's love and the love believers are to have because they have this new nature from God.

is born from God

"is a child of God"

1 John 5:2

This is how we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and obey his commandments.

"When we love God and do what he commands, then we know that we love his children"

1 John 5:3

For this is love for God: that we keep his commandments

"Because when we do what he commands, that is true love for God"

his commandments are not burdensome

"what he commands is not difficult"

burdensome

"heavy" or "crushing" or "difficult"

1 John 5:4

everyone who is born from God overcomes

"all children of God overcome"

overcomes the world

"has victory over the world," "succeeds against the world," or "refuses to do the evil things unbelievers do"

the world

This passage uses "the world" to refer to all the sinful people and the evil systems in the world. Alternate translation: "everything in the world that is against God"

And this is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith

"And this is what gives us the power to resist whatever would lead us to sin against God: our faith" or "And it is our faith that gives us the power to resist whatever would lead us to sin against God"

1 John 5:5

Who is the one who overcomes the world?

John used this question to introduce something he wanted to teach. Alternate translation: "I will tell you who overcomes the world:"

The one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God
This does not refer to a specific person but to anyone who believes this. Alternate translation: "Anyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

1 John 5:6

Connecting Statement:

John teaches about Jesus Christ and what God said about him.

This is the one who came by water and blood: Jesus Christ

"Jesus Christ is the one who came by water and blood."

Here "water" is probably a metonym for the baptism of Jesus, and "blood" stands for Jesus's death on the cross.

Alternate translation: "God showed that Jesus Christ is his son at Jesus's baptism and his death on the cross"

He came not only by water, but also by water and blood

Here "water" is probably a metonym for the baptism of Jesus, and "blood" stands for Jesus's death on the cross.

Alternate translation: "God did not show us Jesus was his son just through his baptism, but through his baptism and his death on the cross"

1 John 5:7

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 John 5:8

General Information:

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1 John 5:9

If we receive the testimony of men

The idiom to "receive the testimony" means to believe what another person testifies concerning something that he has seen. The abstract noun "testimony" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "If we believe what men testify" or "If we believe what men say about what they have seen"

the testimony of God is greater

the testimony of God is more important and more reliable

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 John 5:10

Anyone who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself

"Whoever believes in Jesus knows for sure Jesus is the Son of God"

has made him out to be a liar

"has called God a liar"

because he has not believed the testimony that God has given concerning his Son

"because he has not believed that God has told the truth about his Son"

1 John 5:11

And the testimony is this

"This is what God says"

life

The word "life" throughout this letter refers to more than physical life. Here "life" refers to being alive spiritually. See how you translated this in [1 John 1:1]

this life is in his Son

"this life is through his Son" or "we will live forever if we are joined with his Son" or "we will live forever if we are united with his Son"

Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 John 5:12

The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life

Being in a close relationship to the Son is spoken of as having the Son. Alternate translation: "He who believes in the Son of God has eternal life. He who does not believe in the Son of God does not have eternal life"

1 John 5:13

General Information:

This begins the end of John's letter. He tells his readers the last purpose for his letter and gives them some final teachings.

these things

"this letter"

to you who believe in the name of the Son of God

Here "name" is a metonym for the Son of God. Alternate translation: "to you who trust in the Son of God"

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

1 John 5:14

this is the confidence we have before him, that

The abstract noun "confidence" can be stated as "confident."

Alternate translation: "we are confident in God's presence because we know that"

if we ask anything according to his will

"if we ask for the things that God desires"

1 John 5:15

we know that we have whatever we have asked of him

"we know that we will receive that for which we have asked God"

1 John 5:16

his brother

"a fellow believer"

life

The word "life" throughout this letter refers to more than physical life. Here "life" refers to being alive spiritually. See how you translated this in [1 John 1:1]

death

This refers to eternal death, that is, eternity spent away from God's presence.

1 John 5:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 John 5:18

Connecting Statement:

John closes his letter, reviewing what he has said about the new nature of believers, which cannot sin, and he reminds them to keep themselves from idols (5:21).

the evil one cannot harm him

The phrase "the evil one" refers to Satan, the devil.

1 John 5:19

the whole world lies in the power of the evil one

Lying in someone's power represents being controlled or

ruled by him. Alternate translation: "the whole world is controlled by the evil one"

the whole world lies in the power

Here "world" represents all the people who rebel against God. Alternate translation: "all the people of the world are under the power"

1 John 5:20

Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

has given us understanding

"has enabled us to understand the truth"

we are in him who is true

Being "in" someone represents having a close relationship with him, that is being united to him or belonging to him.

The phrase "him who is true" refers to the true God, and the phrase "in his Son Jesus Christ" explains how we are in him

who is true. Alternate translation: "we are united to him who is true by being united to his Son Jesus Christ"

him who is true

"the true one" or "the real God"

This one is the true God

Possible meanings are 1) "This one" refers to Jesus Christ, or 2) "This one" refers to the one true God.

and eternal life

He is called "eternal life" because he gives us eternal life.

Alternate translation: "and the one who gives eternal life"

1 John 5:21

Children

John was an elderly man and their leader. He used this expression to show his love for them. See how you translated this in [1 John 2:1]

keep yourselves from idols

"stay away from idols" or "do not worship idols"

Introduction to 2 John

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 John

Greeting (1:1-3) Encouragement and the greatest commandment (1:4-6) Warning about false teachers (1:7-11) Greetings from fellow believers (1:12-13)

Who wrote the Book of 2 John?

The letter does not give the name of the author. The author only identified himself as "the elder." The letter was probably written by the Apostle John near the end of his life. The content of 2 John is similar to the content in John's Gospel.

What is the Book of 2 John about?

John addressed this letter to someone he called "the chosen lady" and to "her children"

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "2 John" or "Second John." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Second Letter from John" or "The Second Letter John Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is hospitality?

Hospitality was an important concept in the ancient Near East. It was important to be friendly towards foreigners or outsiders and provide help to them if they needed it. John wanted believers to offer hospitality to guests. However, he did not want believers to offer hospitality to false teachers.

Who were the people John spoke against?

The people John spoke against were possibly those who would become known as Gnostics. These people believed that the physical world was evil. Since they believed Jesus was divine, they denied that he was truly human. This is because they thought God would not become human since the physical body is evil. (See: evil)

Chapter 1

2 John 1 Commentary

1:1-3

Who are the "elder (πρεσβύτερος/g4245)" and the "chosen (ἐκλεκτός/g1588)" lady?

[1:1]

See: Introduction

See: Elder

How does one love in truth?

[1:1]

Christian love is different than many other types of love. It is similar to the love family members show to one another. A Christian should put the needs of others above his own desires. It is a strong or loyal bond between people. Perhaps this is what John wanted to say that Christians should "truly" love others when he wrote Christians are to love "in truth (ἀληθεία/g225)" or "with sincerity." Other scholars think that John wanted Christians to love others in a certain way. This love is "true," that is true to God. They think that John wanted Christians to love God by doing the things that are taught in Scripture.

Is the truth a metaphor for Jesus?

[1:1, 1:2]

Most scholars think this passage contains several different metaphors. Christians were spoken about as if they were a “chosen (ἐκλεκτός/g1588)” or “elect” lady. Perhaps this is a certain group of Christians. Or perhaps it is all Christians in a given area. Or perhaps it is a certain woman.

John also said Christians are people who know the truth. John refers to Jesus as the “truth (ἀληθεια g225)” (see: John 14:6).

Because of this, John may have spoke about all Christians or a certain group of Christians.

In this passage, John also spoke about Christians having a “true” knowledge about Jesus. Perhaps John spoke about the “true” things that God told mankind about himself.

See: Metaphor

1:4-11

Who are the children?

[1:4]

The children in 1:4 were the children of the lady John talked about in 1:1. They think that John spoke about new Christians in this church. Other scholars think that the lady is a certain woman, and John talked about her children.

Who are the false teachers?

[1:7]

John calls certain people “deceivers,” that is, false teachers. However, John did not write what they taught. Perhaps, they taught that Jesus was not a man or that God did not come to earth as a man named Jesus. They also taught these things because another false teacher gave them permission to teach. This was the antichrist. An antichrist is someone who opposes Jesus.

In this passage, some scholars think that John talked about a certain person called the antichrist, that is, the devil. He rules the earth and opposes Jesus.

Other scholars think this is the “spirit” of the antichrist who is still to come, that is, people who oppose Jesus. These people share the same goals as the devil. Because of this, they do the same types of things that the antichrist does.

Other scholars think John wanted to insult certain people. It was insulting because he called the devil.

See: Antichrist;Satan (The Devil)

How does one remain in Jesus?

[1:9]

John often wrote about Christians “remaining (μένω/g3306)” or “abiding” in or with Jesus. This is because Christians are united with Jesus in a special way.

In 1:9, John wrote that Christians “remain” in the things Jesus taught. Some scholars think John wanted to say that Christians cannot “leave” Jesus’ teachings, that is, they cannot teach things that are different from the things that Jesus has taught.

Others scholars think that a Christian can stop teaching the things that Jesus taught. If he stops teaching the things that Jesus taught, then God will not reward him. This is because God only rewards Christians who honor him (see: 1:8).

See: Introduction

What have Christians worked for or achieved?

[1:9]

Christians “work (ἐργάζομαι/g2038)” for something. Some scholars think that Christians work hard so that they will one day live together with God in heaven forever. Other scholars think that Christians work hard to get rewards from God.

Should Christians respect other religions?

[1:10]

In 1:10, John commanded Christians not to welcome certain people into their homes. He told them not to even greet them.

This would have been shocking to John’s readers. In the ancient world, it was very insulting not to greet someone who came to your home. Some scholars think that John wrote this because certain people who came to the homes of Christians were false teachers. These false teachers said that they were Christians. Perhaps they kept asking Christians for help so that they could teach them the wrong things.

Other scholars think that John did not write to a certain religious teacher. However, many religious teachers do not teach the right things about God.

All false teachers do not teach the right things about God, even if they say, “I am a Christian.” Because of this, false teachers are dangerous to people. God wants people to know about him and live with him in heaven forever. If people do not believe the right things about God, they might not be able to live together with God in heaven. When John wrote about Christians not welcoming these people into their homes, he did not want them to start believing in things that the false teachers taught. However, Christians also need to speak against the false teachers in a loving way (see: Ephesians 4:5).

1:12-13

Why did John want to talk to these Christians in person?

[1:12]

John wanted to talk to these Christians when he was with them. Perhaps he did this so that other people could not read his letter and know who he wrote to. Some scholars think that John did this to protect Christians. At this time, people wanted to hurt or kill Christians. Therefore, John made a very short letter and only wrote about things that could not wait until he saw them.

Perhaps he did this to be polite. There may have been things to talk with these Christians about that it would not have been polite to talk about in a letter.

Perhaps John was going to visit these Christians in the near future. Therefore, he wrote a short letter and waited for his visit to speak with them. Because of this, 1:12 was a normal greeting. Other scholars believe this is a just a common greeting.

Who is the sister John talked about?

[1:13]

John talked about a "chosen (ἐκλεκτός/g1588)" or "elect" sister. This is the sister of the chosen lady (see: 1:1). Perhaps John was writing from another church and said that this church was the "sister" of the church he wrote. Fewer scholars think that John wrote to a certain woman and was with this woman's sister.

The Meaning of Greek Words

g225 (αληθεια) Truth Something that is αληθεια is true. It often describes something, that is, an αληθεια is a thing. Therefore, an αληθεια is something that is true However, it is also used in different ways with this same type of meaning. It is used to speak a certain thing that is true. It is used to speak about many or all things that are true. It is sometimes used in this way to speak about all true things or teachings about God. It is also used to speak about the gospel. It is used to describe a person. The person who is αληθεια does not lie or lives in the right way.

See: Gospel

g1588 (ἐκλεκτός) When someone has been ἐκλεκτός, they have been chosen or selected.

This word is often used to speak about God choosing someone or something. God only chose certain people and certain things. This was a great honor. God chose Israel, angels, and Christians.

g2038 (ἐργάζομαι) When someone ἐργάζομαι, they work very hard at something. They may work at their job or work to complete or finish something. Sometimes translators choose to translate this word as "earn" because someone's hard work can cause something to happen or result in a reward (see: 2 John 1:8).

g3306 (μένω) Stay, remain, abide When someone μένω in a place, they do not leave that place. It is also used in other ways. However, scholars do not agree about what it means. (1) Someone μένω in Jesus. Some scholars think this means that Christians can stop being friends with God and will not live together with God in heaven forever. More scholars think this means that Christians stop doing the things that Jesus wants them to do, that is, they do not live in a way that honors God. μένω is also used to say that some people stop teaching the things Jesus and the apostles taught.

g4245 (πρεσβύτερος) An elder, that is, someone who is old. Often, a πρεσβύτερος was an old man. A title given to a leader in the church, a πρεσβύτερος was a mature Christian, that is, a Christian who honored God.

This word is often used as a technical term for a position in the church. Some scholars think that this is the same position as G4245 (πρεσβύτερος). Other scholars think that these are different positions, that is, these leaders serve the church in different ways.

2 John 1:1

General Information:

Tradition identifies the apostle John as the writer of this letter. Though possibly addressed to an individual woman, because he writes that they should "love one another," this is probably to a church. All instances of "you" and "your" in this letter are plural unless noted otherwise. In this letter, John includes himself and his readers by using the word "us" and "our."

From the elder to the chosen lady and her children

This is how letters were started. The name of the author can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I, John the elder, am writing this letter to the chosen lady and her children"

the elder

This refers to John, the apostle and disciple of Jesus. He refers to himself as "elder" either because of his old age or because he is a leader in the church.

to the chosen lady and her children

This probably refers to a congregation and the believers

that belong to it.

2 John 1:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 John 1:3

Father ... Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

in truth and love

The word "truth" describes "love." Possibly the phrase means "in true love."

2 John 1:4

your children

The word "your" is singular.

just as we have received this commandment from the Father
"just as God the Father commanded us"

2 John 1:5

you, lady ... writing to you

These instances of "you" are singular.

I were writing to you a new commandment, but one that we have had

from the beginning

Here, "beginning" refers to "when we first believed."

Alternate translation: "I were commanding you to do something new, but what Christ commanded us to do when we first believed"

beginning—that we should love one another

This can be translated as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "beginning. He commanded that we should love one another"

2 John 1:6

This is the commandment, just as you heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it

Conducting our lives according to God's commands is spoken of as if we were walking in them. The word "it" refers to love. "And he has commanded you, since you first believed, to love one another"

2 John 1:7

Connecting Statement:

John warns his readers of deceivers, reminds them to remain in Christ's teaching, and warns them to stay away from those who do not remain in Christ's teaching.

For many deceivers have gone out into the world

"For many false teachers have left the congregation" or "For many deceivers are in the world"

many deceivers

"many false teachers" or "many imposters"

Jesus Christ came in the flesh

Coming in the flesh is a metonym for being a real person.

Alternate translation: "Jesus Christ came as a real human"

This is the deceiver and the antichrist

"They are the ones who deceive others and oppose Christ himself"

2 John 1:8

Look to yourselves

"Watch out" or "Pay attention" or "Be on guard"

lose the things

"lose your future rewards in heaven"

the things for which we have labored

Another possible meaning is, "the things that we have accomplished."

full reward

"complete reward in heaven"

2 John 1:9

Whoever goes on ahead

This refers to a person who claims to know more about God and truth than everyone else. Alternate translation:

"Whoever claims to know more about God" or "Whoever disobeys the truth"

goes on ahead

Some modern translations read, "transgresses."

does not have God

"does not belong to God"

The one who remains in the teaching, this one has both the Father and the Son

"Someone who follows Christ's teaching belongs to both the Father and the Son"

the Father and the Son

These are important titles that describe the relationship between God and Jesus.

2 John 1:10

receive him into your house

Here this means to welcome him and treat him with honor in order to build a relationship with him.

2 John 1:11

participates in his evil deeds

"shares with him in his evil deeds" or "helps him in his evil deeds"

2 John 1:12

General Information:

The words "you" in verse 12 are singular.

Connecting Statement:

John's letter closes with his desire to visit his readers and gives greetings from another church.

I did not wish to write them with paper and ink

John does not wish to write these other things but would like to come say the words to them. He is not saying that he would write them with something other than paper and ink.

I hope to come to you

John wants to visit his readers but he does not know with certainty that he would be able to visit them. Alternate translation: "I plan to come to you" or "I want to come to you"

Speak face to face

"Speak face to face" here is an idiom, meaning "to speak in their presence." Alternate translation: "speak in your presence" or "speak to you in person"

2 John 1:13

General Information

The word "your" in verse 13 is plural.

The children of your chosen sister

Here John speaks of this other church as if it were a sister to the readers' church and the believers that are a part of that church as if they were that church's children. This emphasizes that all believers are a spiritual family.

Introduction to 3 John

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 3 John

Introduction (1:1) Encouragement and instructions to show hospitality (1:2-8) Diotrephes and Demetrius (1:9-12)

Conclusion (1:13-14)

Who wrote the Book of 3 John?

The letter does not give the name of the author. The author only identified himself as "the elder" (1:1). The letter was probably written by the Apostle John near the end of his life.

What is the Book of 3 John about?

John wrote this letter to a believer named Gaius. He instructed Gaius to be hospitable to fellow believers who were traveling through his area.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "3 John" or "Third John." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Third Letter from John" or "The Third Letter John Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What is hospitality?

Hospitality was an important concept in the ancient Near East. It was important to be friendly towards foreigners or outsiders and provide help to them if they needed it. In 2 John, John discouraged Christians from showing hospitality to false teachers. In 3 John, John encouraged Christians to show hospitality to faithful teachers.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How does the author use family relationships in his letter?

The author used the terms "brother" and "children" in a way that can be confusing. The scriptures often used the term "brothers" to refer to Jews. But in this letter, John used the word to refer to Christians. Also, John called some believers his "children." These are believers he taught to obey Christ.

John also used the term "Gentile" in a way that could be confusing. The scriptures often used the term "Gentile" to refer to people who are not Jews. But in this letter, John used the word to refer to those who did not believe in Jesus.

Chapter 1

3 John 1 Commentary

1:1-4

How did John begin this letter?

[1:1]

The first verse is a type of greeting. Many letters in the Ancient Near East began in the same way. John the Elder said that he wrote this letter John also said that he wrote it to his friend Gaius.

See: Ancient Near East

When John wrote, "whom I love in truth," what did he want to say?

[1:1]

John wrote that Christians are to love in "truth (αληθεια /g0225)." Perhaps John wanted to say that he loved Gaius truly, that is, he was not lying when he wrote this. This is what some scholars think. However, other scholars think John loved Gaius because John knew the truth, that is, because Jesus is truly God's Son. What God says in the Bible is true; it is why John loved Gaius. It is also why John obeyed God.

Advice to translators: If your context is familiar with the concept of the prosperity gospel, then this can be substituted for the phrase "about wealth."

Who is Gaius?

[1:1]

Gaius was a man who honored God. In Verse 2, John talked about Gaius' "health." Perhaps Gaius was sick or perhaps this was the way people greeted other people. Also, Many scholars believe there was more than one man in scripture with the name of Gaius.

Some Christians also think that John wanted to talk to Gaius about money. These Christians believe God wants Christians to be rich or successful in everything they do. They also believe God promised Christians that they will have everything they want if they obey him. Most scholars do not believe these things.

See: Acts 19:29, 20:4; Romans 16:23; 1 Corinthians 1:14

How did John use the word "truth"?

[1:1, 1:3, 1:4]

John used the word "truth (αληθεια/g0255)" many times and in many different ways in this letter.

In verse 1, John talked about someone loving someone else "in truth." The truly, greatly, or really love someone, that is, they love someone as much as they can.

In verse 2, John talked about some who "truly" loves God, that is, they obey God. They "walk in truth." They live in the way that Jesus wanted them to live.

John also said that Jesus was the "truth" (see: John 14:6). He may speak about Jesus in the same way in this letter.

1:5-8

What is hospitality?

[1:5]

Hospitality is showing kindness to visitors, strangers, or those in need. Hospitality was very important to the Jewish people and others living in the Ancient Near East (see: 2 John 1:10-11). John asks his readers to show hospitality to Christians, but not to false teachers.

See: Ancient Near East; Hospitable (Hospitality)

How should Christians support a ministry?

[1:6]

This passage explained to a church how a travelling teacher or missionary should be supported. It also explains how people should be given money to certain leaders in the church. During this time, there were few Christian leaders so they had to travel long distances to visit different churches. They needed some money from the churches to help them travel so they could continue to serve God in this way.

Some scholars think that these church leaders should not to accept money from Gentiles, that is, from people who were not Christians. Other scholars think John talked about church leaders not taking money from the non-Christians who they were trying to get to believe in Jesus. They think that John reject this because many other religious teachers did this in the Ancient Near East.

See: Ancient Near East

1:9-10

What did John previously write to the church?

[1:9]

John wrote three letters or more. It is not clear which letter John talked about in #v9. John may have been writing about Second John or another letter that is lost.

What was Diotrephes doing?

[1:9]

These verses could be a metaphor showing that Diotrephes did not have humility. He was a leader in Gaius' church, but Diotrephes was not a good leader. Diotrephes may have wanted to be seen as the greatest person and tried to force others to do what he wanted done in the church. This was not a way to honor God. John wrote that Diotrephes needed to be corrected. He did not accept what John and the apostles taught. Diotrephes have spoken against them. Perhaps he taught that God did not give the apostles permission to teach others. Because of this, Diotrephes rejected God.

See: Apostle

1:11-12

Who was with John?

It is not clear who was with John when he wrote this letter. Some scholars think John was with the other apostles. Other scholars think John was with other people when he wrote the letter. Fewer scholars think that John was alone when he wrote this letter.

Advice to translators: Different cultures may have different ways to describe removing someone removing people from the church. Some now call this "excommunication."

Does everyone who does good things belong to God?

[1:11]

John often talked about belonging to God. Some scholars think that verse 11 is about those who do good things and the things that God wants them to do. When someone does the wrong thing or something that God does not want them to do, John said that they are "of the world" and "of the devil." Those who do not want to do evil things do not belong to God.

However, John taught that if Christians decide to do what God wants, they belonged to God.

While John tried to help Christians, he may have also been insulting Diotrephes. Perhaps this verse may be talking about Diotrephes and what he did. If this is true, then John said Diotrephes was evil and he did not think that Diotrephes was a Christian. This is because Christians do good things because they love God and do the things that God wants them to do. People who are not Christians do things for the wrong reasons.

1:13-15

What is the last verse about?

[1:15]

Verse 15 is end of John's letter. This was a common way of ending a letter in the ancient Near East. It was a personal greeting and closing. John wanted to visit the church soon so the letter was not long.

Why does John use the word "friend"?

[1:15]

Some scholars think John spoke about Christians when he said "friends." They think that Christians called each other friends. Perhaps this was because Jesus died for his friends (see: John 15:13). Other scholars think John was speaking about the friends of Gaius. Perhaps he greeted Gaius' friends.

See: John 15:14-15

The Meaning of Greek Words

g1544 (ἐκβάλλω) To remove, toG throw out, to force someone to leave a group of people When someone is ἐκβάλλω from a group of people, they are removed from the group of people and they are not allowed to return. This word is used when speaking about the church.

g4245 (πρεσβύτερος) An elder, that is, someone who is old. Often, a πρεσβύτερος was an old man. A title given to a leader in the church, a πρεσβύτερος was a mature Christian, that is, a Christian who honored God.

This word is often used as a technical term for a position in the church. Some scholars think that this is the same position as G4245 (πρεσβύτερος). Other scholars think that these are different positions, that is, these leaders serve the church in different ways.

3 John 1:1

General Information:

This is a personal letter from John to Gaius. All instances of "you" and "your" refer to Gaius and are singular.

The elder

This refers to John, the apostle and disciple of Jesus. He refers to himself as "elder" either because of his old age or because he is a leader in the church. The name of the author can be made explicit: "I, John the elder, am writing."

Gaius

This is a fellow believer to whom John is writing this letter. whom I love in truth
"whom I truly love"

3 John 1:2

all may go well with you and that you may be healthy
"you may do well in all things and be healthy"
just as it is well with your soul
"just as you are doing well spiritually"

3 John 1:3

brothers came

"fellow believers came." These people were probably all male.

you walk in truth

Walking on a path is a metaphor for how a person lives his life. Alternate translation: "you are living your life according to God's truth"

3 John 1:4

my children

John speaks of those he taught to believe in Jesus as though they were his children. This emphasizes his love and concern for them. It could also be that he himself led them to the Lord. Alternate translation: "my spiritual children"

3 John 1:5

Connecting Statement:

John's purpose in writing this letter is to compliment Gaius in the way he took care of traveling Bible teachers; then he talks about two people, one evil and one good.

Beloved

Here this is used as a term of endearment for a fellow believer.

you practice faithfulness

"you are doing what is faithful to God" or "you are being loyal to God"

labor for the brothers and for strangers

"help fellow believers and those you do not know"

3 John 1:6

You do well to send them

John is thanking Gaius for his normal practice of helping these believers.

3 John 1:7

because it was for the sake of the name that they went out

Here "the name" refers to Jesus. Alternate translation: "for they have gone out to tell people about Jesus"

taking nothing

receiving no gifts or help

the Gentiles

Here "Gentiles" means non-Jews who do not believe in Christ.

3 John 1:8

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to John and those with him, and possibly includes all believers.

so that we will be fellow workers for the truth

"so that we will cooperate with them in announcing God's truth to people"

3 John 1:9

General Information:

The word "us" refers to John and those with him and does not include Gaius.

congregation

This refers to Gaius and the group of believers who met together to worship God.

Diotrephes

He was a member of the congregation.

who loves to be first among them

"who loves to be the most important one among them" or "who loves to act as though he's their leader"

3 John 1:10

falsely accusing us with wicked words

"and how he says evil things about us that certainly are not true"

refuses to welcome the brothers

"does not welcome the fellow believers"

stops those who want to welcome them

"stops those who want to welcome the believers"

drives them out of the church

"he forces them to leave the congregation"

3 John 1:11

Beloved

Here this is used as a term of endearment for a fellow believer. See how you translated this in 3 John 1:5.

do not imitate what is evil

"do not copy the evil things that people do"

but what is good

There are words left out but they are understood. Alternate translation: "but imitate what is good" or "but imitate the good things that people do"

is of God

"belongs to God"

has not seen God

"does not belong to God" or "does not believe in God"

3 John 1:12

General Information:

Here "we" refers to John and those with him and does not include Gaius.

Demetrius received a good testimony from everyone

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "All who know Demetrius testify that he is a good man" or

"Every believer who knows Demetrius speaks well of him"

Demetrius

This is probably a man whom John wants Gaius and the congregation to welcome when he comes to visit.

by the truth itself

"the truth itself speaks well of him." Here "truth" is described as a person speaking. Alternate translation:

"everyone who knows the truth knows he is a good person"

We also testify about him

What John is confirming is implied and can be made specific here. Alternate translation: "We also testify about Demetrius" or "We also speak well of Demetrius"

3 John 1:13

General Information:

This is the end of John's letter to Gaius. He gives some final remarks and closes with a greeting.

I do not wish to write them to you with pen and ink

John does not wish to write these other things at all. He is not saying that he would write them with something other than pen and ink.

3 John 1:14

I hope to see you soon

John wants to visit him, but he does not know with certainty that he would be able to visit him. Alternate translation: "I plan to come to you" or "I want to come to you"

face to face

"Face to face" here is an idiom, meaning "in person."

Alternate translation: "in person"

3 John 1:15

May peace be with you

"May God give you peace"

The friends greet you

"The friends here greet you"

Greet our friends there by name

"Greet each of the believers there for me"

Introduction to Jude

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Jude

Introduction (1:1-2) Warning against false teachers (1:3-4) Old Testament examples (1:5-16) Proper response (1:17-23) Praises to God (1:24-25)

Who wrote the Book of Jude?

The author identified himself as Jude the brother of James. Both Jude and James were half-brothers of Jesus. It is unknown whether this letter was intended for a specific church.

What is the Book of Jude about?

Jude wrote this letter to warn believers against false teachers. Jude often referred to the Old Testament. This may suggest that Jude was writing to a Jewish Christian audience. This letter and 2 Peter have similar content. They both speak about angels, Sodom and Gomorrah, and false teachers.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Jude." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "The Letter from Jude" or "The Letter Jude Wrote."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Who were the people Jude spoke against?

It is possible that the people Jude spoke against were those who would become known as Gnostics. These teachers distorted the teachings of scripture for their own gain. They lived in immoral ways and taught others to do the same.

Chapter 1

Jude 1 Commentary

1: 1-2

What did Jude call himself?

[1:1]

Jude called himself a servant (δοῦλος/g1401) of Jesus, even though he was not owned or in debt to anyone.

See: Serve (Servant, Slave)

Why did Jude speak about Jesus in this passage?

[1:1]

Scholars do not agree about what Jude wanted to say in this verse. Perhaps Jude wanted to say that God keeps believers united to Jesus. Or perhaps Jude wanted to say that God watches over believers by means of Jesus. Or perhaps Jude wanted to say that God watches over believers so that Jesus will benefit.

Also, perhaps Jude was saying that it is God the Father who watches over the believers, or perhaps that it is Jesus who

does that.

See: Jesus' Return to Earth; Call (Calling)

1:3-11

Why should Christians try very hard to do?

[1:3]

Jude wrote to Christians and told them to fight for, that is, do everything they could to work very hard to continue to believe what the apostles had taught them about Jesus. False teachers were trying to make them believe things that were different than what they had been taught. In fact, they were the opposite of what they had been taught. Therefore, Jude told the Christians that they needed to “fight” or “work very hard” to keep believing in the things they had been taught about Jesus and how to live as a Christian.

How did these false teachers try to change what the Christians believed the apostles taught about the grace of God?

[1:4]

These false teachers tried to change what the Christians believed the apostles taught about the grace of God. The false teachers believed that they could sin, and that God would not punish them. They believed that they could continue to sin because God would continue to forgive them for doing so. Jude taught that they could not live in the way they wanted to live. God has mercy on Christians, but they should not then say that they could sin all they want. Anyone who thinks like this does not understand why God has mercy on people.

See: Grace; Mercy; Gospel

Who is the only master?

[1:4]

When people were making copies of the New Testament in Greek very long ago, some of them said that the master or ruler (δεσπότης/g1203) was Jesus. But some others said that the master was God.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible)

When did anyone write about the actions of the false teachers?

[1:4]

It is not known when someone wrote about the actions of the false teachers. Some scholars believe that God wrote in heaven about their wrong actions. Perhaps God did this before he made the world. Other scholars believe that Jude or another Christian leader wrote about these false teachers in another letter. Still other scholars believe that a Jewish prophet wrote about these false teachers long ago.

See: Prophecy (Prophesy)

In what way did these false teachers deny Jesus?

[1:4]

Jude said that these false teachers “denied (ἀρνέομαι/g0720)” or rejected Jesus. They may have denied that Jesus was God, or they may have denied something else about Jesus that is true. However, they may have also denied Jesus by living in a way that did not honor God. The scriptures speak about living in a way that does not honor God, so they reject God.

However, God deserves for people obey him.

When did God announce that the false teachers were guilty?

[1:4]

No one knows when God announced that these false teachers were guilty. This word, “identified (προγράφω/g4270)” or “set aside,” is usually about something that someone wrote long ago. This did not happen in the recent past. Perhaps it happened in the Old Testament, or perhaps another Christian wrote it before Jude wrote his book. However, “set aside” does not have to say that someone wrote the names of these teachers in a book on earth. Perhaps someone wrote them in a book in heaven (see: Revelation 20:12). If this is so, this book is a metaphor for believers living with God forever. Some scholars think that the false teachers had been teaching the Christians for a long time. When they began teaching the Christians, some found out that they were guilty. Other scholars believe that “set aside” shows that everyone will learn in the future that these false teachers were guilty. A few scholars believe that these false teachers were not Christians, and that God announced that they were guilty before they were born.

See: Metaphor; Condemn (Condemnation)

Did Jesus bring the Israelites out from Egypt?

[1:5]

Some very old Greek copies of the book of Jude said that it was Jesus who brought the Israelites out of Egypt. Other old copies have the word lord (κύριος/g2962). This word can mean either Jesus or God. More old copies have the word “Jesus,” but Jude probably did not write “Jesus.” This is because the Bible does not say that Jesus brought the Israelites out of Egypt. Neither does the Bible say that Jesus punished the Israelites in the wilderness for not trusting God.

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible)

Did many angels sin?

[1:6] At some time in the past, some of the angels sinned. They rebelled against God and what he commanded them to do. The very first time that they disobeyed God, they became guilty forever. So God punished them for having sinned. They

became the demons. They stopped working for God. He threw them out of heaven and put them into chains. Some scholars think that Jude wanted to say that these are chains from which the demons cannot escape. Others think that they are chains in which the demons will stay forever. In Jude's time, many other people believed the same things Jude believed about what the angels did in Genesis 6.

See: Genesis 6:1-4 See: Angel; Demon; Ancient Writings

What did Jude want to say when he wrote "keep" in verse 6?

[1:6]

Jude wrote the same word twice in verse 6. The angels should have protected or guarded (τηρέω/g5083) the thing that God gave them to guard. However, they rebelled and did not do this. God is guarding them now because they did not guard the things that God gave them to guard. This is a type of irony. Because of this, God will punish them later for having sinned.

See: Irony

God has punished many people at many different times. What three times did Jude talk about?

[1:5, 1:6, 1:7]

Jude reminded his readers that God punished the Israelites who refused to trust in him, even after God brought them out of Egypt. Then, Jude reminded them that God will punish the angels who rebelled against him. Finally, he reminded them that God punished the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

See: Genesis 18 and 19

What is the "great" day?

[1:6]

Jude wrote about a "great" or significant day. This is the time when God will judge and punish all people. This is probably what scripture calls the Day of the Lord.

See: Day of the Lord

What was the strange flesh?

[1:7]

Jude said that the people in Sodom and Gomorrah wanted strange or other flesh or bodies (σάρξ/g4561). Some scholars believe that this means that the people were having sex with people of the same gender. Fewer scholars believe that the people were trying to have sex with angels.

See: Genesis 19

What is hell?

[1:7]

Hell is a place where God will punish people forever. Scripture often says that hell has a fire that never stops. Jude wrote about a fire that never stops as a type of punishment.

See: Hell

Who were the people who dreamed?

[1:8]

John said that the false teachers were people who "dreamed." He said this, because people thought that it was God who made people dream. They thought that God showed people things through their dreams. However, these false teachers dreams and the things they taught did not come from God.

False teachers and false prophets often said that God gave them dreams or visions. When they said this, they wanted to say that God allowed them to tell people what they were supposed to do.

See: Vision

Who did the false teachers reject?

[1:8]

The false teachers rejected a group who was given permission to rule over something. Some scholars believe that it was God or Jesus whom they reject. Fewer scholars believe that it was angels who the false teachers rejected.

Who did the false teachers insult?

[1:8]

The false teachers insulted people or beings who deserved honor. Scholars believe that the false teachers insulted the angels who obeyed God. The Jews thought that the angels had brought Scripture to the people. When the false teachers insulted these angels, they also rejected the word of God.

Who is Michael?

[1:9]

Michael is an archangel or leader of the angels. He is an angel and is also a leader of angels or perhaps the most important angel. Michael is the only archangel that the Scriptures spoke about.

The books of Daniel and Revelation talk about Michael (see: Daniel 10:13, 20; 12:1, 7). Daniel called Michael a "great prince." Some ancient Jews also believed that Michael took care of the place where Moses was buried. These ancient Jews often wrote about Michael.

See: 1 Thessalonians 4:16

See: Ancient Writings

When Michael talked with the devil, what did he show believers?

[1:9]

When Moses died, the devil wanted to take his body. But Michael did not dare to insult the devil, even though the devil was the leader of the angels who had sinned. Michael refused to insult him, because it was God who would judge the devil.

The devil, and the angels that serve him, did not respect God. Despite this, Michael showed that he respected the devil, because he refused to insult the devil. However, the false teachers insulted the angels who still serve God.

The story that Jude mentioned did not come from the Old Testament. Instead, it was from another ancient Jewish book.

See: Deuteronomy 34:6; Zechariah 3:2

See: Satan (The Devil); Ancient Writings

Why did Jude talk about Cain, Balaam, and Korah?

[1:11]

Cain was the first person in the world to murder anyone. He did not love his brother. Instead, he killed his brother because he envied him. Cain also worshiped God in a false way. Balaam worked with enemies of God because Balaam was greedy for money. In Numbers, Moses showed that Balaam also encouraged the Israelites to sin against God (see: Numbers 31). As for Korah, he rebelled against the man whom God had chosen to lead the Israelites. In each of these cases, the people rejected God and rebelled against him. This is what the false teachers also did.

See: Genesis 4; Numbers 16; Numbers 22-24

Why did Jude write five metaphors in 1:12-14?

[1:12, 1:13, 1:14]

Jude wrote five metaphors to show his readers the errors that the false teachers made.

Jude said that the false teachers were like rocks hidden below the surface of the sea. Such rocks are dangerous to ships because they cannot be seen. The false teachers were dangerous, too, but many people did not know that these teachers could harm them.

Jude also said that the false teachers were like clouds that had no water to give to the earth. The wind quickly drives these clouds away in different directions. As for the false teachers, they are always thinking different things, and they are always teaching the people these different things.

These false teachers were also like trees that something has uprooted. So they have no fruit to give. The false teachers could not teach anyone how to live forever with God. God will announce that they are guilty, and he will punish them forever.

The false teachers were like the bubbles on the top of strong waves in the sea. These bubbles have no value. They are like false teachers, who can teach people things that will cause them nothing but shame.

These false teachers are like certain stars in the heavens that wander about, whose path no one can tell in advance.

Because of that, no one can find their way at night by looking at those stars.

See: Metaphor; Lord's Supper

Who was Enoch?

[1:14]

There are two men named Enoch in the Old Testament. One Enoch was the son of Cain. However, verse 14 is about Enoch, the son of Jared (see: Genesis 5). This Enoch honored God and did not die. Instead, God took him to heaven without dying. There is also an ancient writing about this Enoch. Jude was thinking about that writing when he wrote his own letter.

See: Ancient Writings

Who were the holy ones?

[1:14]

In verse 14, Jude talked about "people" who honored God. This was about the angels who honored God. Jude copied this verse and the next verse from an ancient book called "The Assumption of Moses."

See: Angel; Ancient Writings

What type of judgment did Jude talk about?

[1:15]

The judgment that Jude talked about was the final judgment. In this judgment, God will announce who is guilty. He will do this in the last days. Then he will punish those people forever.

See: Last Days

When is the last time or last day?

[1:18]

Jude spoke about the "last time" or "last day." Jude probably talked about the time near to when Jesus would return to the earth. It is the time when God will judge everyone. Some scholars believe that there will be many people at this time who do not honor God. Perhaps this is what Jude talked about in verses 18-19.

See: Last Days

What people do not have the Spirit?

[1:19]

In verse 19, Jude talked about people who do not have the Spirit. This is the Holy Spirit. It means they are not Christians.
See: Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

1:20-25

How does a Christian pray in the Holy Spirit?

[1:20]

Some scholars believe that Jude wants Christians to pray for the things that the Holy Spirit wishes them to pray for. However, fewer scholars think that Jude wants Christians to pray in a special language that the Holy Spirit gives them.
What is the Greek text of verse 22?

[1:22]

In verse 22, some early Greek copies have "to have mercy on a person." Other early copies have "to convince or to correct." The Greek words are very similar (ἐλεέω and ἐλέγχω).

See: Differences in the Ancient Copies of the Bible)

How many groups are listed in verses 22-23?

[1:22, 1:23]

Some scholars believe that there were three groups of people in verses 22-23.

There were those who did not yet decide whether or not to believe the false teachers. Perhaps they could not know whether those teachers were false or not. They did not know what they should believe.

There were also those who followed the false teachers. Because of this, God will judge them. Here Jude might be talking about both Christians and non-Christians. Jude wanted these people to repent and to believe that Jesus will return to earth. Some scholars believe this group is the same group described later in the verse. Others scholars believe that they were a different group.

Some scholars believe that a third group of people who began to follow the false teachers. These people were in danger of following these false teachers completely. Therefore, the Christian must avoid following this third group. Some scholars believe that the people in this group could not repent and believe in Jesus. Believers should have mercy on them because they ought to pity them.

Other scholars believe that these are three ways of describing the same group of people.

See: Zechariah 3:2-4

See: Repent (Repentance; Jesus' Return to Earth

Do Christians save other people?

[1:23]

Christians cannot save or free (σῶζω/g4982) other people from the guilt of their sins. However, God often works through other people so that they become friends with him. Only God can free people from their guilt. Jude said that this was like taking people out of the fire. This is a metaphor meaning that they God will not punish these people in hell (see: Amos 4:11)

1:24-25

What did Jude mean when he wrote about stumbling?

[1:24]

In verse 24, Jude told people not to follow false teachers. Some scholars believe that if Christians followed the false teachers, they could stumble or fall (ἀπταίστος/g0679), that is, become separated from God forever. This is because in this verse, Jude also spoke about Christians standing before God's throne and God welcoming them. Other scholars believe that they might lose some reward in heaven when Jesus judges them.

See: Judge (Judgment); Walk

How does this letter end?

[1:24, 1:25]

In ancient times, most people ended their letters by greeting again the people to whom they were writing. However, Jude ended his letter by praising Jesus.

Jude 1:1

General Information:

Jude identifies himself as the writer of this letter and greets his readers. He was probably the half-brother of Jesus. There are two other Judes mentioned in the New Testament. The word "you" in this letter refers to the Christians to whom Jude was writing and is always plural.

Jude, a servant of

Jude is the brother of James. Alternate translation: "I am

Jude, a servant of"

brother of James

James and Jude were half brothers of Jesus.

Jude 1:2

May mercy and peace and love be multiplied to you

"may mercy, peace, and love be increased many times for you." These ideas are spoken of as if they were objects that could grow in size or number. This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "mercy," "peace," and "love."

Alternate translation: "May God continue to be merciful to you so that you live peacefully and love one another more

and more

Jude 1:3

General Information:

The word "our" in this letter includes both Jude and believers.

Connecting Statement:

Jude tells the believers his reason for writing this letter.

our common salvation

"the salvation we share"

I had to write

"I felt a great need to write" or "I felt an urgent need to write"

to exhort you to struggle earnestly for the faith

"to encourage you to defend the true teaching"

once for all

"finally and completely"

Jude 1:4

For certain men have slipped in secretly among you

"For some men have come in among the believers without drawing attention to themselves"

These men were marked out for condemnation

This can also be put into the active voice. Alternate

translation: "These were men whom God chose to condemn"

who have changed the grace of our God into sensuality

God's grace is spoken of as if it were a thing that could be changed into something horrible. Alternate translation:

"who teach that God's grace permits one to continue to live in sexual sin"

deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ

Possible meanings are 1) they teach that he is not God or 2) these men do not obey Jesus Christ.

Jude 1:5

Connecting Statement:

Jude gives examples from the past of those who did not follow the Lord.

the Lord saved a people out of the land of Egypt

"the Lord rescued the Israelites long ago from Egypt"

the Lord

Some texts read "Jesus."

Jude 1:6

their own position of authority

"the responsibilities God entrusted to them"

their proper dwelling place

The proper dwelling place of angels is heaven.

God has kept them in everlasting chains, in utter darkness

"God has put these angels in a dark prison from which they will never escape"

utter darkness

Here "darkness" is a metonym which represents the place of the dead or hell. Alternate translation: "in utter darkness in hell"

the great day

the final day when God will judge everyone

Jude 1:7

Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them

Here "Sodom," "Gomorrah," and "cities" represent the people who lived in them. Alternate translation: "the people of Sodom and Gomorrah and the people in the cities

around them"

gave themselves over to sexual immorality and perverse sexual acts

"engaged in every kind of sexual immorality and all of the perverse sexual acts they desired." The sexual sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were the result of the same kind of rebellion as the angels' evil ways.

as an example of those who suffer the punishment

The destruction of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah became an example of the fate of all who reject God.

Jude 1:8

these dreamers

These are the people who disobey God, probably because they claim to have seen visions that gave them authority to do so.

defile their bodies

The people sinning is spoken of as if they were making their bodies unclean. Alternate translation: "sin and defile themselves"

they slander

"they speak insults about"

glorious ones

This refers to spiritual beings, such as angels.

Jude 1:9

General Information:

Balaam was a prophet who refused to curse Israel for an enemy but then taught that enemy to get the people to marry unbelievers and become idol worshipers. Korah was a man of Israel who rebelled against Moses's leadership and Aaron's priesthood.

did not dare to bring a slanderous judgment against him

"did not dare to speak anything evil against him" or "did not dare to insult or condemn him"

Jude 1:10

these people

the ungodly people

whatever they do not understand

"anything of which they do not know the meaning."

Possible meanings are 1) "everything good that they do not understand" or 2) "the glorious ones, which they do not understand" (Jude 1:8).

Jude 1:11

walked in the way of Cain

"Walked in the way" here is a metaphor for "lived in the same way as." Alternate translation: "lived the same way Cain lived"

Jude 1:12

Connecting Statement:

Jude uses a series of metaphors to describe the ungodly men. He tells the believers how to recognize these men when they are among them.

These people

The word "These" refers to the "ungodly men" of Jude 1:4.

dangerous reefs

Reefs are large rocks that are very close to the surface of water in the sea. Because sailors cannot see them, they are very dangerous. Ships can easily be destroyed if they hit these rocks.

autumn trees without fruit—twice dead, uprooted

These words contain two metaphors for dead people and

apply them both to "these people."

autumn trees without fruit

This is the first metaphor for dead people. Trees in autumn look dead because their leaves have all fallen off, as has the fruit of fruit trees.

twice dead, uprooted

This is the second metaphor for dead people. After these "autumn trees" have lost their leaves and fruit, they die their first metaphorical death. Then people uproot them, and they die their second metaphorical death.

uprooted

completely pulled out of the ground so their roots dry out
Jude 1:13

violent waves in the sea

As the sea's waves are blown by a strong wind, so the ungodly people are easily moved in many directions.

foaming up their shame

As wind causes wild waves to stir up dirty foam—so these men, through their false teaching and actions, shame themselves. Alternate translation: "and just as waves bring up foam and dirt, these men pollute others with their shame"

wandering stars

Those who studied the stars in ancient times noticed that some "stars,"—what we call planets—do not move the way that stars do, so they called them "wandering stars."

Alternate translation: "They are like moving stars"

for whom the gloom of complete darkness has been reserved forever
Here "darkness" is a metonym that represents the place of the dead or hell, and "the gloom of complete darkness" is an idiom that means "a totally dark place." The phrase "has been reserved" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "and God will put them in the gloom and complete darkness of hell forever"

Jude 1:14

the seventh from Adam

If Adam is counted as the first generation of mankind, Enoch is the seventh. If Adam's son is counted as the first, Enoch is sixth in line.

Look

"Listen" or "Pay attention to this important thing I am going to say"

holy ones

Possible meanings are 1) "angels" or 2) "saints" or 3) "angels and saints"

Jude 1:15

to execute judgment on

"to make judgment on" or "to judge"

Jude 1:16

grumblers, complainers

People who do not want to obey and speak against godly authority. "Grumblers" tend to speak quietly, while "complainers" speak openly.

Their mouths speak loud boasts

They praise themselves so that others can hear.

flattering others

"giving false praise to others"

Jude 1:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Jude 1:18

mockers who will follow their own ungodly desires

Ungodly desires are spoken of as if they were a path that a person will follow. Alternate translation: "mockers who will continue to dishonor God by doing the evil things they wish to do"

Jude 1:19

It is these

"It is these mockers" or "These mockers are the ones"

they are worldly

Here "worldly" describes someone who is concerned with things of the world rather than things of God. Often in the Bible "world" represents all things opposed to God.

Alternate translation: "they are only concerned with doing what is evil"

they do not have the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is spoken of as if he were something that people can possess. Alternate translation: "the Spirit is not within them"

Jude 1:20

Connecting Statement:

Jude tells the believers how they should live and how they should treat others.

But you, beloved

"Do not be like them, beloved. Instead"

build yourselves up

Becoming increasingly able to trust in God and obey him is spoken of as if it were the process of constructing a building.

Jude 1:21

Keep yourselves in God's love

Remaining able to receive God's love is spoken of as if one were keeping oneself in a certain place.

wait for

"eagerly look forward to"

the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that brings you eternal life

Here "mercy" stands for Jesus Christ himself, who will show his mercy to the believers by making them live forever with him.

Jude 1:22

those who doubt

"those who do not yet believe that Jesus is God"

Jude 1:23

snatching them out of the fire

The picture is that of pulling people from a fire before they start to burn. Alternate translation: "doing for them whatever needs to be done to keep them from dying without Christ. This is like pulling them from the fire"

to others show mercy with fear

"be kind to others, but be afraid of sinning the way they do"

hating even the garment defiled by the flesh

Jude exaggerates to warn his readers that they can become like those sinners. Alternate translation: "treating them as though you could become guilty of sin just by touching their clothes"

Jude 1:24

Connecting Statement:

Jude closes with a blessing.

to cause you to stand before his glorious presence
His glory is brilliant light that represents his greatness.
Alternate translation: "and to allow you to enjoy and worship his glory"
glorious presence without blemish and with
Here sin is spoken of as if it were dirt on one's body or a flaw on one's body. Alternate translation: "glorious presence, where you will be without sin and have"
Jude 1:25

to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord
"to the only God, who saved us because of what Jesus Christ did." This emphasizes that God the Father as well as the Son is the Savior.
be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time, now, and forever
God has always had, now has, and always will have glory, absolute leadership, and complete control of all things.

Introduction to Revelation

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of Revelation

Opening (1:1-20) Letters to the seven churches (2:1-3:22) Vision of God in heaven, and a vision of the Lamb (4:1-5:14) The seven seals (6:1-8:1) The seven trumpets (8:2-13:18) Worshipers of the Lamb, the martyrs, and the harvest of wrath (14:1-20) The seven bowls (15:1-18:24) Worship in heaven (19:1-10) The Lamb's judgment, the destruction of the beast, the thousand years, the destruction of Satan, and the final judgment (19:11-20:15) The new creation and the new Jerusalem (21:1-22:5) Jesus's promise to return, the witness from the angels, John's closing words, Christ's message to his church, and the invitation and the warning (22:6-21)

Who wrote the Book of Revelation?

The author identified himself as John. This was probably the Apostle John. He wrote the Book of Revelation while on the island of Patmos. The Romans exiled John there for teaching people about Jesus.

What is the Book of Revelation about?

John wrote the Book of Revelation to encourage believers to remain faithful even when they are suffering. John described visions he had of Satan and his followers fighting against and killing believers. In the visions God causes many terrible things to happen on the earth to punish wicked people. In the end, Jesus defeats Satan and his followers. Then Jesus comforts those who were faithful. And the believers will live forever with God in the new heavens and earth.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by one of its traditional titles, "Revelation," "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," "The Revelation to Saint John," or "The Apocalypse of John." Or they may choose a possibly clearer title, such as "The Things that Jesus Christ Showed to John."

What type of writing is the Book of Revelation?

John used a special style of writing to describe his visions. John described what he saw by using many symbols. This style of writing is called symbolic prophecy or apocalyptic literature.

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

Are the events of Revelation past or future?

Since early Christian times, scholars have interpreted Revelation differently. Some scholars think John described events that happened during his time. Some scholars think John described events happening from his time until the return of Jesus. Other scholars think John described events that will happen in a short period of time just before Christ returns. Translators will not need to decide how to interpret the book before they translate it. Translators should leave the prophecies in the tenses that are used in the ULB.

Are there any other books in the Bible like Revelation?

No other book of the Bible is like the Book of Revelation. But passages in Ezekiel, Zechariah, and especially Daniel are similar in content and style to Revelation. It may be beneficial to translate Revelation at the same time as Daniel since they have some imagery and style in common.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Does one need to understand the Book of Revelation to translate it?

One does not need to understand all of the symbols in the Book of Revelation to translate it properly. Translators should not give possible meanings for the symbols or numbers in their translation.

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in Revelation in the ULB?

The scriptures use these words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating Revelation into English, the ULB uses the following principles:

The meaning in two passages indicates moral holiness. Here, the ULB uses "holy." (See: 14:12; 22:11) Usually the meaning in Revelation indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 5:8; 8:3, 4; 11:18; 13:7; 16:6; 17:6; 18:20, 24; 19:8; 20:9) Sometimes the

meaning implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "sanctify," "set apart," "dedicated to," or "reserved for."

The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

Periods of time

John referred to various periods of time in Revelation. For example, there are many references to forty-two months, seven years, and three and a half days. Some scholars think these time periods are symbolic. Other scholars think these are actual time periods. The translator should treat these time periods as referencing actual periods of time. It is then up to the interpreter to determine their significance or what they may represent.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of Revelation?

For the following verses, some modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. The ULB text has the modern reading and puts the older reading in a footnote. If translations of the Bible exist in the general region, translators should consider using the readings found in those versions. If not, translators are advised to follow the modern reading.

"I am the alpha and the omega," says the Lord God, 'the one who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty'" (1:8). Some versions add the phrase "the Beginning and the End." "the elders prostrated themselves and worshiped" (5:14). Some older translations read, "the twenty-four elders prostrated themselves and worshiped the one who lives forever and ever." "so that a third of it [the earth] was burned up" (8:7). Some older versions do not include this phrase. "the one who is and who was" (11:17). Some versions add the phrase "and who is to come." "they are blameless" (14:5). Some versions add the phrase "before the throne of God" (14:5). "the one who is and who was, the Holy One" (16:5). Some older translations read, "O Lord, the One who is and who was and who is to be." "The nations will walk by the light of that city" (21:24). Some older translations read, "The nations that are saved will walk by the light of that city." "Blessed are those who wash their robes" (22:14). Some older translations read "Blessed are those who do his commandments." "God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city" (22:19). Some older translations read, "God will take away his share in the book of life and in the holy city."

Chapter 1

Revelation 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter explains how the Book of Revelation records the vision John received on the island of Patmos. Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page to make them easier to read. The ULB does this with the quoted words in verse 7.

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven churches

John wrote this book to seven actual churches in Asia Minor, which is now the country of Turkey.

White

The Bible often speaks of something that belongs to a person as being "white." This is metaphor and metonym for that person living rightly and pleasing God. (See: and and righteous)

"the one who is, and who was, and who is to come"

God exists now. He has always existed. He will always exist. Your language may have a different way of saying this.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Blood

Blood is a metonym for death. Jesus "has released us from our sins by his blood." John means that Jesus saved us from our sins by dying for us.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"He is coming with the clouds"

Jesus went into the clouds when he went up to heaven after God raised him from the dead. When Jesus returns, he will also be "with the clouds." It is not clear whether he will be sitting or riding on clouds or coming in the clouds or "with the clouds" in some other way. Your translation should express this in a way that is natural in your language.

"One like a son of man"

This refers to Jesus. You should translate the words "son of man" using the same words as you did in the Gospels for when Jesus called himself the "Son of Man."

"The angels of the seven churches"

The word "angels" here can also mean "messengers." This might refer to heavenly beings, or to the messengers or leaders of these seven churches. John uses the same word "angel" (singular) in verse 1 and in many other places throughout the book. Your translation should also use the same word.

Links:

[Revelation 1:1 Notes](#) [Revelation intro](#)

Revelation 1 Commentary

1:1-3

Why did John say “him”?

[1:1]

John said, “God gave him.” He wanted to say “God gave Jesus.”

When will these things happen?

[1:1]

John said that the things he talked about will occur soon. However, he wrote these things about 2000 years ago.

Some scholars think that these things can begin at any time. That is, these things did not occur yet, but it they will occur soon. Other scholars think that the things John talked about will occur quickly once they begin to occur. Other scholars think John wanted to say these things will definitely occur. Other scholars think the things John talked about already occurred or already began to occur.

1:4-6

What were the seven churches?

[1:4]

John wrote the Book of Revelation to seven churches in Asia. This was not modern Asia. Instead, it was a place called “Asia Minor.” That is, it is where the country of Turkey is today.

See Map: Seven churches of Revelation

Who “was,” “is,” and “is to come”?

[1:4]

John spoke about “the one who is, and who was, and who is to come.” Some scholars think this was God the Father. This means God is eternal. That is, he always lived, is currently living, and will always live. These words made the people think about God’s name. That is, the name he told Moses from a burning bush (see: Exodus 3:14). Other scholars think that John spoke about Jesus. That is, Jesus always lived, is currently living, and will always live. Fewer scholars think John wanted people to remember that Jesus has always lived, he came to the earth, he is now in heaven helping people to be at peace with God, and he will return to the earth.

Who were the seven spirits?

[1:4]

John said there were seven spirits who are always around God’s throne. In the Old Testament, Isaiah spoke about the Holy Spirit in seven different ways. Some scholars think John wanted people to think about Isaiah’s words. Therefore, John said the Holy Spirit is in front of the throne of God.

See: Isaiah 11:2

See: Throne

How did John talk about Jesus?

[1:5]

John talked about Jesus in several different ways.

He is the faithful witness. John wanted to say that Jesus was faithful to God. He told other people about God. He did the things God wanted, even when people killed him for doing those things God wanted him to do. He was the first born from the dead. That is, he was the first to die and then be resurrected. (see: Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 15:20). He rules the kings of the earth. Jesus is more powerful than any king ruling on the earth.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

What are the things Jesus does for Christians?

[1:5, 1:6]

John said Jesus did certain things for Christians.

He loved Christians. He released Christians from their sins. He did this by dying for their sins. He made Christians a kingdom. That is, Jesus rules Christians in a special way. He made Christians priests. That is, they can talk to God directly without anyone else’s help.

See: Kingdom of God; Atone (Atonement); Priest (Priesthood)

1:7-8

How will Jesus come with clouds?

[1:7]

John talks about how Jesus returns to the earth. He said that Jesus comes with or on the clouds. Daniel also talked about this (see: Daniel 7:13-14). While this was still in the future for John, some scholars think that this already happened or is continually happening. That is, Jesus is not physically coming on the clouds, They think this is a metaphor for Jesus’ coming back to earth slowly. However, other scholars think that this did not occur yet. They think this will happen fast.

Who pierced him?

[1:7]

Some scholars think John wrote about the actual people who killed Jesus. Other scholars think John wrote about the Jews. That is, the Jewish leaders wanted the Romans to kill Jesus. Other scholars think John wanted to say that anyone who sinned killed Jesus. That is, Jesus died so that people who sinned will be given peace with God.

See: Atonement (Atonement)

Why will people mourn or be sad when Jesus returns?

[1:7]

Some scholars think people will mourn when Jesus returns because they will regret treating him badly. They will be sad because they wanted him to die. Other scholars think people will mourn because Jesus will return to judge sin. People who do not believe in Jesus when he returns will go to hell. They will see what they did wrong, but they will not be able to change it. Therefore, they will be sad. Fewer scholars think that people will mourn because of what Jesus had to suffer while on the earth.

See: Hell

How is God “the alpha and the omega”?

[1:8]

John said that God is “the alpha and the omega.” That is, God is the beginning and the end. Alpha was the first letter in the Greek alphabet. Omega was the last letter of the Greek alphabet. John wanted to say that God was the beginning of the created world. He existed before the earth was created, and He created the world. God is the end because without God, creation would stop existing. That is, God caused all things to exist, and he causes all things to continue to exist. On the last day, God will destroy the world. That is, he will end the world. Therefore, God is both the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega.

See: Last Days

1:9-20

What does John share with Christians?

[1:9]

John said he shared certain things with the Christians to whom he wrote. That is, the same or similar things happened to him that happened to other Christians.

He suffered because he was a Christian. The Christians in Asia Minor also suffered because they were Christians. He was part of God’s kingdom. So are Christians. He was confident that God will fulfill his promises. Christians are also confident of this.

See: Kingdom of God

See Map: Asia Minor

Why was John on the island of Patmos?

[1:9]

John said he was on the island of Patmos because of “the word of God and the testimony about Jesus.” He was separated from society because he told other people about Jesus.

See Map: Patmos

How was John “in the Spirit on the Lord’s day”?

[1:10]

Some scholars think that John was speaking about the Day of the Lord. This is a special time in Scripture when Jesus returns. Therefore, the Holy Spirit took John to this time that did not happen yet. Other scholars think John was speaking about Sunday, which the Bible calls the “Lord’s day.” This was the day of the week Jesus rose from the dead. They think John was “in the Holy Spirit” on this Sunday.

See: Day of the Lord

Who is “the one like the son of man”?

[1:13]

Daniel talked about the “son of man” (see: Daniel 7:13). John was thinking about what Daniel said when he talked about the son of man. Therefore, John saw Jesus.

See: Son of Man

Why was Jesus dressed in the same way the high priest dressed?

[1:13]

Jesus was dressed in the way the high priest of Israel was dressed. Some scholars think that John wanted to say that Jesus was a priest. He was also a prophet and a king.

See: Exodus 28:4; 39:29

See: High Priest; Priest (Priesthood) ; Prophet

How did what Jesus looked like affect John?

[1:17]

John talked about what Jesus looked like. Scholars think that it did not matter what Jesus looked like. Scholars do not agree about the exact meaning of the details of what Jesus looked like. However, John was in awe of Jesus, and Jesus

looked very holy. This is why John fell at Jesus' feet

See: Isaiah 53:2

See: Awe (Awesome); Holy (Holiness, Set Apart)

What are "the keys of death and of Hades"?

[1:18]

Jesus wanted to say that he controls where people go when they die. Therefore, he said that he has "the keys of death and Hades." This was a metaphor. Hades is a place where many people go when they die. Those who believe in Jesus do not go to Hades. They go to heaven.

See: Metaphor; Hades (Sheol); Heaven

Who were the seven angels of the seven churches?

[1:20]

The Greek word, often translated as "angel" (ἄγγελος/g0032), can also be translated as "messenger." Some scholars think God gave each church an angel to protect it. They think John was writing about those angels. Other scholars think that John was speaking about messengers. That is, he spoke about people. They were either the leaders of each of these seven churches, or they were the people who brought John's letters to these seven churches.

Advice to translators: A messenger is a person who says something for someone else. Often, this is because they cannot go somewhere. So, they send someone else to say certain things for them. The messenger does not say what he wants. He says what the person who sends him wants him to say.

See: Angel

Revelation 1:1

General Information:

This is an introduction to the book of Revelation. It explains that it is a revelation from Jesus Christ and it gives a blessing to those who read it.

his servants

This refers to people who believe in Christ.

what must soon take place

"the events that must happen soon"

made it known

"communicated it"

to his servant John

John wrote this book and was referring to himself here.

Alternate translation: "to me, John, his servant"

Revelation 1:2

who testified about ... all the things that he saw

The word "who" refers to John. This tells what John did after he learned about the revelation. Alternate translation:

"And John testified about ... all the things that he saw"

the word of God

"the message that God spoke"

the testimony of Jesus Christ

These words could refer to 1) the testimony that John has given about Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "he has also given testimony about Jesus Christ" Or 2) the testimony that Jesus Christ has given about himself.

Revelation 1:3

the one who reads aloud

This does not refer to a specific person. It refers to anyone who reads it aloud. Alternate translation: "anyone who reads aloud"

obey what is written in it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"obey what John has written in it" or "obey what they read in it"

the time is near

"the things that must happen will soon happen"

Revelation 1:4

General Information:

This is the beginning of John's letter. Here he names himself as the writer and greets the people he is writing to.

May grace be to you and peace

"May you receive grace and peace" or "May you experience grace and peace." This is a wish or blessing.

from the one who is

"from God, who is"

who is to come

Existing in the future is spoken of as coming.

seven spirits

The number seven is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The "seven spirits" refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God.

Revelation 1:5

and from Jesus Christ

This continues the blessing from [Revelation 1:4](#). Alternate translation: "and may grace be to you and peace also from Jesus Christ" or "and may Jesus Christ treat you kindly and enable you to live peacefully and securely"

the firstborn from the dead

"the first person to be raised from death, never to die again"

from the dead

The expression "the dead" describes all dead people together in the underworld. To come back from among them speaks of becoming alive again. Alternate translation: "from among all those who have died"

has freed us from our sins

"has released us from our sins"

Revelation 1:6

has made us a kingdom, priests

"has set us apart and begun to rule over us and he has made us priests"

his God and Father

This is one person. Alternate translation: "God, his Father"

Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

to him be the glory and the power

This is a wish or prayer. Possible meanings are 1) "May

people honor his glory and power" or 2) "May he have glory and power." John prays that Jesus Christ will be honored and will be able to rule completely over everyone and everything.

the power

This probably refers to his authority as king.

Revelation 1:7

General Information:

Here John quotes from Daniel and Zechariah.

every eye

Since people see with the eyes, the word "eye" is used to refer to people. Alternate translation: "every person" or "everyone"

including those who pierced him

"even those who pierced him will see him"

pierced him

Jesus's hands and feet were pierced when he was nailed to the cross. Here it refers to people killing him. Alternate translation: "killed him"

pierced

made a hole in

Revelation 1:8

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is ... the Almighty."

This can be restated so that the quotation is not split.

Alternate translation: "The Lord God says, 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the one who is ... the Almighty.'" or "'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the one who is ... the Almighty,' says the Lord God."

the Alpha and the Omega

These are first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

Possible meanings are 1) "the one who began all things and who ends all things" or 2) "the one who has always lived and who always will live." If the meanings are unclear to readers, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. Alternate translation: "the A and the Z" or "the first and the last"

who is to come

Existing in the future is spoken of as coming.

Revelation 1:9

General Information:

John explains how his vision began and the instructions the Spirit gave him.

your ... you

These refer to the believers in the seven churches.

I, John—your brother and the one who shares with you in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are in Jesus—was

This can be stated as a separate sentence. Alternate translation: "I, John, am your brother who shares with you in God's kingdom and also suffers and patiently endures trials along with you because we belong to Jesus. I was"

because of the word of God

"because I told others the word of God"

the word of God

"the message that God spoke." Translate as in Revelation 1:2.

the testimony about Jesus

"the testimony that God has given about Jesus." Translate as in Revelation 1:2.

Revelation 1:10

I was in the Spirit

John speaks of being influenced by God's Spirit as if he were in the Spirit. Alternate translation: "I was influenced by the Spirit" or "The Spirit influenced me"

the Lord's day

the day of worship for believers in Christ

loud voice like a trumpet

The voice was so loud it sounded like a trumpet.

trumpet

This refers to an instrument for producing music or for calling people to gather together for an announcement or meeting.

Revelation 1:11

Smyrna ... Pergamum ... Thyatira ... Sardis ... Philadelphia ... Laodicea

These are names of cities in the region of western Asia that today is modern Turkey.

Revelation 1:12

Connecting Statement:

John begins to explain what he saw in his vision.

whose voice

This refers to the person speaking. Alternate translation: "who"

Revelation 1:13

son of man

This expression describes a human figure, someone who looks human.

a golden sash

a piece of cloth worn around the chest. It may have had golden threads in it.

Revelation 1:14

His head and hair were as white as wool—as white as snow

Wool and snow are examples of things that are very white. The repetition of "as white as" emphasizes that they were very white.

wool

This is the hair of a sheep or goat. It was known to be very white.

his eyes were like a flame of fire

His eyes are described as being full of light like fire flames.

Alternate translation: "his eyes were glowing like a flame of fire"

Revelation 1:15

His feet were like polished bronze

Bronze is polished to make it shine and reflect light.

Alternate translation: "His feet were very shiny like polished bronze"

like polished bronze, like bronze that had been refined in a furnace

The bronze would be refined first and then polished.

Alternate translation: "like bronze that has been purified in a hot furnace and polished"

furnace

a strong container for holding a very hot fire. People would put metal in it, and the hot fire would burn away any impurities that were in the metal.

the sound of many rushing waters

This is very loud, like the sound of a large, fast flowing river, of a large waterfall, or of loud waves in the sea.

Revelation 1:16

a sword ... was coming out of his mouth

The sword blade was sticking out of his mouth. The sword itself was not in motion.

a sword with two sharp edges

This refers to a double-edged sword, which is sharpened on both sides to cut both directions.

Revelation 1:17

fell at his feet like a dead man

John lay down facing the ground. He was probably very frightened and was showing Jesus great respect.

He placed his right hand on me

"He touched me with his right hand"

I am the first and the last

This refers to the eternal nature of Jesus.

Revelation 1:18

I have the keys of death and of Hades

Having the power over something is spoken of as having the keys to it. The implied information is that he can give life to those who have died and let them out of Hades.

Alternate translation: "I have the power over death and over Hades" or "I have the power to give life to people who

have died and to let them out of Hades"

Revelation 1:19

Connecting Statement:

The Son of Man continues to speak.

Revelation 1:20

stars

These stars are symbols that represent the seven angels of the seven churches.

lampstands

The lampstands are symbols that represent the seven churches. See how you translated this in Revelation 1:12.

the angels of the seven churches

Possible meanings are that these "angels" are 1) heavenly angels who protect the seven churches or 2) human messengers to the seven churches, either messengers who went from John to the churches or the leaders of those churches.

seven churches

This refers to seven churches that actually existed in Asia Minor at that time. See how you translated this in Revelation 1:11.

Chapter 2

Revelation 2 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 2 and 3 together are usually called the "seven letters to the seven churches." You may wish to set each letter apart. The reader can then easily see that they are separate letters.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 27.

Special concepts in this chapter

Poverty and wealth

The Christians in Smyrna were poor because they did not have much money. But they were rich spiritually because God would reward them for their suffering. (See: spirit)

"The devil is about to"

Some authorities were about to take some of the Christians in Smyrna and throw them into prison and even kill some of them

Balaam, Balak, and Jezebel

Balaam, Balak, and Jezebel were people who lived long before Jesus was born. They all tried to harm the Israelites either by cursing them or by making them want to stop obeying God.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

"Let the one who has an ear, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches"

The writer knew that almost all of his readers had physical ears. The ear here is a metonym for hearing what God says and desiring to obey him.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The angel of the church"

The word "angel" here can also mean "messenger." This might refer to the messenger or leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in [Revelation 1:20](#).

"The words of the one who"

The verses with these words can be difficult to translate. They do not make complete sentences. You may need to add "These are" to the beginning of these verses. Also, Jesus used these words to speak of himself as if he were speaking of another person. Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking of other people. Jesus began speaking in [Revelation 1:17](#). He continues to speak through the end of Chapter 3.

Links:

[Revelation 2:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 2

2:1-7

Why did John write seven letters inside of one letter?

[2:1]

John wrote seven letters to seven different churches in chapters two and three. These seven churches were in a place called Asia minor. That is, they were in the country now called Turkey. Some scholars think these letters were a special type of metaphor. They think these seven churches represented seven different types of churches. That is, they represented groups of Christians in certain areas. Fewer scholars think that they represent different periods of time since Jesus died. More scholars think that these were simply seven letters to seven churches when John lived.

See: Metaphor

See Map: Seven churches of Revelation

Where was Ephesus?

[2:1]

See Map: Ephesus

Who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands?

[2:1]

Jesus holds the seven stars in his right hand. He wanted to say that Jesus rules the seven churches to whom John wrote. Or he wanted to say that Jesus controls the seven angels who protect each of these churches. He also walks among the seven golden lampstands. He wanted to say that Jesus is with his church on the earth in some way.

See: 1:20

See: Angel

How did Jesus talk about the Ephesians?

[2:2, 2:3, 2:4]

Jesus said the Ephesian Christians “have left behind their first love.” This was a metaphor. Some scholars think Jesus wanted to say the Ephesians stopped loving Jesus. Other scholars think Jesus wanted to say that the Ephesians stopped loving one another and they stopped loving Jesus. Jesus also said they had “fallen.” That is, they stopped doing what Jesus wanted them to do.

See: Metaphor

What does it mean to repent?

[2:5]

See: Repent (Repentance)

How will Jesus remove the church from its place?

[2:5]

Jesus said, “I will remove your lampstand from its place.” This was a metaphor. He wanted to say that he will punish the church. He would take away the church in Ephesus because of their sinning. Today, the city of Ephesus no longer exist.

Therefore, there is not a church in Ephesus anymore.

Advice to translators: A lampstand is something that holds candles.

See: Metaphor

Who were the Nicolaitans?

[1:6]

Scholars do not know much about the “Nicolaitans.” This Greek word means “to conquer the people.” They were false teachers who did the same things non-Christians did. Some scholars think they were a group of people who did not honor God. Many Christians in Ephesus began to do the things that they did. Other scholars think they were a group of people who said they were Christians, but did not honor God.

See: Revelation 2:15, Numbers 25

Why did John say “he who has an ear, let him hear”?

[1:7]

John said “he who has an ear, let him hear” because he really wanted people to listen to the things that he said. John said that it was the Holy Spirit who said these things. When Jesus spoke, the Holy Spirit also spoke.

See: Trinity

Was Jesus speaking only to the church in Ephesus or to all churches?

[2:7]

In this passage, Jesus spoke to the church in Ephesus. However, in 2:7, Jesus also spoke to many churches. Perhaps this was all churches. Or perhaps he was speaking specifically to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3.

What is the tree of life in the paradise of God?

[2:7]

John said that the “one who conquers” will get to eat from the tree of life in the paradise of God. That is, they will live together with God in heaven forever.

See: Genesis 2:9; 3:2
See: Conquer (Overcome)

2:8-11

How is Jesus the first and the last?

[2:8]

When John said Jesus was the first and the last, he wanted to say that Jesus always lived and will always live. Also, John wanted to comfort the people. The Christians in Smyrna were being persecuted. Because of this, John wanted to comfort them. He reminded them that any problems they had in this world were only temporary. Jesus is in control of all things.

See: Persecute (Persecution)

See Map: Smyrna

How were the Christians in Smyrna both rich and poor?

[2:9]

Christians in Smyrna were poor because they did not have much money. However, Jesus said that they were rich. This is a metaphor. They had the one thing that all people want. They had peace with God, and they will live with him forever in heaven.

See: Metaphor

See Map: Smyrna

Who were the people saying they were Jews?

[1:9]

Smyrna had many Jewish people. Jesus said there were some people who said that they were Jews. However, they were a “synagogue of Satan.” These people were born Jews, but they did not honor God. Jesus said that they honored Satan instead.

See: Synagogue

Why will the Christians in Smyrna suffer for ten days?

[2:10]

Jesus said that the Christians in Smyrna “will suffer for ten days.” Scholars do not agree why Jesus said this.

Some scholars think that Jesus meant these Christians will suffer for a short time. Perhaps for 10 days. Some scholars think Jesus was talking about 10 different Roman Emperors who persecuted the church after Jesus said this. Some scholars think Jesus said that there will be 10 different times when Christians will be severely persecuted. Some scholars think that they were going to suffer within ten days. Some scholars think John wanted to say that God was going to completely test the Christians in Smyrna. This is because 10 is a symbol of completeness in Scripture.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ;Symbol

Who is the one who conquers?

[2:11]

God will give to the one who conquers a crown. When Jesus spoke about the “crown of life,” he wanted to say that these Christians will live together with God in heaven forever. Some scholars think that only those who continued to believe in Jesus when they suffered will live with God forever. More scholars think this is a special reward for Christians who suffered for Jesus, or those who were killed because they were Christians.

See: Conquer (Overcome); Crown;Reward

What is the second death?

[2:11]

Death is something that separates people from something. The first “death” separates a person’s soul from their body. The second “death” separates a person from God forever. Those who believe in Jesus live together with God forever. Those who do not believe in Jesus live forever without God in hell.

See: Soul; Hell

2:12-17

Where was Pergamum?

[2:12]

See Map: Pergamum

Why did Jesus say that he has “the sword with two sharp edges”?

[2:12]

Pergamum was the capital city of one part of the Roman Empire. In ancient times, the government was said to hold a type of sword. This is a metaphor meaning that they were able to kill someone. Here, Jesus said that his sword had two edges. Perhaps this means he can make someone die two times. The first time he makes their body die. The second time, he separates them from God forever. Therefore he said going to hell was the second type of death.

See: Metaphor; Hell

What was Satan’s throne?

[2:13]

A throne was a type of chair. It was where a ruler sat and told people what to do. Some scholars think Jesus spoke about the people of Pergamum worshipping a false god. That is, he spoke about the leader of the Roman Empire. Fewer scholars think Jesus spoke about the throne of a certain false God.

See: Throne; Metaphor

How did the Christians in Pergamum hold tightly to Jesus' name?

[2:13]

Jesus said the Christians in Pergamum held tightly to his name. He wanted to say that they did not reject Jesus and worship a false god. Who were Balak and Balaam?

See: Numbers 22-25; 31

What was a "stumbling block"?

[2:14]

See: Stumble (Stumbling Block)

What was food sacrificed to idols?

[2:14]

See: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 10:14-33

See: Sacrifice; Idolatry (Idol)

What was sexual immorality?

[2:14]

See: Sexual Immorality

Who were the Nicolaitans?

[2:15]

See: Revelation 2:6

Why did Jesus say that he might go to Pergamum?

[2:16]

Jesus said that he will "make war" with the Christians in Pergamum with the "sword from his mouth." Jesus used two metaphors to warn the church in Pergamum that he will go there to punish them if they did not repent. Because Pergamum does not exist anymore, there is no church in Pergamum today. Therefore, some scholars think that Jesus already punished this church. Fewer scholars think that Jesus was talking about punishing the church in Pergamum when Jesus returns.

See: Metaphor Repent (Repentance)

Why did John say, "he who has an ear, let him hear"?

[2:17]

See: 2:7

What was the "hidden manna" Jesus gives to certain people?

[2:17]

Jesus promised to give certain Christians in Pergamum "hidden manna." He promised this to those who "conquer." Some scholars think that Jesus wanted to say that he will help Christians. They think this was a metaphor meaning that Jesus gave them things they need, but cannot see. That is, he gave them the they needed to honor God.

Other scholars think Jesus promised that they will eat manna at a special feast when he returns. In ancient Israel, some Jews believed that the prophet Jeremiah hid some manna in the ark of the covenant. They thought they will eat this manna when the messiah rules.

Fewer scholars think Jesus wanted to say that those who conquer will get to live with Jesus forever.

See: Hebrews 9:4

See: Manna; Metaphor; Prophet; Ark of the Covenant; Messiah (Christ); Conquer (Overcome)

Why did Jesus promise to give white stones to certain people?

[2:17]

In the Ancient Near East, when someone was charged with a crime, a jury decided whether the person was guilty or innocent. They did this by putting a white or black stone into a jar. The white stone meant that they thought the person was innocent. Perhaps Jesus was thinking about this when he promised to give white stones to certain people. In some places, the judge gave the innocent person a white stone.

In the Ancient Near East, white stones were also used as a type of ticket to enter a feast or festival. Perhaps Jesus was thinking about this when he promised to give white stones to certain people.

Advice to translators: A jury is a group of people who decide whether someone accused of a crime is guilty or innocent. If the jury thinks they are guilty, then they are punished. If they do not think they are guilty, then they are not punished.

See: Ancient Near East; Wedding

Why was there a new name on the white stone?

[2:17]

Some scholars think that Jesus will give Christians a new name when they go to heaven (see: Isaiah 62:2). Other scholars think that Jesus will tell them the name of God when they go to heaven. Other scholars think that they get to be called by

Jesus' name. Fewer scholars think that Jesus will have a new name (see: Revelation 3:12).

No one knows what this name is except the person to whom Jesus gives the name. Some scholars think that Jesus will give all Christians a name only the Christian and Jesus know. Other scholars think that this is a special name for Jesus, which allows them to go into Jesus' feast.

See: Exodus 3

See: Heaven; Wedding

2:18-28

Where was Thyatira?

[2:18]

See Map: Thyatira

Why did Jesus say he had "eyes like a flame of fire and feet like polished bronze"?

[2:18]

Jesus said he had "eyes like a flame of fire and feet like polished bronze." These were both metaphors. Jesus wanted to say that he will judge people. Perhaps he spoke about his eyes because he can see everything. Or perhaps, he said this because he hates all sin, and he sees all sins. When Jesus spoke about his bronze feet, perhaps he was thinking about making wine. When people made wine, they stepped on, or crushed, grapes with their feet. Therefore, Jesus wanted to say that he will "crush" or punish evil.

See: 1:12-15; 14:19

See: Metaphor; Wine (Winepress)

How did Jesus describe the church in Thyatira?

[2:19]

Jesus said that the church in Thyatira was growing. That is, they stopped doing many evil things. They started to do the types of things that Jesus did. They began to honor God more and more.

See: Grow in Faith

What did Jesus mean when he said the Christians in Thyatira tolerated Jezebel?

[2:20]

The Christians in Thyatira allowed a false teacher in their church who claimed to speak for God. Some of the Christians obeyed this false teacher. Jesus talked about this false teacher in the same way as Jezebel. Jezebel was a false prophet from ancient Israel. She was one of the most evil people in Israel. She and her husband Ahab made Israel worship false gods (see: 1 Kings 16:33).

See: 1 Kings 18-21; 2 Kings 9

See: Prophet

How was Jesus going to punish this false prophet?

[2:22]

After giving this false teacher time to repent, Jesus said that he will punish him or her. He said that he will "throw her onto a sickbed." Some scholars think that God promised to make this false prophet sick if he did not repent. Perhaps, he would even die. Other scholars think that God wanted to warn people that difficult times were coming for those who did not honor God.

See: Prophet; Repent (Repentance)

What did Jesus say about adultery?

[2:22]

See: Adultery

Who were Jezebel's children?

[2:23]

When Jesus spoke about Jezebel's children, he spoke about those who do the things that she wanted them to do. That is, they did not honor God.

How will God give to everyone "according to their deeds"?

[2:23]

God will give something to everyone "according to their deeds," that is, according to the things they did. Jesus will punish those who do not believe in him. They will go to hell. All Christians will live with God in heaven forever. Jesus will not punish them. However, he will give them rewards based on the things they did to honor God after they believed in Jesus. Jesus will know what they did and why they did what they did. He will know the things they thought about.

See: Hell; Reward

What were the "deep things of Satan"?

[2:24]

Jesus talked about certain Christians not knowing the "deep things of Satan." Perhaps the false prophet thought he spoke for God. But he did not know that he was speaking for Satan and teaching them things that Satan wanted them to know.

See: 1 Corinthians 2:10

See: Prophet

Why did Jesus want the Christians in Thyatira to wait for him to come?

[2:25]

Jesus told the Christians in Thyatira to wait for him to come back. Some scholars think Jesus talked about his physical return to earth to take all Christians to himself. Therefore, he was not only speaking to the people of Thyatira. He spoke to all Christians. Other scholars think he wanted the Christians in Thyatira to live their life knowing Jesus might return any moment to judge them.

Who was the one who conquers?

[2:26]

Jesus will give the one who conquers permission to rule over nations. Some scholars think that God will give certain Christians permission to rule over other groups of Christians. This will happen when Jesus rules on the earth. It will be a reward for those who conquers. Other scholars think that certain Christians will reign in heaven with Jesus. However, some scholars think that all Christians will reign with Jesus in this way. Other scholars think that certain Christians will rule over the nations who did not believe in Jesus.

Jesus also talked about those whom he will give permission to rule. They will "rule them with an iron rod, like clay jars he will break them into pieces" (see: Psalm 2:9). That is, they will rule only because Jesus gave them permission to rule. Or perhaps, they will do certain things that Jesus wants them to do.

See: Conquer (Overcome)Reward

What was the "morning star"?

[2:28]

Some scholars think this was a special place or position in heaven. More scholars think that to have the "morning star" meant Christians will have Jesus, or be with Jesus. These scholars also think they will be light in the world in the same way that God sent Jesus to be light in the world.

See: 22:16 and John 38:7

See: Heaven; Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Revelation 2:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Ephesus.

the angel

Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.

stars

These stars are symbols. They represent the seven angels of the seven churches. See how you translated this in

[Revelation 1:16]

lampstands

The lampstands are symbols that represent the seven churches. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:12]

Revelation 2:2

I know ... your hard labor, and your patient endurance

"Labor" and "endurance" are abstract nouns and can be translated with verbs "work" and "endure." Alternate translation: "I know ... that you work very hard and that you endure patiently"

but are not

"but are not apostles"

you have found them to be false

"you have recognized that those people are false apostles"

Revelation 2:3

for my name

"Name" here is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ.

Alternate translation: "because of me" or "because you believe in my name" or "because you believe in me"

you have not grown weary

Being discouraged is spoken of as being tired. Alternate translation: "you have not become discouraged" or "you have not quit"

Revelation 2:4

I have against you the fact that

"I disapprove of you because" or "I am angry with you because"

you have left behind your first love

To stop doing something is spoken of as leaving it behind.

Love is spoken of as if it is an object that can be left behind.

Alternate translation: "you have stopped loving me as you did at the beginning"

Revelation 2:5

from where you have fallen

No longer loving as much as they used to is spoken of as haven fallen. Alternate translation: "how much you have changed" or "how much you used to love me"

Unless you repent

"If you do not repent"

remove your lampstand

The lampstands are symbols that represent the seven churches. See how you translated "lampstand" in

[Revelation 1:12]

Revelation 2:6

Nicolaitans

people who followed the teachings of a man named

Nicolaus

Revelation 2:7

Let the one who has an ear, hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. Alternate translation:

"Let the one who is willing to listen, listen to" or "The one who is willing to understand, let him understand and obey"

Let the one ... hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. Alternate translation: "If you are willing to listen, listen to" or "If you are willing to understand, then understand and obey"

the one who conquers

This refers to anyone who conquers. Alternate translation: "anyone who resists evil" or "those who do not agree to do evil"

the paradise of God

"God's garden." This is a symbol for heaven.

Revelation 2:8

General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Smyrna.

the angel

Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.

Smyrna

This is the name of a city in a part of western Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]

the first and the last

This refers to the eternal nature of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:17]

Revelation 2:9

I know your sufferings and your poverty

"Sufferings" and "poverty" can be translated as verbs. Alternate translation: "I know how you have suffered and how poor you are"

I know the slander of those who say they are Jews

"Slander" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "I know how people have slandered you—those who say they are Jews" or "I know how people have said terrible things about you—those who say they are Jews"

but they are not

"but they are not real Jews"

a synagogue of Satan

People who gather to obey or honor Satan are spoken of as if they were a synagogue, a place of worship and teaching for the Jews.

Revelation 2:10

The devil is about to throw some of you into prison

The words "The devil" here are a metonym for the people who obey the devil. Alternate translation: "The devil will soon cause others to put some of you in prison"

Be faithful until death

"Be faithful to me even if they kill you." The use of the word "until" does not mean that you should stop being faithful at death.

the crown

"the winner's crown." This was a wreath, originally of olive branches or laurel leaves, that was put on the head of a victorious athlete.

the crown of life

Possible meanings are 1) "a crown that shows that I have given you eternal life" or 2) "true life as a prize like a winner's crown"

Revelation 2:11

Let the one who has an ear, hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Let the one ... hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

The one who conquers

This refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]

will not be hurt by the second death

"will not experience the second death" or "will not die a second time"

Revelation 2:12

General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Pergamum.

the angel

Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.

Pergamum

This is the name of a city in a part of western Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]

the sword with two sharp edges

This refers to a double-edged sword, which is sharpened on both sides to cut both directions. See how you translated this in Revelation 1:16

Revelation 2:13

Satan's throne

Possible meanings are 1) Satan's power and evil influence on people, or 2) the place where Satan rules.

you hold on tightly to my name

"Name" here is a metonym for the person. Firmly believing is spoken of as holding on tightly. Alternate translation: "you firmly believe in me"

you did not deny your faith in me

"Faith" can be translated with the verb "believe." Alternate translation: "you continued to tell people that you believe in me"

Antipas

This is the name of a man.

Revelation 2:14

But I have a few things against you

"I disapprove of you because of a few things you have done" or "I am angry with you because of a few things you did." See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 2:4.

who hold tightly to the teaching of Balaam, who
Possible meanings are 1) "who teach what Balaam taught; he" or 2) "who do what Balaam taught; he."
Balak
This is the name of a king.
who taught Balak to throw a stumbling block before the sons of Israel
Something that leads people to sin is spoken of as a stone in the road that people stumble on. Alternate translation:
"who showed Balak how to cause the people of Israel to sin" be sexually immoral
"sin sexually" or "commit sexual sin"
Revelation 2:15
Nicolaitans
This was the name for a group of people who followed the teachings of a man named Nicolaus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:6]
Revelation 2:16
Repent, therefore
"So repent"
If you do not, I
The verb can be supplied from the previous phrase.
Alternate translation: "If you do not repent, I" wage war against them
"fight against them"
with the sword in my mouth
This refers to the sword in [Revelation 1:16]
Revelation 2:17
Let the one who has an ear hear
Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]
Let the one ... hear
Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]
To the one who conquers
This refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]
Revelation 2:18
General Information:
This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Thyatira.
the angel
Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.
Thyatira
This is the name of a city in a part of western Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]
Son of God
This is an important title for Jesus.
who has eyes like a flame of fire
His eyes are describes as being full of light like a flame of fire. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:14]

feet like polished bronze
Bronze is polished to make it shine and reflect light. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:15]
Revelation 2:19
your love and faith and service and your patient endurance
The abstract nouns "love," "faith," "service," and "endurance" can be translated with verbs. Alternate translation: "How you have loved, trusted, served, and endured patiently"
your love and faith and service and your patient endurance
The implied objects of these verbs can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "How you have loved me and others, trusted me, served me and others, and endured troubles patiently"
Revelation 2:20
But I have this against you
"But I disapprove of some of the things you are doing" or "But I am angry with you because of something you are doing." See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 2:4.
the woman Jezebel, who
Jesus spoke of a certain woman in their church as if she were Queen Jezebel because she did the same kinds of sinful things that Queen Jezebel had done long before that time. Alternate translation: "the woman who is just like Jezebel and"
Revelation 2:21
I gave her time to repent
"I gave her opportunity to repent" or "I waited for her to repent"
Revelation 2:22
I will throw her onto a sickbed ... into great suffering
Her having to lie in bed would be the result of Jesus making her very sick. Alternate translation: "I will make her lie sick in bed ... I will make suffer greatly" or "I will make her very sick ... I will make suffer greatly"
those who commit adultery with her into great suffering
Jesus speaks of causing people to suffer as throwing them into suffering. Alternate translation: "I will make those who commit adultery with her to suffer greatly"
commit adultery
"practice adultery"
unless they repent of her deeds
This implies that they have participated with her in her wicked behavior. By repenting of her deeds, they also repent of participating in her behavior. Alternate translation: "if they do not repent from doing the evil that she does" or "if they do not repent of participating in her deeds"
Revelation 2:23
I will strike her children dead
"I will kill her children"
her children
Jesus spoke of her followers as if they were her children. Alternate translation: "her followers" or "the people who do what she teaches"
thoughts and hearts
The term "heart" a metonym that represents feelings and desires. Alternate translation: "what people think and

want"

I will give to each one of you

This is an expression about punishment and reward.

Alternate translation: "I will punish or reward each one of you"

Revelation 2:24

everyone who does not hold this teaching

Believing a teaching is spoken of as holding the teaching.

Alternate translation: "everyone who does not believe this teaching"

does not hold this teaching

The noun "teaching" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "does not hold to what she teaches" or "does not believe what she teaches"

deep things

Secret things are spoken of as if they were deep. Alternate translation: "secret things"

Revelation 2:25

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 2:26

The one who conquers

This refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]

does my works

"does what I command him to do"

Revelation 2:27

He will rule ... break them into pieces

This is a prophecy from the Old Testament about a king of Israel, but Jesus applies it here to those to whom he gives authority over the nations.

He will rule them with an iron rod

Ruling harshly is spoken of as ruling with an iron rod.

Alternate translation: "He will rule them harshly as if striking them with an iron stick"

like clay jars he will break them into pieces

Breaking them to pieces is an image that represents either 1) destroying evildoers or 2) defeating enemies. Alternate translation: "He will defeat his enemies completely as if breaking clay jars into pieces"

Revelation 2:28

Just as I have received from my Father

Some languages may need to tell what was received.

Possible meanings are 1) "Just as I have received authority from my Father" or 2) "Just as I have received the morning star from my Father."

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

I will also give him

Here "him" refers to the one who conquers.

morning star

This is a bright star that sometimes appears early in the morning just before dawn. It was a symbol of victory.

Revelation 2:29

Let the one who has an ear hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Let the one ... hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Chapter 3

Revelation 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 2 and 3 together are usually called the "seven letters to the seven churches." You may wish to set each letter apart. The reader can then easily see that they are separate letters.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with verse 7.

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven spirits of God

These spirits are the seven spirits of [Revelation 1:4](#).

Seven stars

These stars are the seven stars of [Revelation 1:20](#).

Important metaphors in this chapter

Look, I am standing at the door and am knocking

Jesus speaks of his desire to have the Christians in Laodicea obey him as if he were a man asking people in a house to allow him to enter and eat with them

"Let the one who has an ear, hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches"

The speaker knew that almost all of his readers had physical ears. The ear here is a metonym for hearing what God says and desiring to obey him.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The angel of the church"

The word "angel" here can also mean "messenger." This might refer to the messenger or leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in [Revelation 1:20](#).

"The words of the one who"

The verses with these words can be difficult to translate. They do not make complete sentences. You may need to add "These are" to the beginning of these verses. Also, Jesus used these words to speak of himself as if he were speaking of another person. Your language may not allow people to speak of themselves as if they were speaking of other people. Jesus began speaking in [Revelation 1:17](#). He continues to speak through the end of Chapter 3.

Links:

[Revelation 3:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 3

3:1-6

Where is Sardis?

[3:1]

See Map: Sardis

What were the seven spirits of God and the seven stars?

[3:1]

Jesus said he holds "the seven spirits of God" and the "seven stars." In the Old Testament, Isaiah spoke about the Holy Spirit in seven different ways. Some scholars think John wanted people to think about Isaiah's words when he talked about the seven spirits. He wanted to say that Jesus has power over everything.

See: 1:4, 20; 2:1

See: Seven (Symbol)

Did Jesus speak only to Christians in this letter?

[3:1]

Jesus spoke to the people in the church in Sardis. Some scholars think that he spoke to people in Sardis who believed in Jesus. Other scholars think that Jesus spoke to people who said they were Christians, but who did not really believe in Jesus.

See: Conquer (Overcome)

How were the Christians in Sardis both alive and dead?

[3:1]

The Bible often speaks about people being alive or dead. People thought the Christians in Sardis were alive, but they were dead. That is, Christians normally did things that honored God. However, some Christians in Sardis did things that did not honor God. They did this in secret so that others were not able to see them. When Jesus said their deeds were not complete, he said that they did things that did not honor God. Jesus also used the metaphor of sleeping to talk about the way Christians in Sardis lived. When Jesus said they needed to wake up, he wanted to say they needed to stop doing things that do not honor God and do things that honor God.

See: Metaphor; Born Again (New Life, Regeneration); Sleep (Metaphor)

How will Jesus come in the same way a thief comes?

[3:3]

Jesus said that he will go to the church in Sardis in the same way that a thief enters into a house. When a thief enters a house, people do not know when they will come. A thief hurts the people he robs. In the same way, Jesus will punish those in the church who will not repent. Some scholars think that Jesus spoke about returning to the earth. Fewer scholars think that he spoke about coming to the church in Sardis to punish it.

See: Matthew 24:42-44

See: Repent (Repentance)

How did people in Sardis "not stain their clothes"?

[3:4]

The Bible says that doing things that honor God makes a person clean. Also, doing things that do not honor God makes a person dirty. In 3:4-5, Jesus said that those who honor God and conquer will become friends with God. They will live with him in heaven forever. Jesus will also give them white clothes. That is, they will be completely clean and will not sin anymore.

See: Conquer (Overcome); White (symbol); Clean and Unclean

What is the "Book of Life"?

[3:5]

The Book of Life is the list of people who now live and who will live with God in heaven. Jesus said he will not remove or wipe a person's name from this book. That is, he wanted to say they will live with God forever. They will never be separated from him. Jesus will also speak a person's "name" (ὄνομα/g3686) to God the Father and the angels in heaven. Some scholars think he will tell God the Father and the angels about these Christians. Other scholars think he will tell the Christian their new name.

See: Matthew 10:32; Luke 12:8

See: Name

Why did John say “he who has an ear, let him hear”?

[3:6]

John said “he who has an ear, let him hear” because he wanted people to listen to the things that he said. John said that the Holy Spirit said these things. When Jesus spoke, the Holy Spirit spoke too.

See: Trinity

3:7-13

Where was Philadelphia?

[3:7]

See Map: Philadelphia

What are the keys Jesus holds?

[3:7]

Jesus spoke about entering his kingdom in the same way people unlock a door with a key. He has the power to allow people to enter the kingdom of God or not allow them to enter the kingdom of God. In ancient Israel, the kingdom of Israel was also called the kingdom of David. A man named Eliakim was given permission to govern the king's house when Hezekiah was king. That is, he allowed some people to see the king and did not allow other people to see the king. In a similar way, God gave Jesus permission to rule his kingdom. Jesus held the “key of David.” That is, he has complete control over God's kingdom. God gave Jesus permission to allow certain people into the kingdom.

Jesus said that no one can close this door. Some scholars think there were Jews who tried to stop people from becoming Christians. These scholars think that no one can stop someone from believing in Jesus. He also wanted to say that no one can have peace with God without Jesus.

See: Isaiah 22:22

See: Kingdom of God

Who was the synagogue of Satan?

[3:9]

The synagogue of Satan was the group of Jews who did not believe in Jesus. In Philadelphia, there were many Jews who persecuted the Christians. They did not believe Jesus was the Messiah. Because they did not believe in Jesus, they rejected God. They did not worship God anymore. They served Satan.

Jesus also said that these Jews would one day know that he is the Messiah. They will know that they rejected the Messiah.

See: Philippians 2:10

See: Synagogue; Persecute (Persecution) ; Messiah (Christ); Satan (The Devil)

How will Jesus keep these Christians from the “hour of testing”?

[3:10]

Jesus said that he will keep the Christians in Philadelphia from the “hour of testing.” Scholars think many different things about the meaning of these words:

Christians will not suffer during the difficult times John prophesied in Revelation 6-19. That is, Jesus will not allow them to suffer. They think Christians will not have to suffer the seven years of tribulation that John prophesied. Christians will endure the very difficult time at the end of the world when God will punish all those who do not believe in Jesus. Jesus will protect Christians during these very difficult times. Some scholars think Jesus will protect Christians from physical harm or death. Other scholars think God will not protect people from physical harm or death. But, Jesus will protect Christians from being punished forever in hell. The Roman Empire would not harm the Christians in Philadelphia. Some scholars think God protected the church. Although, some Christians suffered and died. They think this will be true for all Christians in the world. The church will be protected, but individual Christians might suffer and die.

See: Prophecy (Prophesy) ;on)Persecute (Persecution) ; Tribulation; Hell

Why did Jesus say no one will remove these Christians' crown?

[3:11]

Jesus told these Christians that no one will remove their “crown.” People gave this type of crown to those who won races. They earned this crown. Because of this, Jesus wanted to say that no one can remove a Christians' reward if they conquer.

See: Crown; Conquer (Overcome); Reward

Why will Jesus make certain people pillars in the temple of God?

[3:12]

Jesus said he will make certain Christians pillars in the temple of God. Jesus said many Christians will endure strong testing and suffering in their lives. However, the Christians who conquer and keep their belief in Jesus will made pillars in the temple of God.

Advice to translators: Pillars are the things that keep large buildings from falling down. They are tall poles.

See: 1 Corinthians 3:16, Ephesians 2:21-22

See: Temple; Church

Why will the conquerors never go out again?

[3:12]

In ancient times, Philadelphia had many earthquakes. Because of this, the people left their homes. After some time, they returned to their homes. When Jesus said that the conquerors will never go out again, he wanted to say that they will live without fear, safe and secure forever with God in heaven.

See: Conquer (Overcome)

Why did Jesus say he will write the name of God on someone?

[3:12]

Jesus said he will write God's name on those who conquer. In the ancient Near East, a master owned their slave, and the master's name was written on the slave. This meant other people were not able to take their slaves from them. When Jesus writes the name of God on Christians, it means that nothing can take them from God.

See: 7:3, 14:1

See: Ancient Near East

Why did Jesus say he will write the name of the city of God on someone?

[3:12]

Jesus said that he will write the name of the city of God on someone. That is, the New Jerusalem. He wanted to say that these conquerors will be citizens of heaven.

See: Revelation 21

See: Conquer (Overcome); Citizen

Why did Jesus say he will write his new name on someone?

[3:12]

Some scholars think Jesus will give Christians a new name when they go to heaven. Other scholars think that Jesus will tell them the true name of God when they go to heaven. Other scholars think that they will be called by Jesus' name.

Fewer scholars think that Jesus will have a new name.

See Revelation 2:17

See: Heaven

Why did John say, "he who has an ear, let him hear"?

[3:13]

See: 2:6

3:14-22

Where was Laodicea?

[3:14]

See Map: Laodicea

How did Jesus speak about himself in 3:14?

[3:14]

Jesus spoke about himself in different ways in 3:14.

Jesus is the "amen" (ἀμήν/g0281). Jesus used this word because he wanted something to occur. Jesus is the "reliable and true witness." Some scholars think that Jesus wanted to say that the things he said to the Christians in Laodicea were true. Other scholars think that Jesus wanted to say that everything he says is true. Jesus rules the whole universe.

How did Jesus speak about the Christians in Laodicea?

[3:15]

Jesus said the things the Christians in Laodicea did were the same as the water they drank. Near the city of Laodicea were two other cities, Heirapopolis and Colossae. Heirapopolis was known for its hot springs. Colossae was known for its cold, refreshing mountain spring water. However, Laodicea was known for its lukewarm water. This water was neither fresh, nor good to drink. It came to the city through large pipes from many miles away. The hot and cold water from Heirapopolis and Colossae were good. But lukewarm water from Laodicea made people sick. Jesus said this metaphor to say he wanted people to be hot or cold. If people were hot, they were happy to honor God. If they were not hot, Jesus wanted them to be cold.

Some scholars think he wanted them to not believe in Jesus and not honor him. Other scholars think the cold water was refreshing. That is, this also meant he wanted people to be happy to do the things that honor God. However, Jesus did not want people to be lukewarm. That is, he did not want people to be uncaring or unconcerned about him. Some scholars think that this is because people who do not care or who are unconcerned do not think they need Jesus. They do not think they need any help to be good people. However, those who reject Jesus know they need him in order to be good people.

While they may serve other gods, they just need to learn about the true God.

Other scholars think that Jesus was speaking about people who said they were Christians, but who do not believe in Jesus. They think that some people who say they are Christians do not really believe in Jesus and will not live with God in heaven forever.

Advice to translators: Lukewarm is neither hot or cold. It is the temperature of water if it is left outside.

See: Metaphor; Ancient Near East

Was Laodicea a wealthy city?

[3:17]

The things done in Laodicea caused many people there to be very wealthy. Jesus said this because wealthy people often do not think they need anything. However, they still needed Jesus. Without Jesus, God thinks they are very poor. That is, they are spiritually poor. They do not have anything of value. Money will not help them go to heaven or be at peace with God. This is why Jesus said the things he said in 3:18.

How are non-Christians naked?

[3:17]

Jesus said non-Christians were naked. Before Adam and Eve sinned, they were naked. They did not know they were naked. They did not feel the need to cover their bodies. However, after they sinned, they were ashamed because God saw their sin. they were naked in front of God. That is, they were fully exposed in front of God. (see: 3:18).

Advice to translators: Here exposed means everything about Adam and Eve was uncovered in front of God. That is, they were unable to hide their sinning from him because God knows all things.

See: Genesis 3; Isaiah 47:1-4

Why did Jesus talk about medicine for a person's eyes?

[3:18]

In the ancient Near East, Laodicea was known for making a certain medicine for sicknesses in the eyes. Jesus said that people who rejected Jesus were blind. That is, they did not see the truth about Jesus. Therefore, Jesus said that he will give these people medicine so that they can see the truth, that is, believe in Jesus.

See: Ancient Near East

Why did Jesus say that he was standing at a door knocking?

[3:20]

Jesus said he stood at a door knocking and waiting for someone to open the door. When Jesus said this, some scholars think he wanted people to believe in him and be saved from sinning. They think that the door was a metaphor about entering into heaven. More scholars think Jesus wanted the Christians to welcome him into their church. Therefore, Jesus wanted to be friends with them even though they did not honor him.

When Jesus spoke about eating with him, some scholars think that Jesus spoke about the Lord's Supper. That is, Jesus spoke about people becoming Christians and remembering his death by eating bread together. Other scholars think he spoke about something the Bible calls the "wedding celebration of the lamb" (see: Revelation 19:6-9).

See: Metaphor; Lord's Supper; Wedding

How will the conquerors sit on the throne with Jesus?

[3:21]

Jesus said that those who conquer will sit on the throne with him. He wanted to say that he will give permission to those who conquer to rule for him on the earth (see: 5:10). Some scholars think this is a metaphor for certain Christians who will rule on the earth with physical bodies. Scholars do not agree when this will occur.

See: Conquer (Overcome); Metaphor

Why did John say, "he who has an ear, let him hear"?

[3:22]

See: 2:6

Revelation 3:1

General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Sardis.

the angel

Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.

Sardis

This is the name of a city in the western part of Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]

the seven spirits

The number seven is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The "seven spirits" refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:4]

the seven stars

These stars are symbols that represent the seven angels of the seven churches. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:16]

You have a name that you are alive

The word "name" here is a metonym for a reputation.

Alternate translation: "You have a reputation for being alive" or "People think that you are alive"

alive ... dead

Obedying and honoring God is spoken of as being alive; disobeying and dishonoring him is spoken of as being dead. Revelation 3:2

Wake up and strengthen what remains but is about to die

The good deeds done by the believers in Sardis are spoken of as if they were alive but in danger of dying. Alternate translation: "Wake up and complete the work that remains; otherwise what you have done will become worthless" or "Wake up. If you do not finish what you have started to do, your previous work will have been useless"

Wake up

Being alert to danger is spoken of as waking up. Alternate translation: "Be alert" or "Be careful"

Revelation 3:3

what you have received and heard

This refers to God's word, which they believed. Alternate translation: "God's word that you heard and the truth that you believed"

if you do not wake up

Being alert to danger is spoken of as waking up. See how you translated "wake up" on [Revelation 3:2]

I will come as a thief

Jesus will come at a time when people do not expect him, just as a thief comes when not expected.

Revelation 3:4

a few names

The word "names" is a metonym for the people themselves.

Alternate translation: "a few people"

have not stained their clothes

Jesus speaks of sin in a person's life as if it were a stain on clothes. Alternate translation: "have not made their lives sinful"

will walk with me

People commonly spoke of living as "walking." Alternate translation: "will live with me"

dressed in white

White clothes represent a pure life without sin. Alternate translation: "and they will be dressed in white, which shows that they are pure"

Revelation 3:5

The one who conquers

This refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]

will be clothed in white garments

This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "will wear white garments" or "I will give white clothes"

I will confess his name

He would announce that the person belongs to him, not simply say the person's name. Alternate translation: "I will announce that he belongs to me"

before my Father

"in the presence of my Father"

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

Revelation 3:6

Let the one who has an ear hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Let the one ... hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Revelation 3:7

General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Philadelphia.

the angel

Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.

Philadelphia

This is the name of a city in the western part of Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]

key of David

Jesus speaks of his authority to decide who may go into his kingdom as if it were King David's key.

he opens and no one shuts

"he opens the door to the kingdom and no one can close it"

he shuts and no one can open

"he closes the door and no one can open it"

Revelation 3:8

I have put before you an open door

"I have opened a door for you"

you have obeyed my word

Possible meanings are 1) "you have followed by teachings" or 2) "you have obeyed my commands"

my name

The word "name" here is a metonym for the person who has that name. Alternate translation: "me"

Revelation 3:9

General Information:

The writer begins his sentence with "I will cause," but he does not finish the sentence by telling what he will cause "those who belong to the synagogue of Satan" to do. He begins the sentence again with "I will make them," where "them" refers to "those who belong to the synagogue of Satan."

synagogue of Satan

People who gather to obey or honor Satan are spoken of as if they were in a synagogue, a place of worship and teaching for the Jews. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:9]

those calling themselves Jews but are not, but rather liars

"those calling themselves Jews when they are not Jews: instead, they are liars." These words further describe "those who belong to the synagogue of Satan."

bow down

This is a sign of submission, not worship. Alternate translation: "bow down in submission"

before your feet

Here the word "feet" represent the person before whom these people bow down. Alternate translation: "before you" or "to you"

they will know

"they will learn" or "they will admit"

Revelation 3:10

will also keep you from the hour of testing

"will also prevent the hour of testing from happening to you" or "will protect you so you do not enter the hour of testing"

hour of testing

"time of testing." This probably means "the time when people try to make you disobey me."

is coming

Existing in the future is spoken of as coming.

Revelation 3:11

I am coming soon

It is understood that he is coming in order to judge.

Alternate translation: "I am coming to judge soon"

Hold to what you have

Continuing to believe firmly in Christ is spoken of as if it were holding something tightly. Alternate translation: "Continue to believe firmly"

crown

A crown was a wreath, originally of olive branches or laurel leaves, that was put on the head of a victorious athlete. Here "crown" stands for a reward. See how you translated "crown" in Revelation 2:10.

Revelation 3:12

The one who conquers I will make a pillar in the temple of my God Here "The one who conquers" refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]

Revelation 3:13

Let the one who has an ear, hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Let the one ... hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Revelation 3:14

General Information:

This is the beginning of the Son of Man's message to the angel of the church in Laodicea.

the angel

Possible meanings are that this "angel" is 1) a heavenly angel who protects this church or 2) a human messenger to the church, either a messenger who went from John to the church or the leader of the church. See how you translated "angel" in Revelation 1:20.

Laodicea

This is the name of a city in the western part of Asia that today is modern Turkey. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:11]

The words of the Amen

Here "the Amen" is a name for Jesus Christ. He guarantees God's promises by saying amen to them.

the ruler over God's creation

Possible meanings are 1) "the one who rules over everything that God created" or 2) "the one through whom God created everything."

Revelation 3:15

you are neither cold nor hot

The writer speaks of the Laodiceans as if they were water. Possible meanings are 1) "cold" and "hot" represent two extremes of spiritual interest or love for God, where "cold"

is to be completely against God, and to be "hot" is to be zealous to serve him, or 2) "cold" and "hot" both refer to water that is useful for drinking or for cooking or healing, respectively. Alternate translation: "you are like water that is neither cold nor hot"

Revelation 3:16

I am about to vomit you out of my mouth

Rejecting them is spoken of as vomiting them out of the mouth. Alternate translation: "I will reject you as I would spit out lukewarm water"

Revelation 3:17

you are most miserable, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked

Jesus speaks of their spiritual condition as if he were speaking about their physical condition. Alternate translation: "You are like people who are most miserable, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked"

Revelation 3:18

Buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and brilliant white garments so you may clothe yourself and not show the shame of your nakedness, and salve to anoint your eyes so you will see

Here to "buy" represents receiving things from Jesus that have true spiritual value. The "gold refined by fire" represents spiritual wealth. The "brilliant white garments" represents righteousness. And the "salve to anoint your eyes" represents the ability to understand spiritual things.

Alternate translation: "Come to me and receive spiritual wealth, which is more valuable than gold that is refined by fire. Receive from me righteousness, which is like brilliant white garments, so that you will not be ashamed. And receive from me wisdom, which is like salve for the eyes, so that you may understand spiritual things"

Revelation 3:19

be earnest and repent

"be serious and repent"

Revelation 3:20

I am standing at the door and am knocking

Jesus speaks about wanting people to relate to him as if he wanted them to invite him into their home. Alternate translation: "I am like one standing at the door and knocking"

am knocking

When people want someone to welcome them into their home, they knock on the door. Alternate translation: "I want you to let me come inside"

hears my voice

The phrase "my voice" refers to Christ speaking. Alternate translation: "hears me speak" or "hears me call"

I will come into his home

Some languages might prefer the verb "go" here. Alternate translation: "I will go in to his home"

and will eat with him

This represents being together as friends.

Revelation 3:21

The one who conquers

This refers to anyone who conquers. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:7]

to sit down with me on my throne

To sit on a throne means to rule. Alternate translation: "to rule with me" or "to sit down on my throne and rule with

me"

my Father

This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.

Revelation 3:22

Connecting Statement:

This is the end of the Son of Man's messages to the angels of the seven churches.

Let the one who has an ear, hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he has just said is important and may take some effort to understand and put into practice. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Let the one ... hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Chapter 4

Revelation 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with verses 8 and 11.

John has finished describing the letters to the churches. He now begins to describe a vision that God showed him.

Special concepts in this chapter

Jasper, carnelian, and emerald

These words refer to kinds of special stones that the people in John's day considered valuable. It may be difficult for you to translate these words if people in your culture do not value special kinds of stones.

Twenty-four elders

Elders are church leaders. Twenty-four elders may be symbolic of the whole church through the ages. There were twelve tribes in Old Testament Israel and twelve apostles in the New Testament church.

Seven spirits of God

These spirits are the seven spirits of [Revelation 1:4](#).

Giving glory to God

God's glory is the great beauty and radiant majesty that God has because he is God. Other Bible writers describe it as if it were a light so bright that no one can look at it. No one can give God this kind of glory, because it is already his. For people "to give glory" to God and for God "to receive glory" means that people are praising and worshipping God because of the glory he already has. (See: glory and worthy and worship)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Difficult images

Such things as bolts of lightning coming from the throne, lamps that are spirits, and a sea in front of the throne may be difficult to imagine, and so the words for them may be difficult to translate.

Links:

[Revelation 4:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 4

4:1-3

How did John speak about something different in this chapter?

[4:1]

In 4:1, John spoke about something different. John began to prophesy about things happening in the future. John talked about these things in Revelation 4-19. Some scholars think all of these prophecies were already fulfilled. Other scholars think some of these prophecies were fulfilled and some will be fulfilled in the future. Other scholars think that none of these prophecies were fulfilled yet.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)

What is a vision?

[4:1]

John saw these prophecies in a vision. A vision are words or images that are seen inside of someone's mind. It is not seen by other people, only by the person having the vision. John described the things that he saw happen. These things did not actually happen when he saw them. God showed him things that were going to happen in the future.

See: Vision; Prophecy (Prophecy)

What were "these things"?

[4:1]

Some scholars think "these things" were what John said was going to happen to the seven church in Revelation 2-3. They think John wanted to say that after these things happen, the things he was about to say will happen. Fewer scholars think

that John was talking about what will happen after the time period of the church. They think God will take all Christians from the earth. The things John talks about will only happen after God takes all Christians from the earth.

See: Church

What was John describing in these verses?

[4:1, 4:2]

In his vision, John saw a place in heaven. In this place, there was a throne. This throne in heaven is the place where God the Father rules.

Some scholars think John spoke of a throne where a king ruled. On his throne the king led his people and made rules for people to follow. 1. Some scholars think John spoke of a throne where a judge ruled or judged people. They think John spoke of a place where Jesus judged people. Other scholars think he spoke of rulers who persecuted Christians when John lived. Some scholars think John spoke of things that are physically in heaven. Other scholars think John spoke using metaphors. If this is true, then these things are not physically in heaven. They are a way to speak of what is in heaven in a way people on earth will know.

See: Vision; Heaven; Persecute (Persecution) ; Metaphor

What was a trumpet?

[4:1]

A trumpet was a loud musical instrument. It was made of metal, and it was a type of instrument called a horn. In ancient times, people used trumpets to tell other people that something or someone was coming. Someone or something which the people needed to know and to listen. John said God's voice sounded the same as a trumpet. Some scholars think this was because he was about to say something that John needed to listen to.

How was John "in the spirit"?

[4:2]

In 4:2, John said he was "in the spirit." Some scholars think John wanted to say that God gave him a vision. Since he already had a vision, this was another vision. Or it was a special part of the first vision. He said he was in the spirit because his physical body was not taken to heaven. He saw the things he wrote about, but he was not inside heaven. Other scholars think the Holy Spirit was with John in a special way.

See: Vision; Heaven

How did John describe God?

[4:3]

John saw God sitting on a throne in heaven. He used metaphors to describe God. However, he did not describe God, but the area around God. There are many opinions about the true meanings of these metaphors. However, God is described in the same way light is described. This light could be so bright that it makes someone blind if they looked at it (See: 1 Timothy 6:15-16). If this is true, then this is because God is so amazing, he cannot be looked at or approached.

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

4:4-5

Who were the 24 elders?

[4:4]

John said 24 men were near the throne of God in heaven. They had their own thrones. Some scholars think God gave them permission to rule something. Scholars think different things about who are these 24 men.

Some scholars think these are leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles. Some scholars think there were 24 different groups of priests in the Old Testament (see: Ezekiel 8:16; 11:1; 1 Chronicles 24-25). Some scholars think they were angels. Some scholars think they are certain Christians. They may represent all Christians.

See: Tribes of Israel; Apostle; Angel

How were the elders dressed?

[4:4]

The elders wore white clothes and gold crowns. In the Bible, white clothes meant that a person was holy, pure, or clean. In ancient times, a king wore a crown made of gold. They wore crowns because it showed people that they were the king.

Some scholars think God gave these elders permission to rule over something. Other scholars think John spoke about a certain type of crown given to someone who won something. That is, they earned this crown. Fewer scholars think that the angels wore these crowns. That is, they were given permission to judge people (see: 20:4).

See: Elder; Crown; White (symbol); Angel

Why did John describe a storm near God?

[4:5]

John described a storm near God. In ancient times, people thought the gods caused storms. This was because people did not control a storm. It was too powerful for them to control. Some scholars think this was what John was saying when he said these things. Other scholars think John thought about the storms when God met Moses on Mount Sinai (see: Exodus 19:16).

See: Sinai

See Map: Mount Sinai

What were the seven burning lamps in front of God's throne?

[4:5]

There were seven burning lamps in front of the throne of God. John said these were the seven spirits of God. Scholars think John spoke about the Holy Spirit. The number seven was used in the Bible many times. It was used when the writer wanted to say something was complete or perfect.

See: Revelation 1:4; Ezekiel 1:13

See: Seven (Symbol); Throne; Holy Spirit

4:6-11

Why was there a sea of glass in front of God's throne?

[4:6]

Scholars do not know why there was a sea of glass in front of God's throne. This separated God from everything he made. They think Ezekiel also spoke about this (see: Ezekiel 1). Some scholars think John spoke about the separation of the waters when the world was being created (see: Genesis 1:7).

See: Exodus 24:10; 1 Kings 7:23; Revelation 15:2

See: Throne

What were these four creatures?

[4:6]

There were four "creatures" (ζῷον/g2226) around the throne of God. Some scholars think these creatures were angelic beings in the form of animals. However, they were not animals from the earth. They were alive and they had many eyes. John described these animals in the same way as animals from the earth.

See: Throne; Angel

Why were these creatures around the throne of God?

[4:6]

There were four living "creatures" (ζῷον/g2226) around the throne of God. Ezekiel spoke of creatures in much the same way John spoke of them (see: Ezekiel 1). Scholars do not know if John wrote about them for a certain reason. Some scholars think each creature spoke about God, and how he works inside of his creation. Other scholars think John spoke about the four gospels and how they talked about Jesus in different ways. This helps people to know God.

See: Throne; Gospel

Why did these creatures speak?

[4:8]

The creatures near God said, "holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty, who was, and who is, and who is to come." They always praise God. God has always been alive. God is alive. And God will always be alive. John wanted to say God will return to the earth.

See: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Praise

Revelation 4:1

General Information:

John begins to describe his vision of the throne of God.

After these things

"Just after I had seen these things." Here "these things" refers to what John saw in (Revelation 2:1-3:22)

an open door in heaven

This expression stands for the ability that God gave John to see into heaven, at least by means of a vision.

speaking to me like a trumpet

How the voice was like a trumpet can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "speaking to me loudly like the sound of a trumpet"

trumpet

This refers to an instrument for producing music or for calling people to gather together for an announcement or meeting. See how you translated this in Revelation 1:10.

Revelation 4:2

I was in the Spirit

John speaks of being influenced by God's Spirit as if he were in the Spirit. See how you translated this in

[Revelation 1:10]

Revelation 4:3

jasper and carnelian

These are valuable stones. Jasper may have been clear like glass or crystal, and carnelian may have been red.

emerald

a green, valuable stone

Revelation 4:4

twenty-four elders

"24 elders"

golden crowns

These were likenesses of wreaths of olive branches or laurel leaves, hammered out in gold. Such crowns, made of leaves, were given to victorious athletes to wear on their heads.

Revelation 4:5

flashes of lightning

Use your language's way of describing what lightning looks like each time it appears.

rumblings, and crashes of thunder

These are the loud noises that thunder makes. Use your language's way of describing the sound of thunder.

seven spirits of God

The number seven is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The "seven spirits" refers either to the Spirit of

God or to seven spirits who serve God. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:4]

Revelation 4:6

a sea of glass

How it was like glass or a sea can be stated clearly. Possible meanings are 1) a sea is spoken of as if it were glass.

Alternate translation: "a sea that was as smooth as glass" or 2) glass if spoken of as if it were a sea. Alternate translation: "glass that was spread out like a sea"

like crystal

How it was like crystal can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "clear as crystal"

In the middle of the throne and around the throne

"Immediately around the throne" or "Close to the throne and around it"

four living creatures

"four living beings" or "four living things"

Revelation 4:7

The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature was like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle

How the head of each living creature appeared to John is expressed as a comparison with something more familiar.

living creature

"living being" or "living thing." See how you translated this in Revelation 4:6

Revelation 4:8

full of eyes on top and underneath

The top and bottom of each wing was covered with eyes.

who is to come

Existing in the future is spoken of as coming.

Revelation 4:9

the one who sits on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever

This is one person. The one who sits on the throne lives

forever and ever.

forever and ever

These two words mean about the same thing and are repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: "for all eternity"

Revelation 4:10

twenty-four elders

"24 elders." See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:4]

fall down

They purposely lie down facing the ground to show that they are worshiping.

They lay their crowns before the throne

These crowns looked like wreaths of olive branches or laurel leaves, hammered out in gold. The elders were respectfully placing the crowns on the ground, showing that they were submitting to God's authority to rule.

Alternate translation: "they lay their crowns before the throne to show that they are submitting to him"

lay

Possible meanings are 1) to place or 2) to throw down forcibly, as of something worthless ("throw," Revelation 2:22). The reader should understand that the elders are acting respectfully.

Revelation 4:11

our Lord and our God

"our Lord and God." This is one person, the one sitting on the throne.

to receive glory and honor and power

These are things that God always has. Being praised for having them is spoken of as receiving them. Alternate translation: "to be praised for your glory, honor, and power" or "for everyone to praise you because you are glorious, honorable, and powerful"

Chapter 5

Revelation 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 9-13.

Special concepts in this chapter

Sealed scroll

Kings and important people in John's time wrote important documents on large pieces of paper or animal skin. They then rolled them up and sealed them with wax so they would stay closed. Only the person to whom the document was written had the authority to open it by breaking the seal. In this chapter, "the one who was seated on the throne" had written the scroll. Only the person called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" and "the Lamb" had the authority to open it. (See: scroll and authority)

Twenty-four elders

Elders are church leaders. Twenty-four elders may be symbolic of the whole church through the ages. There were twelve tribes in Old Testament Israel and twelve apostles in the New Testament church.

Christian prayers

The prayers of Christians are described as incense. Christian prayers have a good smell to God. He is pleased when Christians pray.

Seven spirits of God

These spirits are the seven spirits of [Revelation 1:4](#).

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

The "Lion of the tribe of Judah" and the "Root of David" are metaphors that refer to Jesus. Jesus descended from the tribe

of Judah and the family of David. Lions are fierce, and all animals and people are afraid of them, so they are a metaphor for a king whom everyone obeys. The words "Root of David" speak of Israel's King David as if he were a seed that God had planted and of Jesus as if he were a root growing from that seed.

Links:

[Revelation 5:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 5

5:1-3

Who did John see?

[5:1]

John saw God sitting on a throne.

See: Throne

What did God hold in his hand?

[5:1]

God held a scroll in his hand. When John lived, people wrote on an old type of paper. This paper was rolled together. They did this to send messages to other people. Often, people sealed these scrolls with wax. The wax had a special symbol pressed into it. This was used for official things the government wanted to send to people. They used this seal to make sure that only certain people read the scrolls. If the seal was unbroken when someone was given the scroll, they knew no one read the scroll.

Often, these scrolls had writing on only one side. However, this scroll was written on both sides.

Advice to translators: Some may translate "scroll" as "book." However, a scroll is rolled and a book has its pages stacked and bound on one side. It is important for people to know that John was speaking about a scroll because it was rolled.

See: Scroll

What are the seven seals?

[5:1]

Normally, people sealed a scroll once. However, this scroll was sealed seven times. Some scholars think these seven seals all sealed the edge of the scroll. Therefore, one needed to remove all seven seals to read the message. Other scholars think this scroll was sealed in different places throughout the scroll. After each seal was removed, a part of the message can be read.

Why was the number seven used so many times?

[5:1]

See: Seven (Symbol)

Why was the scroll sealed?

[5:2]

Only Jesus was able to open the seals on this scroll and read its message. However, scholars do not agree about why the scroll was sealed.

Only Jesus knows what will happen in the future. Only he can tell people what will happen in the future. Therefore, the scroll announced something. This scroll told who will rule the earth after God punished it. In ancient Rome, people were given property in a scroll sealed seven times. Therefore, this scroll told people that God will control the earth once again. That is, Satan will not have permission to rule the earth anymore. This scroll told people about God's plan for the universe and everything in it.

Why could only a certain person open the scroll?

[5:3]

The angel said that only a certain type of person was able to open the scroll. This was someone who was "worthy." That is, someone who earned the right to open it. Jesus is able to open it because he is perfect. Jesus earned the right to open the seals of the scroll because he died and came back from being dead.

Who is "under the earth"?

[5:3]

In Scripture, Satan and the demons are said to live under the earth. This is because people in ancient Israel spoke about the place where God lives as being in an upward direction. Living under the earth is the opposite of living "up" in the sky. Satan and the demons do not live underground.

See: Philippians 2:10

See: Satan (The Devil); Demon

5:4-6

Why did John cry?

[5:4]

John cried when no one was able to open this scroll and read it. Some scholars think John was sad that the things God

planned would happen. Fewer scholars think John was overwhelmed by the things he saw. They think anyone would cry if they saw the end of the world.

Why was Jesus called different names?

[5:5]

One of the elders saw Jesus, and he called him by different names.

He is the “lion of the tribe of Judah.” The Old Testament prophesied that the rulers of Israel would come from the tribe of Judah (see: Genesis 49:10). He is the “root of David.” This is the fulfillment of God’s promise to David that one of his descendants will rule forever (see: 2 Samuel 7:8-17; Isaiah 11:1). He also looked like a lamb after being sacrificed to God.

This is because Jesus sacrificed himself so that people could be at peace with God.

See: Elder; Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Tribes of Israel; Lamb of God

What did Jesus conquer?

[5:5]

Jesus died so that people could be at peace with God. John speaks about this as a type of win or victory. Jesus “defeated” or “conquered”(νικᾶω/g3528) Satan. It is because of this that Jesus is able to open the scroll. It is also because of this that John saw Jesus defeating Satan forever. John wanted people to know that the things he saw will happen.

See: Satan (The Devil); Conquer (Overcome)

Why did Jesus have the seven horns and eyes?

[5:6]

In Revelation, there are many different symbols. It is hard to know what these symbols mean. In the ancient world, horns were often a symbol of power. And perhaps the eyes were symbols of being able to see everything or know everything.

See: Symbol; Seven (Symbol)

Who were the seven spirits?

[5:6]

John said that there were seven spirits in front of the throne of God. In the Old Testament, Isaiah spoke about the Holy Spirit in 7 different ways (see: Isaiah 11:1-2). John might have wanted people to think about Isaiah’s words when he talked about the seven spirits. Therefore, John said the Holy Spirit is before, or in front of, the throne of God.

See: Revelation 1:4

See: Seven (Symbol); Throne

5:7-10

Why did Jesus take the scroll out of God’s right hand?

[5:7] John said that Jesus took the scroll out of God’s right hand. In Scripture, the right hand is a symbol of power. The right hand of the king symbolizes the power of a king. God gave Jesus the power to open the scroll..

See: Symbol

Who were the 24 elders?

[5:8]

John said 24 men were near the throne of God in heaven. God gave them their own thrones. This could mean God gave them permission to rule something. Scholars think different things about who these 24 men were.

Some scholars think these were leaders of the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles. Some scholars think there were 24 different groups of priests in the Old Testament (see: Ezekiel 8:16; 11:1; 1 Chronicles 24-25). Some scholars think they were angels. Some scholars think they were certain Christians. They may represent all Christians.

See: Elder; Throne; Heaven; Tribes of Israel; Apostle; Priest (Priesthood) ; Angel

What were these four creatures?

[5:8]

There were four “creatures”(ζῴον/g2226) around the throne of God. Some scholars think these creatures were angelic beings in the form of animals. However, they were not animals from the earth. They were alive and they had many eyes. John described these animals in the same way as animals from the earth.

See: Throne; Angel

Why were these creatures around the throne of God?

[5:8]

There were four living “creatures”(ζῴον/g2226) around the throne of God. Ezekiel also talked about living creatures in a similar way (see: Ezekiel 1). Scholars do not know if John wrote about them for a certain reason. Some scholars think the creatures spoke of God and how he works with his creation. Other scholars think John thought about the four gospels and how they talked about Jesus in different ways. This helps people to know God.

See: Throne; Gospel

Why did John compare the prayers of the holy ones to a bowl full of incense?

[5:8]

In ancient Israel, people thought angels helped bring people’s prayers to God. In the same way incense has a fragrant smell, John spoke about the prayers of people in the same way as a fragrant offering to God.

See: Holy Ones;Angel; Fragrant Offering (Aroma)

How did Jesus "purchase" people?

[5:8]

In his vision, John saw that Jesus purchased or bought people through his blood. That is, he purchased people through his death. Jesus freed people from being slaves to doing evil things. Jesus needed to die to make this happen.

See: Atone (Atonement); Redeem (Redemption)

How are Christians priests?

[5:10]

Christians help non-Christians to know about God. In Israel, a person came to God through a priest. Israel also helped the Gentile nations know about God. Because of this, they acted in the way of a priest to the Gentile nations.

See: Priest (Priesthood) ; Gentile

How will people rule on the earth?

[5:10]

The elders and creatures sang about people who will rule on the earth. When they said this, they were singing about all those who believe in Jesus. Scholars do not agree about how people will rule on the earth.

Some scholars think Christians will rule over their own lives after they believe in Jesus. They will no longer be slaves to Satan. That is, satan will no longer rule over them. Some scholars think that certain Christians will rule with Jesus when he returns to the earth. Some scholars think that Christians ruling was a metaphor. The elders said that Christians make the world a better place.

See: Elder;Metaphor

5:11-14

How did John describe what happened in the place where God rules in this passage?

[5:11, 5:12, 5:13, 5:14]

John described what happened in the place in heaven where God rules. He said that everything where God rules praises him and gives him honor. That is the purpose of the four living creatures and the twelve elders. That is, they praise and honor God continually.

See: Heaven; Elder

Revelation 5:1

Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe what he saw in his vision of the throne of God.

Then I saw

"After I saw those things, I saw"

the one who was seated on the throne

This is the same "one" as in Revelation 4:2-3.

a scroll written on the front and on the back

"a scroll with writing on the front and the back"

sealed with seven seals

"and it had seven seals keeping it closed"

Revelation 5:2

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?

The person would need to break the seals in order to open the scroll. Alternate translation: "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"

Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?

This can be translated as a command: "The one who is worthy to do this should come to break the seals and open the scroll!"

Revelation 5:3

in heaven or on the earth or under the earth

This means everywhere: the place where God and the angels live, the place where people and animals live, and the place where those who have died are. Alternate translation: "anywhere in heaven or on the earth or under the earth"

Revelation 5:4

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 5:5

Look

"Listen" or "Pay attention to what I am about to tell you"

The Lion of the tribe of Judah

This is a title for the man from the tribe of Judah that God had promised would be the great king. Alternate translation: "The one who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah" or "The king who is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah"

The Lion

The king is spoken of as if he were a lion because a lion is very strong.

the Root of David

This is a title for the descendant of David that God had promised would be the great king. Alternate translation: "the one who is called the Root of David"

the Root of David

The descendant is spoken of as if David's family were a tree and he were a root of that tree. Alternate translation: "the Descendant of David"

Revelation 5:6

General Information:

The Lamb appears in the throne room.

a Lamb

A "lamb" is a young sheep. Here it is used symbolically to refer to Christ.

seven spirits of God

The number seven is a symbol of completeness and perfection. The "seven spirits" refers either to the Spirit of God or to seven spirits who serve God. See how you translated this in Revelation 1:4.

sent out into all the earth

This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "which God sent out over all the earth"

Revelation 5:7

He went

He approached the throne. Some languages would use the verb "come." Alternate translation: "He came"

Revelation 5:8

the Lamb

A "lamb" is a young sheep. Here it is used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

twenty-four elders

"24 elders." See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:4]

fell down

"lay down on the ground." Their faces were toward the ground to show that they were worshiping the Lamb. They did this on purpose; they did not fall accidentally.

Each of them

Possible meanings are 1) "each of the elders and living creatures" or 2) "each of the elders."

a golden bowl full of incense, which are the prayers of God's holy people

The incense here is a symbol for the believers' prayers to God.

Revelation 5:9

For you were slaughtered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For they slaughtered you" or "For people killed you"

slaughtered

If your language has a word for killing an animal for a sacrifice, consider using it here.

with your blood

Since blood represents a person's life, losing the blood represents dying. This probably means "by your death" or

"by dying."

you purchased people for God

"you bought people so that they could belong to God" or

"you paid the price so that people could belong to God"

from every tribe, language, people, and nation

This means that people from every ethnic group are included.

Revelation 5:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 5:11

ten thousands of ten thousands and thousands of thousands

Use an expression in your language that shows that it is a huge number. Alternate translation: "millions" or "too many thousands to count"

Revelation 5:12

Worthy is the Lamb, who has been slaughtered

"The Lamb, who has been slaughtered, is worthy"

to receive power, wealth, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and praise

These are all things that the Lamb has. Being praised for having them is spoken of as receiving them. This can be

restated to remove the abstract nouns. See how you translated a similar sentence in [Revelation 4:11]

Revelation 5:13

in heaven and on the earth and under the earth

This means everywhere: the place where God and the angels live, the place where people and animals live, and the place where those who have died are. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:3]

To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be

"May he who sits on the throne and the Lamb have"

Revelation 5:14

General Information:

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Chapter 6

Revelation 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The author describes what happened after the Lamb opens each of the first six seals. The Lamb does not open the seventh seal until Chapter 8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven Seals

Kings and important people in John's time wrote important documents on large pieces of paper or animal skin. They then rolled them up and sealed them with wax so they would stay closed. Only the person to whom the document was written had the authority to open it by breaking the seal. In this chapter, the Lamb opens the seals.

The Four Horsemen

As the Lamb opens each of the first four seals, the author describes horsemen riding different colored horses. The colors of the horses seem to symbolize how the rider will affect the earth.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

The Lamb

This refers to Jesus. In this chapter, it is also a title for Jesus.

Similes

In verses 12-14, the author uses several similes to try to describe the images he sees in the vision. He compares the images to everyday things.

Links:

[Revelation 6:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 6

6:1-2

How did John describe the seven seals?

[6:1]

In this passage, John said God punished people when Jesus, the Lamb, opened the seven seals from the scroll. After one seal is opened, something happens. This was a type of punishment from God. Some scholars think this punishment was for all people. Other scholars think this was a punishment for those who did not believe in Jesus. After this, the next seal opens and something else happens. Some scholars think these things happen at the same time or in a very short period of time. Other scholars think there was a lot of time between each of these punishments.

See: Revelation 5:1

See: Seven (Symbol)

Why did John speak of a white horse?

[6:2]

John spoke of something using the metaphor of a white horse. The rider had a bow. This means he had power, perhaps military power. The rider also had a crown. This means the rider ruled over people. In ancient times, people used horses for wars. Having many horses meant that a king had a lot of power. Therefore, horses are symbols of power. Scholars do not agree about the meaning of this white horse.

Some scholars think John spoke about the Romans. God gave them power to defeat their enemies. The Roman Empire did not have many wars because of their power. This helped Christians to tell other people about Jesus. Some scholars think John also spoke about the Romans. However, God gave them the power to defeat Israel. They think John spoke about the Romans destroying the temple in Jerusalem. Before this happened, the Jews warred against the Roman Empire. Some scholars think Jesus had the power to help people believe in him. By doing this, he was defeating Satan and their unbelief. Some scholars think John spoke of the antichrist. In the rest of Revelation, God gave permission to the antichrist to rule and to punish people. Scholars think John's use of the white horse means God will use the antichrist to serve him. Advice to translators: The rider had a bow. He had a bow and arrow. He did not have a piece of cloth in his hair, which is also called a bow.

See: Metaphor; Crown; Symbol; Temple; Satan (The Devil); Antichrist; White (symbol)

6:3-4

Why did John speak of a red horse?

[6:4]

John spoke about a red horse. Red is the color of blood and fire. Scholars think John spoke of someone bringing war and people would die. Some scholars think the war will be with the whole world. The rider might be the antichrist. Other scholars think the war will be in Israel. Therefore, the person riding the horse is a leader in the Roman Empire. Also, some scholars think John spoke of the temple in Jerusalem being destroyed. Other scholars think John spoke of a period of time before Jesus returns to the earth. During this time, there will be many wars (see: Matthew 24:6).

See: Antichrist

What is the huge sword?

[6:4]

John said people will kill one another. He said this by saying the rider had a great sword. Scholars think the sword symbolized the power to take away peace from the earth. Some scholars think God gave the sword to the antichrist. Therefore, the antichrist will make people kill one another or kill Christians. Other scholars think that Satan gave the sword to the antichrist. This allowed him to kill Christians.

See: Symbol; Antichrist; Satan (The Devil)

6:5-6

Why did John talk about a black horse?

[6:5]

In ancient times, black symbolized things dying. Breaking this seal made things or people die. Scholars think this was because of a famine.

The rider on this horse holds a scale. A scale is something used to compare the weight of one object to the weight of another object. It symbolizes justice.

Because of this, some scholars think John spoke of the Roman Empire increasing the taxes on its people. Other scholars think John spoke of the famine in Israel when they fought against the Roman Empire. Other scholars think John spoke of a famine during the time before Jesus returns to the earth.

Advice to translators: A famine is a period of time where there is not enough food.

See: Leviticus 26:26

See: Symbol; Justice (Just, Unjust)

What did the voice say?

[6:6]

The voice of the person John heard said there was going to be famine. This was because the price of the different foods were very high. These were the foods people needed to live. It was much higher than the normal cost of these foods. In general, this meant that a person had to work all day to get enough money to feed himself.

Advice to translators: A famine is a period of time where there is not enough food.

Why did John say that they oil and wine will not be harmed?

[6:6]

Oil and wine were not needed to live in the way that many other foods were needed for people to live. Some scholars think oil and wine were for wealthy people. Therefore, John wanted to say that the rich will have plenty, but the poor will not be able to live. Other scholars think John wanted to say that people did not have enough money for food or anything else. Still other scholars think the famine did not last for a long time. Therefore, it only affected certain crops. It did not harm other crops that took longer to destroy. Olive trees and grapevines were crops that took longer to destroy.

6:7-8

Why did John speak of a pale horse?

[6:8]

John spoke of a pale colored horse. The voice called this horse death. It causes people to die through war and because insects destroyed crops.

Some scholars think this happened in the Roman Empire 200 years after Jesus died. What happened during this time was similar to what John described in this verse. Some scholars think John described Jerusalem. Jerusalem warred with the Roman Empire. This happened shortly after Jesus died. At this time, the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. Some scholars think the things John spoke of have not happened. They think they will happen in the future (see: Matthew 24:21).

Advice to translators: The word "pale" can be a yellow and green color or a green and gray color. It was the color used to describe a dead person's body.

See: Hades (Sheol); Temple

6:9-11

Why were the martyrs under the altar?

[6:9]

God allowed the martyrs to be under the altar so they could ask God for justice. They waited for God to punish those who killed them. Some scholars think this was because the people who killed them were alive when John saw the martyrs.

Other scholars think John spoke of the many Christians who will die in the time right before Jesus returns.

Some scholars think the Jewish leaders killed these people. Other scholars think that it was the Roman Empire which killed them.

See Leviticus 4:7

See: Witness (Martyr); Altar; Justice (Just, Unjust)

Why did the martyrs wear white robes?

[6:11]

See: Witness (Martyr); White (symbol)

Why did the martyrs have to wait until their number was completed?

[6:11]

The voice told these martyrs that they needed to wait a little longer. He wanted them to wait until all of the other people to be martyred were killed. Some scholars think he also wanted them to know that Christians will not be persecuted for a long time. This was because he spoke about a specific time when Christians were persecuted. After this time, the Roman Empire allowed Christians to worship God without being imprisoned or killed.

See: Witness (Martyr); Persecute (Persecution)

6:12-17

What happened to the sun?

[6:12]

John said the sun became completely black. Some scholars think that the sun became or will become black. That is, a solar eclipse will occur. This is because, in scripture, there are often signs in the sky. These signs tell people something God wants people to give special attention to. Other scholars think this was a type of metaphor. They think John wanted to say that Jerusalem will be destroyed and the Jewish leaders will be punished.

Advice to Translators: An eclipse is when the moon passes between earth and the sun. When this occurs, the moon can completely block the sun and it will look black.

See: Isaiah 34:4; Joel 2:31; 3:15

See: Metaphor; Sign

What happened to the moon?

[6:12]

John said that the moon appeared to be blood. That is, it became red. It is not known how this will happen. Some scholars think this will be a lunar eclipse. Other scholars think that something will happen on the earth that causes the moon to look red.

Advice to Translators: A lunar eclipse is when the earth is between moon and the sun. When this occurs, the shadow of the earth can completely block the moon and it will look red.

See: Isaiah 34:4; Joel 2:31; 3:15

See: Metaphor

What happened to the sky?

[6:13]

John said the stars of the sky fell. This is a type of metaphor. Some scholars think this meant there will be a meteor shower. Other scholars do not think John spoke about stars anyone can see in the sky.

Advice to Translators: A meteor shower is when the sky has streaks of light across it.

Why did the leaders hide?

[6:15]

The leaders hid because they were afraid of God. The leaders knew that only God can do these things. Because they rejected God, they were afraid of God. John wanted to say they knew they could not be at peace with God. Perhaps it was too late for them to believe in God because they already rejected him.

The things they said were a sad type of humor. The leaders thought that death could hide them from God. However, death will only make things worse for those who reject God.

What is the Day of the Lord?

[6:17]

John spoke about a great day. The Bible also calls this the Day of the Lord. When he asked if anyone will be able to stand, he wanted to say that no one will be able to stand when they saw Jesus. This is because he is God. When people see God, they must worship him. In Scripture, people often kneel when they worship God. In the ancient world, people also knelt before a king. While people can worship God while standing, John wanted people to know that everyone will worship God, whether they want to or not. They will honor him and know that he is the greatest ruler or king.

See: Malachi 3:2; Philippians 2:9-11

See: Worship; Day of the Lord

Revelation 6:1

Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe the events that happened before the throne of God. The Lamb begins to open the seals on the scroll.

Come!

This is a command to one person, apparently the rider of the white horse who is spoken of in verse 2.

Revelation 6:2

he was given a crown

This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "he received a crown" or "God gave him a crown"

a crown

Crowns were wreaths of olive branches or laurel leaves and were given to victorious athletes to wear on their heads. The crown given to rider may have been hammered out in gold in the likeness of wreaths of olives branches or laurel leaves.

Revelation 6:3

the second seal

"the next seal" or "seal number two"

the second living creature

"the next living creature" or "living creature number two"

Revelation 6:4

came out—fiery red

This can be stated as a second sentence. Alternate

translation: "came out. It was red like fire" or "came out. It

was bright red"

To its rider was given permission

This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "God gave permission to its rider" or "Its rider received person"

This rider was given a huge sword

This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "This rider received a huge sword" or "God gave this rider a huge sword"

a huge sword

"a very large sword" or "a great sword"

Revelation 6:5

the third seal

"the next seal" or "seal number three"

the third living creature

"the next living creature" or "living creature number three"

a pair of scales

a tool used for weighing things

Revelation 6:6

A choenix of wheat for one denarius

Some languages might want a verb such as "cost" or "buy" in the sentence. There was very little wheat for all the people, so its price was very high. Alternate translation: "A choenix of wheat now costs one denarius" or "Buy a choenix of wheat with one denarius"

A choenix of wheat ... three choenices of barley

A "choenix" was a specific measure that was about one liter. The plural of "choenix" is "choenices." Alternate

translation: "One liter of wheat ... three liters of barley" or "One bowl of wheat ... three bowls of barley"

one denarius

This coin was worth a day's wages. Alternate translation: "one silver coin" or "the pay for one day of work"

But do not harm the oil and the wine

If the oil and wine were harmed, there would be less of them for people to buy, and their prices would go up.

the oil and the wine

These expressions probably stand for the olive oil harvest and the grape harvest.

Revelation 6:7

the fourth seal

"the next seal" or "seal number four"

the fourth living creature

"the next living creature" or "living creature number four"

Revelation 6:8

pale horse

"grey horse." This is the color of a dead body, so its color is a symbol of death.

one-fourth of the earth

Here "the earth" represents the people of the earth.

Alternate translation: "one-fourth of the people on the earth"

the sword

A sword is a weapon, and here it represents war.

with the wild animals of the earth

This means that Death and Hades would cause the wild animals to attack and kill people.

Revelation 6:9

the fifth seal

"the next seal" or "seal number five"

under the altar

This may have been "at the base of the altar."

those who had been killed

This can be translated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "those whom others had killed"

because of the word of God and the testimony which they held

Here "word of God" is a metonym for the message from God and "held" is a metaphor. Possible meanings are 1) holding the testimony refers to believing God's word and testimony.

Alternate translation: "because of the teachings of scripture and what they taught about Jesus Christ" or "because they believed the word of God, which is his testimony" or 2) holding the testimony refers to testifying about the word of God. Alternate translation: "because they testified about the word of God"

Revelation 6:10

avenge our blood

The word blood here represents their deaths. Alternate translation: "punish those who killed us"

Revelation 6:11

Then each of them was given a white robe

Either God or an angel gave them a white robe. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then each of them received a white robe"

they were told

Either God or an angel is speaking. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God told them" or "an

angel told them"

until the full number of their fellow servants and their brothers who were to be killed, just as they had been killed, was made complete Here "servants" and "brothers" refer to the same group. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "until enemies have killed all of Christ's servants whom God had determined would die, just as those under the altar had died"

brothers

Christians are often spoken of as being one another's brothers. Females were among those spoken of here.

Alternate translation: "fellow Christians" or "fellow believers"

Revelation 6:12

the sixth seal

"the next seal" or "seal number six"

as black as sackcloth

Sometimes sackcloth was made of black hair. People would wear sackcloth when they were mourning. The image of sackcloth is meant to lead people to think of death and mourning. Alternate translation: "as black as mourning clothes"

like blood

The image of blood is meant to lead people to think of death. How it was like blood can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "red like blood"

Revelation 6:13

just as a fig tree drops its unripe figs when shaken by a stormy wind

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"just as figs do when a stormy wind shakes a fig tree and causes it to drop its unripe figs"

Revelation 6:14

The sky vanished like a scroll that was being rolled up

The sky was normally thought of as being as strong as a sheet of metal, but now it had become as weak as a sheet of paper and was easily torn and rolled up.

Revelation 6:15

the commanders

soldiers who command warriors during battle

caves

large holes in the sides of hills

Revelation 6:16

the face of the one

Here "face" represents "presence." Alternate translation: "the presence of the one" or "the one"

Revelation 6:17

the great day of their wrath has come

The day of their wrath refers to the time when they would punish wicked people. Alternate translation: "this is the terrible time when they will punish people"

has come

Existing now is spoken of as having come.

their wrath

"Their" refers to the one on the throne and the Lamb.

Who is able to stand?

Surviving, or staying alive, is spoken of as if it were standing. This question is used to express great sadness and fear that no one will be able to survive when God punishes him. Alternate translation: "No one can survive."

Revelation 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Scholars have interpreted parts of this chapter in many different ways. Translators do not need to fully understand what this chapter means to accurately translate its contents.

It is important to accurately translate the large numbers in this chapter. The number 144,000 is twelve times twelve thousand.

Translators should be aware that the tribes of the people of Israel are not listed in this chapter the same as they are generally listed in the Old Testament.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 5-8 and 15-17.

Special concepts in this chapter

Worship

God saves his people and keeps them through times of trouble. His people respond by worshipping him. (See: worship)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

The Lamb

This refers to Jesus. In this chapter, it is also a title for Jesus.

Links:

[Revelation 7:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 7

7:1-3

What were the four winds?

[7:1]

John spoke of the “four winds.” When John lived, the wind often destroyed things. Therefore, people spoke about something coming to destroy things in the same way they spoke of a strong wind. Scholars do not know why John spoke of the four winds.

Some scholars think it was a metaphor for Rome. They think John prophesied about the Roman Empire Being destroyed. Therefore, the winds were people or nations that would destroy the Roman Empire. Some scholars think John prophesied about Jerusalem being destroyed. The winds were the four parts of the Roman Empire. Some scholars think that John spoke about the four people riding on the four horses he spoke of earlier in Revelation.

See: Metaphor; Prophecy (Prophecy)

What was the seal of the living God?

[7:2]

In the Bible, when God permanently protects someone, he seals them. Some scholars think God seals everyone who believes in Jesus. That is, he protects them and allows them to go to heaven. Or he protects them while they are on the earth. Other scholars think John spoke of a special protection God gave to Christians during the time period John prophesied about in Revelation.

It is unknown why this seal was on their forehead. Some scholars think this was a type of mark that people saw. They think it might contrast with the mark John spoke of from the beast (see: Revelation 14:9). Other scholars think this was a type of metaphor meaning God knows everyone who is his.

See: Ezekiel 9:4 and Ephesians 1:13

See: Seal; Heaven; Prophecy (Prophecy) ;Metaphor; People of God

Why was the angel not given permission to hurt the earth and the sea?

[7:2]

John said there were certain angels given permission to hurt or punish the earth and seas for God. However, John said these angels could not do this at the time he spoke. Some scholars think it was not time for God to punish the earth. They think that this punishment will occur after God has sealed the last person ever to be sealed. That is, he will not punish the earth until the last person who will believe in Jesus has believed in Jesus. Other scholars think John spoke of God protecting Christians during a certain, difficult period of time.

See: Angel; Seal

7:4-8

Why did John speak of 144,000 people?

[7:4]

John spoke of God sealing 144,000 sons of Israel. Scholars do not agree on why he spoke of these people.

Some scholars think there will be many Israelites who repent and believe in Jesus. They think this will occur when the things John prophesied begin to happen. They will become witnesses that Jesus is the Messiah during this time. These scholars think Christians will be taken from the earth. Therefore, these Israelites will tell people about Jesus. Some scholars think John spoke of Christians. They think God sealed many people. They think he was speaking of people in ancient times. Some think this happened after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Some scholars think John spoke of how there were always some people in Israel who trusted God. They believed in Jesus, who is the Messiah. Other scholars think John spoke of the Israelites who traveled to other countries when Jerusalem was destroyed. They think the number was a symbol. That is, many Israelites escaped Jerusalem from every tribe of Israel. See: Seal, Repent (Repentance); Prophecy (Prophecy); Messiah (Christ); Symbol; Tribes of Israel
Are these the twelve tribes of Israel?

[7:5, 7:6, 7:7, 7:8]

John did not speak of the twelve tribes of Israel in the same way the Old Testament speaks about them (see: Genesis 49:2-27). He did not say anything about Dan. Instead of speaking of Dan, he spoke of Manasseh.

See: Tribes of Israel

Why does John not speak of the tribe of Dan?

John did not speak of the tribe of Dan with those whom God sealed. Scholars think this is because they were more evil than the other tribes. They often worshiped idols and rejected God. Some scholars think the antichrist will come from the tribe of Dan (see: Genesis 49:17).

See: Seal; Tribes of Israel; Antichrist

7:9-17

Who were the "huge multitude"?

[7:9] John spoke of many people standing in front of the lamb. That is, Jesus.

Some scholars think John spoke of all people from every nation and every generation who believe in Jesus. They think John spoke of the church becoming mostly Gentile Christians. The church began with Jewish Christians. Some scholars think there will be many different Gentiles who believe in Jesus near the time of Jesus' return. They think the 144,000 sealed Israelites will tell the Gentiles from every nation about Jesus. This will allow these different Gentiles to believe in Jesus. Some scholars think John spoke of people who died because they were Christians.

See: Lamb of God; Gentile

Why were palm branches in their hands?

[7:9]

When Jesus entered Jerusalem before his death, people placed palm branches on the ground where he was going to walk. They worshipped their king. Perhaps this is what John spoke of when he said this.

See: John 12:13

Why did John speak of white robes?

[7:9]

See: White (symbol)

What is the great tribulation?

[7:14]

John spoke of a great tribulation. Some scholars think this is a time when Christians will be greatly persecuted. Other scholars think this is part of the time before Jesus returns to the earth. They think there will be tribulation for a period of seven years. The great tribulation is the last three and a half years of this time of tribulation.

See: Tribulation; Persecute (Persecution)

What did God promise to these people?

[7:16]

God promised many things to the people he spoke of in this passage.

They will live together with God in heaven. All things will be perfect for them. That is, there will be no more difficulties, suffering, or pain. Jesus will care for them. Jesus will lead them to the "springs of living water" (see: John 4:14; 7:38). That is, he will satisfy them or make them complete in the same way water does for the body.

See: Heaven

Revelation 7:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a vision of 144,000 servants of God who become marked with seals. Their marking takes place after the Lamb opens the sixth seal and before he opens the seventh seal.

the four corners of the earth

The earth is spoken of as if it were flat and square like a sheet of paper. The phrase "the four corners" refers to the

north, south, east, and west.

Revelation 7:2

the seal of the living God

The word "seal" here refers to a tool that is used to press a mark onto a wax seal. In this case the tool would be used to put a mark on God's people. Alternate translation: "the marker of the living God" or "the stamp of the living God"

Revelation 7:3

put a seal on the foreheads

The word "seal" here refers to a mark. This mark shows that the people belong to God and that he will protect them. Alternate translation: "put a mark on the foreheads" foreheads

The forehead is the top of the face, above the eyes. Revelation 7:4

those who were sealed

This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "those whom God's angel marked" 144,000

"one hundred forty-four thousand people" Revelation 7:5

twelve thousand from the tribe

"12,000 people from the tribe"

twelve thousand from ... Judah were sealed

This can be translated in active form. See how you translated similar words in [Revelation 7:4]

Revelation 7:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank. Revelation 7:7

Connecting Statement:

This continues the list of the people of Israel who were sealed. Revelation 7:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank. Revelation 7:9

General Information:

John begins to describe a second vision about a multitude praising God. This vision also takes place after the Lamb opens the sixth seal and before he opens the seventh seal. a huge multitude

"a huge crowd" or "a great number of people"

white robes

Here the color "white" represents purity. Revelation 7:10

Salvation belongs to

"Salvation comes from"

Salvation belongs to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!

They were praising God and the Lamb. The noun "salvation" can be expressed with the verb "save." Alternate translation: "Our God, who sits on the throne, and the Lamb have saved us!"

Revelation 7:11

the four living creatures

These are the four creatures mentioned in Revelation 4:6-8. they fell on their faces

Here "fell on their faces" is an idiom that means they lay down facing the ground. See how you translated "prostrated themselves" in [Revelation 4:10]

Revelation 7:12

Praise, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honor, power, and strength be to our God

"Our God is worthy of all praise, glory, wisdom, thanks, honor, power and strength" or "We must give praise, glory, thanks, and honor to our God"

forever and ever

These two words mean basically the same thing and emphasize that the praise will never end. Revelation 7:13

these, clothed with white robes

The white robes showed that these people were righteous. Revelation 7:14

have come out of the great tribulation

"have survived the great tribulation" or "have lived through the great tribulation"

the great tribulation

"the time of terrible suffering"

They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb

People who have been made righteous by the blood of the Lamb are spoken of as if they have washed their robes in his blood. Alternate translation: "They have been made righteous by washing their robes white in his blood" the blood of the Lamb

The word "blood" is used to refer to the death of Lamb. Revelation 7:15

Connecting Statement:

The elder continues to speak to John. they ... them

These words refer to those people who have come through the great tribulation. day and night

These two parts of the day are used together to mean "all the time" or "without stopping"

will spread his tent over them

"will put his tent up over them." Protecting them is spoken of as if it were giving them shelter to live under. Alternate translation: "will shelter them" or "will protect them"

Revelation 7:16

They ... them

These words refer to those people who have come through the great tribulation. The sun will not beat down

The sun's heat no longer causing people to suffer is spoken of as if the sun would not beat down on them. Alternate translation: "The sun will not burn them" or "The sun will not make them weak"

Revelation 7:17

them ... them ... their

These words refer to those people who have come through the great tribulation. the Lamb at the center of the throne will

"the Lamb, who is standing in the middle of the area around the throne, will be"

For the Lamb ... will shepherd them

The elder speaks of the Lamb's care for his people as if it were a shepherd's care for his sheep. Alternate translation: "For the Lamb ... will be like a shepherd to them" or "For the Lamb ... will care for them as a person cares for his animals"

he will guide them to springs of living water

The elder speaks of what gives life as if it were springs of fresh water. Alternate translation: "he will guide them like a shepherd guiding his sheep to fresh water" or "he will guide them to life like a shepherd guiding his sheep to

living water"

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes

Tears here represent sadness. Alternate translation: "God

will wipe away their sadness, like wiping away tears" or

"God will cause them to not be sad anymore"

Chapter 8

Revelation 8 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven seals and seven trumpets

This chapter begins to show what happens when the Lamb opens the seventh seal. God uses the prayers of all believers to cause dramatic things to happen on earth. John then describes what happens when angels sound the first four of seven trumpets.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Similes

In verses 8 and 10, John uses similes to try to describe the images he sees in the vision. He compares the images to everyday things.

Links:

[Revelation 8:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 8

8:1-5

Why was there silence for 30 minutes?

[8:1]

John said there was silence in heaven for 30 minutes. In heaven, people and angels continually sing praises to God. Therefore, silence was not normal. Scholars do not know why there was silence.

Some scholars think this was the time period when God sealed people (see:7:1-3). Some scholars think this was the time period between the sixth and seventh seals. Some scholars think John wanted people to know something serious. That is, something serious was happening or about to happen. Some scholars think it was a type of metaphor. That is, it was about silence after the Romans destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. Some scholars think the seventh seal is different from all of the other seals. They think all the other things John prophesied will happen after the seventh seal. Some scholars think John wanted people to know that all things were about to end. That is, the world will end.

See: Heaven; Angel; Praise; Seal; Metaphor; Prophecy (Prophesy)

Why was a trumpet used?

[8:2]

Trumpets were used so people would give attention to something. Often, trumpets were used when kings were coming into a room or area. Also, they were used when something was going to happen and people needed to listen.

Why did the angels hold bowls of incense?

[8:3]

In ancient Israel, people thought angels brought prayers to God. In this verse, John said these prayers "rose up before God." John wanted to make known that God was going to do something because of their prayers.

See: Angel; Fragrant Offering (Aroma)

Why did the angel throw the bowl to the earth?

[8:5]

The angel threw the bowl to the earth because God was judging all people. He wanted people to know this.

See: Angel

8:6-12

Why did John speak of seven trumpets?

[8:6]

A trumpet is a musical instrument. It was often used to announce something. When a trumpet was used, people were to listen. Scholars do not know what these trumpets announced.

Some scholars think the trumpets were a prophecy. It was a symbol. John was talking about different people who fought the Roman Empire. Other scholars think the trumpets were a different prophecy. It was a symbol. John was talking about the Roman Empire. The Roman empire fought the Jews and destroyed the temple in Jerusalem. Other scholars think the trumpets were a different prophecy. It was a symbol. John was talking about the things that will happen in the time before Jesus returns to the earth. These trumpets announced that God will punish the world. Fewer scholars think the trumpets were a metaphor. John wanted to say that God punishes people who sin. Therefore, the trumpets told people to

repent.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Symbol; Metaphor; Repent (Repentance)

What did the first trumpet make known?

[8:7]

Something happened to the earth when the angel blew the first trumpet. This was something that would not happen on earth without God doing it. It rained hail, fire, and blood. Hail is large pieces of frozen ice. In the Bible, hail means God will punish people for sinning (see: Job 38:22-23).

Some scholars think this was a metaphor. John spoke of certain people who attacked the Roman Empire. They destroyed everything they attacked. Trees and grass were the church and its leaders.

Other scholars think John spoke of war between the Jews and the Roman Empire. This war happened a few years after Jesus died. Perhaps John spoke of the Roman Empire destroying the trees and grass near Jerusalem. Or perhaps John used a metaphor of trees and grass. Or perhaps he wanted to say that Christians will suffer also when God punishes non-Christians.

Other scholars think that it will actually rain hail, fire, and blood on the earth. This warned people to repent.

See: Exodus 9:18-27

See: Angel;Metaphor; Repent (Repentance); Hail; Fire

What did the second trumpet make known?

[8:8, 8:9]

Something else happened on earth when the second angel blew his trumpet. This was also not something that would happen without God doing it. Some scholars think John used a metaphor. Other scholars think he spoke of something he saw.

Some scholars think John used a metaphor. John was talking about one of the times when the Roman Empire was defeated. In ancient times, people spoke of mountains when they wanted to say something or someone is powerful. They think this spoke of nations defeating the Roman Empire. They defeated them on the seas. Before this, no nation defeated the Roman Empire on the seas.

Other scholars think John used a different metaphor. Jerusalem was also called Mount Zion. This prophecy made known how the Roman Empire defeated Judah. They defeated Mount Zion.

Other scholars think John spoke of a meteor. A meteor appears to have fire around it when it goes from space to the earth.

Advice to translators: A meteor is a large rock that comes from space and falls to the earth. Space is the sky where the stars and other planets are located. The seas are the large open waters surrounding the land. Often, people fought wars with boats in the seas.

See: Angel; Metaphor; Zion; Prophecy (Prophecy)

What did the third trumpet make known?

[8:10, 8:11]

Something else happened on earth when the third angel blew his trumpet. This was also something that would not happen without God doing it.

Some scholars think John used a metaphor. He wanted people to know about a certain nation becoming powerful. Other scholars think John spoke of the Roman Empire defeating Judah. During this war, there were many dead people in rivers. Other scholars think John spoke of a meteor. A meteor appears to have fire around it when it goes from space to the earth.

Other scholars think John used a different metaphor. He spoke of how people poison the earth. That is, people hurt and destroy the earth.

See: Angel;Metaphor

What did the fourth trumpet announce?

[8:12]

Something else happened on earth when the fourth angel blew his trumpet. This was also something that would not happen without God doing it.

Some scholars think John used a metaphor. Perhaps John was speaking about the people who destroyed part of the Roman Empire. The main part of the Roman Empire was destroyed. However, the empire remained in power for many years after this.

Other scholars think John spoke about Rome defeating other nations. These nations were defeated near the time when the Roman Empire warred with Judah. The war happened a few years after Jesus died.

Other scholars think John spoke of a specific day. This day was different than any other day. They think the things John saw will happen on the earth before Jesus returns to the earth.

See: Matthew 24:22

See: Angel; Metaphor;Prophecy (Prophecy)

8:13

What was a “woe”?

[8:13]

A “woe” (οὐαί/g3759) announced that God was going to judge people. In this verse, John says “woe” three times. In Revelation, there were three woes announced. These had special meaning (see: Revelation 9:12; 11:14; 12:12).

See: Woe

Revelation 8:1

Connecting Statement:

The Lamb opens the seventh seal.

the seventh seal

This is the last of the seven seals on the scroll. Alternate translation: "the next seal" or "the final seal" or "seal number seven"

Revelation 8:2

seven trumpets were given to them

They were each given one trumpet. This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "God gave them seven trumpets" or 2) "the Lamb gave them seven trumpets"

Revelation 8:3

he would offer it

"he would offer the incense to God by burning it"

Revelation 8:4

the angel's hand

This refers to the bowl in the angel's hand. Alternate translation: "the bowl in the angel's hand"

Revelation 8:5

filled it with fire

The word "fire" here probably refers to burning coals.

Alternate translation: "filled it with burning coals" or "filled it with coals of fire"

Revelation 8:6

General Information:

The seven angels sound the seven trumpets, one at a time.

Revelation 8:7

It was thrown down onto the earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The angel threw the hail and fire mixed with blood down onto the earth"

a third of it was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it burned up a third of the earth, a third of the trees, and all the green grass"

a third

"A third" is a fraction.

Revelation 8:8

The second angel

"The next angel" or "Angel number two"

something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the angel threw something like a great mountain burning with fire"

A third

"A third" is a fraction.

became blood

Possible meanings are it 1) "became red like blood" or it 2) really became blood.

Revelation 8:9

the living creatures in the sea

"the things living in the sea" or "the fish and other animals that lived in the sea"

Revelation 8:10

a huge star fell from the sky, blazing like a torch

"a huge star that was blazing like a torch fell from the sky."

The fire of the huge star looked similar to the fire of a torch. torch

a stick with one end lit on fire to provide light

Revelation 8:11

The name of the star is Wormwood

Wormwood is a shrub that tastes bitter. People made medicine out of it, but they also believed that it was poisonous. Alternate translation: "The name of the star is Bitterness" or "The name of the star is Bitter Medicine"

became wormwood

The bitter taste of the water is spoken of as if it were wormwood. Alternate translation: "became bitter like wormwood" or "became bitter"

died from the waters that became bitter

"died when they drank the bitter water"

Revelation 8:12

a third of the sun was struck

Causing something bad to happen to the sun is spoken of as striking, or hitting, it. This can be stated with an active verb. Alternate translation: "a third of the sun changed" or "God changed a third of the sun"

a third of them turned dark

Possible meanings are 1) "one third of the time they were dark" or 2) "one third of the sun, one third of the moon, and one third of the stars became dark"

a third of the day and a third of the night had no light

"there was no light during one third of the day and one third of the night" or "they did not shine during one third of the day and one third of the night"

Revelation 8:13

because of the remaining trumpet blasts that are about to be sounded by the three angels

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "because the three angels who have not yet sounded their trumpets are about to sound them"

Chapter 9

Revelation 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, John continues to describe what happens when angels sound seven trumpets.

Woe

John describes several "woes" in the Book of Revelation. This chapter begins to describe three "woes" announced at the end of Chapter 8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Animal imagery

This chapter includes several animals: locusts, scorpions, horses, lions, and snakes. These animals represent different qualities or traits. For example, a lion is powerful and dangerous. Translators should use the same animals in their translation if possible. If the animal is unknown, one with similar qualities or traits should be used.

Bottomless pit

This image is seen several times in the Book of Revelation. It is a picture of hell as being inescapable and the opposite direction as heaven. (See: hell)

Abaddon and Apollyon

"Abaddon" is a Hebrew word. "Apollyon" is a Greek word. Both words mean "Destroyer." John used the sounds of the Hebrew word and wrote them with Greek letters. The ULB and UDB write the sounds of both words with English letters. Translators are encouraged to transliterate these words using the letters of the target language. The original Greek readers would have understood "Apollyon" to mean "Destroyer." So translators may also supply what it means in the text or in a footnote.

Repentance

Despite great signs, people are described as not repenting and so remain in their sin. People refusing to repent are also mentioned in Chapter 16. (See: repent and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Simile

John uses many similes in this chapter. They help to describe the images that he sees in his vision.

Links:

[Revelation 9:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 9

9:1-12

What did the fifth trumpet make known?

[9:1]

John talked about a star falling to earth. John called the star "him." This is how someone would address a person. Therefore, scholars do not think John was talking about a star. Instead, star was a metaphor.

Some scholars think John was talking about another religion. John was talking about the leader of this religion. Other scholars think that John was talking about certain teachers who did not teach the right things about God. Other scholars think John was speaking about someone in heaven. Perhaps John was speaking about Satan. In the Bible, Satan is an angel who God removed from heaven (see: 2 Peter 2:4). God will give this angel permission to cause bad things to happen on the earth.

See: Metaphor; Heaven; Hell; Satan (The Devil)

What is the bottomless pit?

[9:1, 9:2]

John wrote about a bottomless pit. This was a type of prison. Nothing could escape out of it. Scholars think the bottomless pit is the place where Satan, the antichrist, and the demons live. John spoke about this pit as if it were a prison with a lock on it. Only God has the key to this lock. Only he can let people out of this prison. God imprisoned all the demons in the bottomless pit for a specific period of time.

See: Luke 8:31; Revelation 20

See: Satan (The Devil); Antichrist; Demon

What are locust?

[9:3]

Locust are insects. They travel in large groups. They come into an area and eat all the plants. Some scholars think John was using a metaphor. They think he spoke about certain religions or nations. Other scholars do not think John was using a metaphor. Instead, he spoke about a large group of actual locusts.

See: Locust

What is a scorpion?

[9:3]

A scorpion is an insect that has a tail which can sting something. This sting can harm or kill people. Some scholars think this was a metaphor. They think John spoke about evil things in the world. These evil things harm people. However, God did not allow these evil things to harm Christians.

See: Metaphor

Who has the seal of God on their forehead?

[9:4]

In Revelation, John says Christians have the seal of God on their foreheads. This means that God will protect them. Also, they are promised to live together with God in heaven forever. Some scholars think all Christians have this seal. They think it cannot be seen. Other scholars think only the Christians living during the time John prophesied will have this seal. They think it will be a mark that can be seen on their forehead.

See: Seal; Prophecy (Prophecy)

How did John describe the locust?

[9:7, 9:8, 9:9, 9:10]

John wrote that these locust did not look like a normal locusts. Instead, John used a metaphor. Scholars do not agree about what John wanted to say.

Some scholars think John spoke about a certain country. This country will come and defeat the people of Israel. They ruled in Israel for a period of time. Other scholars think John spoke about demons. Satan sends these demons to punish anyone who does not have the seal of God (see: John 8:44, Revelation 2:9; 3:9). Other scholars think John spoke about certain creatures that come in the future. They think John spoke about actual creatures he saw. These creatures punished people.

See: Metaphor; Demon; Satan (The Devil); Seal

Who was the king of the locusts?

[9:11]

Some scholars think the king of the locusts was a religious leader. More scholars think Satan is the king of these locusts.

Satan has many different names.

See: Satan (The Devil)

What is the first woe?

[9:12]

See: Woe

9:13-21

What are the horns in front of the golden altar?

[9:13]

John spoke about horns in front of the golden altar. Scholars do not agree about what John was saying.

Some scholars think John spoke about a priest in heaven. This priest told the sixth angel to release the destroying angels. These angels waited around the earth to kill people on the earth. Some scholars think John spoke about different nations who conquered Israel. Some scholars think John spoke about the Roman Empire. They defeated Israel shortly after Jesus died. At this time, they destroyed Jerusalem. Some scholars think John spoke about demons. God allowed them to punish evil people on the earth. Some scholars think John spoke about how God will allow the people of the world to be very evil. Until this time, God stops evil these evil people from completely controlling the earth.

See: Priest (Priesthood) ; Heaven; Angel; Demon; World

Who are the four angels at the Euphrates river?

[9:14]

It is not known who are the four angels at the Euphrates River. Some scholars think they were angels. Other scholars think they were demons. Scholars do not know why John spoke about the Euphrates River. Some scholars think he talked about the actual river. Other scholars think John used a metaphor. He did not speak about the actual river.

See: Angel; Demon; Metaphor

See Map: Euphrates river

Why did John talk about "that hour, that day, that month, and that year"?

[9:15]

John spoke about "that hour, that day, that month, and that year." He wanted to say that God controlled everything. God knew before these thing happened when they would happen.

Why did John talk about horses and their riders?

[9:17]

John talked about horses and their riders. This was a symbol.

Some scholars think he talked about a nation in history and its leaders. This nation would conquer and control Israel for a long time. This nation did not exist until long after John lived. Other scholars think John spoke about the Roman Empire near the time when John lived. Other scholars think John spoke about demons. They think that these demons will attack Israel in the future. Other scholars think John spoke about nations or armies. These nations will one day attack Israel. Fewer scholars think that John used a metaphor. He wanted to say that people in the world were becoming more and more evil. Some scholars think John was simply talking about what he saw when he talked about the rider and horses. Other scholars think the things John saw were symbols of something else.

See: Symbol; Demon; Metaphor
Who was punished?
[9:20]

John said that specific people will be punished because they did not repent.

Some scholars think John spoke about certain groups of people. These people said that they were Christians, but they were very evil. These were people who lived between the time when John lived and today. Other scholars think John talked about the Jews who did not believe in Jesus. God punished them. Other scholars think John prophesied about people who do not believe in Jesus in the time just before Jesus returns to the earth. Fewer scholars think John told all people who did not believe in Jesus to repent.

See: Repent (Repentance), Prophecy (Prophecy)

Revelation 9:1

Connecting Statement:

The fifth of the seven angels begins to sound his trumpet.

I saw a star from heaven that had fallen

John saw the star after it had fallen. He did not watch it fall.

the key to the shaft of the bottomless pit

"the key that unlocks the shaft of the bottomless pit"

the shaft of the bottomless pit

Possible meanings are 1) "shaft" is another way of referring to the pit and describes it as long and narrow, or 2) "shaft" refers to the opening of the pit.

the bottomless pit

This is an extremely deep, narrow hole. Possible meanings are 1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever or 2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom.

Revelation 9:2

like smoke from a huge furnace

A huge furnace gives off a great amount of thick, dark smoke. Alternate translation: "like the great amount of smoke that comes from a huge furnace"

turned dark

"became dark"

Revelation 9:3

locusts

insects that fly together in large groups. People fear them because they can eat up all the leaves in gardens and on trees.

power like that of scorpions

Scorpions have the ability to sting and poison other animals and people. Alternate translation: "the ability to sting people as scorpions do"

scorpions

small insects with poisonous stingers on their tails. Their sting is extremely painful and the pain lasts a long time.

Revelation 9:4

They were told not to damage the grass on the earth or any green plant or tree

Ordinary locusts were a terrible threat to people because when they swarm, they can eat up all the grass and all the leaves on plants and trees. These locusts were told not to do this.

but only the people

The phrase "to damage" or "to harm" is understood.

Alternate translation: "but only to harm the people"

the seal of God

The word "seal" refers a mark that would be left by a tool being pressed into a wax seal. In this case it refers to

mark that God would place upon the foreheads of his people. The people who do not have this mark do not belong to God. See how you translated "seal" in [Revelation 7:3]

foreheads

The forehead is the top of the face, above the eyes.

Revelation 9:5

They were not given permission

"They" refers to the locusts. (Revelation 9:3)

those people

the people whom the locusts were stinging

but only to torture them

Here the words "given permission" are understood.

Alternate translation: "but only given permission to torture them"

to torture them for five months

The locusts would be allowed to do this for five months.

to torture them

"to make them suffer terrible pain"

the sting of a scorpion

A scorpion is a small insect with a poisonous stinger at the end of its long tail. The sting can cause severe pain or even death.

Revelation 9:6

people will seek death but will not find it

This can be restated to remove the abstract noun "death."

Alternate translation: "people will try to find a way to die but will not find it" or "people will try to kill themselves but will not find a way to die"

will greatly desire to die

"will want very much to die" or "will wish that they could die"

death will flee from them

John speaks of death as if it were a person or animal that could run away. Alternate translation: "they will not be able to die" or "they will not die"

Revelation 9:7

General Information:

These locusts did not look like ordinary locusts. John describes them by telling how parts of them looked like other things.

crowns of gold

These were likenesses of wreaths of olive branches or laurel leaves, hammered out in gold. Examples actually made of leaves were given to victorious athletes to wear on their heads.

Revelation 9:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 9:9

General Information:

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Revelation 9:10

They had tails

The word "They" refers to the locusts.

with stingers like scorpions

A scorpion is a small insect with a poisonous stinger at the end of its long tail. Its sting can cause severe pain or even death. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 9:3]

in their tails they had power to harm people for five months

Possible meanings are 1) they had power for five months to harm people or 2) they could sting people and the people would be in pain for five months.

Revelation 9:11

the bottomless pit

This is an extremely deep, narrow hole. Possible meanings are 1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever or 2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in Revelation 9:1.

Abaddon ... Apollyon

Both names mean "Destroyer."

Revelation 9:12

there are still two disasters to come

Existing in the future is spoken of as coming.

Revelation 9:13

Connecting Statement:

The sixth of the seven angels begins to sound his trumpet.

I heard a voice coming

The voice refers to the one who was speaking. John does not say who the speaker was, but it may have been God.

Alternate translation: "I heard someone speaking"

horns of the golden altar

These are horn-shaped extensions at each of the four corners of the top of the altar.

Revelation 9:14

the four angels who had been bound

This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: "the four angels whom God had commanded someone to bind" or "the four angels whom God bound"

Revelation 9:15

The four angels who had been prepared for ... that year were released

This can be stated with an active form. Alternate translation: "The angel released the four angels who had been prepared for ... that year"

The four angels who had been prepared

This can be stated with an active form. Alternate

translation: "The four angels whom God had prepared"

for that hour, that day, that month, and that year

These words are used to show that the time to release the angels is a specific, chosen time and not just any time.

Alternate translation: "for that exact time"

Revelation 9:16

General Information:

Suddenly, 200,000,000 soldiers on horseback appear in John's vision. John is no longer speaking about the four angels mentioned in the previous verse.

200,000,000

Some ways to express this are: "two hundred million" or "two hundred thousand thousand" or "twenty thousand times ten thousand." If your language does not have a specific number for this, you could also see how you translated a similar large number in [Revelation 5:11]

Revelation 9:17

fiery red

"red like fire" or "bright red." See how you translated this in Revelation 6:3.

out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and sulfur

"fire, smoke, and sulfur came out of their mouths"

Revelation 9:18

Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe the horses and the plagues brought upon humanity.

A third of the people

"One third of the people." See how you translated "A third" in [Revelation 8:7]

Revelation 9:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 9:20

those who were not killed by these plagues

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those whom the plagues had not killed"

the works of their hands

The word "hand" here is a metonym for the person whose hands they are. Alternate translation: "the deeds they had done"

things that cannot see, hear, or walk

This phrase reminds us that idols are not alive and do not deserve to be worshiped. But the people did not stop worshiping them. Alternate translation: "even though idols cannot see, hear, or walk"

Revelation 9:21

General Information:

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Chapter 10

Revelation 10 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Seven thunders

John here describes the seven thunders as making sounds that he could understand as words. However, translators should use their normal word for "thunder" when translating these verses.

"The mystery of God"

This refers to some aspect of the hidden plan of God. It is not necessary to know what this mystery is to translate it. (See:

reveal)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Simile

John uses similes to help him describe the face, legs, and voice of the mighty angel. Translators should understand other objects in this chapter, such as the rainbow and the cloud, with their normal meanings.

Links:

[Revelation 10:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 10

10:1-4

What did John say about the angel?

[10:1]

John used metaphors to talk about the angel.

Some scholars think John spoke about Jesus when he talked about this angel. They think the book he had was the Bible (see: 5:3) They think that many years ago, the church had false teachers leading the church. They think translating the Bible into the languages people spoke changed things. Other scholars think John spoke about Jesus and the book was the book of Revelation. In this book, Jesus judges the Jews and the Gentiles. In the Bible, the sea often symbolizes Gentiles. Others scholars think John spoke about a powerful angel. John wanted to say that God was going to control of the earth. That is, God will begin his kingdom on the earth.

Scholars think the cloud John spoke about symbolized God. Clouds are often seen near God in the Bible.

Scholars think the rainbow John spoke about symbolized the promise God gave to Noah (see: Genesis 9). God promised never again to completely destroy the world with a flood.

John said that the angel put his feet on the sea and land. He wanted to say that God gave the angel permission to rule over the sea and land. Some scholars think the sea and land were symbols of Gentiles and Jews. Other scholars think this means the whole world.

See Daniel 10:6

See: Metaphor; Symbol; Angel; Gentile; Kingdom of God; Sea

Who were the seven thunders?

[10:3]

Scholars do not know why John wrote about the seven thunders. Some scholars think John spoke about creatures near God. Other scholars think John talked about God speaking. Other scholars think the angel spoke very loud, and the thunder came after the angel spoke. Other scholars think this was a metaphor. They think John wanted to say that the angel was given permission to speak the words of God.

See: Angel; Metaphor

Why was John told not write the things the angels said?

[10:4]

John was told not to write down the things the angel said. Scholars think this was because God did not want people to know what was done, that is, it was not the time for them to know. Through John, God told people what he was going to do. However, God did not tell people everything he was going to do.

See: Daniel 8:26, 12:4, 9

See: Angel

10:5-7

What is an oath?

[10:6]

See: Swear (Oath)

What is the day when the angel will sound the seventh trumpet?

[10:7]

The angel said that certain things were about to happen.

Some scholars think this day was a warning to false teachers in the church. The angel wanted the false teachers to repent. Some scholars think the angel talked about the antichrist. The antichrist was given permission to rule on the earth for a period of time. The angel said that this time will end. Some scholars think the angel talked about the time Jesus will punish those who persecuted Christians and did not obey God. ** Advice to translators**: When John spoke about a day, he was speaking about a certain time.

See: Revelation 6:6

See: Angel; Antichrist; Persecute (Persecution)

What is the mystery of God?

[10:7]

See: Mystery

10:8-11

What is the little book?

[10:9]

John spoke about the little book. Some scholars think he spoke about the book of Revelation. Fewer scholars think John spoke about all of the Bible.

Why did the angel say to eat the little book?

[10:9, 10:10]

The angel told John to eat the little book.

Some scholars think John used a metaphor. That is, It was good for people to read the Bible. However, if someone does not do what the Bible says to do, then they will be punished. Some scholars think John used a different metaphor. He prophesied that Jerusalem was going to be destroyed. Or perhaps another nation was going to be destroyed. Some scholars think John spoke about the gospel. Some scholars think he spoke about how someone cannot have peace with God without Jesus dying for them. Other scholars think he spoke about the gospel being very good news for those who believe in Jesus but very bad news for those who do not believe in Jesus.

See: Ezekiel 3

See: Angel; Metaphor, Prophecy (Prophecy) ; Gospel; Atonement (Atonement)

Revelation 10:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a vision of a mighty angel holding a scroll. In John's vision he is viewing what is happening from earth. This takes place between the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

He was clothed in a cloud

John speaks of the angel as if he were wearing a cloud as his clothing. This expression may be understood as metaphor. However, because very unusual things were often seen in visions, it might be understood as a literally true statement in its context.

His face was like the sun

John compares the brightness of his face with the brightness of the sun. Alternate translation: "His face was bright like the sun"

his feet were like pillars of fire

The word "feet" here refers to the legs. Alternate translation: "his legs were like pillars of fire"

Revelation 10:2

He put his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land

"He stood with his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land"

Revelation 10:3

Then he shouted

"Then the angel shouted"

the seven thunders spoke out

The thunder is described as if it were a person who could speak. Alternate translation: "the seven thunders made a loud noise" or "the thunder sounded very loudly seven times"

seven thunders

Thunder occurring seven times is spoken of as if it were seven different "thunders."

Revelation 10:4

but I heard a voice from heaven

The word "voice" refers to words spoken by someone other than the angel. Alternate translation: "but I heard someone speaking from heaven"

Seal up

People in John's day would write a message on a scroll and then seal the scroll so that only the person whom the writers wanted to open it were able to open it. This is a metaphor for keeping something secret. Alternate translation: "Keep secret"

Revelation 10:5

raised his right hand to heaven

He did this to show that he was swearing by God.

Revelation 10:6

He swore by the one who lives forever and ever

"He asked that what he was going to say would be confirmed by the one who lives forever and ever"

the one who lives forever and ever

Here "the one" refers to God.

There will be no more delay

"There will be no more waiting" or "God will not delay"

Revelation 10:7

the mystery of God will be accomplished

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will accomplish his mystery" or "God will complete his secret plan"

Revelation 10:8

Connecting Statement:

John hears the voice from heaven, which he had heard in Revelation 10:4, speak to him again.

The voice I heard from heaven

The word "voice" refers to the speaker. Alternate translation: "The one I heard speak from heaven" or "The one who had spoken to me from heaven"

I heard

John heard

Revelation 10:9

He said to me

"The angel said to me"

make ... bitter

"make ... sour" or "make ... acid." This refers to a bad taste from the stomach after eating something that is not good.

Revelation 10:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Chapter 11

Revelation 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 15 and 17-18.

Woe

John describes several "woes" in the book of Revelation. This chapter describes a second and third "woe" announced at the end of Chapter 8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Gentiles

The word "Gentiles" here refers to ungodly people groups and not Gentile Christians. (See: godly)

Two witnesses

Scholars have suggested many different ideas about these two witnesses. Translators do not need to understand this passage to accurately translate it. (See: prophet)

Bottomless pit

This image is seen several times in the Book of Revelation. It is a picture of hell as being inescapable and the opposite direction as heaven. (See: hell)

Links:

[Revelation 11:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 11

11:1-2

What was John told to measure?

[11:1]

God told John to measure the temple of God. However, scholars do not know exactly what God was talking about.

Some scholars think God spoke about measuring the church. Those inside of the temple were Christians. That is, those who obeyed God and worshipped him in the right ways. Those outside of the temple were those who said they were Christians, but who did not believe in Jesus. Or perhaps they did believe in Jesus but did not worship God in the right way. Some scholars think God spoke about the temple in Ezekiel 40-57. This temple was a symbol of all Christians. God wanted to say that the church will replace the temple in Jerusalem. That is because it was going to be destroyed. Christians will gather together instead of going to the temple to worship God. They will worship God in the right way anywhere in the world. Some scholars think God spoke about a temple that will be built in the future. This temple will be built when the things the book of Revelation talks about happen. That is, it will be built during the seven years of suffering and punishment. Anyone who worships in this temple does not obey God. Therefore, God will judge them.

See: Temple; Church; Symbol; Worship

Why did God talk about measuring the temple?

[11:1, 11:2]

God talked about judging certain people when God talked about measuring the temple.

See: Temple

Why was the outside of the temple given to the Gentiles for 42 months?

[11:2]

The Gentiles were all the people who were not Jews. However, in the Bible, people who do not believe in Jesus or do not obey God are also called Gentiles.

Some scholars think God spoke about how people who did not obey God will rule the church or rule Christians for a long time. They think that each day was a symbol for a year. Some scholars think God spoke about when the Romans attacked Jerusalem. They attacked for 42 months. Some scholars think God spoke about a time when Christians were persecuted shortly after Jesus died. Some scholars think God spoke about punishing the Jews because they did not obey God. He will give the rebuilt temple to the Gentiles to control for 42 months to punish the Jews. The Gentiles will use the temple to get people to worship a false god.

See: Gentile; Symbol; Hebrew Calendar (Seasons in Israel); Persecute (Persecution) ; Worship

How long is 42 months?

[11:2]

42 months is 1260 days. In the Jewish calendar, a month is 30 days long. Some scholars think that a day is one day long. Fewer scholars think that a day in the book of Revelation is a symbol of one year. That is, it is 360 or 365 days.

See: Symbol

11:3-12

Who were the two witnesses?

[11:3]

The names of the two witnesses are not in the Bible.

Some scholars think they were Enoch and Elijah. This is because they were the only people in the Bible who never died (see: Hebrews 11:5; 2 Kings 2:11). Some scholars think that these two men were symbols. They symbolized all the men who spoke against evil church leaders. Other scholars think they were different symbols. They think that one man was a symbol of a church leader. The other man was a symbol of a leader in the government. Some scholars think they were Moses and Elijah (see: Deuteronomy 18:15 and Malachi 4:5). They think they were symbols of all the prophets of the Old Testament. These prophets talked about the time when God will destroy the world. They think Moses symbolized the Law of Moses and Elijah symbolized the prophets. Some scholars think that these men were a different symbol. They symbolized the people who will tell other people about Jesus. They will do this when the things in the book of Revelation about happen. Other scholars think that these are two Christians. They become prophets when the things in the book of Revelation happen.

There are also many other thoughts about who were these two witness.

Advice to translators: A witness is someone who tells other people about what they saw. These witness told people the things God wanted them to say. Someone who tells people about Jesus is also a type of witness.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy) ;Prophet; Symbol; Law of Moses

Why did the prophets wear sackcloth?

[11:3]

These two prophets wore sackcloth. This was a cloth that was heavy and rough to touch. It was not comfortable. In the Bible, people wore this cloth so that other people will know they were sad or mourning something bad.

See: Prophet

Why did John talk about two olive trees and two lampstands?

[11:4]

John was thinking about Zechariah 4 when John wrote this. The olive trees and lampstands were symbols of something. Scholars think the two olive trees and the two lampstands are both metaphors for the two witnesses.

Advice to translators: A witness is someone who tells other people about what they saw. These witness told people the things God wanted them to say. Someone who tells people about Jesus is also a type of witness.

See: Symbol; Metaphor

When does fire come out of the mouths of these two men?

[11:5]

John said fire will come out of the mouth of the two witnesses. Some scholars think this will happen to kill anyone who attempt to hurt them. Other scholars think this is a metaphor. God will protect them. God will hurt anyone who attempts to hurt these two men.

Advice to translators: A witness is someone who tells other people about what they saw. These witness told people the things God wanted them to say. Someone who tells people about Jesus is also a type of witness.

See: Metaphor

Will it rain when the two men prophesy?

[11:6]

Scholars think that it will not rain when these two men prophesy. This might be in Jerusalem or all over the world.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)

Who is the beast?

[11:7]

John said a beast will kill these two men after 1260 days. Some scholars think this beast is Satan or the antichrist. They think Satan or the antichrist will kill the two prophets. Other scholars think John talked about leaders who killed Christians.

See: Prophet; Satan (The Devil); Antichrist

What was the bottomless pit?

[11:7]

In the Bible, hell is called a bottomless pit.

See: Hell

Why is the great city called Sodom and Egypt?

[11:8]

John called Jerusalem the great city. However, he also called Sodom and Egypt the great city. These two cities were very

evil. Therefore, John wanted to say that in the same way the people in Sodom and Egypt were evil so were the people in Jerusalem evil. They were so evil that they did not allow God's prophets to be buried after they died. This dishonored the dead prophets.

See: Prophet

11:13-14

How did Jerusalem collapse?

[11:13]

When John said that Jerusalem collapsed, he wanted to say that part of the city of Jerusalem was destroyed.

What is a "woe"?

[11:14]

See: Woe

11:15-19

How did the kingdom of the world become the kingdom of Jesus?

[11:15]

The voice from heaven said that the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of Jesus.

Some scholars think that he wanted to say that church leaders who honored God will defeat the evil church leaders. Some scholars think that God rules on the earth in some way through Christians. God did not rule the world through Israel anymore. He rules through all Christians. Some scholars think that this will happen in the future. Jesus will return to the earth and rule people during this time.

Who are the 24 elders?

[11:16]

See: Revelation 4:4

How are the dead judged?

[11:18]

The dead are judged by the things they did while they were alive. These things are written in God's books.

See: Revelation 20:11-12

What is the ark of the covenant?

[11:19]

See: Ark of the Covenant

Revelation 11:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a vision about receiving a measuring rod and about two witnesses that God appointed. This vision also takes place between the blowing of the sixth and seventh trumpets.

A reed was given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Someone gave me a reed"

given to me ... I was told

The words "me" and "I" refer to John.

those who worship in it

"count those who worship in the temple"

Revelation 11:2

trample

to treat something as worthless by walking on it

forty-two months

"42 months"

Revelation 11:3

Connecting Statement:

God continues speaking to John.

for 1,260 days

"for one thousand two hundred and sixty days" or "for

twelve hundred and sixty days"

days, clothed in sackcloth

Why they will wear sackcloth can be made explicit.

Alternate translation: "days, wearing rough mourning clothes" or "days. They will wear scratchy clothes to show

that they are very sad"

Revelation 11:4

These witnesses are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that have stood before the Lord of the earth

The two olive trees and the two lampstands symbolize these people, but they are not literally the people. Alternate translation: "The two olive trees and the two lampstands that have stood before the Lord of the earth represent these witnesses"

the two olive trees and the two lampstands that

John expects his readers to know about them because many years earlier another prophet had written about them.

Alternate translation: "the two olive trees and the two lampstands, told about in scripture, that"

Revelation 11:5

fire comes out of their mouth and devours their enemies

Because this is about future events, it can also be stated in the future tense. Alternate translation: "fire will come out of their mouth and devour their enemies"

fire comes ... and devours their enemies

Fire burning and killing people is spoken of as if it were an animal that could eat them up. Alternate translation: "fire will come ... and destroy their enemies" or "fire will come ... and completely burn up their enemies"

Revelation 11:6

to close up the sky so that no rain will fall

John speaks of the sky as if it had a door that can be opened to let rain fall or closed to stop the rain. Alternate

translation: "to keep rain from falling from the sky"

the days that they prophesy

"the time that they prophesy." The word "days" here can refer to weeks, months, or years.

to turn

"to change"

to strike the earth with every kind of plague

John speaks of the plagues as if they were a stick that someone could hit the earth with. Alternate translation: "to cause all kinds of trouble to occur on earth"

Revelation 11:7

bottomless pit

This is an extremely deep, narrow hole. Possible meanings are 1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever or 2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in Revelation 9:1.

Revelation 11:8

Their bodies

This refers to the bodies of the two witnesses.

in the street of the great city

The city had more than one street. This was a public place where people could see them. Alternate translation: "in one of the streets of the great city" or "in the main street of the great city"

their Lord

They served the Lord, and, like him, would die in that city.

Revelation 11:9

three and a half days

"3 full days and one half day" or "3.5 days" or "3 1/2 days"

They will not permit them to be placed in a tomb

This will be a sign of disrespect.

Revelation 11:10

will rejoice over them and celebrate

"will rejoice that the two witnesses have died"

even send gifts to one another

This action shows how happy the people were.

because these two prophets tormented those who lived on the earth

This is the reason that the people will be so happy that the witnesses have died.

Revelation 11:11

three and a half days

"3 full days and one half day" or "3.5 days" or "3 1/2 days."

See how you translated this in [Revelation 11:9]

a breath of life from God will enter them

The ability to breathe is spoken of as if it were something that can go into people. Alternate translation: "God will cause the two witnesses to breathe again and live"

Great fear will fall on those who see them

Fear is spoken of as if it is a object that can fall on people.

Alternate translation: "Those who see them will be extremely afraid"

Revelation 11:12

Then they will hear

Possible meanings are 1) the two witnesses will hear or 2) the people will hear what is said to the two witnesses.

a loud voice from heaven

The word "voice" refers to the one who speaks. Alternate translation: "someone speak loudly to them from heaven and"

say to them

"say to the two witnesses"

Revelation 11:13

Seven thousand people

"7,000 people"

the survivors

"those who do not die" or "those who are still living"

give glory to the God of heaven

"say that the God of heaven is glorious"

Revelation 11:14

The second woe is past

"The second terrible event is over." See how you translated

"The first woe is past" in Revelation 9:12.

The third woe is coming quickly

Existing in the future is spoken of as coming. Alternate

translation: "The third woe will happen soon"

Revelation 11:15

Connecting Statement:

The last of the seven angels begins to sound his trumpet.

the seventh angel

This is the last of the seven angels. See how you translated

"seventh" in [Revelation 8.1]

loud voices spoke in heaven and said

The phrase "loud voices" represents speakers who spoke loudly. Alternate translation: "speakers in heaven spoke loudly and said"

The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ

Here "kingdom" refers to the authority to rule the world.

Alternate translation: "The authority to rule the world now

belongs to our Lord and his Christ" or "Our Lord and his

Christ are now the rulers of the world"

the world

This refers to everyone in the world. Alternate translation:

"everyone in the world"

Revelation 11:16

twenty-four elders

"24 elders." See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:4]

fell upon their faces

This is an idiom that means they lay down facing the ground. See how you translated "prostrated themselves" in [Revelation 4:10]

Revelation 11:17

you, Lord God Almighty, the one who is and who was

These phrases can be stated as sentences. Alternate

translation: "you, Lord God, the ruler over all. You are the one who is, and you are the one who was"

the one who is

"the one who exists" or "the one who lives"

who was

"who has always existed" or "who has always lived"

you have taken your great power

What God did with his great power can be stated clearly.

Alternate translation: "you have defeated with your power everyone who has rebelled against you"

Revelation 11:18

General Information:

The words "you" and "your" refer to God.

Connecting Statement:

The twenty-four elders continue praising God.
were enraged
"were extremely angry"
your wrath has come
Existing in the present is spoken of as having come.
Alternate translation: "You are ready to show your anger"
The time has come
Existing in the present is spoken of as having come.
Alternate translation: "The time is right" or "Now is the time"
for the dead to be judged
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for God to judge the dead"
the dead
This nominal adjective can be stated as a verb or adjective.
Alternate translation: "Those who have died" or "the dead people"
the prophets, those who are believers, and those who feared your name
This list explains what "your servants" means. These were not three completely different groups of people. The

prophets also were believers and feared God's name.
"Name" here is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ.
Alternate translation: "the prophets, those who are believers, and those who fear you" or "the prophets and the others who are believers and fear your name"
Revelation 11:19
Then God's temple in heaven was opened
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Then someone opened God's temple in heaven"
the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I saw the ark of his covenant in his temple"
flashes of lightning
Use your language's way of describing what lightning looks like each time it appears. See how you translated this in Revelation 4:5.
rumblings, crashes of thunder
These are the loud noises that thunder makes. Use your language's way of describing the sound of thunder. See how you translated this in Revelation 4:5.

Chapter 12

Revelation 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 10-12.

Special concepts in this chapter

Serpent

The Book of Revelation uses imagery from the Old Testament. For example, John refers to Satan as the serpent. This image comes from the account of the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted Eve.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"A great sign was seen in heaven"

By using the passive voice here, John does not say who saw this great sign in heaven. The translation may be difficult when the subject is unclear, if your language does not have a passive voice. Many English translations use the past tense here and say "A great sign appeared in heaven."

Links:

[Revelation 12:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 12

12:1-2

John talked about a woman. Who was she?

[12:1]

John talked about a woman. However, this woman was a symbol of something.

Some scholars think this woman was a symbol of Christians who obey and honor God. Some scholars think this woman was a symbol of the Jews who believed in Jesus.

See: Symbol

Why does John talk about the way the woman is dressed?

[12:1]

The way this woman was dressed was a symbol of something.

Some scholars think these things are symbols of different rulers. Some scholars think these things are symbols representing Israel.

See: Genesis 37:9

See: Symbol

The woman gave birth to a child. Who is this child?

[12:2]

When John talked about this child, it was a metaphor.

Some scholars think John was speaking about Christians. Some scholars think John was speaking about Jesus. Some scholars think John was speaking about Israel expecting the messiah to come.
See: Metaphor; Messiah (Christ)

12:3-6

What is a sign?

[12:3]

See: Sign

Who was the dragon?

[12:3]

The dragon was a symbol of someone or something.

Some scholars think that John was talking about the Roman Empire. This is because they tried to harm Christians. Some scholars think that John was talking about Satan. Some scholars think that John was talking about another empire like the Roman Empire that would rule near the time when Jesus returns.

See: Symbol; Dragon; Satan (The Devil)

Why did the dragon look the way it did?

[12:3]

The dragon appeared in a certain way. This was a symbol of something.

Some scholars think that John was talking about Satan getting a third of the angels to rebel against God. Those angels were removed from heaven and are now called demons. Some scholars think that John was talking about the Roman Empire and that a third of the Roman Empire tried to harm Christians. The rest of the Roman Empire did not try to harm Christians. Some scholars think that John was thinking about Daniel 7. They think that John was speaking about different groups of people who would rule large parts of the world.

See: Dragon; Symbol; Angel; Demon; Heaven

The woman gave birth to a son. Who is he?

[12:5]

John talked about a woman who gave birth to a son. This was a metaphor. Because the son is described as being a leader who will "rule all the nations with an iron rod" many scholars think John was speaking about Jesus (see: 19:15; Psalm 2:6-9).

See: Metaphor

Why did the women go to the wilderness?

[12:6]

The woman went to the wilderness. This was a metaphor.

Some scholars think the woman going to the wilderness was a metaphor about Christians who stopped honoring God after a certain leader ruled the Roman Empire. It was 1260 years before the church would honor God again. Some scholars think the woman was a metaphor about Jews who left Jerusalem before it was destroyed. Some scholars think John was talking about God helping Christians when people tried to harm them during the time John talks about in the book of Revelation. Some scholars think John was talking about God helping Christians at any time.

See: Metaphor

12:7-17

Who fought in this war?

[12:7]

John talked about a war in heaven.

Some scholars think John was talking about a war that will happen in heaven while the events of the book of Revelation take place. Some scholars think John was talking about a war on earth that happens while the events of the Book of Revelation take place. Some scholars think this was a metaphor. John wanted to say that Jesus and other Christians were defeating people who opposed Jesus.

See: Heaven; Metaphor

Why is Satan called the old serpent?

[12:9]

In Genesis 3, a serpent tempts Adam and Eve. This serpent was Satan.

See: Satan (The Devil)

Who accuses people?

[12:10]

Satan accuses Christians of sinning. Some scholars think that he accuses them before God. However, Christians do not need to worry about this because Jesus died and paid the penalty for their sins by dying for them. Other scholars think that Satan used to accuse people of sinning, but he stopped after Jesus died.

See: Satan (The Devil); Atonement (Atonement)

How do Christians defeat Satan?

[12:11]

John says that Satan accuses Christians of sinning. He tells God. However, it does not matter. Christians have defeated Satan and when he accuses them, it does not matter. This is because Jesus, as the Lamb of God, already died so that they could be at peace with God. The testimony about which Christians spoke was testimony of the shed blood of the Lamb.

See: Satan (The Devil); Lamb of God; Testify (Testimony); Blood

What is a "woe"?

[12:12]

See: Woe

Why does Satan have "only a little time"?

[12:12]

Most of the events of the book of Revelation occur over a short period of time. Because of this, Satan is only given a short period of time to do the things he wants to do that are written about in the book of Revelation.

See: Satan (The Devil)

Why did the woman have wings?

[12:14]

John said that this woman had wings. This was a symbol. He wanted to say that God helped her when she needed to be helped. She was trying to get away from Satan's attacks.

See: Exodus 19:4; Deuteronomy 32:11-12

See: Symbol

What did Paul mean when he said a "time, times, and half a time"?

[12:14]

John wanted to say three and a half years. A time was a year. Times was two years. Half a time was half a year. This would make this time the same 1260 days he mentioned in 12:6. Some scholars think these are days, while other scholars think that each day represents a year. They think, therefore, that John was talking about 1260 years.

Why was water coming out of the serpent's mouth?

[12:15]

Scholars think the water coming out of the serpent's mouth meant different things.

Some scholars think John was speaking about God protecting the church during difficult times when Satan persecuted the church. Other scholars think that the water was a symbol of something strong and powerful. They think John was talking about Satan invading Israel and harming the Israelites. Or that John was talking about Satan trying to harm Christians. Other scholars think this was about a war that happened after Jesus died. This war was between the Jews and the Roman Empire.

See: Persecute (Persecution) ; Symbol

Revelation 12:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a woman who appears in his vision.

A great sign was seen in heaven

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "A great sign appeared in heaven" or "I, John, saw a great sign in heaven"

a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "a woman who was wearing the sun and had the moon under her feet"

a crown of twelve stars

This was apparently a likeness of a wreath made of laurel leaves or olive branches, but with twelve stars included in it.

twelve stars

"12 stars"

Revelation 12:2

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 12:3

Connecting Statement:

John describes a dragon that appears in his vision.

dragon

This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish

people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos.

Revelation 12:4

His tail swept away a third of the stars

"With his tail he swept away a third of the stars"

a third

"one third." See how you translated this in [Revelation 8:7]

Revelation 12:5

rule all the nations with an iron rod

Ruling harshly is spoken of as ruling with an iron rod. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 2:27]

Her child was snatched away to God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God quickly took her child to himself"

Revelation 12:6

for 1,260 days

"for one thousand two hundred and sixty days" or "for twelve hundred and sixty days"

Revelation 12:7

Now

John uses this word to mark a shift in his account to introduce something else happening in his vision.

dragon

This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as "the devil or Satan." See how you

translated this in [Revelation 12:3]

Revelation 12:8

So there was no longer any place in heaven for him and his angels
"So the dragon and his angels could no longer stay in heaven"

Revelation 12:9

dragon—that old serpent called the Devil or Satan, who deceives the whole world—was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him

The information about the serpent can be given in a separate sentence after the statement that it was thrown down to the earth. Alternate translation: "dragon was thrown down to earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. He is the old serpent who deceives the world and is called the Devil or Satan"

The great dragon ... was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God threw the great dragon ... and his angels out of heaven and sent them to the earth"

Revelation 12:10

I

The word "I" refers to John.

I heard a loud voice in heaven

The word "voice" refers to someone who speaks. Alternate translation: "I heard someone saying loudly from heaven"

Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ

God saving people by his power is spoken of as if his salvation and power were things that have come. God's ruling and Christ's authority are also spoken of as if they have come. Alternate translation: "Now God has saved his people by his power, God rules as king, and his Christ has all authority"

have come

"have begun to really exist" or "have appeared" or "have become real." God is revealing these things because their time to occur has "come." It is not that they did not exist before.

the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down

This is the dragon that was thrown down in Revelation 12:9.

our brothers

Fellow believers are spoken of as if they were brothers.

Alternate translation: "our fellow believers"

day and night

These two parts of the day are used together to mean "all the time" or "without stopping"

Revelation 12:11

Connecting Statement:

The loud voice from heaven continues to speak.

They conquered him

"They conquered the accuser"

by the blood of the Lamb

The blood refers to his death. Alternate translation:

"because the lamb had shed his blood and died for them"

by the word of their testimony

The word "testimony" can be expressed with the verb

"testify." Also, whom they testified about can be stated

clearly. Alternate translation: "by what they said when they testified to others about Jesus"

even to death

The believers told the truth about Jesus, even though they knew that their enemies might try to kill them because of it. Alternate translation: "but kept testifying even though they knew that doing so might cause their death"

Revelation 12:12

He is filled with terrible anger

The devil is spoken of as if he were a container, and anger is spoken of as if it were a liquid that could be in him.

Alternate translation: "He is terribly angry"

Revelation 12:13

the dragon realized he had been thrown down to the earth

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the dragon realized that God had thrown him out of heaven and sent him to earth"

he pursued the woman

"he chased after the woman"

dragon

This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]

Revelation 12:14

the serpent's presence

This is another way of referring to the dragon. Alternate translation: "the dragon's presence"

Revelation 12:15

serpent

This is the same being as the dragon mentioned earlier in Revelation 12:9.

poured water out of his mouth like a river so that

The water flowed from his mouth like a river flows.

Alternate translation: "poured a very large amount of water out of his mouth so that"

river so that he might make a flood to sweep

"river; he was trying to make a flood that would sweep"

to sweep her away

"to wash her away"

Revelation 12:16

The earth opened its mouth and swallowed the river that the dragon

was pouring out of his mouth

The earth is spoken of as if it were a living thing, and a hole in the earth is spoken of as if it were a mouth that could drink up the water. Alternate translation: "A hole in the ground opened up and the water went down into the hole"

dragon

This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in verse 9 as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]

Revelation 12:17

hold to the testimony about Jesus

The word "testimony" can be translated as a verb. Alternate translation: "continue to testify about Jesus"

Revelation 12:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 10, which is from the Old Testament.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Similes

John uses many similes in this chapter. They help to describe the images that he sees in his vision.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Unknown animals

John uses different animals to try to describe what he saw. Some of these animals may not be known in the target language.

Links:

[Revelation 13:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 13

13:1-10

Who were the beast and the dragon?

[13:1, 13:2]

The beast and the dragon John wrote about were symbols of someone or something else.

Some scholars think the beast was the antichrist. They think the dragon was Satan. They think that beast's coming from the sea was a symbol that the antichrist will be a gentile. Some scholars think the beast was the Roman Empire. They think the dragon was the leader of the Roman Empire. Some scholars think the beast was a certain leader of the Roman Empire. They think the dragon was Satan.

See: Symbol; Gentile; Antichrist; Satan (The Devil)

Why did the beast look the way it did?

[13:2]

The beast looked like a leopard, a bear, and a lion. This beast was similar to the strong rulers that Daniel wrote about in the Old Testament (see: Daniel 7).

Some scholars think John wrote about the people who will help the antichrist rule the world. These are the scholars who think John was writing about the antichrist.

Other scholars think the seven heads of the beast were symbols of the seven mountains near Rome. These are the scholars who think John wrote about Rome. When John talked about other things, he wanted to talk about the Roman Empire in some way.

See: Symbol; Antichrist

Why did John write that the beast had a "fatal wound"?

[13:3]

John wrote that the beast had a "fatal wound." Some scholars think John wrote about the antichrist dying and being made alive again. The antichrist wants to do the same types of things Jesus did so people will worship him. Other scholars think the antichrist will not die and be made alive again, but he will make everyone think he died and was made alive again. Some scholars think John wrote about certain leaders of the Roman Empire. These leaders worshipped false gods for many years. Then they stopped worshipping false gods for many years. And then they began worshipping false gods again.

Other scholars think John wrote about the Roman Empire after a certain leader died. After he died, there was war. However, the Empire continued to rule even though war weakened them.

Some scholars think John wrote about how the Roman Empire ended. A new empire will arise that will be like the old Roman Empire in some way.

See: Antichrist

What was blasphemy?

[13:5]

See: Blasphemy (Blasphemy)

What is the book of life?

[13:8]

The book of life is a list of people's names. These people will live together with God in heaven forever. This may be a metaphor or there may be an actual book in heaven.

See: Heaven; Metaphor

Who is the lamb?

[13:8]

See: Lamb of God

What happened before the world was created?

[13:8]

God planned for Jesus to die so people could be at peace with God. He planned this before the world was created.

13:11-18

Who is this other beast?

[13:11]

John wrote about a second beast. This was a symbol. Some scholars think wrote about a false prophet. This false prophet would get people to worship the antichrist. Satan gave this false prophet power and permission to do miracles. He did this so that people would worship the antichrist.

Other scholars think this was a certain evil religious leader. This leader wanted people to not do the things God taught in the Bible.

Other scholars think the beast was another leader in the Roman Empire or a leader in Israel.

See: Symbol; Prophet; Miracle; Antichrist; Satan (The Devil)

What is the image this beast created?

[13:14]

This beast created something for people to worship. This was evil. Scholars think this might be in the temple that the antichrist builds. Some scholars think John wanted to write that many began worshipping these false gods. They even worshipped the leader of the Roman Empire.

See: Daniel 3:1-7

See: Worship

What is the mark people have to have?

[13:16]

In ancient times, slaves often had a mark placed on their forehead. This made people know that the slave belonged to their certain master. Some scholars think John wrote about people who served a certain false teacher. People would somehow know who these people were by the things they said or did.

Other scholars think that John wanted to write that Roman leaders or Jewish leaders will persecute Christians.

Other scholars think that the antichrist will make people have some kind of mark for people to buy and sell things. This mark means that they worship the antichrist. Therefore, Christians will not be able to buy and sell things.

See: Persecute (Persecution); Antichrist

What is the number of the beast?

[13:18]

In ancient times, sometimes letters of the alphabet were also used as numbers. Some scholars think this number was a symbol for a certain word. They think John wrote about a certain evil leader in the church. Other scholars think John wrote about the name of a certain leader of the Roman Empire.

See: Symbol

Revelation 13:1

General Information:

John begins to describe a beast who appears in his vision.

The word "I" here refers to John.

Revelation 13:2

dragon

This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]

The dragon gave it his power

The dragon made the beast as powerful as he was. He did not lose his power, however, by giving it to the beast.

his power ... his throne, and his great authority to rule

These are three ways of referring to his authority, and together they emphasize that the authority was great.

his throne

The word "throne" here refers to the dragon's authority to rule as king. Alternate translation: "his royal authority" or "his authority to rule as king"

Revelation 13:3

but that fatal wound had been healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but that fatal wound had healed"

fatal wound

"deadly wound"

The whole earth

The word "earth" refers to the people on it. Alternate translation: "All the people on the earth"

followed the beast

"obeyed the beast"

Revelation 13:4

dragon

This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]

he had given his authority to the beast

"he had caused the beast to have as much authority as he had"

Who is like the beast?

This question shows how amazed they were about the beast. Alternate translation: "No one is as powerful as the beast!"

Who can fight against it?

This question shows how much the people feared the power of the beast. Alternate translation: "No one could ever fight against the beast and win!"

Revelation 13:5

The beast was given ... It was permitted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave the beast ... God permitted the beast"

The beast was given a mouth that could speak

Being given a mouth refers to being allowed to speak.

Alternate translation: "The beast was allowed to speak"

forty-two months

"42 months"

Revelation 13:6

to speak blasphemies against God

"to say disrespectful things about God"

blaspheming his name and his tabernacle, those who live in heaven

The words "those who live in heaven" describe "his tabernacle." John is speaking as though God's people were a tabernacle in which God dwells. Alternate translation: "blaspheming his name and those who live in heaven, who are like a tabernacle for him"

blaspheming his name

God's name is a metonym for God himself. Alternate translation: "blaspheming God"

his name and his tabernacle, those who live in heaven

Some modern translations read, "his name, his tabernacle, and those who live in heaven."

Revelation 13:7

authority was given to it

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God gave authority to the beast"

every tribe, people, language, and nation

This means that people from every ethnic group are included. See how you translated a similar list in Revelation 5:9.

Revelation 13:8

will worship it

"will worship the beast"

everyone whose name was not written ... in the Book of Life

This phrase clarifies who on the earth will worship the beast. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whose names the Lamb did not write ... in The Book of Life" or "those whose names were not ... in the Book of Life"

from the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "from the time that God created the world"

the Lamb

A "lamb" is a young sheep. Here it is used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

who had been slaughtered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom the people slaughtered"

Revelation 13:9

General Information:

These verses are a break from John's account of his vision. Here he give a warning to the people reading his account.

If anyone has an ear, let him hear

Jesus is emphasizing that what he is about to say is important. The phrase "has an ear" here is a metonym for the willingness to understand and obey. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

If anyone ... let him hear

Since Jesus is speaking directly to his audience, you may prefer to use the second person here. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 2:7]

Revelation 13:10

If anyone is to be taken

This expression means that someone has decided who should be taken. If needed, translators may state clearly who decided it. Alternate translation: "If God has decided that someone should be taken" or "If it is God's will that someone should be taken"

If anyone is to be taken into captivity

This can be stated in active form. The noun "captivity" can be stated with the verb "capture." Alternate translation: "If it is God's will for the enemy to capture a certain person" into captivity he will go

The noun "captivity" can be stated with the verb "capture." Alternate translation: "he will be captured" or "the enemy will capture him"

If anyone is to be killed with the sword

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If it is God's will for the enemy to kill a certain person with a sword"

with the sword

The sword represents war. Alternate translation: "in war"

he will be killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the enemy will kill him"

Here is a call for the patient endurance and faith of God's holy people "God's holy people must endure patiently and be faithful"

Revelation 13:11

Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe another beast who appears in his vision.

it spoke like a dragon

Harsh speech is spoken of as if it were the roar of a dragon.

Alternate translation: "it spoke harshly like a dragon speaks"

dragon

This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]

Revelation 13:12

the earth and those who live on it

"everyone on the earth"

the one whose lethal wound had been healed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the one who had a lethal wound that healed"

lethal wound

"deadly wound." This was an injury that was serious enough that it could have made him die.

Revelation 13:13

He performed

"The beast from the earth performed"

Revelation 13:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 13:15

He was permitted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God permitted the beast from the earth"

to give breath to the beast's image

Here the word "breath" represents life. Alternate

translation: "to give life to the beast's image"

the beast's image

This is the image of the first beast that had been mentioned.

cause all who refused to worship the beast to be killed

"put to death anyone who refused to worship the first beast"

Revelation 13:16

He also forced everyone

"The beast from the earth also forced everyone"

Revelation 13:17

It was impossible for anyone to buy or sell unless he had the mark of

the beast

"People could buy or sell things only if they had the mark of the beast." The implicit information that the beast from the earth commanded it can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "He commanded that people could buy or sell things only if they had the mark of the beast"

the mark of the beast

This was an identifying mark that indicated that the person who received it worshiped the beast.

Revelation 13:18

General Information:

This verse is a break from John's account of his vision. Here he gives another warning to the people reading his account.

This calls for wisdom

"Wisdom is needed" or "You need to be wise about this"

If anyone has insight

The word "insight" can be translated with the verb

"understand." Alternate translation: "If anyone is able to understand things"

let him calculate the number of the beast

"he should discern what the number of the beast means" or

"he should figure out what the number of the beast means"

is the number of a human being

Possible meanings are 1) the number represents one person or 2) the number represents all of humanity.

Chapter 14

Revelation 14 General Notes

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Harvest

Harvest is when people go out to gather ripe food from plants. Jesus used this as a metaphor to teach his followers that they need to go and tell other people about him so those people can be part of God's kingdom. This chapter uses the metaphor of two harvests. Jesus gathers in his people from the whole earth. Then an angel gathers in wicked people whom God will punish. (See: and harvest and faith)

Links:

[Revelation 14:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 14

14:1-5

What is Mount Zion?

[14:1]

See: Zion

Who were the 144,000?

[14:1]

John wrote about 144,000 people who were with Jesus. Some scholars think John wrote about Christians. Perhaps they were in heaven. Or perhaps they were on the earth. Some scholars think John wrote about the first Jews who believed in Jesus. Some scholars think that these are the Christians God will protect during the events written about in this book (see: Revelation 7)

See: Heaven

What was a harp?

[14:2]

A harp was a music instrument with strings.

What was the new song?

[14:3]

Some scholars think the new song was a metaphor. This metaphor was about Christians. These Christians came to believe

the same things that Jesus taught after false teachers taught them the wrong things for a long period of time. Other scholars think John wrote about Jews believing what Jesus said while he was on the earth. Other scholars think a large group in heaven was singing about God's saving and redeeming people (see: Psalm 33:1-12; 40:1-3).

See: Metaphor; Heaven; Redeem (Redemption)

Who were the four living creatures and the elders?

[14:3]

See: Revelation 4:6-11

The 144,000 kept themselves sexually pure. What did this mean?

[14:4]

John wrote about these people being sexually pure. They think this was a metaphor. He wanted to write that they were completely committed to God. They did the right things and did not worship false gods. In the Old Testament, God spoke about worshipping false gods as adultery (see: Ezekiel 6:9).

See: Metaphor; Idolatry (Idol); Adultery

What was a first fruit?

[14:4]

See: Fruit (Metaphor)

Revelation 14:6-13

The angel said the time of judgment has come. When will God judge people?

[14:7]

The angel said that "the hour of his judgment has come." God will judge people. Some scholars think this will happen after the whole world hears the gospel.

Other scholars think the angel spoke about a certain day when God will judge people. This will be in the last days.

Other scholars think the angel spoke about the gospel. People will be judged if they do not believe in the gospel. He wanted to say that it is now time for people to believe in Jesus or to reject him.

See Matthew 24:14;

See: Angel; Gospel; Last Days

What was Babylon?

[14:8]

Babylon was a city in a very evil empire in the ancient world. It was the most important city in this empire. In the Bible, there is another empire that will come. This empire will be more evil than Babylon. The angel also called this empire Babylon. This may be a metaphor.

Some scholars think the angel spoke about Jerusalem. God punished the people of Jerusalem after they did not believe in Jesus. Rome destroyed the city and destroyed the temple shortly after Jesus lived.

Other scholars think the angel spoke about Rome and the Roman Empire.

Other scholars think this was a future empire that the antichrist will lead. Perhaps this will be in the same place as ancient Babylon.

See: Angel; Metaphor; Babylon, Prostitute (Prostitution) ; Antichrist; Temple

See Map: Babylon

What have people done that is like things Babylon has done?

[14:8]

In the Babylonian Empire, people worshipped false gods. Therefore, Babylon tried to get people to worship false gods.

God judged them because of this.

See: Idolatry (Idol); Adultery

What happens to those who are given the mark of the beast?

[14:9, 14:10, 14:11]

Some scholars think God will punish those who are given the mark of the beast or worship the beast. He will punish them forever. Once someone is given the mark, they will not be able to have peace with God and live with him forever. Instead, they will live forever separated from God in hell.

Other scholars think John used a metaphor. They think he spoke about the city John called Babylon being destroyed.

See: Revelation 13

See: Hell

What did it mean to drink the wine of God's wrath?

[14:10]

When someone was crucified, they were given a small taste of wine before they died (see: Mark 15:23).

Some scholars think John wanted to write that those who worshipped the beast were going to die.

Other scholars think this was a metaphor. He wanted to write that they would be punished completely. John wrote the wine was "undiluted." That is, it was not mixed with anything else. In the same way, God's punishment would not be

mixed with grace.
See: Crucify (Crucifixion); Metaphor; Grace
How does someone die in the lord?
[14:13]

Brought into the kingdom of God. The second harvest is about those who reject Jesus. They will be punished. Other scholars think John was speaking about Jesus judging evil people. Perhaps this is when he returns to the earth. Other scholars think John was speaking about God punishing the city of Jerusalem when Roman destroyed the temple. John said that people who believe in Jesus will die in the Lord. He wanted to say that they can die happy because they know they are at peace with God and will be with him forever. Scholars think God will give extra favor to those who die during the time John wrote about.
See: Son of Man; Kingdom of God
See: Philippians 1:21

Revelation 14:14-20

Who is the son of man?
[14:14]
See: Son of Man
Why did the son of man look the way he did?
[14:14]

The son of man came sitting on a cloud. He wears a crown because he is a king and rules the world. He also is about to harvest people. This is a metaphor about how he will judge people.
Some scholars think John wrote about God helping people when they are persecuted.
Other scholars think that John wrote about God judging people when the Roman Empire destroyed the temple in Jerusalem.
See: Matthew 13:24-30
See: Crown; Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution); Son of Man
Why did John write, "the harvest of the earth is ripe"?
[14:15]

Some scholars think John wrote about two harvests. Other scholars think John wrote about one harvest in two different ways. This was a metaphor about something.
Some scholars think in the first harvest those who believe in Jesus will be brought into the kingdom of God. The second harvest is about those who do not believe in Jesus. They will be punished. Other scholars think John wrote about Jesus judging evil people. They think this is when he returns to the earth. Other scholars think John wrote about God punishing the city of Jerusalem when the Roman Empire destroyed the temple.
See: Harvest; Son of Man; Kingdom of God; Temple
Why did John write about a winepress?
[14:19]
John continued a metaphor he began earlier (see: Revelation 14:10). God will punish people. Instead of this winepress making wine, blood comes out of it. It will be about 1 meter deep and about 300 kilometers wide.
Because there is so much blood, some scholars think this is a metaphor. He wanted to say that God will completely punish evil and the people who do not believe in him.
Other scholars think that many people will actually die and there will be this much blood. Perhaps it will be in a river.
See: Metaphor

Revelation 14:1
General Information:
The word "I" refers to John.
Connecting Statement:
John begins to describe the next part of his vision. There are 144,000 believers standing before the Lamb.
Lamb
A "lamb" is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]
144,000
"one hundred forty-four thousand." See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:4]
who had his name and his Father's name written on their foreheads
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "on whose foreheads the Lamb and his Father had written their

names"
his Father
This is an important title for God that describes the relationship between God and Jesus.
Revelation 14:2
a voice from heaven
"a sound from heaven"
Revelation 14:3
They sang a new song
"The 144,000 people sang a new song." This explains what the sound was that John heard. Alternate translation: "That sound was a new song that they sang"
the four living creatures
"the four living beings" or "the four living things." See how you translated "living creature" in Revelation 4:6
elders

This refers to the twenty-four elders around the throne. See how you translated "elders" in Revelation 4:4.

No one could learn the song except for the 144,000

This double negative emphasizes that the 144,000 were unique. Alternate translation: "The only ones who could learn the song were the 144,000"

144,000

"one hundred forty-four thousand." See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:4]

Revelation 14:4

have not defiled themselves with women

Possible meanings are 1) "have never had immoral sexual relations with a woman" or 2) "have never had sexual relations with a woman." Defiling oneself with women may be a symbol of worshipping idols.

they have kept themselves sexually pure

Possible meanings are 1) "they have not had sexual relations with a woman who was not their wife" or 2) "they are virgins."

follow the Lamb wherever he goes

Doing what the Lamb does is spoken of as following him.

Alternate translation: "they do whatever the Lamb does" or "they obey the Lamb"

redeemed from among mankind as firstfruits

"Firstfruits" here is a metaphor for the first offering to be made to God in celebration of harvest. Alternate translation: "purchased out of the midst of the rest of mankind as a special celebration of salvation"

Revelation 14:5

No lie was found in their mouth

Their "mouth" refers to what they said." Alternate translation: "They never lied when they spoke"

Revelation 14:6

Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe the next part of his vision. This is the first of three angels who proclaim judgment on the earth.

every nation, tribe, language, and people

This means that people from every ethnic group are included. See how you translated a similar list in Revelation 5:9.

Revelation 14:7

the hour of his judgment has come

Here "the hour" represents the time that has been chosen for something, and the hour having "come" is a metaphor for now being the chosen time. The idea of "judgment" can be expressed with a verb. Alternate translation: "now is the time that God has chosen for judgment" or "it is now the time for God to judge people"

Revelation 14:8

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great

The angel speaks of Babylon having been destroyed as if it had fallen. Alternate translation: "Babylon the great has been destroyed"

Babylon the great

"Babylon the large city" or "the important city of Babylon."

This was probably a symbol for the city of Rome, which was large, wealthy, and sinful.

who persuaded

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a person, instead of a city filled with people.

to drink the wine of her immoral passion

This is a symbol for participating in her sexually immoral passion. Alternate translation: "to be sexually immoral like her" or "to get drunk like her in sexual sin"

her immoral passion

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a prostitute who has caused other people to sin along with her. This may well have a double meaning: literal sexual immorality and also the worship of false gods.

Revelation 14:9

with a loud voice

"loudly"

Revelation 14:10

will also drink some of the wine of God's wrath

Drinking the wine of God's wrath is a symbol for being punished by God. Alternate translation: "will also drink some of the wine that represents God's wrath"

that has been poured undiluted

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God has poured full strength"

that has been poured undiluted

This means that the wine has no water mixed into it. It is strong, and a person who drinks much of it will get very drunk. As a symbol, it means that God will be extremely angry, not just a little angry.

cup of his anger

This symbolic cup holds the wine that represents God's anger.

Revelation 14:11

Connecting Statement:

The third angel continues to speak.

The smoke from their torment

The phrase "their torment" refers to the fire that torments them. Alternate translation: "The smoke from the fire that torments them"

they have no rest

"they have no relief" or "the torment does not stop"

Revelation 14:12

Here is a call for the patient endurance of God's holy people

"God's holy people must endure patiently and be faithful."

See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 13:10.

Revelation 14:13

the dead who die

"those who die"

who die in the Lord

"who are united with the Lord when they die." This may refer to people who are killed by their enemies. Alternate translation: "who die because they are united to the Lord"

labors

difficulties and sufferings

their deeds will follow them

These deeds are spoken of as if they were alive and able to follow those who did them. Possible meanings are 1)

"others will know the good deeds these people have done" or 2) "God will reward them for their deeds"

Revelation 14:14

Connecting Statement:

John begins to describe the next part of his vision. This part is about the Son of Man harvesting the earth. Harvesting the grain is a symbol of God's judging people.

one like a son of man

This expression describes a human figure, someone who looks human. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:13]

golden crown

This was the likeness of a wreath of olive branches or laurel leaves, hammered out in gold. Examples actually made of leaves were given to victorious athletes to wear on their heads.

sickle

a tool with a curved blade used for cutting grass, grain, and vines

Revelation 14:15

came out of the temple

"came out of the heavenly temple"

the time to reap has come

Existing in the present is spoken of as having come.

Revelation 14:16

the earth was reaped

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "he reaped the earth"

Revelation 14:17

Connecting Statement:

John continues describing his vision about the earth being harvested.

Revelation 14:18

who had authority over the fire

Here "authority over" refers to responsibility to tend the fire.

Revelation 14:19

harvested the grapevine of the earth ... threw it

John describes the earth as a grapevine full of ripe grapes that the angel is harvesting. The grapevine is a metonym for the grapes on the vine, and the grapes are a metaphor for the people of the earth. Alternate translation:

"harvested the earth as if he were a person harvesting grapes ... threw the harvest" or "took away the people of the earth as if he were a person harvesting grapes ... threw them"

threw it

"threw the grapevine," a metonym for the harvest from the grapevine, or "threw the harvest from the grapevine"

the great winepress of God's wrath

"the large winepress where God will show his wrath." A winepress is a large container in which people put grapes and then crush them to get the juice out. John is saying that the angel will take the people of the earth and put them where God will punish or destroy them because he is angry with them.

Revelation 14:20

winepress

This is "the great wine vat" of [Revelation 14:19](#).

up to the height of a horse's bridle

"as high as the bridle on a horse's head"

bridle

a device made of leather straps that goes around a horse's head and is used for directing the horse

1,600 stadia

"one thousand six hundred stadia" or "sixteen hundred stadia." A "stadium" is 185 meters. In modern measures this would be about "300 kilometers" or "200 miles."

Chapter 15

Revelation 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter John describes events and pictures that occur in heaven.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 3-4.

Special concepts in this chapter

"Victorious over the beast"

Those who are "victorious over the beast" are spiritually victorious. While most spiritual battles cannot be seen, the Book of Revelation pictures spiritual battles as openly occurring.

"The temple having the tent of witness was open in heaven"

Scripture elsewhere indicates the earthly temple copied God's perfect dwelling place in heaven. Here John seems to refer to God's heavenly dwelling place or temple.

Songs

The Book of Revelation often describes heaven as a place where people sing. They worship God with songs. This illustrates that heaven is a place where God is always worshiped.

Links:

[Revelation 15:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 15

15:1-8

Why did John wrote about seven final plagues?

[15:1]

John wrote about seven final plagues.

Some scholars think John wrote about something that will happen when the world is going to end.

Other scholars think John wrote about the end of the antichrist. That is, the time when God will judge him.

Other scholars think John wrote about the time when Jerusalem was destroyed.

See: Plague; Antichrist

How is the wrath of God complete?

[15:1]

The wrath of God will be complete when God defeats Satan and the antichrist. Some scholars think John wanted to encourage Christians by promising them that God would defeat Satan. Although Satan defeated Christians for a period of time, they will ultimately defeat him.

See: Wrath; Satan (The Devil); Antichrist

What is the sea of glass?

[15:2]

God rules from a throne. Near to this throne is something that looks like a lot of water made of glass. This is what John was writing about. Some scholars think it had fire coming out of it because God was about to judge someone. Because of this, scholars think John wrote about something that happened in heaven.

See: Revelation 4:6

See: Throne; Heaven

What are the people doing?

[15:2, 15:3, 15:4]

John talked about certain people who were praising God. Scholars think John was speaking about Christians who were killed because they believed in Jesus.

See: Exodus 15

What is the temple having the tent of witness?

15:5]

John wrote about a temple in heaven. Scholars think the temple God told Moses to build in the Old Testament was based on the temple that is in heaven.

See: Heaven; Temple

Why were the angels dressed in this way?

[15:6]

The angels were perfectly holy. The clothes they wore showed they did not have any dirt on them.

See: Angel: Holy (Holiness, Set Apart); Clean and Unclean

Why are there seven bowls of wrath?

[15:7]

The seven bowls John wrote about are symbols. John wrote about God judging someone or something. Perhaps John wrote about God judging the beast (see: Revelation 11:7)

See: Wrath; Symbol

Why was no one able to enter into the temple?

[15:8]

The temple was filled with the glory of God. People were not able to enter the temple when this happened. If they did, they would die.

See: Exodus 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11

See: Temple; Glory (Glorify); Wrath

Revelation 15:1

General Information:

This verse is a summary of what will happen in 15:6-16:21.
great and marvelous

These words have similar meanings and are used for emphasis. Alternate translation: "something that greatly amazed me"

seven angels with seven plagues

"seven angels who had authority to send seven plagues on the earth"

which are the final plagues

"and after them, there will not be any more plagues"

for with them the wrath of God will be completed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "for

these plagues will complete the wrath of God"

for with them the wrath of God will be completed

Possible meanings are 1) these plagues will show all of God's anger or 2) after these plagues, God will no longer be angry.

Revelation 15:2

General Information:

Here John begins to describe his vision of the people who had been victorious over the beast and who were praising God.

sea of glass

How it was like glass or a sea can be stated clearly. Possible meanings are 1) a sea is spoken of as if it were glass.

Alternate translation: "a sea that was as smooth as glass" or

2) glass if spoken of as if it were a sea. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:6]
 who had been victorious over the beast and his image
 How they were victorious can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "who had been victorious over the beast and his image by not worshiping them"
 over the number representing his name
 How they were victorious over the number can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "over the number representing his name by not being marked with that number"
 the number representing his name
 This refers to the number described in Revelation 13:18.
 Revelation 15:3
 They were singing
 "Those who had been victorious over the beast were singing"
 Revelation 15:4
 Who will not fear you, Lord, and glorify your name?
 This question is used to show their amazement at how great and glorious the Lord is. It can be expressed as an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Lord, everyone will fear you and glorify your name!"
 glorify your name
 The phrase "your name" refers to God. Alternate translation: "glorify you"
 your righteous deeds have been revealed
 This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you have made everyone know about your righteous deeds"
 Revelation 15:5
 Connecting Statement:
 The seven angels with the seven plagues come out of the most holy place. They were spoken of previously in Revelation 15:1.

After these things
 "After the people finished singing"
 the temple of the tabernacle of witness
 The words "the temple" seem to refer either literally to a solid building or metaphorically to a tent or tabernacle. Possible meanings of "tabernacle of witness" are 1) "the tabernacle" is the place where the priests had set the "witness," also called "the ark of the testimony," or 2) the "tabernacle of witness" is another name for "the ark of the testimony."
 Revelation 15:6
 Out of the temple
 This is the "temple" spoken of in [Revelation 15:5](#).
 the seven angels holding the seven plagues
 These angels were seen as holding seven plagues because in Revelation 17:7 they are given seven bowls full of the wrath of God.
 linen
 a fine, expensive cloth made from flax
 sashes
 A sash is a decorative piece of cloth worn on the upper body.
 Revelation 15:7
 the four living creatures
 "the four living beings" or "the four living things." See how you translated "living creatures" in Revelation 4:6
 seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God
 The image of the wine in the bowls can be stated clearly. The word "wrath" here refers to punishment. The wine is a symbol for punishment. Alternate translation: "seven gold bowls full of the wine that represents the wrath of God"
 Revelation 15:8
 until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed
 "until the seven angels finished sending the seven plagues to the earth"

Chapter 16

Revelation 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter continues the vision of chapter 15. Together they give the seven plagues that complete the wrath of God. (See: wrath)

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 5-7.

Special concepts in this chapter

"I heard a loud voice call out of the temple"

This is the same temple that was mentioned in chapter 15.

Seven bowls of God's wrath

This chapter reveals severe judgments. They are pictured as angels pouring out seven bowls of God's wrath.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

The tone of this chapter is meant to astonish the reader. Translations should not minimize the vivid language expressed in this chapter.

Armageddon

This is a Hebrew word. It is the name of a place. John used the sounds of the Hebrew word and wrote them with Greek letters. Translators are encouraged to transliterate it using the letters of the target language.

Links:

[Revelation 16:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 16

16:1-2

Who are the seven angels?

[16:1]

These are the seven angels who are near the throne of God.

See: Revelation 8:2

See: Angel; Throne

What is a bowl of the wrath of God?

[16:1]

John used the bowl as a metaphor. A bowl holds something. Here, it holds God's anger. When God wants to punish people, he pours it on them.

See: Metaphor; Wrath

How does God speak to the angels?

[16:1]

God commands all of the angels at the same time. Some scholars think this means that these things will happen in a very short period of time. Other scholars think these things will happen over a longer period of time.

See: Angel

What are the painful sores?

[16:2]

Some scholars think God will punish the people who do not believe in Jesus and worship the antichrist by giving them painful sores. 1. Other scholars think this is a metaphor. They think John wrote about people doing evil things. Other scholars think he wrote about bad things that happened when the temple was destroyed and Jerusalem was conquered in ancient times. 1. Other scholars think that this meant that people will be punished in hell forever.

See: Exodus 9:8-12; Deuteronomy 28:27-35

See: Antichrist; Metaphor; Temple; Hell

Who is the beast?

[16:2]

See: Revelation 11:7

16:3

What happens to the sea?

[16:3]

Some scholars think that the sea will turn red. Everything in it will die. Other scholars think this is a metaphor. John wrote about a battle that happened between ships in the sea. Other scholars think the metaphor was about Israel becoming unclean. Other scholars think he wrote about the war between Israel and the Roman Empire. This happened after Jesus returned to heaven.

See: Metaphor; Clean and Unclean; Heaven

16:4-7

To whom is the angel speaking?

[16:5]

The angel spoke to God the Father in heaven.

See: Angel; Heaven

Why were people being punished?

[16:6]

The angel turned the rivers into blood.

Some scholars think this was a metaphor. John was writing about battles or wars that would happen. Certain places were punished because many Christians were killed there. Some scholars think this was a metaphor. John was writing about how God punished the Roman Empire after they killed many Christians and Jews. Some scholars think this was a metaphor. John was writing about God punishing Israel for not believing in Jesus and what the prophets said. Some scholars think God will one day turn rivers all over the world to blood. God will punish those who worship the antichrist.

See: Angel; Metaphor; Prophet; Antichrist

16:8-9

Who was John writing about when he wrote about the sun?

[16:8]

Some scholars think this was a metaphor. They think John wrote about a certain leader. Other scholars think he wrote about the actual sun. Other scholars think that John wrote about the Roman Empire. Other scholars think John wrote about God judging the world.

See: Metaphor

What is blasphemy?

[16:9]

See: Blaspheme (Blasphemy)

What is repenting?

[16:9]

See: Repent (Repentance)

What is a plague?

[16:9]

A plague is when large numbers of insects or animals come into an area and destroy things. In ancient times, people thought plagues were God's punishment. John was not writing about insects. Instead, he wrote about God punishing them.

16:10-11

Who is the beast?

[16:10]

See: Revelation 11:7

What is the kingdom of the beast?

[16:10]

God gave Satan permission to rule the earth. However, God rules Satan (see: Luke 4:6; John 14:30).

Some scholars think John wrote about ruling the world.

Other scholars think he wrote about the kingdom the antichrist rules.

See: Satan (The Devil); Antichrist

16:12-16

What is the Euphrates River?

[16:12]

Some scholars think John wrote about the actual Euphrates River. Other scholars think this was a metaphor about a certain country or kingdom.

See: Metaphor;

See Map: Euphrates River

What is an unclean spirit?

[16:13]

See: Clean and Unclean; Spirit (Spiritual); Demon

Who is the dragon?

[16:13]

See: Revelation 12:3

Who is the false prophet?

[16:13]

A prophet is someone who says the things God tell him to say. A false prophet says they are saying the things God wants them to say, but God has not really said anything to them. John was talking about a certain false prophet. This false prophet said the things that Satan wanted him to say, but he said they were from God.

See: Prophet; Satan (The Devil)

What is a demon?

[16:14]

See: Demon

What is the battle of the great day?

[16:14]

Some scholars think John wrote about a physical war that will happen before Jesus returns to the earth (see: Joel 2:11; 3:2). Other scholars think John wrote about the spiritual war that would happen before Jesus returns to the earth.

See: Spiritual Warfare

How will Jesus return like a thief?

[16:15]

No one knows when a thief will enter into a home. John used this as a metaphor to talk about how no one will know when Jesus returns.

See: Revelation 3:3

See: Metaphor

Where is Armageddon?

[16:16]

See Map: Armageddon

16:17-21

What is the great city?

[16:19]

John does not name the great city. It may be Babylon or the capital of the nation of Babylon (see: 18:10, 21). However, scholars do not know what John was writing about when he wrote about Babylon. Babylon was an ancient city and the capital of a great empire. However, there was no city of Babylon when John wrote these words. Some scholars think the great city is Babylon. Other scholars think the great city and Babylon are two different places.

See Map: Babylon

What nation is Babylon?

[16:19]

When John wrote these words, the nation and city of Babylon had been destroyed for many years. Some scholars think John wrote about a nation that is evil in the same way that the ancient Babylonian Empire was evil.

However, scholars do not know the name of the nation. They think Babylon was a metaphor. It is a very evil nation which did not believe in God. Scholars think it was a prophecy about a nation coming in the future. Other scholars think it was the Roman Empire. Other scholars think he wrote about the city of Jerusalem. Other scholars think that John wrote about a certain religious leader and the people who followed this religious leader.

See: Prophecy (Prophecy)

See Map: Babylon

Did the islands and mountains disappear?

[16:20]

Some scholars think John wrote using a hyperbole. He wanted to say that many things will be destroyed.

Other scholars think these things will happen in the same way John saw them.

See: Hyperbole

How heavy is a talent?

[16:21]

A talent weighs about 60 kilograms.

What does it mean to curse God?

[16:21]

See: Curse

Revelation 16:1

Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe the part of the vision about the seven angels with the seven plagues. The seven plagues are the seven bowls of God's wrath.

I heard

The word "I" refers to John.

bowls of God's wrath

The image of the wine in the bowls can be stated clearly.

The word "wrath" here refers to punishment. The wine is a symbol for punishment. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 15:7]

Revelation 16:2

poured out his bowl

The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. Alternate translation: "poured out the wine from his bowl" or "poured out God's wrath from his bowl"

painful sores

"painful wounds." These could be infections from diseases or injuries that have not healed.

mark of the beast

This was an identifying mark that indicated that the person who received it worshiped the beast. See how you translated this in Revelation 13:17.

Revelation 16:3

poured out his bowl

The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]

the sea

This refers to all the salt water lakes and oceans.

Revelation 16:4

poured out his bowl

The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]

rivers and the springs of water

This refers to all bodies of fresh water.

Revelation 16:5

the angel of the waters

These words could be a reference to 1) the third angel who was in charge of pouring out God's wrath on the rivers and springs of water or 2) another angel who was in charge of all the waters.

You are righteous

"You" refers to God.

the one who is and who was

"God who is and who was." See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 1:4.

Revelation 16:6

they poured out the blood of God's holy people and prophets

Here "poured out the blood" means killed. Alternate translation: "they murdered God's holy people and the prophets"

you have given them blood to drink

God will make the evil people drink the waters that he turned to blood.

Revelation 16:7

I heard the altar reply

The word "altar" here refers perhaps to someone at the

altar. "I heard someone at the altar reply"

Revelation 16:8

poured out his bowl

The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]

on the sun, and it was given permission to scorch the people
John speaks about the sun as if it were a person. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "on the sun and caused it to severely burn the people"

Revelation 16:9

They were scorched by the terrible heat

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The extreme heat burned them badly"

they blasphemed the name of God

Here the name of God represents God. Alternate

translation: "they blasphemed God"

God, who has the authority over these plagues

This phrase reminds readers of something they already know about God. It helps to explain why the people were blaspheming God. Alternate translation: "God because he has the authority over these plagues"

the authority over these plagues

This refers to the power to inflict these plagues on people, and the power to stop the plagues.

Revelation 16:10

poured out his bowl

The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]

the throne of the beast

This is where the beast reigns from. It may refer to the capital city of his kingdom.

darkness covered its kingdom

Here "darkness" is spoken of as if it were something like a blanket. Alternate translation: "it became dark in all his kingdom" or "all of his kingdom became dark"

They chewed

The people in the beast's kingdom chewed.

Revelation 16:11

They blasphemed

The people in the beast's kingdom blasphemed.

Revelation 16:12

poured out his bowl

The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]

the Euphrates. Its water was dried up

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Euphrates. Its water dried up" or "the Euphrates, and caused its water to dry up"

Revelation 16:13

looked like frogs

A frog is a small animal that lives near water. Jews considered them unclean animals.

dragon

This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos. The dragon is also identified in 12:9 as "the devil or Satan." See how you translated this in [Revelation 12:3]

Revelation 16:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 16:15

Look! I am coming ... his shameful condition

This is in parentheses to show that it is not part of the vision about the spirits. Rather, this is something that the Lord Jesus said. It can be stated clearly that the Lord Jesus said this, as in the UDB.

I am coming as a thief

Jesus will come at a time when people do not expect him, just as a thief comes when not expected. See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation 3:3]

keeping his garments on

Living the right way is spoken of as keeping one's clothes on. Alternate translation: "doing what is right, like keeping his clothes on"

keeping his garments on

Some versions translate this as, "keeping his garments with him."

does not walk around naked

Walking around naked is a metaphor for living foolishly without knowing it. Alternate translation: "does not live foolishly"

they do not see his shameful condition

Here the word "they" refers to other people.

his shameful condition

This is a general term for anything of which a person should be ashamed. Here the shame is from living foolishly. Alternate translation: "those things of which he should be ashamed"

Revelation 16:16

They brought them together

"The spirits of the demons brought the kings and their armies together"

the place that is called

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the place that people call"

Armageddon

This is the name of a place.

Revelation 16:17

Connecting Statement:

The seventh angel pours out the seventh bowl of God's wrath.

poured out his bowl

The word "bowl" refers to what is in it. See how you translated this in [Revelation 16:2]

Then a loud voice came out of the temple and from the throne

This means someone sitting on the throne or someone standing near the throne spoke loudly. It is unclear who is speaking.

Revelation 16:18

flashes of lightning

Use your language's way of describing what lightning looks like each time it appears. See how you translated this in Revelation 4:5.

rumblings, crashes of thunder

These are the loud noises that thunder makes. Use your language's way of describing the sound of thunder. See how you translated this in Revelation 4:5.

Revelation 16:19

The great city was split
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"The earthquake split the great city"
Then God called to mind
"Then God remembered" or "Then God thought of" or "Then God started to pay attention to." This does not mean that God remembered something he had forgotten.
he gave that city the cup filled with the wine made from his furious wrath
The wine is a symbol of his wrath. Making people drink it is a symbol of punishing them. Alternate translation: "he made the people of that city drink the wine that represents

his wrath"
Revelation 16:20
Connecting Statement:
This is part of the seventh bowl of God's wrath.
the mountains were no longer found
The inability to see any mountains is metonymy expressing the idea that no mountains existed any longer. Alternate translation: "there were no longer any mountains"
Revelation 16:21
a talent
You may convert this to a modern measure. Alternate translation: "33 kilograms"

Chapter 17

Revelation 17 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins to describe how God will destroy Babylon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prostitute

Scripture often pictures idolatrous Jews as adulterous people and sometimes as prostitutes. This is not the reference here. The translator should allow this illustration to be vague.

Seven hills

This possibly refers to the city of Rome, which was known as the city on seven hills. However, the translator should not attempt to identify Rome in the translation.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

John uses many different metaphors in this chapter. He explains some of their meanings, but allows them to remain relatively unclear. The translator should attempt to do the same.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The beast you saw existed, does not exist now, but is about to come up "

This and similar phrases in this chapter contrast the beast with Jesus. Jesus is called "the one who is, and who was, and who is to come" elsewhere in the Book of Revelation.

Paradox

A paradox is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This sentence in 17:11 is a paradox: "the beast ... is itself also an eighth king; but it is one of those seven kings." The translator should not attempt to resolve this paradox. It should remain a mystery. ([Revelation 17:11](#))

Links:

[Revelation 17:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 17

17:1-6

Who was the great prostitute?

[17:1]

John wrote about a great prostitute. John often used a metaphor about Christians being the bride of Christ. Those who know God, but who commit idolatry are said to commit adultery. In the same way a wife is unfaithful to her husband if she commits adultery, so is a person unfaithful to God if they commit idolatry. In this passage, John wrote about a certain person.

Some scholars think John wrote about a certain false teacher in the church. Other scholars think John wrote about an evil city. Some scholars think John wrote about Rome and the Roman Empire. Other scholars think John wrote about the new Babylon (see: Revelation 14:8). Other scholars think John wrote about the people of Israel who did not believe in Jesus. Advice to translators: In English, one cannot say "do idolatry" or "do adultery." Instead, one must say "commit idolatry" or "commit adultery."

See: Revelation 17:15-18

See: Metaphor; Bride of Christ; Adultery; Prostitute (Prostitution) ; Idolatry (Idol); Church

See Map: Babylon

Why is she "seated on many waters"?

[17:1]

See: Revelation 13

How did the kings commit sexual immorality?

[17:2]

John continues the metaphor of adultery when writing about the kings of the world. He wanted to write that the rulers in the world will do the things the false teachers say to do. That is, they will also commit idolatry.

Advice to translators: In English, one cannot say “do idolatry.” Instead, one must say “commit idolatry.”

See: Metaphor; Adultery

How do the people get drunk?

[17:2]

People got drunk because they drank too much wine. John wrote about getting drunk. This was a metaphor. The people drank too much from the cup the woman was holding. He wanted to write that the people did the evil things the woman taught. They committed idolatry.

See: Metaphor; Idolatry (Idol)

How did John get carried away in the Spirit?

[17:3]

John wrote he was carried away by the Spirit. This means God gave him a vision.

See: Holy Spirit; Vision

What was the woman sitting on?

[17:3]

See: Revelation 13

Why was the woman dressed the way she was dressed?

[17:4]

Some scholars think John wrote about a woman who was a false teacher. They think her clothes were a symbol. Perhaps John was writing about the church where she taught. He may been writing about how the church building looked. Or perhaps John wrote about the clothes the false teacher wore.

See: Symbol

What was written on her forehead?

[17:5]

The woman had something written on her forehead. Some scholars think this was a metaphor. She knew she taught the wrong things. And even wanted people to know she taught the wrong things. She was not ashamed about the things she taught.

See: Metaphor

How was the woman drunk?

[17:6]

John wrote that the woman was drunk. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say that she persecuted and killed many Christians.

See: Metaphor; Persecute (Persecution)

17:7-13

Who is the beast?

[17:7]

John wrote that the beast was not and is not. That is, he is not Jesus. Jesus is the only one who was, is, and is to come. The beast was not God. However, he will come to the earth before he is destroyed.

See: Revelation 1:8; 13:1

What is the bottomless pit?

[17:8]

Hell is often described as a bottomless pit. When John wrote about the bottomless pit, he wanted to say Satan gave these rulers power.

See: Hell; Satan (The Devil)

What is the book of life?

[17:8]

See: Revelation 3:5

What is the foundation of the world?

[17:8]

John wrote about the foundation of the world. This is the time when the world was created.

What are the seven mountains?

[17:9]

John wrote about the seven heads being symbols. They were symbols of the seven mountains on which the woman spoke.

Scholars think John wrote about the seven hills around the city of Rome. The woman rules. She sits in the same way someone would sit on a throne.

See: Symbol; Throne

Who are the seven kings?

[17:10]

John wrote about seven kings.

Some scholars think John used a metaphor. They think he wrote about seven different ways the Romans ruled people. He wrote that five fell from ruling because they did not rule in these ways anymore. John lived during the time when they ruled in the sixth way.

Other scholars think John wrote about seven different empires who ruled large parts of the world near Israel. When John wrote that five had fallen, he wanted to write that they did not rule anymore. The Roman Empire was the sixth great kingdom ruling the world. The seventh kingdom had not yet begun to rule the world.

See: Metaphor

Who is the eighth king?

[17:11]

John wrote about an eighth king. This king will rule the seventh kingdom. John wrote about the antichrist. The antichrist will rule for a time. However, God promises that the antichrist is going to be destroyed.

See: Antichrist

What are the ten horns?

[17:12]

John wrote about ten horns. These were ten kings. This was a metaphor.

Some scholars think John wrote about ten parts of the Roman Empire. Other scholars think these were ten different rulers of parts of the Roman Empire. Other scholars think these were other nations that helped the Roman Empire when they fought against Israel shortly after Jesus returned to heaven. Other scholars think John wrote about what Daniel wrote about. He wrote about the ten toes of a statue (see: Daniel 2). They think these are ten rulers who will help the antichrist to rule.

See: Metaphor; Antichrist; Heaven

How will the kings receive a kingdom?

[17:12]

John talked about the kings receiving a kingdom. He wanted to say that they will be given permission to rule something.

Why are these kings given permission to rule for one hour?

When John wrote these kings were given permission to rule for one hour, he wanted to write they ruled for a short time.

17:14-18

Who will these kings serve?

[17:12, 17:13]

These king will serve the beast.

See: Revelation 1:8

Who is the lamb?

[17:14]

Jesus is the lamb. The kings will war against Jesus and the people who serve him.

See: Lamb of God

Who are “the called ones, the chosen ones, and the faithful ones”?

[17:14]

Christians are the called ones, the chosen ones, and the faithful ones.

See: Call (Calling); Elect (Election)

Why will the beast and the ten kings hate the prostitute?

[17:16]

The ten kings and the beast (see: Revelation 1:8) will hate the prostitute. These were symbols.

Some scholars think John wrote about ten rulers who defeated the Roman Empire. Other scholars think these kings were kings of other nations who served the Roman Empire. They had to serve the Roman Empire, but they hated it. Other scholars think these kings were rulers of parts of the Roman Empire who hated the leader of the Roman Empire. Other scholars think that John wrote about the antichrist becoming the ruler of the whole world.

See: Revelation 17:1

See: Prostitute (Prostitution) ; Symbol; Antichrist

What will the kings and beast do to the prostitute?

[17:16]

The kings and beast do horrible things to the prostitute. This was a metaphor.

Some scholars think John wanted to write that the ten rulers who defeated the Roman Empire would do horrible things to the Romans. These things did not happen when John wrote, but they happened after the time John wrote. Other scholars

think John wrote about false leaders in the church being punished. Other scholars think John wrote about certain false religious leaders. They were being punished because the antichrist wants everyone to worship him.
See: Revelation 1:8; 17:1; 1 Kings 21:23; 2 Kings 9:33-37
See: Prostitute (Prostitution) ; Metaphor; Antichrist

Revelation 17:1

General Information:

John begins to describe the part of his vision about the great prostitute.

the condemnation of the great prostitute

The noun "condemnation" can be expressed with the verb "condemn." Alternate translation: "how God will condemn the great prostitute"

the great prostitute

"the prostitute that everyone knows about." She represents a certain sinful city.

on many waters

If you need to, you can use a more specific word for the kind of water. Alternate translation: "on many rivers"

Revelation 17:2

with the wine of her sexual immorality the inhabitants of the earth became drunk

The wine represents sexual immorality. Alternate translation: "the people of the earth became drunk by drinking her wine, that is, they were sexually immoral"

her sexual immorality

This may well have a double meaning: sexual immorality among people and also the worship of false gods.

Revelation 17:3

carried me away in the Spirit to a wilderness

The setting changes from John being in heaven to being in a wilderness.

Revelation 17:4

pearls

beautiful and valuable white beads. They are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean.

Revelation 17:5

On her forehead was written a name

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone had written on her forehead a name"

Babylon the great

If it needs to be made clear that the name refers to the woman, it can be put in a sentence. Alternate translation: "I am Babylon, the powerful one"

Revelation 17:6

was drunk with the blood ... and with the blood

"was drunk because she had drunk the blood ... and had drunk the blood"

the martyrs for Jesus

"the believers who have died because they told others about Jesus"

astonished

amazed, surprised

Revelation 17:7

General Information:

The angel begins to explain to John the meaning of the prostitute and the red beast. The angel explains these things through verse 18.

Why are you astonished?

The angel used this question to gently scold John. Alternate translation: "You should not be astonished!"

Revelation 17:8

the bottomless pit

This is an extremely deep, narrow hole. Possible meanings are 1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever or 2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in Revelation 9:1.

Then he will go on to destruction

The noun "destruction" can be translated with a verb.

Alternate translation: "Then he will be destroyed" or "Then God will destroy him"

he will go on to destruction

The certainty of what will happen in the future is spoken of as if the beast were going to it.

those whose names have not been written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"those whose names God did not write"

since the foundation of the world

The author speaks of the world as if it were a building set on a foundation. Alternate translation: "since the creation of the world" or "since God created the world"

Revelation 17:9

Connecting Statement:

The angel continues speaking. Here he explains the meaning of the seven heads of the beast that the woman is riding.

This calls for a mind that has wisdom

The abstract nouns "mind" and "wisdom" can be expressed with "think" and "wise" or "wisely." Why a wise mind is needed can be stated clearly. Alternate translation: "A wise mind is needed in order to understand this" or "You need to think wisely in order to understand this"

This calls for

"This makes it necessary to have"

The seven heads are seven hills

Here "are" means "stand for" or "represent."

Revelation 17:10

Five kings have fallen

The angel speaks of dying as falling. Alternate translation: "Five kings have died"

one exists

"one is king now" or "one king is alive now"

the other has not yet come, and when he comes

Not having existed yet is spoken of as not yet having come.

Alternate translation: "the other has not yet become king; when he becomes king"

he must remain for a little while

The angel speaks of someone continuing to be king as if he were remaining in a place. Alternate translation: "he can be king only for a little while"

Revelation 17:11

He belongs to the seven

Possible meanings are 1) the beast rules twice: first as one of the seven kings, and then as the eighth king or 2) the beast belongs to that group of seven kings because he is like them.

and is going to his destruction

The certainty of what will happen in the future is spoken of as if the beast were going to it. Alternate translation: "and will certainly be destroyed" or "and God will surely destroy him"

Revelation 17:12

Connecting Statement:

The angel continues speaking to John. Here he explains the meaning of the ten horns of the beast.

for one hour

If your language does not divide the day into 24 hours, you may need to use a more general expression. Alternate translation: "for a very short time" or "for a very small part of a day"

Revelation 17:13

These are of one mind

"These all think the same thing" or "These all agree to do the same thing"

Revelation 17:14

the Lamb

A "lamb" is a young sheep. Here it is used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

the called, chosen, and faithful ones

This refers to one group of people. The words "called" and "chosen" can be expressed in active form. Alternate translation: "the ones whom God has called and chosen, who are faithful to him"

Revelation 17:15

The waters you saw, where the prostitute is seated, are peoples, multitudes, nations, and languages

Here "are" stands for "represent."

The waters

If you need to, you can use a more specific word for the kind of water. See how you translated "many waters" in

[Revelation 17:1]

multitudes

large groups of people

languages

This refers to people who speak the languages. See how you translated this in [Revelation 10:11]

Revelation 17:16

make her desolate and naked

"steal everything that she has and leave her with nothing"

they will devour her flesh

Destroying her completely is spoken of as eating all her flesh. "They will destroy her completely"

Revelation 17:17

For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give ... until God's words are fulfilled

They would agree to give their power to the beast, but it would not be that they want to obey God. Alternate translation: "For God has put it into their hearts to agree to give ... until God's words are fulfilled, and by doing this, they would carry out God's purpose"

God has put it into their hearts

Here "heart" is a metonym for desires. Making them want to do something is spoken of as putting it in their hearts to do it. Alternate translation: "God has made them want"

power to rule

"authority" or "kingly authority"

until God's words are fulfilled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"until God fulfills what he said will happen"

Revelation 17:18

Connecting Statement:

The angel finishes speaking to John about the prostitute and the beast.

is

Here "is" stands for "represents."

the great city that has power to rule

The city having power to rule is a metonym for the leader of the city having power to rule. Alternate translation: "the great city whose leader has power to rule"

Chapter 18

Revelation 18 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 2-8, 10, 16-17, and 19-24.

Special concepts in this chapter

Prophecy

The angel prophesies about Babylon falling, which here means being destroyed. It is spoken of as having already happened. This is common in prophecy. It emphasizes that the coming judgment will certainly happen. The angel also prophesies that the people will lament over Babylon falling.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Prophecy frequently uses metaphors. This chapter has an apocalyptic style that is slightly different from that of the rest of the Book of Revelation.

Links:

[Revelation 18:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 18

18:1-8

How was the earth illuminated with the angel's glory?

[18:1]

The angel came from heaven with glory. This means that God gave the angel great power to do what God wanted the angel to do. When this happened, it meant that someone or something was going to be punished.

See: Angel; Heaven; Glory (Glorify)

Who was Babylon?

[18:2]

Some scholars think the Babylon John wrote about in this chapter was different than the Babylon he wrote about in chapter 17. Before, John wrote about the religious part of Babylon. Here, John wrote about the government of Babylon. Other scholars think these chapter talk about the same Babylon.

See: Revelation 14:8

See Map: Babylon

Was Babylon destroyed?

[18:2]

The angel said that Babylon was destroyed. When he said this, Babylon was not destroyed. Instead, the angel prophesied that Babylon would be destroyed. Therefore, the angel warned people that God was about to judge people.

See: Angel; Prophecy (Prophecy)

See Map: Babylon

Why did John talk about birds?

[18:2]

When a city was destroyed, certain birds would come to the city. They eat dead things. These birds were not clean.

See: Isaiah 13:21

See: Clean and Unclean

What did the nations do?

[18:3]

The leaders of many nations did the same things Babylon did. They did evil things. They did not honor God. John used the metaphor of sexual immorality to write about this. He wanted to write that the rulers in the world will do the things the false teacher says to do. That is, they will also commit idolatry.

Advice to translators: In English, one cannot say "do idolatry." Instead, one must say "commit idolatry."

See: Metaphor; Idolatry (Idol); Sexual Immorality

Who is talking in heaven?

[18:4]

Someone else spoke in heaven. John did not say who spoke. Scholars think God spoke.

See: Heaven

The voice talked about "my people." Who were they?

[18:4]

See: Jeremiah 51:6, 44-45

See: People of God

How do sins pile up?

[18:5]

John wrote about sins piling up to heaven. This was a metaphor. He wanted to say that the people sinned a lot. Perhaps he was also thinking about what was written in Genesis 18:21.

See: Ezra 9:6

See: Heaven; Metaphor

How does the voice talk about paying back Babylon?

[18:6]

This passage says that Babylon will be paid back for their sins. This is a metaphor. Babylon will be punished for sinning. It will get what it deserves.

See: Jeremiah 16:18; 17:18

See: Metaphor

Why is Babylon thought to be seated as a queen?

[18:7]

A queen can be a woman who rules a nation. A queen can also be the wife of a king. Kings and Queens rule many times while seated on their thrones.

See: Revelation 14:8

See: Throne

Why will Babylon be burned with fire?

[18:8]

See: Punish (Punishment); Fire

18:9-24

What is a woe?

[18:10]

See: Woe

Why did John write about the clothes Babylon wore?

[18:16, 18:7]

In this passage, John wrote about Babylon as if it were a person. He wrote about the clothes it wore.

Some scholars think it wore the clothes of a king. People honored Babylon. However, they were going to be punished for it.

Other scholars think that John wrote about certain things only rich people bought. John wanted to write that the wealth of Babylon would be lost.

See Revelation 14:8

Why did the sailors put dust on their heads?

[18:19]

In ancient Israel, when someone was very sad, they put ashes on their head. Sometimes they put ashes on their head as a way to repent of the evil things they did.

See: Repent (Repentance)

Why did the angel throw the stone into the sea?

[18:21]

When a stone entered into the sea, it sank immediately to the bottom. John wanted to say that Babylon would be punished, and it would quickly be destroyed.

See: Jeremiah 51:63-64

Why did John write about Babylon in the way that he did?

[18:21]

John wrote about Babylon in a certain way. He wanted to write that it was destroyed. Nothing remained after it was destroyed

Did Babylon practice sorcery?

[18:23]

When someone practiced sorcery, they did a certain type of magic that dishonored God. This was a metaphor. They did things that made people want to not believe in God.

See: Revelation 2:20

See: Sorcery; Metaphor

Why did John write that blood was found in Babylon?

[18:24]

John wrote that blood was found in Babylon. He wanted to say that Babylon killed certain people. They were punished for killing people who honored God.

Revelation 18:1

Connecting Statement:

Another angel comes down from heaven and speaks. This is not the angel mentioned in the previous chapter who spoke about the prostitute and the beast.

Revelation 18:2

Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great

The angel speaks of Babylon having been destroyed as if it had fallen. See how you translated this in [Revelation 14:8]

She has become

The pronoun "she" refers to the city of Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute.

a prison

The word "prison" here is a metaphor for a secure place.

This was probably a secure place where the unclean spirits feel safe, such as a refuge or hideout. Alternate translation: "a hideout"

Revelation 18:3

all the nations

The nations is a metonym for the people of those nations.

Alternate translation: "the people of all the nations"

have drunk the wine of her immoral passion

This is a symbol for participating in her sexually immoral passion. Alternate translation: "have become sexually immoral like her" or "have become drunk like her in sexual sin"

her immoral passion

Babylon is spoken of as if it were a prostitute who has caused other people to sin along with her. This may well have a double meaning: literal sexual immorality and also the worship of false gods.

merchants

A merchant is a person who sells things.

from the power of her sensual way of living

"because she spent so much money on sexual immorality"

Revelation 18:4

General Information:

The pronouns "she" and "her" refer to the city of Babylon,

which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute.

Connecting Statement:

Another voice from heaven begins to speak.

another voice

The word "voice" refers to the speaker, which is probably either Jesus or the Father. Alternate translation: "someone else"

from her

The pronoun "her" refers to the city of Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute.

Revelation 18:5

Her sins have piled up as high as heaven

The voice speaks of Babylon's sins as if they were objects that could form a pile. Alternate translation: "Her sins are so many they are like a pile that reaches heaven"

has remembered

"has thought of" or "has started to pay attention to." This does not mean that God remembered something he had forgotten. See how you translated "called to mind" in

Revelation 16:19.

Revelation 18:6

Pay her back as she has paid others back

The voice speaks of punishment as if it were payment.

Alternate translation: "Punish her as she has punished others"

her ... she

The pronouns "her" and "she" refer to the city of Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute.

repay her double

The voice speaks of punishment as if it were payment.

Alternate translation: "punish her twice as much"

in the cup she mixed, mix double the amount for her

The voice speaks of causing others to suffer as preparing strong wine for them to drink. Alternate translation:

"prepare for her the wine of suffering that is twice as strong as what she made for others" or "make her suffer twice as much as she made others suffer"

mix double the amount

Possible meanings are 1) "prepare twice the amount" or 2) "make it twice as strong"

Revelation 18:7

Connecting Statement:

The same voice from heaven continues speaking about Babylon as if it were a woman.

she glorified herself

"the people of Babylon glorified themselves"

For she says in her heart

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's mind or thoughts.

Alternate translation: "For she says to herself"

I am seated as a queen

She claims to be a ruler, having her own authority.

I am not a widow

She implies that she will not be dependent on other people.

I will never see mourning

Experiencing mourning is spoken of as seeing mourning.

Alternate translation: "I will never mourn"

Revelation 18:8

her plagues will come

Existing in the future is spoken of as a coming.

She will be consumed by fire

Being burned up by fires is spoken of as being eaten up by fire. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Fire will completely burn her up"

Revelation 18:9

General Information:

In these verses the word "her" refers to the city of Babylon, committed sexual immorality and went out of control with her

"sinned sexually and did whatever they wanted just as the people of Babylon did"

Revelation 18:10

Connecting Statement:

John tells what people say about Babylon.

afraid of her torment

The abstract noun "torment" can be translated as a verb.

Alternate translation: "afraid that they will be tormented as Babylon is" or "afraid that God will torment them as he torments Babylon"

Woe, woe

This is repeated for emphasis.

your punishment has come

Existing in the present is spoken of as having come.

Revelation 18:11

mourn for her

"mourn for the people of Babylon"

Revelation 18:12

precious stone, pearls

"many kinds of expensive stones." See how you translated these in Revelation 17:4.

fine linen

expensive cloth made from flax. See how you translated "linen" in Revelation 15:6.

purple, silk, scarlet

Purple is a very dark red cloth that is very expensive. Silk is a soft, strong cloth made from the fine string that silkworms make when they make their cocoons. Scarlet is an expensive red cloth.

every vessel of ivory

"all kinds of containers made of ivory"

ivory

a beautiful hard, white material that people get from the tusks or teeth of very large animals such as elephants or walruses.

Alternate translation: "tusks" or "valuable animal teeth"

marble

a precious stone used for building

Revelation 18:13

cinnamon

a spice that smells nice and comes from the bark of a certain kind of tree

spice

a substance used to add flavor to food or a good smell to oil bodies and souls of people

Possible meanings are 1) the parts of people are used figuratively to refer to people who are sold as slaves.

Alternate translation: "slaves" or 2) the word "bodies" refers to slaves, and the phrase "souls of people" expresses the truth that slaves are real people. Alternate translation: "slaves, that is human souls"

Revelation 18:14

The fruit

"Fruit" here is a metaphor for "result" or "outcome."

Alternate translation: "The result"

desired with all your might

"wanted very much"

vanished, never to be found again

Not to be found stands for not existing. This figure of speech can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "vanished; you will never have them again"

Revelation 18:15

General Information:

In these verses, the word "her" refers to the city of Babylon. because of the fear of her torment

This can be restated to remove the abstract nouns "fear" and "torment." Alternate translation: "because they will be afraid of God tormenting them the way he torments her" or "because they will be afraid of suffering the way she is suffering"

weeping and mourning loudly

This is what the merchants will be doing. Alternate translation: "and they will weep and mourn loudly"

Revelation 18:16

the great city that was dressed in fine linen

Throughout this chapter, Babylon is spoken of as if it were a woman. The merchants speak of Babylon as being dressed in fine linen because its people were dressed in fine linen. Alternate translation: "the great city, which was like a woman dressed in fine linen" or "the great city, whose women were dressed in fine linen"

that was dressed in fine linen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that wore fine linen"

was adorned with gold

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "adorned herself with gold" or "adorned themselves with gold" or "wore gold"

precious jewels

"valuable gems" or "treasured gems"

pearls

beautiful and valuable white beads. They are formed inside the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the ocean. See how you translated this in [Revelation 17:4]

Revelation 18:17

who make their living from the sea

The phrase "from the sea" refers to what they do on the sea. Alternate translation: "who travel on the sea to make their living" or "who sail on the sea to different places in order to trade things"

Revelation 18:18

General Information:

In these verses the word "they" refers to the sailors and seafarers, and the word "her" refers to the city of Babylon.

What city is like the great city?

This question shows that the merchants thought the city of Babylon was very important. Alternate translation: "No other city is like the great city, Babylon!"

Revelation 18:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 18:20

God has brought your judgment on her

The noun "judgment" can be expressed with the verb "judge." Alternate translation: "God has judged her for you" or "God has judged her because of the bad things she did to you"

Revelation 18:21

Connecting Statement:

Another angel begins to speak about Babylon. This angel is not one of those who has spoken previously.

millstone

a large round stone used to crush grain

Babylon, the great city, will be thrown down with violence and will not be seen anymore

God will completely destroy the city. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will violently throw down Babylon, the great city, and it will no longer exist" will not be seen anymore

"no one will see it anymore." Not being seen here means that it will not exist. Alternate translation: "it will not exist anymore"

Revelation 18:22

The sound made by harpists, musicians, flute players, and trumpeters will not be heard anymore in you

Not being heard here means that they will not be there.

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Harpists, musicians, flute players, and trumpeters will no longer make a sound in your city"

in you

The angel speaks as if he were talking to Babylon. Alternate translation: "in Babylon"

No craftsman ... will be found in you

Not being found there means that they will not be there.

Alternate translation: "No craftsman ... will be in your city"

No sound of a mill will be heard anymore in you

The sound of something not being heard means that no one will make that sound. Alternate translation: "No one will use a mill in your city anymore"

Revelation 18:23

General Information:

The words "you" and "your" refer to Babylon.

Connecting Statement:

The angel who threw the millstone finishes talking.

The voices of the bridegroom and the bride will not be heard in you anymore

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one will ever again hear in Babylon the happy voices of a bridegroom and a bride"

will not be heard in you anymore

Not being heard here means that they will not be there.

Alternate translation: "will not be in your city anymore"

your merchants were the princes of the earth

The angel speaks of important and powerful people as if they were princes. Alternate translation: "your merchants were like princes of the earth" or "your merchants were the most important men in the world"

the nations were deceived by your sorcery

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"you deceived the people of the nations with your magic spells"

Revelation 18:24

General Information:

The word "her" refers to Babylon.

In her the blood of prophets and of God's holy people was found, and

the blood of all who have been killed on the earth

Blood being found there means that the people there were guilty of killing people. Alternate translation: "Babylon is guilty of killing the prophets and believers and all the other people in the world who were killed"

Chapter 19

Revelation 19 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The beginning of chapter 19 concludes the topic of Babylon falling.

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 1-8.

Special concepts in this chapter

Songs

The Book of Revelation often describes heaven as a place where people sing. They worship God with songs. This illustrates that heaven is a place where God is always worshiped. (See: heaven)

Wedding celebration

The wedding celebration or feast is an important image in Scripture. Jewish culture often pictured paradise, or life with God after death, as a feast. Here, the wedding feast is for the Lamb, who is Jesus, and his bride, who is all his people.

Links:

[Revelation 19:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 19

19:1-10

Who is in heaven praising God?

[19:1]

There are many people in heaven praising God. Some scholars think John wrote about angels (see: 5:11). Other scholars think John wrote about the Jews in heaven. Other scholars think John wrote about everyone who died and is in heaven.

See: Heaven; Praise; Angel

Who is the great prostitute?

[19:2]

See: Revelation 17:1

Why does God punish the people who harm those who serve him?

[19:2]

John wrote about God punishing certain people. He used the metaphor of blood. He wanted to write that certain people died. The people God punished killed Christians because Christians believed in Jesus.

See: Metaphor

Why does the smoke rise forever?

[19:3]

John used a metaphor of smoke rising forever. He wanted to say that God would people and they would be completely destroyed. This is the last time he judged them.

Who are the twenty-four elders?

[19:4]

See: Revelation 4:4

Why is God seated on a throne?

[19:4]

See: Revelation 1:4

What is the wedding of the lamb?

[19:7]

See: Wedding; Lamb of God

Who is Jesus' bride?

[19:7]

See: Bride of Christ

Why is the bride wearing certain clothes?

[19:8]

John wrote about all Christians when he wrote about the bride. The bride wore certain clothes. This was a metaphor. John wanted to say that she did good things to serve God. Before a wedding, the bride needed to make herself ready for the wedding ceremony.

See: Bride of Christ; Metaphor

Why did John try to worship the angel?

[19:10]

John tried to worship the angel. Scholars think this was because seeing the angel overwhelmed him. This is because the angel was greater than any person. Scholars think John also wanted to warn people not to worship anyone or anything except God.

See: Angel

What is the spirit of prophecy?

[19:10]

Scholars do not know what John meant when he wrote that Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. They think this might mean that prophecy talks about Jesus and helps people to know that Jesus is who he said he is. In this chapter, there are many prophecies that were fulfilled.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Prophecy (Prophecy)

19:11-21

Why did John write about a white horse from heaven?

[19:11]

John wrote about Jesus when he wrote about the white horse from heaven. Some scholars think John wanted to write that Jesus would come to earth to defeat his enemies. Other scholars think this was a symbol. John wanted to say that Jesus would use Christians to defeat his enemies. Other scholars think John wrote about a certain type of war on the earth between Christians and Satan.

See: Spiritual Warfare; Satan (The Devil); Symbol; White (symbol)

Why did the rider of the horse wear many crowns?

[19:12]

The rider on the horse wore many crowns. A ruler wore a crown. The rider wore many crowns because he ruled over many people. These people ruled over other people. This is why John wrote that Jesus is the king of kings.

See: Crown

Why is the rider's robe dipped in blood?

[19:13]

The rider was going to punish people. This is why his robe was dipped in blood. Scholars think people were going to die. Some scholars think John wrote about a real warrior. This warrior's robe was stained with the blood of his enemies. Advice to translators: A warrior is like a soldier, but he does not have to be in the army. Instead, he is someone who fights other people. He fights for a reason.

See: Isaiah 63:1-3

What does the rider do when he comes to the earth?

[19:15]

Some scholars think the rider comes to the earth to punish people for not believing in God. Other scholars think the rider is a metaphor. John wrote about a war between Christians and Satan.

See: Metaphor; Satan (The Devil); Spiritual Warfare

What does the angel standing in the sun say?

[19:17]

The angel in the sun told the birds to eat different things. John wrote about certain birds who eat dead things. God punished these people and they died. This is why John wrote about these birds. People were punished and they died.

See: Angel

Who is the beast?

[19:19]

See: Revelation 11:7

Who is the false prophet?

[19:20]

See: Revelation 16:13

What is the mark of the beast?

[19:20]

See: Revelation 13:16

What is the lake of fire?

[19:20]

Those who reject God are punished. They are sent to hell. In the Bible, hell is made of fire which never goes out. People

are punished by being burned forever. Some scholars think this is a metaphor. Other scholars think there is fire in hell.
See: Fire; Hell; Metaphor

Revelation 19:1

General Information:

This is the next part of John's vision. Here he describes the rejoicing in heaven over the fall of the great prostitute, who is the city of Babylon.

I heard

Here "I" refers to John.

Hallelujah

This word means "Praise Yahweh." Some modern versions translate it as "Praise the Lord."

Revelation 19:2

the great prostitute

Here John refers to the city of Babylon whose wicked people rule over all the people of the earth and lead them to worship false gods. He speaks of the wicked people of Babylon as if they were a great prostitute. Alternate translation: "that wicked city that was like a prostitute who corrupted the earth"

Here "the earth" is a metonym for its inhabitants. Alternate translation: "who corrupted the people of the earth"

He has avenged the blood of his servants from her hand

Here "the blood ... from her hand" is a metonym for her murdering people. The word "her" refers to the "prostitute," the city of Babylon. Alternate translation: "He has punished her for murdering his servants"

Revelation 19:3

They spoke

Here "They" refers to the crowd of people in heaven.

Hallelujah

This word means "Praise Yahweh." Some modern versions translate it as "Praise the Lord." See how you translated this in Revelation 19:1.

smoke rises from her

The word "her" refers to the city of Babylon, which is spoken of as if it were a prostitute. The smoke is from the fire that destroys the city. Alternate translation: "smoke rises from that city"

Revelation 19:4

twenty-four elders

"24 elders." See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:4]

the four living creatures

"the four living beings" or "the four living things." See how you translated this in Revelation 4:6

who was seated on the throne

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "who sat on the throne"

Hallelujah

This word means "Praise Yahweh." Some modern versions translate it as "Praise the Lord." See how you translated this in Revelation 19:1.

Revelation 19:5

a voice came out from the throne

Here John speaks of the "voice" as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "someone spoke from the throne"

Praise our God

Here "our" refers to the speaker and all God's servants.

you who fear him

Here "fear" does not mean to be afraid of God, but to honor him. Alternate translation: "all you who honor him"

both the unimportant and the powerful

The speaker uses these words together to mean all of God's people.

Revelation 19:6

Then I heard what sounded like the voice of a great number of people, like the roar of many waters, and like mighty crashes of thunder
John speaks of what he is hearing as if it were like the sound made by a very large crowd of people, a large body of rushing water, and very loud thunder.

Hallelujah

This word means "Praise Yahweh." Some modern versions translate it as "Praise the Lord." See how you translated this in Revelation 19:1.

For the Lord

"Because the Lord"

Revelation 19:7

Connecting Statement:

The voice of the crowd from the previous verse continues speaking.

Let us rejoice

Here "us" refers to all of God's servants.

give him the glory

"give God the glory" or "honor God"

wedding celebration of the Lamb ... his bride has made herself ready

Here John speaks of the joining of Jesus and his people together forever as if it were a wedding celebration.

Lamb

This is a young sheep. Here it is used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]
has come

Existing in the present is spoken of as having come.

his bride has made herself ready

John speaks of God's people as if they were a bride who has gotten ready for her wedding.

Revelation 19:8

She was permitted to be dressed in bright and clean fine linen

Here "she" refers to the people of God. John speaks of the righteous acts of God's people as if they were a bright and clean dress that a bride wears on her wedding day. You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "God allowed her to wear a dress of bright and clean fine linen"

Revelation 19:9

General Information:

An angel begins to speak to John. This is likely the same angel who began to speak to John in Revelation 17:1.

those who are invited

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation: "the people whom God invites"

the wedding feast of the Lamb

Here the angel speaks of the joining of Jesus and his people forever as if it were a wedding feast.

Revelation 19:10

I fell down at his feet

This means that John purposely lay on the ground and stretched himself out in reverence or submission. This action was an important part of worship, to show respect and willingness to serve. See how you translated "fell down" in Revelation 5:8.

your brothers

The word "brothers" here refers to all believers, male and female.

who hold the testimony about Jesus

Here holding stands for believing in or announcing.

Alternate translation: "who speak the truth about Jesus"

for the testimony about Jesus is the spirit of prophecy

Here "spirit of prophecy" refers to God's Holy Spirit.

Alternate translation: "for it is the Spirit of God who gives people the power to speak the truth about Jesus"

Revelation 19:11

General Information:

This is the beginning of a new vision. John begins to describe a rider on a white horse.

Then I saw heaven open

This imagery is used to signify the beginning of a new vision. See how you translated this idea in Revelation 4:1 and Revelation 11:19 and Revelation 15:5.

The one riding it

The rider is Jesus.

It is with justice that he judges and wages war

Here "justice" refers to what is right. Alternate translation: "He judges all people and wages war according to what is right"

Revelation 19:12

His eyes are like a fiery flame

John speaks of the rider's eyes as if they shone like a flame of fire.

He has a name written on him

You can state this in active form. Alternate translation:

"Someone has written a name on him"

on him that no one knows but himself

"on him, and only he knows the meaning of that name"

Revelation 19:13

He is clothed with a robe that was dipped in blood

You can state this in an active form. Alternate translation:

"He wears a robe that has blood on it"

his name is called the Word of God

You can state this in active form. "Word of God" here is a metonym for Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "his name is called the Message of God" or "his name is also the Word of God"

Revelation 19:14

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 19:15

Out of his mouth goes a sharp sword

The sword blade was sticking out of his mouth. The sword itself was not in motion. See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 1:16.

strikes down the nations

"destroys the nations" or "brings the nations under his control"

rule them with an iron rod

John speaks of the rider's power as if he were ruling with an iron rod. See how you translated this in [Revelation 2:27]

He tramples in the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty

John speaks of the rider's destroying his enemies as if they

were grapes that a person tramples in a winepress. Here

"wrath" refers to God's punishment of evil persons.

Alternate translation: "He crushes his enemies according to the judgment of God Almighty, just as a person crushes grapes in a winepress"

Revelation 19:16

He has a name written on his robe and on his thigh:

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"Someone has written a name on his robe and thigh:"

Revelation 19:17

I saw an angel standing in the sun

Here "the sun" is a metonym for the light of the sun.

Alternate translation: "Then I saw an angel standing in the light of the sun"

Revelation 19:18

both free and slave, the unimportant and the powerful

The angel uses these two sets of opposite-meaning words together to mean all people.

Revelation 19:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 19:20

The beast was captured and with him the false prophet

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The rider on the white horse captured the beast and the false prophet"

the mark of the beast

This was an identifying mark that indicated that the person who received it worshiped the beast. See how you translated this in Revelation 13:17.

The two of them were thrown alive

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God threw the beast and the false prophet alive"

the fiery lake of burning sulfur

"the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" or "place full of fire that burns with sulfur"

Revelation 19:21

The rest of them were killed by the sword that came out of the mouth of the one who rode on the horse

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"The rider of the horse killed the remainder of the beast's armies with the sword that extended from his mouth"

the sword that came out of the mouth

The sword blade was sticking out of his mouth. The sword itself was not in motion. See how you translated a similar phrase in Revelation 1:16.

Special concepts in this chapter

The thousand-year reign of Christ

In this chapter, Jesus is said to reign for a thousand years, at the same time that Satan is bound. Scholars are divided over whether this refers to a future period of time or to Jesus reigning now from heaven. It is not necessary to understand this passage in order to translate it accurately. (See: prophet)

Final rebellion

This chapter also describes what happens after the thousand years are ended. During this time, Satan and many people will attempt to rebel against Jesus. This will result in God's ultimate and final victory over sin and evil. (See: sin and evil and eternity)

Great white throne

This chapter ends with God judging all people who ever lived. God separates people who believe in Jesus from those who do not believe in him. (See: judge and heaven and faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Book of Life

This is a metaphor for eternal life. Those possessing eternal life are said to have their names written in this Book of Life.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Hades and the lake of fire

These appear to be two distinct places. The translator may wish to do further research to determine how to translate these two places differently. They should not be made the same as each other in translation. (See: hell)

Links:

[Revelation 20:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 20

20:1-6

What does the angel do to Satan?

[20:2]

John wrote about an angel putting Satan into a type of prison. That is, Satan will be separated from people. Before this time, Satan tries to get people to serve him and do things that do not honor God. He also tries to get the rulers of different nations to serve him and do things that do not honor God. Satan will be in this prison for 1000 years. He will not be in this prison forever.

Some scholars think this has not happened yet. Other scholars think this was a metaphor. By dying, Jesus defeated Satan in some way. Other scholars think that John spoke about many people believing in Jesus. When this happens, people stop following Satan.

See: Angel; Satan (The Devil); Metaphor

Who sat on the thrones?

[20:4]

Scholars do not know who sat on the thrones judging people. Some scholars think these were angels. Other scholars think these were the 24 elders John wrote about before (see: Revelation 4:4). Other scholars think these were all the people in heaven with God (see: Matthew 19:28). Other scholars think these were Christians the antichrist killed.

Advice to translators: A throne is a place where a leader sat when he rule. When he sat on the throne, he made rules for people to follow.

See: Throne;Angel; Antichrist

Who will rule with Jesus?

[20:4]

John talked about certain people ruling with Jesus. There were people killed because they believed in Jesus. They were people who did not worship the antichrist.

See: Revelation 13:16

See: Antichrist;Worship

When will Jesus rule the kingdom of God?

[20:4]

Scholars think the things John wrote about in these verses will happen at different times.

Some scholars think Jesus will return before he rules on the earth for 1000 years. Jesus will return to the earth and begin his kingdom. He will rule from Jerusalem. This will last for a thousand years. During this time, Satan will be in prison. There will be perfect peace and justice. This change will happen quickly. Some scholars think Jesus will not return to the earth to rule for 1000 years. They think he will rule through people that believe in Jesus. They think Jesus will not rule on the earth in person. Instead, he will rule from heaven through his people. The kingdom of God on earth has already begun. It is a metaphor for Jesus helping or guiding Christians to do the things that honor God. However, the time of

peace and justice only will only come after he returns to earth. This means that the kingdom has already started, but not yet ruling over the earth completely. Other scholars think Jesus will return to the earth after 1000 years of peace. Christ will return after he rules the earth for 1000 years. Jesus will rule the earth through Christians. Gradually, the world will see how Jesus brings about justice and peace in this world. Jesus' kingdom may last for a thousand years. However, the time period may also be a symbol for a long period of time. At the end of this time of peace, Jesus will return.

See: Kingdom of God; Satan (The Devil); Heaven; People of God; Metaphor; Symbol

Who are the rest of the dead?

[20:5]

Some scholars think John wrote about Christians being resurrected. However, they think that at this time, the Christians who were killed for believing in Jesus are resurrected before other Christians and rule with Jesus first.

Other scholars think John wrote about all people being resurrected, except for those who are already alive and ruling with Jesus.

Still other scholars think John wrote about the resurrection of those people who did not believe in Jesus.

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

What is the first resurrection?

[20:5]

See: Resurrect (Resurrection)

What is the second death?

[20:6]

In the Bible, death is a type of separation. When someone dies, they are separated from their body. However, some people die a second time. Those who do not believe in Jesus die a second time. This means they will be separated from God forever. They will live forever apart from God in hell.

See: Fire;Hell

How will people be priests?

[20:6]

See: Priest (Priesthood)

20:7-10

When will Satan be released from prison?

[20:7]

Scholars think different things about Satan being released from prison.

Some scholars think that Satan will be released from prison after Jesus rules on the earth for 1000 years. There will be peace on the earth for 1000 years. After this time, Satan will be released. He will fight against God. Many people will fight with Satan against God when this happens. John wanted to write that people will still reject God, even without Satan trying to get them to reject God. Other scholars think Christians were allowed to fight against Satan and defeat him. This happens when people believe in Jesus and obey God. Here, John wanted to write that there will be a time when Satan will fight against Christians. Some people will reject God. However, God will ultimately defeat Satan.

See: Satan (The Devil); Metaphor

Where is Gog and Magog?

[20:8]

See: Ezekiel 38-39

See Map: Gog; Magog

Does John write about a battle between Satan and God?

[20:9]

In these verses, John writes about a final battle between God and Satan.

Some scholars think that Satan will be imprisoned for 1000 years. After this time, he will be released and fight against God one more time. When this happens, God will defeat Satan. Satan then will live forever in the lake of fire. Other scholars think this is a battle that will take place between God and Satan. In this battle, Satan will try to get people to reject God. John wrote about a time when many people will reject God. It will seem as if the whole world is fighting against God and Christians. However, God will win this battle. Satan will be punished. Other scholars think there is not really a battle between God and Satan. What John wanted to write was that Satan fights against God. When he does this, God immediately stops him.

See: Satan (The Devil); Fire; Hell

What is the lake of burning sulfur?

[20:10]

John talked about a lake of burning sulfur and a lake of fire. He was talking about a place where people are punished forever.

See: Fire; Hell

Who is the beast?

[20:10]
See: Revelation 11:7
Who is the false prophet?
[20:10]
See: Revelation 16:13

20:11-15

What is the great white throne?
[20:11]

John wrote about a time when God will judge people. This is what he wrote about when he wrote about the great white throne. At this time, God separates some people that will live together with him in heaven forever. Everyone else will live separated from God in hell forever. That is, those who did not believe in Jesus will be in hell forever. God does this when he sits on the great white throne.

Advice to translators: A throne is a place where a leader sat when he rule. When he sat on the throne, he made rules for people to follow.

See: Heaven; Fire; Hell; White (symbol)
What is the book of life?

[20:12]
See: Revelation 3:5
How are the dead judged?

[20:12]
John wrote about dead people being judged for the things the did. Some scholars think everyone will be judged because of the things they did while they were alive. Other scholars think John only wrote about those who do not believe in Jesus. This is because they do not think Christians will be judged in this way.

See: Judge (Judgment)
What are death and Hades?

[20:13]
God talked about death and Hades being punished. This was a metaphor. People died because God punished people (see: Genesis 3). After this judgment, God would not punish people in this way anymore. After this time, no one would ever die or be sent to hell.
See: 1 Corinthians 15:26
See: Metaphor; Fire; Hell
Who are the dead people in the sea?

[20:13]
John wrote about dead people in the sea. In ancient times, people who died at sea were never found. John wanted to say that no one could hide from God. God will judge everyone.
What is the lake of fire?

[20:14]
John wrote about a lake of fire. He was writing about a place where people will be punished forever.
See: Fire; Hell
What is the second death?

[20:14]
In the Bible, when someone dies, they are separated from something. All people die once. When they die, they are separated from their body. Some people also die a second time. When this happens, they are separated from God forever. This is because they do not believe in Jesus. They will be separated from God forever in hell.
See: Fire; Hell

Revelation 20:1
General Information:
John begins to describe a vision of an angel throwing the devil into the bottomless pit.
Then I saw
Here "I" refers to John.
bottomless pit
This is an extremely deep, narrow hole. Possible meanings are 1) the pit has no bottom; it continues to go down further forever or 2) the pit is so deep that it is as if it had no bottom. See how you translated this in Revelation 9:1.
Revelation 20:2
dragon

This was a large, fierce reptile, like a lizard. For Jewish people, it was a symbol of evil and chaos.
Revelation 20:3
sealed it over him
The angel sealed the pit to keep anyone from opening it.
Alternate translation: "sealed it to prevent anyone from opening it"
deceive the nations
Here "nations" is a metonym for the people of the earth.
Alternate translation: "deceive the people-groups"
the thousand years
"1,000 years"
he must be set free

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will command the angel to free him"

Revelation 20:4

General Information:

This is the next part of John's vision. He describes suddenly seeing thrones and the souls of believers.

who had been given authority to judge

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whom God had given authority to judge"

who had been beheaded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"whose heads others had cut off"

for the testimony about Jesus and for the word of God

"because they had spoken the truth about Jesus and about the word of God"

for the word of God

These words are a metonym for the message from God.

Alternate translation: "for what they taught about the scriptures"

They came to life

"They came back to life" or "They became alive again"

Revelation 20:5

The rest of the dead

"All of the other dead people"

the thousand years were ended

"the end of the 1,000 years"

Revelation 20:6

Over these the second death has no power

Here John describes "death" as a person with power.

Alternate translation: "These people will not experience the second death"

the second death

"dying a second time." This is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14]

Revelation 20:7

Satan will be released from his prison

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will release Satan from his prison"

Revelation 20:8

They will be as many as the sand of the sea

This emphasizes the extremely large number of soldiers in Satan's army.

Revelation 20:9

They went

"Satan's army went"

the beloved city

This refers to Jerusalem.

fire came down from heaven and devoured them

Here John speaks of fire as if it were alive. Alternate

translation: "God sent fire from heaven to burn them up"

Revelation 20:10

The devil, who deceived them, was thrown into

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God threw the devil, who had deceived them, into" or

"God's angel threw the devil, who had deceived them, into"

lake of burning sulfur

"the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" or "place full of fire that burns with sulfur." See how you translated this in Revelation 19:20.

where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"where he had also thrown the beast and the false prophet"

They will be tormented

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God will torment them"

Revelation 20:11

General Information:

This is the next part of John's vision. He describes suddenly seeing a great white throne and the dead being judged.

The earth and the heavens fled away from his presence, but there was no place for them to go

John describes heaven and earth as if they were people who were trying to escape God's judgment. This means that God completely destroyed the old heaven and earth.

Revelation 20:12

the books were opened

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"someone opened the books"

The dead were judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God judged the people who had died and now lived again"

by what was recorded

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by what he had recorded"

Revelation 20:13

The sea gave up the dead ... Death and Hades gave up the dead

Here John speaks of the sea, death, and Hades as if they were living persons.

the dead were judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God judged the dead people"

Hades

Here "Hades" is a metonym that represents the place where unbelievers go when they die, to wait for God's judgment.

Revelation 20:14

Death and Hades were thrown

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"God threw Death and Hades" or "God's angel threw Death and Hades"

the second death

"dying a second time." This is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14]

Revelation 20:15

If anyone's name was not found written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "If God's angel did not find a person's name"

he was thrown into the lake of fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the angel threw him into the lake of fire" or "the angel threw him into the place where fire burns forever"

Chapter 21

Revelation 21 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter gives a detailed picture of the new Jerusalem.

Special concepts in this chapter

Second death

Death is a type of separation. The first death is physically dying, when the soul is separated from the body. The second death is being eternally separated from God. (See: death and soul and eternity)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Book of Life

This is a metaphor for eternal life. Those possessing eternal life are said to have their names written in this Book of Life.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

New heaven and new earth

It is unclear whether this is an entirely new heaven and earth or if it is remade out of the present heaven and earth. The same is also true of the new Jerusalem. It is possible this will affect translation in some languages. The word "new" in the original language means different and better than the old. It does not mean new in time.

Links:

[Revelation 21:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 21

21:1-8

What is the new heaven and the new earth?

[21:1]

John wrote about a new heaven and a new earth.

Some scholars think God will make a new heaven and a new earth. When he wrote about heaven here, he wrote about everything in the sky. This is the universe. This will happen after Jesus rules on the earth for 1000 years. Other scholars think this was a metaphor. John wrote about something that will happen in heaven. Other scholars think John wrote about the world changing after people become Christians.

See: Heaven; Metaphor

What is the new Jerusalem?

[21:2]

John wrote about God making a new Jerusalem.

Some scholars think John wrote about the place where people go when they die. This was the place where people go if they are at peace with God. Other scholars think John wrote about all Christians. Christians worship God in a new way. Other scholars think John wrote about a new place where people will go to worship God.

See: Worship

What does the voice promise?

[21:3]

God talked about making everything new. He promised there was not going to be sin anymore. Because of this, the world will be perfect. Everyone will be at peace with one another and at peace with God. Also, nothing will ever die again.

See: Sin

Who is seated on the throne?

[21:5]

God is seated on the throne.

See: Revelation 1:4

How is God the alpha and the omega?

[21:6]

See: Revelation 1:8

How does someone inherit these things?

[21:7]

John wrote about the people who will inherit the promises God made. That is, Christians will inherit these things. Those who do not believe in Jesus will be cursed forever.

See: Inherit (Inheritance, Heir)

What is the lake of burning sulfur?

[21:8]

See: Revelation 20:10

21:9-27

Who are the seven angels?

[21:9]

John wrote about seven angels. These are the seven angels near the throne of God.

See: Revelation 1:4

What are the seven bowls?

[21:9]

See: Revelation 16:1

Who is the bride of the lamb?

[21:9]

When John wrote about the bride of the lamb, he wrote about all Christians and Jesus.

See: Bride of Christ; Lamb of God

How did John get carried away in the spirit?

[21:10]

See: Revelation 1:10

How is the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven?

[21:10]

John wrote about the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven. This is a metaphor. He wanted to say that God made this new Jerusalem.

See: Heaven; Metaphor

What are the twelve tribes of Israel?

[21:12]

See: Tribes of Israel

Why did they measure the city?

[21:15]

Scholars do not know why he measured the city. Perhaps this was a symbol of something.

See: Symbol

How long is a stadia?

[21:16]

John wrote about 12,000 stadia. That is about 2200 kilometers.

How long is a cubit?

[21:17]

A cubit is about 46 centimeters. John spoke about 144 cubits. This is about 66 meters.

See: Cubit

Why was the city made the way it was made?

[21:18, 21:19, 21:20, 21:21]

In ancient times, a bride wore jewelry. The high priest also wore jewelry. This city also looked like jewelry. Scholars think many of the things John spoke about were symbols. However, they do not know what were symbols. They also do not know what these symbols mean.

See: Symbol; High Priest

Why was there no temple in the city?

[21:22]

John wrote that there was no temple in this city. This is because a temple was a place where one went to worship God.

However, in this city, God is everywhere. He can be worshipped anywhere. They do not need to go somewhere to worship God.

See: Temple: Worship

Why did the city not need the sun?

[21:23]

The city did not need a sun because it did not need light. This is because God is the light (see: John 8:12; 1 John 1:5).

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor)

Who lives in this city?

[21:24]

Christians from all over the world will live in this city. Everyone will worship God. People will be able to worship God at any time and nothing will stop them from worshipping God.

See: Holy Ones

Revelation 21:1

General Information:

John begins to describe his vision of the new Jerusalem.

I saw

Here "I" refers to John.

Revelation 21:2

like a bride adorned for her husband

This compares the new Jerusalem to a bride who has made herself beautiful for her bridegroom.

Revelation 21:3

a great voice from the throne saying
The word "voice" refers to the one who speaks. Alternate translation: "someone speak loudly from the throne saying" Look!

The word "Look" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

The dwelling place of God is with human beings, and he will live with them

These two phrases mean the same thing and emphasize that God will, indeed, live among men.

Revelation 21:4

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes
Tears here represent sadness. See how you translated this in [Revelation 7:17]

Revelation 21:5

these words are trustworthy and true
Here "words" refers to the message that they formed. Alternate translation: "this message is trustworthy and true"

Revelation 21:6

the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end
These two phrases mean basically the same thing and emphasize God's eternal nature.

the Alpha and the Omega
These are first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Possible meanings are 1) "the one who began all things and who ends all things" or 2) "the one who has always lived and who always will live." If the meanings are unclear to readers, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:8]

the beginning and the end
Possible meanings are 1) "the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end" or 2) "the one who existed before all things and who will exist after all things."

To the one who thirsts ... water of life
God speaks of a person's desire for eternal life as if it were thirst and of that person receiving eternal life as if he were drinking life-giving water.

Revelation 21:7

Connecting Statement:
The one seated on the throne continues to speak to John.

Revelation 21:8

the cowards
"those who are too afraid to do what is right"

the detestable
"those who do terrible things"

the fiery lake of burning sulfur
"the lake of fire that burns with sulfur" or "place full of fire that burns with sulfur." See how you translated this in Revelation 19:20.

the second death
"dying a second time." This is described as eternal punishment in the lake of fire in [Revelation 20:14]

Revelation 21:9

the bride, the wife of the Lamb
The angel speaks of Jerusalem as if it were a woman who is about to marry her groom, the Lamb. Jerusalem is metonymy for those who believers who will inhabit it.

the Lamb
This is a young sheep. Here it is used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

Revelation 21:10

carried me away in the Spirit
The setting changes as John is taken to a high mountain where he can see the city of Jerusalem. See how you translated this phrase in [Revelation 17:3]

Revelation 21:11

Jerusalem
This refers to the "Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven" that he described in the previous verse and not to the physical Jerusalem.

like a very precious jewel, like a stone of crystal-clear jasper
These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the brilliance of Jerusalem by naming a specific jewel.

crystal-clear
"extremely clear"

jasper
This is a valuable stone. Jasper may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:3]

Revelation 21:12

twelve gates
"12 gates"

were written
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone had written"

Revelation 21:13

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 21:14

Lamb
This refers to Jesus. See how you translated this in Revelation 5:6.

Revelation 21:15

General Information:
This page has intentionally been left blank.

Revelation 21:16

twelve thousand stadia
"12,000 stadia." You may convert this to modern measures. Alternate translation: "2,200 kilometers"

Revelation 21:17

144 cubits
"one hundred forty-four cubits." You may convert this to modern measures. Alternate translation: "66 meters"

Revelation 21:18

The wall was built of jasper and the city of pure gold
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Someone had built the wall with jasper and the city with pure gold"

pure gold, like clear glass
The gold was so clear that it is spoken of as if it were glass.

jasper
This is a valuable stone. Jasper may have been clear like glass or crystal. See how you translated this in [Revelation 4:3]

Revelation 21:19

The foundations of the wall were adorned
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"Someone adorned the foundations of the wall"
jasper ... sapphire ... agate ... emerald
These are valuable stones. Jasper may have been clear like
glass or crystal. See how you translated it in [Revelation
4:3]
Revelation 21:20
onyx ... chrysolite ... beryl ... topaz ... chrysoprase ... jacinth ... amethyst
These are all valuable gems.
Revelation 21:21
pearls
beautiful and valuable white beads. They are formed inside
the shell of a certain kind of small animal that lives in the
ocean. See how you translated this in [Revelation 17:4]
each of the gates was made from a single pearl
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:
"someone had made each of the gates from a single pearl"
pure gold, like transparent glass
The gold was so clear that it is spoken of as if it were glass.
See how you translated a similar phrase in [Revelation
21:18]
Revelation 21:22
Lord God ... and the Lamb are its temple
The temple represented God's presence. This means the
new Jerusalem does not need a temple because God and the
Lamb will live there.
Revelation 21:23

its lamp is the Lamb
Here the glory of Jesus, the Lamb, is spoken of as if it were
a lamp that gives light to the city.
Revelation 21:24
The nations will walk
The words "the nations" are a metonym for the people who
live in the nations. "Walk" here is a metaphor for "live."
Alternate translation: "The people from all the different
nations will live"
Revelation 21:25
Its gates will not be shut
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No
one will shut the gates"
Revelation 21:26
They will bring
"The kings of the earth will bring"
Revelation 21:27
nothing unclean will ever enter into it, nor anyone
This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation:
"only what is clean will ever enter, and never anyone"
but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but
only those whose names the Lamb wrote in his Book of
Life"
the Lamb
This is a young sheep. Here is it used symbolically to refer
to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

Chapter 22

Revelation 22 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter emphasizes that Jesus is coming soon.

Special concepts in this chapter

Tree of life

There is probably an intended connection between the tree of life in the Garden of Eden and the tree of life mentioned in this chapter. The curse that began in Eden will end at this time.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Alpha and omega

These are the names of the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet. The ULB spells out their names in English. This strategy can serve as a model for translators. Some translators, however, may decide to use the first and last letters in their own alphabet. This would be "A and Z" in English.

Links:

[Revelation 22:1 Notes](#)

Revelation 22

22:1-5

What is the river of the water of life?

[22:1]

John continued to write about the new things God made. He wrote about a river coming from God. Scholars think this was a symbol. He wanted to say that God makes things alive.

See: Ezekiel 47; John 7:37-39

See: Symbol

What is the throne of God?

[22:1]

See: Revelation 1:4

What was the city about which John wrote?

[22:2]

See: Revelation 21:2

What is the tree of life?

[22:2]

See: Genesis 1:9; Revelation 2:7

Why did the tree make fruit every month?

[22:2]

John wrote about the tree making fruit every month. That is, it made fruit about every thirty days. Some scholars think people will eat from this tree when they are in heaven with God. Other scholars think this is a metaphor. However, they do not know what John wanted to say.

See: Heaven

Why will God's name be on people's foreheads?

[22:4]

See: Revelation 7:3

22:6-7

Why did John write, "the God of the spirits of the prophets"?

[22:6]

John wrote, "the God of the spirits of the prophets." He wanted people to know that God gave the prophets the words they needed to say. He also did this for the prophets from the Old Testament.

See: Spirit (Spiritual); Prophet

When do these things happen?

[22:6, 22:7]

In these verses, John wrote about something he saw and heard. However, the angel spoke things to John about which John was to tell other people. The angel told him to say these things to people who lived when John lived. The angels, the prophets, and people serve God and worship him.

See: Angel; Prophet:Worship

22:8-9

What changes in these verses?

[22:8]

Before these verses, John only wrote about the things he saw. John then began to write about what he did because of the things he saw.

Why did the angel tell John not to worship him?

[22:9]

The things he saw amazed John. He wanted to worship the angel. However, people need to worship God alone. Therefore, the angel did not want John to worship him.

See: Angel

22:10-15

How is the time near?

[22:10]

John wrote that the things he talked about were about to happen.

Some scholars think these things happened shortly after John saw them. Other scholars think these things are always about to happen, but they have not happened yet.

John wrote that people who reject God need to continue to dishonor God. He also wrote that Christians need to keep honoring God. Why did he write this?

[22:11]

John wrote that people who reject God need to continue to dishonor God. He also wrote that Christians need to keep honoring God. When he wrote these things, he wanted people to know that the things he wrote about were close to happening. When these things happen, there will not be any time for people to change the things they did.

Who is coming soon?

[22:12]

Someone said that he is coming soon. The person who spoke was Jesus.

What is the alpha and omega?

[22:13]

See: Revelation 1:8

Who are the people who wash their robes?

[22:14]

People who wash their robes are clean. This was a metaphor. Christians are made clean when they believe in Jesus. They

will live together with God in heaven forever. They will also live in the new Jerusalem.

See: Revelation 21

See: Clean and Unclean; Metaphor; Heaven

Who is outside of the city?

[22:15]

Those who do not believe in Jesus will not live together with him forever. Instead, they will live forever in hell. The words they will live outside of the city were a metaphor. They will not live in the new Jerusalem.

See: Revelation 21

See: Heaven; Fire; Hell

Who are dogs?

[22:15]

In the Bible, certain people are called dogs. This was a metaphor used for people who are evil. Dogs are not themselves evil, but they eat in a way that is unclean. In the same way people who do evil things, making them unclean, are considered “dogs” (see: Proverbs 26:11).

See: Philippians 3:2

What is a sorcerer?

[22:15]

See: Sorcery

What is an idolater?

[22:15]

See: Idolatry (Idol)

22:16-21

How is Jesus the root of David?

[22:16]

Jesus is the root of David. This was a metaphor. He is the descendant of David whom God promised to rule Israel (see: 2 Samuel 7:8-17)

See: Covenant with David

How is Jesus the bright morning star?

[22:16]

In the Bible, Jesus is said to be light (see: John 8:12). Scholars think John wanted people to know that Jesus was the king promised to come after David.

See: Numbers 24:17; 2 Peter 1:19; Revelation 2:28

See: Light and Darkness (Metaphor); Covenant with David

Who is the bride?

[22:17]

When John wrote about the bride of Christ, he wrote about the church. That is, he wrote about all Christians.

See: Bride of Christ; Church

Why is someone thirsty?

[22:17]

John wanted people who were thirsty to go to Jesus. This was a metaphor. He wanted to write that people who were “thirsty” were people who wanted to know true things about God. Therefore, they needed to believe in Jesus. They will be given the “water of life.” This is also a metaphor. They will live forever with God in heaven.

See: Metaphor; Heaven

Why did John warn people about adding or removing words from his book?

[22:18, 22:19]

John warned people about adding or removing words from his book. Some scholars think that people added or removed words in books about the last days. Other scholars think that John did not think people would add words to this book. He wanted people to be careful when they studied this book and tried to know what it meant. This is because the book is not easy to understand. Other scholars think John wanted to write that no book of the bible was written after this book. The bible was finished.

See: Last Days

How does someone share in the tree of life?

[22:19]

John wrote about someone sharing in the tree of life. This was a metaphor. Someone who shares in the tree of life lives together with God in forever. They will also live in the new Jerusalem (see: Revelation 21).

See: Metaphor; Heaven

Who “testifies to these things”?

[22:20]

John wrote about someone who “testifies to these things.” This is Jesus.

Revelation 22:1

Connecting Statement:

John continues to describe the new Jerusalem as the angel shows it to him.

showed me

Here "me" refers to John.

the river of the water of life

"the river flowing with life-giving water"

the water of life

Eternal life is spoken of as if it were provided by life-giving water. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:6]

the Lamb

This is a young sheep. Here it is used symbolically to refer to Christ. See how you translated this in [Revelation 5:6]

Revelation 22:2

the nations

Here "nations" refers to the people who live in every nation. Alternate translation: "the people of all nations"

Revelation 22:3

There will no longer be any curse

Possible meanings are 1) "There will never be anyone there that God will curse" or 2) "There will not be anyone there who is under God's curse"

his servants will serve him

Possible meanings of "his" and "him" are 1) both words refer to God the Father, or 2) both words refer to both God and the Lamb, who rule together as one.

Revelation 22:4

They will see his face

This is an idiom, meaning to be in God's presence. Alternate translation: "They will be in God's presence"

Revelation 22:5

General Information:

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Revelation 22:6

General Information:

This is the beginning of the end of John's vision. In this versethe angel is speaking to John. This can be shown clearly as it is in the UDB.

These words are trustworthy and true

Here "words" refers to a message. See how you translated this in [Revelation 21:5]

the God of the spirits of the prophets

Possible meanings are 1) the word "spirits" refers to the inward disposition of the prophets and indicates that God inspires them. Alternate translation: "God who inspires the prophets" or 2) the word "spirits" refers to the Holy Spirit who inspires the prophets. Alternate translation: "God who gives his Spirit to the prophets"

Revelation 22:7

General Information:

This is the beginning of the end of John's vision. Jesus is speaking. This can be shown clearly as it is in the UDB.

Look!

Here Jesus begins to speak. The word "Look" adds emphasis to what follows.

I am coming soon!

It is understood that he is coming in order to judge. See how you translated this in Revelation 3:11. Alternate translation: "I am coming to judge soon!"

the words of the prophecy of this book

Here "words" refers to a message. Alternate translation: "the prophetic message of this book"

Revelation 22:8

General Information:

John tells his readers about how he responded to the angel.

I fell down to worship at the feet

This means that John purposely lay on the ground and stretched himself out in reverence or submission. This action was an important part of worship, to show respect and willingness to serve. See how you translated similar words in Revelation 19:10.

Revelation 22:9

General Information:

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Revelation 22:10

Connecting Statement:

The angel finishes speaking to John.

Do not seal up ... this book

To seal a book was to keep it closed with something that makes it impossible for anyone to read what was inside without breaking the seal. The angel is telling John not to keep the message a secret. Alternate translation: "Do not keep secret ... this book"

the words of the prophecy of this book

Here "words" refers to a message. See how you translated this in [Revelation 22:7]

Revelation 22:11

General Information:

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Revelation 22:12

General Information:

As the book of Revelation is ending, Jesus gives a closing greeting.

Revelation 22:13

the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end

These three phrases share similar meanings and emphasize that Jesus has existed and will exist for all time.

the Alpha and the Omega

These are first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.

Possible meanings are 1) "the one who began all things and who ends all things" or 2) "the one who has always lived and who always will live." If these meanings are unclear to readers, you may consider using the first and last letters of your alphabet. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:8]

the first and the last

This refers to the eternal nature of Jesus. See how you translated this in [Revelation 1:17]

the beginning and the end

Possible meanings are 1) "the one who began all things and the one who will cause all things to end" or 2) "the one who existed before all things and who will exist after all things."

See how you translated this in Revelation 21:6.

Revelation 22:14

Connecting Statement:

Jesus continues giving his closing greeting.

those who wash their robes so that

Becoming righteous is spoken of as if it were washing one's clothing. See how you translated as similar phrase in [Revelation 7:14]

Revelation 22:15

Outside

This means they are outside the city and not allowed to enter.

are the dogs

In that culture the dog was an unclean, despised animal. Here the word "dogs" is derogatory and refers to people who are wicked.

Revelation 22:16

to testify to you

Here the word "you" is plural.

the root and the descendant of David

The words "root" and "descendant" mean basically the same thing. Jesus speaks of being a "descendant" as if he were a "root" that grew out of David. Together the words emphasize that Jesus belongs to the family of David.

the bright morning star

Jesus speaks of himself as if he were the bright star that sometimes appears early in the morning and indicates that a new day is about to begin. See how you translated "morning star" in [Revelation 2:28]

Revelation 22:17

Connecting Statement:

This verse is a response to what Jesus said.

the Bride

Believers are spoken of as if they were a bride about to be married to her groom, Jesus.

Come!

Possible meanings are 1) that this is an invitation for people

to come and drink the water of life. Alternate translation:

"Come and drink!" or 2) that this is a polite request for Jesus to return. Alternate translation: "Please come!"

Whoever is thirsty ... the water of life

A person's desire for eternal life is spoken of as if it were thirst and of that person receiving eternal life as if he were drinking life-giving water.

the water of life

Eternal life is spoken of as if it were provided by life-giving water. See how you translated this in Revelation 21:6.

Revelation 22:18

General Information:

John gives his final remarks.

I testify

Here "I" refers to John.

the words of the prophecy of this book

Here "words" refers to a message. See how you translated this in [Revelation 22:7]

If anyone adds to them ... God will add

This is a strong warning to not change anything about this prophecy.

that are written about in this book

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation:

"which I have written about in this book"

Revelation 22:19

If anyone takes away ... God will take away

This is a strong warning to not change anything about this prophecy.

Revelation 22:20

General Information:

In these verses John gives his and Jesus's closing greetings.

The one who testifies to these things says

"Jesus, who testifies to these things, says"

Revelation 22:21

with all

"with every one of you"